

# HERESIES 18

A FEMINIST PUBLICATION ON ART AND POLITICS



**MOTHERS, MAGS & MOVIE STARS**  
*Feminism & Class*

\$8



Photos ©1985, Mary Beth Edelson

## ANA MENDIETA 1948–1985

We would like to dedicate this issue of *Heresies* to Ana Mendieta, who fell to her death in suspicious circumstances on September 8. Ana worked on the collective of the ecology issue of *Heresies* and her work also appeared in "Third World Issue" and "Racism Is The Issue."

Born in Cuba in 1948, Mendieta was sent into exile in an Iowa orphanage in 1960. She became, by necessity, a survivor, and once said she knew she would be either an artist or a criminal. Her sense of loss and deracination were the sources of her ongoing *silueta* series, begun in 1973, after earlier performance-photo works that were also based in her own body. This obsessive, and original, series imprinted her own (or Everywoman's) form on and in the earth in a great diversity of natural sites and materials, from flowers to gunpowder, from mud to grass.

*HERESIES* is an idea-oriented journal devoted to the examination of art and politics from a feminist perspective. We believe that what is commonly called art can have a political impact and that in the making of art and all cultural artifacts our identities as women play a distinct role. We hope that *HERESIES* will stimulate dialogue around radical political and aesthetic theory, as well as generate new creative energies among women. It will be a place where diversity can be articulated. We are committed to broadening the definition and function of art.

*HERESIES* is published by a collective of feminists, some of whom are also socialists, marxists, lesbian feminists, or anarchists; our fields include painting, sculpture, writing, anthropology, literature, performance, art history, architecture, filmmaking, photography, and video. While the themes of the individual issues will be determined by the collective, each issue will have a different editorial staff, composed of women who want to work on that issue as well as members of the collective. *HERESIES* provides experience for

In 1980, she returned to Cuba for the first time and became a passionate supporter of the Revolution. In 1981, she spent the summer there, carving increasingly abstract female figures into the cliffs and caves of Jaruco. As her work matured, it was rapidly recognized by the art institutions. Between 1980 and 1984, Mendieta received grants from the Guggenheim Foundation, the NEA, the American Academy in Rome, and the National Awards in Visual Art.

Ana lived at a certain risk, but with a fierce creative appetite which is still visible in her art. Although her work contained a deep knowledge of loss and death, it was also a powerful force for life, and rebirth, and revolution. A 1976 *silueta* was "drawn" against the night sky in fireworks, arms raised in triumph.

Ana contributed to *HERESIES'* issues "Third-World Women" (8), "Feminism and Ecology" (13), and "The Great Goddess."

Contributions to the Ana Mendieta Memorial Fund can be sent to The School of Art & Art History, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa 52240.

women who work editorially, in design, and in production. An open evaluation meeting will be held after the appearance of each issue. *HERESIES* will try to be accountable to and in touch with the international feminist community.

As women, we are aware that historically the connections between our lives, our arts, and our ideas have been suppressed. Once these connections are clarified, they can function as a means to dissolve the alienation between artist and audience, and to understand the relationship between art and politics, work and workers. As a step toward the demystification of art, we reject the standard relationship of criticism to art within the present system, which has often become the relationship of advertiser to product. We will not advertise a new set of genius-products just because they are made by women. We are not committed to any particular style or aesthetic, nor to the competitive mentality that pervades the art world. Our view of feminism is one of process and change, and we feel that in the process of this dialogue we can foster a change in the meaning of art.

*Heresies: A Feminist Publication on Art & Politics* is published two times a year by Heresies Collective, Inc., c/o Foundation for the Community of Artists, 280 Broadway, Suite 412, New York, NY 10007. Subscription rates: \$15 for four issues, \$24 for institutions. Outside the U.S. and Canada add \$2 postage. Single copies: \$5 each. Address all correspondence to: Heresies, PO Box 766, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013.

*Heresies*, ISSN 0146-3411. Vol. 5, No. 2, Issue 18. ©1985, Heresies Collective, Inc. All rights reserved.

This publication is made possible, in part, with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts. Additional funds provided by New York Community Trust and Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines. *Heresies* is indexed by the Alternative Press Centre, Box 7229, Baltimore, MD 21218. It is a member of COSMEP (Committee of Small Magazine Editors and Publishers), Box 703, San Francisco, CA 94101.



# HERESIES<sup>18</sup>

A FEMINIST PUBLICATION ON ART AND POLITICS

Editorial Statement | 3

In My Hands Carol Sun | 4

The Graphic Ordering of Desire  
Sally Stein | 6Tango Fatalé Linda Hartinian with  
Ilaria Freccia | 17Sorry I Find It So Difficult To Write  
Alexis Hunter | 18Nancine, Lili, & Chloe  
Catherine Texier | 20Who's Afraid of Aunt Jemima?  
Faith Ringgold | 22Plain Talk... Four Lives from Orange County,  
New York Kay Kenny | 24Not A Nice Jewish Girl... The Return of the  
Repressed. Bérénice Reynaud | 28

Not A Nice Jewish Girl Nicky Lindeman | 28

Photographs Susan Eve  
Jahoda | 31, 33Messages from the Catholic Church  
Mary Moran | 36

Devotional Paintings Joni Wehrli | 36, 37

Me and the TV Stars Leslie Simon | 38

Mammies Patricia Jones | 39

Motherlove Sharon Demarest and  
Sandra De Sando | 40War, Women, and Lipstick... Fan Mags in  
the Forties. Jane Gaines | 42

My Mother's Body Victoria Singer | 48

World's Greatest Mom  
Bonnie Lucas | 48, 49From a Series of Delightful Hate  
Poems Joan Raymund | 49

#1 Daughter Bonnie Lucas | 48, 49

Woman in a Sawmill Anne Pitrone | 50

Etymology Sharon Gilbert | 51

Her Intestinal Bypass Surgery  
Mickie McGee | 52Portrait from Totonicanpan  
Zoe Anglesey | 54

Photographs Marilyn Anderson | 54

March 6, 1982 Margaret Randall | 55

Photograph Colleen McKay | 55

One Mother of a Mountain Sandra Joy  
Jackson-Opoku | 56

Pleistocene Cari Rosmarin | 58

Spirit Lake, Nos. 1 and 2 Helen Oji | 60, 62

Of My Mother's Mother's Mother  
Anna Castillo | 63

Story of Elza Josely Carvalho | 56

Objects on My Dresser  
Sonya Rappaport | 66From the Barbie Calendar Series  
Stacey Godlesky | 67

Manna Lenora Champagne | 68

Artifact, Commerce, Texas  
Sabra Moore | 73

Terror Tales Aisha Eshe | 74

Wild Beauties Carole Gregory | 75

Monotype Michele Godwin | 75

My Mother, Anna Podolsky Louise  
Podolsky-Kramer | 77The Class Struggles of the Cosmo Girl  
and the Ms. Woman  
Mariana Valverde | 78

The Secretary Adelaida Lopez | 83

Don't Fall in Love with a Dreamer  
Penelope Goodfriend | 84

Eureka! Barbara Osborn | 86

Mobility: A Game of Chance and  
Ambition Lyn Hughes | 87Ya' Got Class, REAL CLASS Terry  
Wolverton and Vicki Stolsen | 88Four Women, Vermont 1980  
Suzanne Opton | 94My Mother is a Tired Woman  
Helene Keating-Levine | 95

I Can't Ida Applebroog | 96

## EDITORIAL COLLECTIVE

JOSELY CARVALHO

CHRIS COSTAN

SANDRA DE SANDRO

MICHELE GODWIN

PENNELOPE GOODFRIEND

KAY KENNY

LUCY R. LIPPARD

SABRA MOORE

## DESIGN AND PRODUCTION

KATHIE BROWN

with thanks to the collective  
and Anne Lloyd, Carole Gregory,  
Mary O'Shaughnessy, Morgan  
Gwenwald, Rochelle Kalish,  
Angela Taormina, and  
USLithograph.

## HERESIES COLLECTIVE

Emma Amos, Kathie Brown,

Josely Carvalho, Lenora

Champagne, Chris Costan,

Sandra De Sando, Day

Gleeson, Michele Godwin,

Penelope Goodfriend,

Kathy Grove, Kay Kenny,

Avis Lang, Ellen Lanyon,

Lucy R. Lippard, Sabra

Moore, Carrie Moyer,

Linda Peer, Liza Suzuki,

Holly Zox

## STAFF

SANDRA DE SANDO

PENNELOPE GOODFRIEND

KAY KENNY

LINDA PEER

This issue was printed by  
Wickersham Printing Co.,  
Lancaster, PA.

**ASSOCIATE MEMBERS** Ida Applebroog, Patsy Beckert, Lyn Blumenthal, Joan Braderman, Cynthia Carr, Mary Beth Edelson, Su Friedrich, Janet Froelich, Vanalyne Green, Harmony Hammond, Sue Heinemann, Elizabeth Hess, Lyn Hughes, Joyce Kozloff, Arlene Ladden, Nicky Lindeman, Melissa Meyer, Marty Pottenger, Carrie Rickey, Elizabeth Sacre, Miriam Schapiro, Amy Sillman, Joan Snyder, Elke Solomon, Pat Steir, May Stevens, Michelle Stuart, Susana Torre, Cecilia Vicuña, Elizabeth Weatherford, Sally Webster, Nina Yankowitz

**ADVISORY BOARD** Vivian E. Browne, Ada Ciniglio, Elaine Lustig Cohen, Eleanor Munro, Linda Nochlin, Barbara Quinn, Jane Rubin, Ann Sperry, Rose Weil

# MOTHERS, MAGS & MOVIE STARS

*Feminism & Class*

YOU NEED A SUBSCRIPTION TO HERESIES, I TELL YOU!  
IT'S A FEMINIST PUBLICATION ON ART AND  
POLITICS. SUBSCRIBE NOW AND YOU'LL GET  
FOUR ISSUES FOR THE PRICE OF THREE!!!



## SUBSCRIBE

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

## NEW TRUTHS BEGIN AS HERESIES

Please enter my subscription for:

Four issues ☐ \$15—individual ☐ \$24—institutional

Eight issues ☐ \$37—individual ☐ \$44—institutional

Please send these back issues (\$6 each):

- ☐ 7—Women Working Together
- ☐ 8—Third World Women
- ☐ 9—Women Organized/Divided
- ☐ 10—Women and Music
- ☐ 11—Women and Architecture
- ☐ 13—Feminism and Ecology
- ☐ 14—Women's Pages
- ☐ 15—Racism Is the Issue
- ☐ 16—Film/Video/Media
- ☐ 17—Acting Up (Performance)

Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ copies of the  
Great Goddess Reprint at \$8 each.

Included with my subscription fee is a tax-deductible  
contribution of:

☐ \$10 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ other

Payment must accompany order. Make checks payable to  
HERESIES. Outside the U.S. and Canada, please add \$2 per  
four issues for postage. All foreign checks must be drawn  
on a New York bank.

**HERESIES** A FEMINIST PUBLICATION ON ART AND POLITICS  
PO Box 766, Canal Street Station, New York, New York 10013

The Coordinating Council  
of Literary Magazines  
announces the winners of  
The 1985 General Electric  
Foundation Awards for  
Younger Writers:

ANDREI CODRESCU for poetry  
published in *Smoke Signals*.

PETER COLE for poetry  
published in *Conjunctions*.

DAVID BROMWICH for a  
literary essay published  
in *Raritan*.

AMY HERRICK for  
fiction published in  
*The Kenyon Review*.

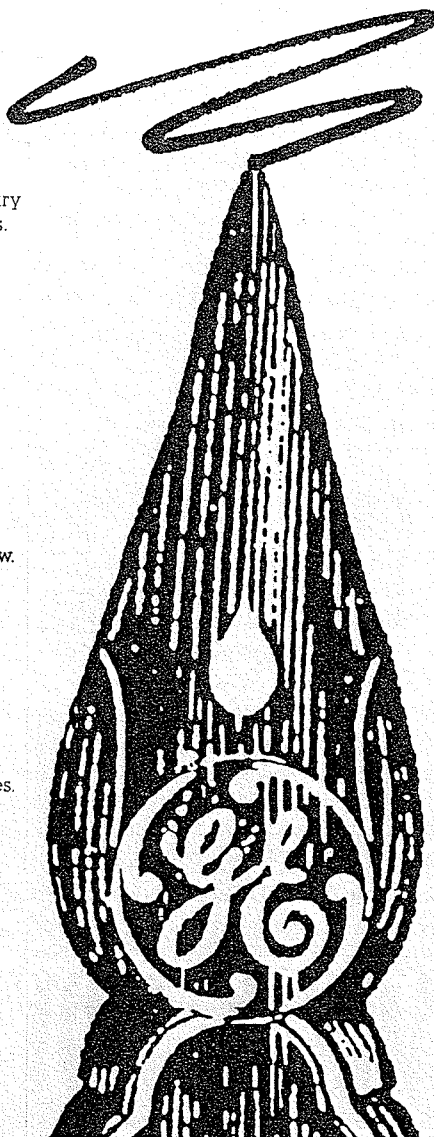
BETH NUGENT for  
fiction published in  
*The North American Review*.

WENDY STEVENS for  
fiction published in  
*Nimrod*.

The awards recognize  
excellence in new writers  
while honoring the  
significant contribution of  
America's literary magazines.

This year's judges were  
Michael Anania,  
Elizabeth Hardwick,  
Margo Jefferson  
and Kenneth Koch.

For information about  
The General Electric  
Foundation Awards for  
Younger Writers, contact:  
CCLM, 666 Broadway,  
New York, NY 10012.  
(212) 481-5245.



## UPCOMING ISSUES

### FIRST STRIKE FOR PEACE: WOMEN AND DISARMAMENT

With the possibility of nuclear destruction  
threatening all our lives, it's increasingly  
important to "hear" more voices in  
protest. What is the impact of creative  
work on disarmament? Which imagery  
or form is effective in which context? A  
special, 32-page portfolio will display  
page art designed specifically for this  
issue. A separate directory of women's  
groups will give the projects and plans  
of progressive political and cultural  
groups from all over the world.

### FOOD AS A FEMINIST ISSUE

An antidote to diet books and pop-psychol-  
ogy treatises, the issue will explore the  
cultural-political impact of food on wom-  
en's lives, from kitchen conversations to  
recipes to images of nurturance. Is food a  
theme in your art, writing, film, perfor-  
mance? We want both critical essays and  
creative pieces that attempt to define  
and reclaim our kitchen heritage.

### NEIGHBORHOOD/COMMUNITY ARTS

From murals to graffiti to street theater,  
this issue is on art that lives in the  
community. Send us proposals, visuals,  
discussions, interviews with neighbor-  
hood viewers. We're particularly inter-  
ested in examining the relation between  
the artist and the community, as well as  
funding questions.

### GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Each issue of HERESIES has a specific  
theme and all material submitted should  
relate to that theme. Manuscripts should  
be typed double-spaced and submitted  
in duplicate. Visual material should be  
submitted in the form of a slide, xerox, or  
photograph. We will not be responsible  
for original art. All material *must* be  
accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed  
envelope for it to be returned. We do not  
publish reviews or monographs on con-  
temporary women. We do not commission  
articles and cannot guarantee acceptance  
of submitted material. HERESIES pays a  
small fee for published material. Send  
all submissions to: HERESIES, PO Box 766,  
Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013.

## HERESIES 18/19 BENEFIT!

### 'Stars & Starlets' at Kamikaze

Feb 20, 1986

Performances, Art Show  
and Raffle

D-A-N-C-I-N-G!  
D-A-N-C-I-N-G!

We wanted to do an issue on class and feminism, and we chose our mothers as the medium. (Men would do it through jobs.) Class analysis is not just about economic categorization. It has to include self-image and desire. In the mythologized U.S., "anyone can be anything" ... and if you're not what you want to be, it's your own fault. People don't want to see themselves as "lower class," which engenders an unawareness that is precisely what keeps them there where they don't want to be.

We were sad to conclude that none of us were formed by art images; the magazines and the movies were much stronger. There were few reflections of the "lower classes" there, so people had nowhere to go but up. (For some, the trip was downhill all the way.) Ordinary work is rarely seen on TV. Archie Bunker was a working-class stereotype, but he wasn't seen working. Edith, now, did work, but in the house, because housework isn't *real* work.

Our editorial process was like a collaged memoir—piecing together our mothers' lives and our own, finding that the resulting "quilt" revealed a good deal about both. We had a lot of discussions within the collective about the connections between feminism and class viewed through our own families (mostly before the New Museum "Big Pages" show in 1983, which previewed this issue). These discussions were somewhere between a sewing circle and a study group. We felt that most of our mothers had never been *recorded*, that we were putting our mothers in history even as we bemoaned their helplessness therein. I think we all felt a certain pride and a certain pathos. We were often led to reject our mothers (or to compete with them) and to choose alternate idols. Our disappointment as children when our mothers turned out not to be perfect as the movie stars was channeled into a broader socialization process controlled by the dominant culture.

**A**bsences: We discussed a lot but received little about the ways women's class changes through marriage—up and down—and what generational effects that has on people's images of themselves. We would have liked a piece comparing women's class circumstances in several cultures. (A Brazilian member of the collective notes how much more stagnated the classes are in Latin America, which is true of England and Western Europe too, though that is slowly changing.) In our meetings, most of our autobiographical anecdotes centered on images, clothes, objects and spaces. But we received nothing about spaces—about the kitchens many of us were raised in, the differences between large rooms and houses and small ones, fields and yards and apartments. And we got less than we thought we would about clothes and how they reflect and affect power: about working jeans and designer jeans; about women who dress like girls, like boys, or like men in androgynous success suits; about the loose and the tight as sexy or functional; about cross-dressing. We could have used a good psychological analysis of what is "normal" and "unnatural" in this society, and who decides the norms. We'd have liked something on children's books and grandmothers and horses and...

**W**e were kind of appalled when we realized how many submissions we received about women being (sometimes literally) cut and chopped up ... until we figured out that the real subject was the changing body image—fragmentation as a prerequisite for transformation. There are bits of us all over the place. Cutting up is rebellion. We're formed by an alienated society, parts of which are severed from others by a class system that is largely ignored or denied. The cutting edge, the political, is cut off from the personal. Racism cuts us off from other cultures. Cut it out. This is the cutoff point. Operation, penetration, incision, intersection, a cutting remark, cut the cards, Reagan's cutbacks for our own good, cut a new pattern, not trimmed down to fashionable lines. Lights, action, cut.



Montage by Sabra Moore

*Mothers of HERESIES 18. Left to right, their daughters are: Lucy R. Lippard, Pennelope Goodfriend, Kathie Brown, Josely Carvalho, Sandra De Sando, Michele Godwin, Kay Kenny, Chris Costan, and Sabra Moore.*



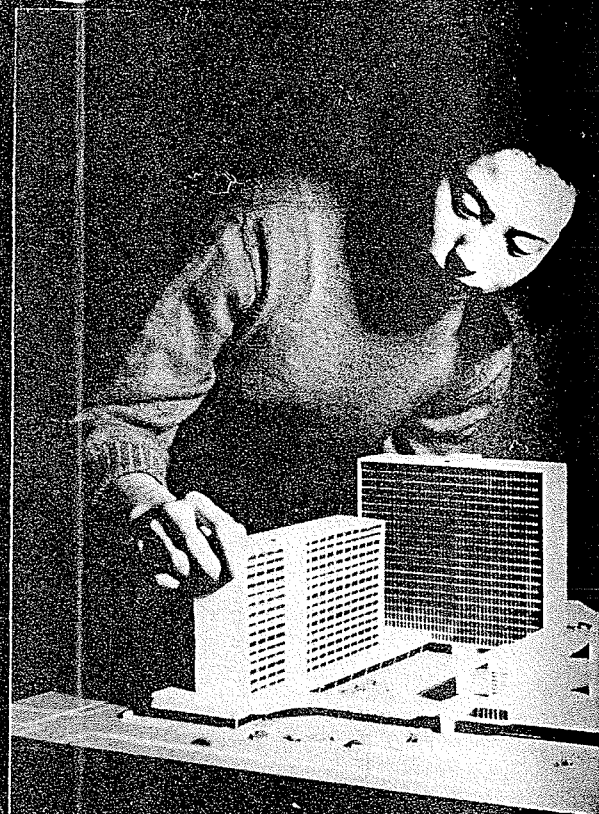


(1)  
*In my hands  
her fingers trace a dream*

*I am who she is  
I am who she is not*

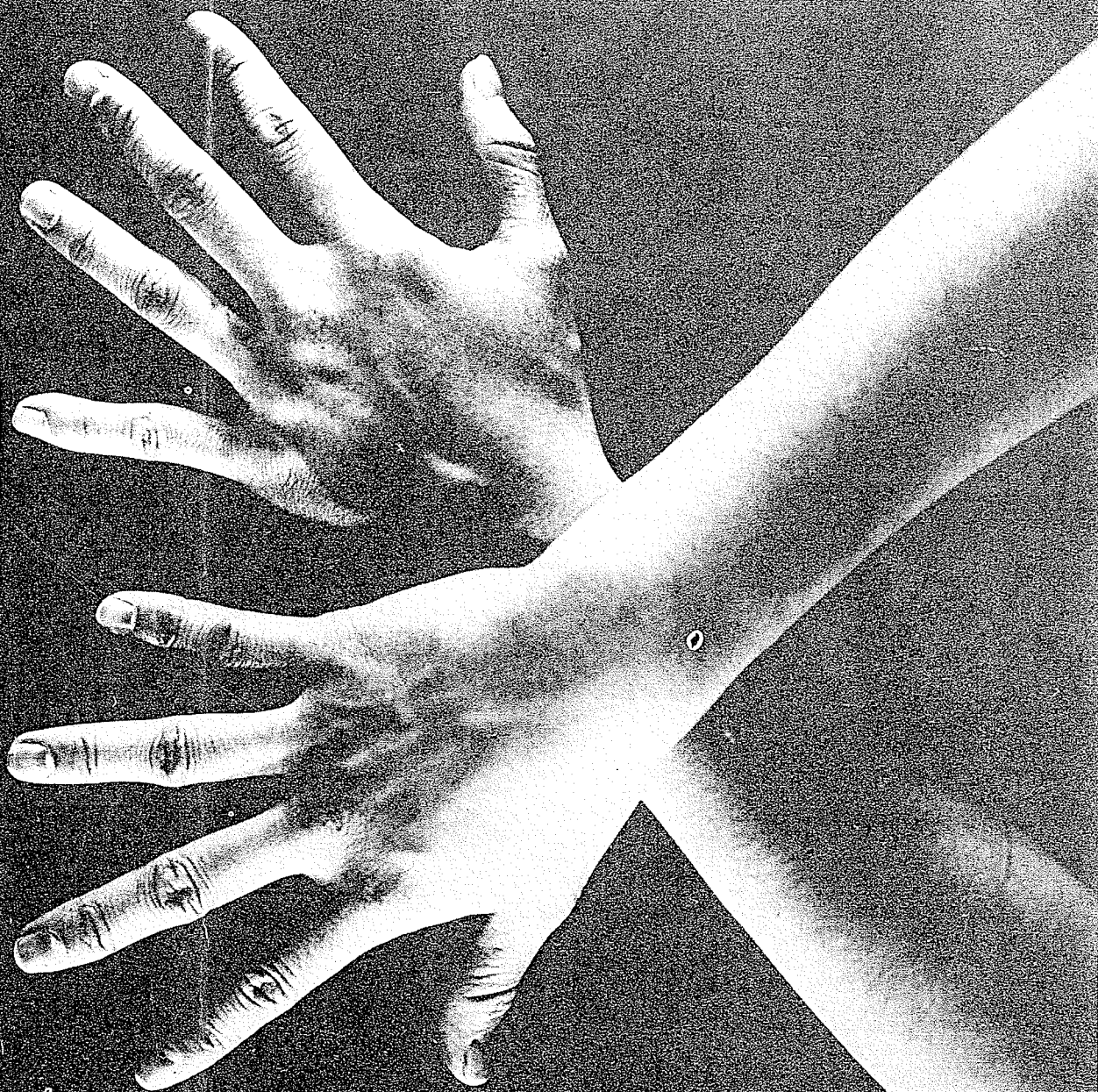
(2)  
*When in a storm  
swim to the closest harbor  
it is easier to find  
a ready-made suit  
to put on a silhouette  
to find a frame to fit  
dismantling  
your identity  
pouring yourself into  
something else*

*Accommodation  
is only the beginning*



(3)  
*Beginning on another continent  
my mother collected her  
ambitions  
and embarked across the ocean*

*Her dreams  
were drawn in absolute precision  
somewhere on the drafting table*



(5)

*Introspection and conversion  
conversion and internal combustions  
thoughts which cannot fit an emotion  
an emotion which can no longer find  
a source or end*

*I am only given what you have seen  
I am given which you possess  
My harbors fear the dreams we cannot assimilate*

(6)

*When the evidence of  
ambition and struggle pales  
spirit becomes transparent and thin*

(6)

*Memory is a story to inspire*

*Carol Sun was born in NYC, attended its public schools, and  
is now a painter living in Brooklyn.*



Ladies Home

# JOURNAL

THE MAGAZINE WOMEN BELIEVE IN

October, 1939... Ten Cents



PAY'S WIFE COMPLETE NOVEL BY KATHLEEN NORRIS



# THE GRAPHIC ORDERING OF DESIRE

In the 1920s study *Middletown*, a Muncie, Indiana housewife gave this account of her reading habits:

I just read magazines in my scraps of time. I should so like to do more consecutive reading but I don't know of any reading course or how to make one out.<sup>1</sup>

A key phrase here is the "scraps of time," the sense of fragmented leisure time which characterized women's work in the home. This woman was still describing her activity with magazines as "reading," but she was clearly distinguishing between this form of reading and the more continuous reading required of traditional literature. It won't ever be possible to know exactly what she was getting from magazines; but if we are to begin to comprehend the kinds of messages transmitted and the reasons for the medium's enormous appeal in this century, we need to develop new methods of conceptualizing the content and construction of the modern women's magazine.

The magazine's use of texts implies a fairly rational mode of apprehension. It would be inaccurate, however, to describe most magazine reading as a straight, linear process; though often referred to as a "book" by editors, the typical magazine is not organized along a single continuum. By sandwiching within its covers a variety of discrete texts, the magazine invites us to pick and choose, to move backwards as well as forwards, in a way that suggests that we not only will the process to continue by physically turning the pages (distinctly different from the more passive modes of radio and television reception) but that we "freely" negotiate a "personal" path through the magazine labyrinth.

We do enjoy considerable freedom in determining our experience with magazines, and, as the testimony of the Muncie housewife suggests, the flexibility of the magazine format is one of the chief reasons for its popularity as a modern, mass communication form. Moreover, a regular magazine reader develops a routine to avoid perpetual distraction. This technique of "reading with blinders" is a logical response to the amount of visual diversion incorporated in the modern magazine.

The magazine forces us to discipline our focus in much the same way that modern highway driving cultivates split-second timing. But if we employed perfect tunnel-vision while driving, the value of billboards would be nil. Any description of the highway which focused exclusively on the road would fail to address the way this form of mobility allows us to achieve specific destinations while constantly recharging our desire for less immediately attainable ends. The car encloses us, the road directs us, and these conditions make ads especially welcome as points of reference and as emblems of our long-term goals.

The picture magazine was refined at the same time that the commercial roadscape was being developed. Both forms of communication reflect the same impulse in the history of corporate capitalism to mobilize consumption at a national level. But unlike recent studies of car culture and "the strip," the magazine has rarely been studied as unified cultural artifact.

*Modernization of  
A Middle-Class  
Women's Magazine,  
1914-1939*

SALLY STEIN

Author Sally Stein writes  
cultural criticism on photography,  
women, and mass media.

Studies of magazines have usually treated literary texts, or editorial images, or ads, as independent entities, and have proceeded to analyze their meanings divorced from their original context. This strategy flattens our conception of the way magazines came to be assembled and then received. For these elements are certainly not apprehended in isolation; rather images and texts, ads and editorial matter, are each designed to work off each other within the larger ensemble of the magazine.<sup>2</sup>

Historians and sociologists have often referred to the phenomenal increases in ad revenues in the post-World War I era as an index of change in the traditional women's magazine.<sup>3</sup> But the statistics alone say very little about the character of these changes or the way the magazine remained a coherently structured text, a social product whose value derived in part from the way it organized its diverse collection of materials. Thus I am interested in the specific ways new graphic techniques—color, photography, serial cartoons—were orchestrated in a more dynamic layout to sustain the reader's interest and to draw the reader closer to the marketplace. My stress on the changing material aspects of the magazine is not intended to promote a formalist analysis *per se*. Rather I hope to bring home the point that the women's magazine in the twentieth century, though continuing to include lengthy literary texts, was becoming a predominantly visual experience, constructing an audience of spectators and, by extension, consumers.

The *Ladies Home Journal* provides a good case study of the reshaping of the nineteenth-century women's magazine into its familiar twentieth-century format. For half a century beginning in the 1890s, it was the most successful women's publication, leading in advertising revenues and circulation figures. In its prime, numerous editors and writers published detailed "inside" accounts of the magazine's operation. Most important is the fact that the *Journal's* enormous success did not rest upon a fixed formula but involved especially aggressive innovation beginning around World War I—a good twenty years before that moment generally thought of as the birth of the modern picture magazine. Indeed the more familiar success story of *Life* magazine—born in 1936 with all the fanfare of complete "originality"—represents a relatively late development, based largely on the earlier transformation of the women's magazine.

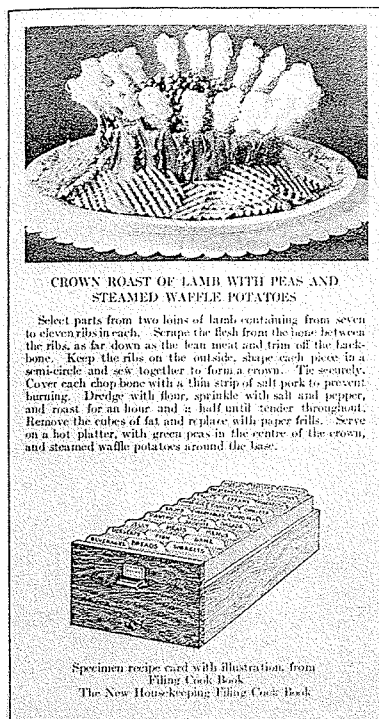


FIG. 1 From Mrs. Christine Frederick's *The New Housekeeping*, 13, facing p. 150.

In order to understand why women's magazines were revamped especially early in this century, we need to consider the impact of changes in two social spheres: that of industrial production and that of domestic reproduction. These spheres were never wholly "separate," but in this period the two became closely synchronized, and women's magazines played an important mediating link in that process.

With the late nineteenth-century emergence of monopoly capitalism, factory work changed drastically. Industrial consolidation led to larger workplaces, assembling far more workers at a single site, thereby leading to new ways of organizing manufacturing processes. The foreman's traditional authority was rapidly preempted by a new breed of professionally trained industrial engineers. With stop watches in hand, these men entered the shop floor to study all details of the established production techniques with the objective of transforming craft skills in to a series of simple, endlessly repeatable tasks. By "deskilling" work, the efficiency experts promised to break shopfloor resistance. Logically, production rates would soar, for it would now be possible to exploit far more efficiently the mass of common laborers who—lacking long-developed craft skills—were far more vulnerable to constant monitoring, thus easily pressured to increase output.

To Frederick Winslow Taylor goes most credit for promulgating the initial principles of "scientific management." However, the general process of industrial rationalization came to be popularly associated with Henry Ford's introduction of the assembly line in 1914, which allowed Ford to hire thousands of unskilled workers at the unprecedented rate of \$5 per day. The increased pay rate was easily matched by an unprecedented rate of production (and profit). The justly famous output of Ford's assembly line constituted a truly massive demonstration of the value of efficiency.<sup>4</sup>

Of course, middle-class women had little direct involvement with factory work, but their work within the home changed quickly with the advent of scientific management. On two distinct levels, rationalization altered the character of housework. Materially, monopoly capital quickly discovered that marketing specialists were as essential as industrial engineers, for accelerated production would yield no profits if consumption were not also systematically managed. Ideologically, the rhetoric of efficiency had such appeal for the middle class (including feminists like Charlotte Perkins Gilman), that a variant on the discourse of "scientific management" soon became part of the rhetoric directed at women.<sup>5</sup>

But there was a fundamental contradiction in the burgeoning discourse of "domestic efficiency." Scientific management in the factory offered wage incentives in exchange for accelerated production. Domestic efficiency experts, on the other hand, avoided the issue of money, since they maintained the sanctity of women's domestic labor as a labor of love. Without the wage motive, other stimuli had to be developed to promote interest in higher standards for housework in conjunction with the use of new machinery and products. Born-again housework had many attributes of a spiritual revival, taking hold in direct relation to the decline of actual managerial work and autonomy in the home.<sup>6</sup> And as in many faiths that do not address basic contradictions, signs were a necessary form of sustenance on the road to salvation.

Extremely sophisticated graphics appeared early in this discourse. An illustration from Mrs. Christine Frederick's 1913 home efficiency tract, appropriately titled *The New Housekeeping*, stands as a prototype of a new kind of communication in which a variety of visual and literary codes—text, drawing, photo—are neatly combined to suggest that a feast for the eyes could be produced by means of "efficiency" (signified by the business file adapted to the kitchen) rather than by time, effort and money (Fig. 1).<sup>7</sup> If it seems that I am reading too much into this composite image, one need only note the title of Frederick's subsequent publication—*Meals that Cook Themselves* (1914).

Frederick's career path is even more revealing of the interests best served by the rationalization of housework. Following her first book on domestic efficiency, she became an associate editor for the *Ladies' Home Journal*, a position she held until the mid-1920s when she began to work free-lance, advising manufacturers and retailers on the best sales strategies for capturing the women's market. Thus, if initially she was committed to providing women with more efficient domestic skills, the distinction between skills and commodities was then attenuated in the commercially sponsored forum of the women's magazine, and the distinction was completely abandoned by the time she wrote her last book, *Selling Mrs. Consumer* (1929).

In the same period that Frederick's career advanced along these lines, the women's magazines were themselves rationalized as marketing vehicles, providing an optimal context in which to sell new domestic commodities by constructing a paradoxical vision of housework: scientifically reducible to its component parts yet containing still an irreducible quality of romance. The format could be made to mirror the compartmentalization of domestic tasks, while supplying instruction in all phases of this minutely detailed work. The magazine neatly categorized performance standards in matters of dressing, decorating, cleaning, cooking, child-rearing... and the repairing of home and marriage if constant attention proved to be insufficient. And unlike conventional instruction manuals, it provided a constant stream of promises—false promises, or at least inflated ones—of personal benefits that would result from tending new machines and using new materials. What these promises lacked in substance, they made up for in vividness—the kind of tantalizing but tawdry incentive proposed by the industrial engineer Frederick Winslow Taylor in his discussion of the "scientific management" of young, lowpaid, female factory workers: "encouragement either in the form of personal attention from those over them or an actual reward in sight as often as once an hour."<sup>8</sup>

Of course, since they were underwritten by advertisers, magazines were well-suited to construct an extended visual argument for the rewards of modern domesticity. They had another advantage over isolated treatises on "scientific management" of the home. Given their periodic appearance, the magazines were an especially effective means of inculcating new habits and standards. Once a month, the drilling and instructions were repeated in slightly different form, and each repetition was accompanied by a new representation of the rewards—exactly the type of "scientific pedagogy" advocated by the industrial psychologist Lilian Gilbreth in 1914: "Associations...lapse more slowly the older they are and the oftener they have been reviewed by renewed memorizing."<sup>9</sup>

The mappings presented in Venturi's, Scott Brown's, and Izenour's *Learning from Las Vegas* far surpass photographs or any other conventional representations in providing a schematic overview of the signifying structure of the commercial strip. I sought a comparable form to conceptualize the totality of a single magazine issue, with the idea of then comparing changes at five-year intervals in the use and structuring of various graphic elements of the *Journal* between 1914 and 1939. By "exploding" the magazine into a synchronically viewed series of double pages—each double page being represented by a vertical bar in which the right hand page appears above the center line (representing the "gutter" or "spine" of the magazine) and the left-hand page below—patterns of communication emerge which would have been experienced less consciously when the magazine is looked at page by page.

Though I ended up making a series of graphs on the changes between 1914–1939 in the use of photography, color printing, and narrative picture sequences, I began simply by charting the breakdown of editorial and advertising space in each issue. Editorial space is shaded; advertising space is white. These first diagrams should not be mistaken for an economic breakdown of publishing costs, but they do indicate how the advertising basis of the magazine was reflected (and to some extent con-

cealed) in the allocation of space within an issue.

Between 1914 and 1939, the ratio of advertising to editorial space remained relatively constant at 45%, but there are noticeable changes in the distribution of advertising material during this period. The front of the *Journal* always contained a disproportionate amount of editorial pages, a format designed to emphasize the *weight* of editorial matter. Over twenty-five years, the solid block of editorial material was somewhat pushed back, allowing more full-page ads to appear on the opening pages. By 1939, advertising was so culturally pervasive that it was unnecessary to confine it to the back pages. By 1939, *Fortune* was a decade old and had made a trademark of its gallery of full-page ads at the front of each issue. In comparison with contemporary magazines like *Fortune* and *Vogue*, the *Journal* still led with editorial emphasis, so that the reader was made conscious immediately of an authoritative voice which presumably organized the following contents with her best interests in mind.

The lines running in and out of the bar graph trace the internal "page flow"—the way texts are broken up and continued elsewhere in the magazine. The interruption of articles may appear to the average reader as a commonplace if inconvenient occurrence, but the resulting movement back and forth also serves as a form of entrapment. Thus the reader will find it considerably more difficult to confine her time and attention to a single article. She is forced to flip through the rest of the magazine in order to pursue her immediate interests.

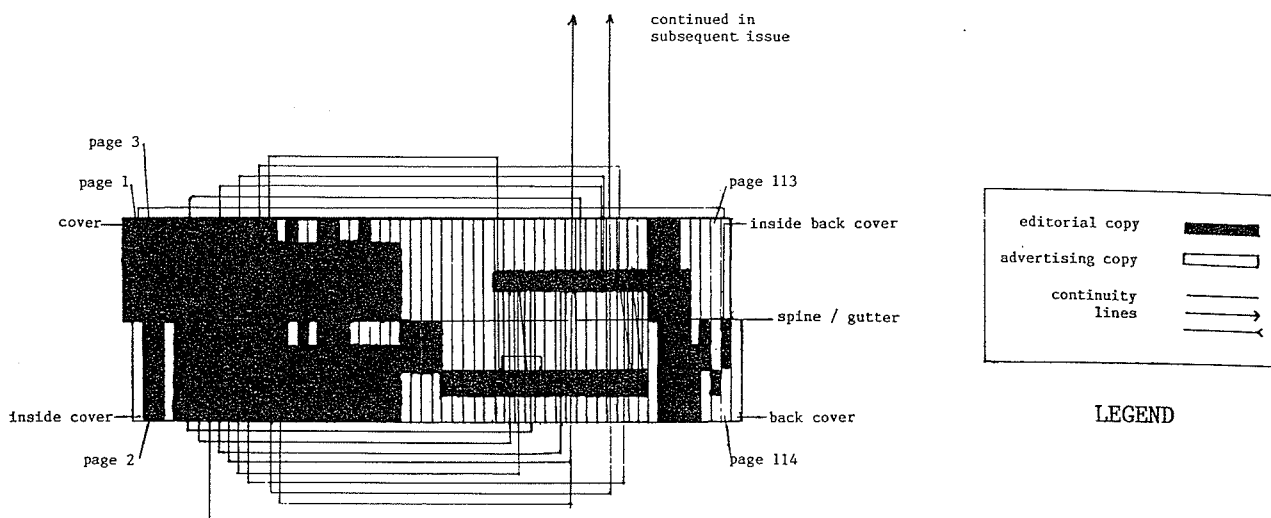
The historical evolution of a maze-like page flow is readily seen here. In 1914, less than one half of the editorial space was thus interwoven; the rest was allowed to stand as isolated pieces of text. A marked change occurred between 1914 and 1919, when many more direct routes were established from the front, beginning at page 7, to the middle of the magazine, though the last thirty pages were not so integrated. By 1924, the constructed flow began on page 3, and extended almost to the back of the issue, although some portions of the magazine continued as isolated islands. The same held true in 1929, when a prodigious labyrinth between front and back was created, still leaving portions of the magazine unconnected. In the Depression years of the 1930s, when the *Journal* shrank from the gargantuan size of the October 1929 issue, the process of interweaving



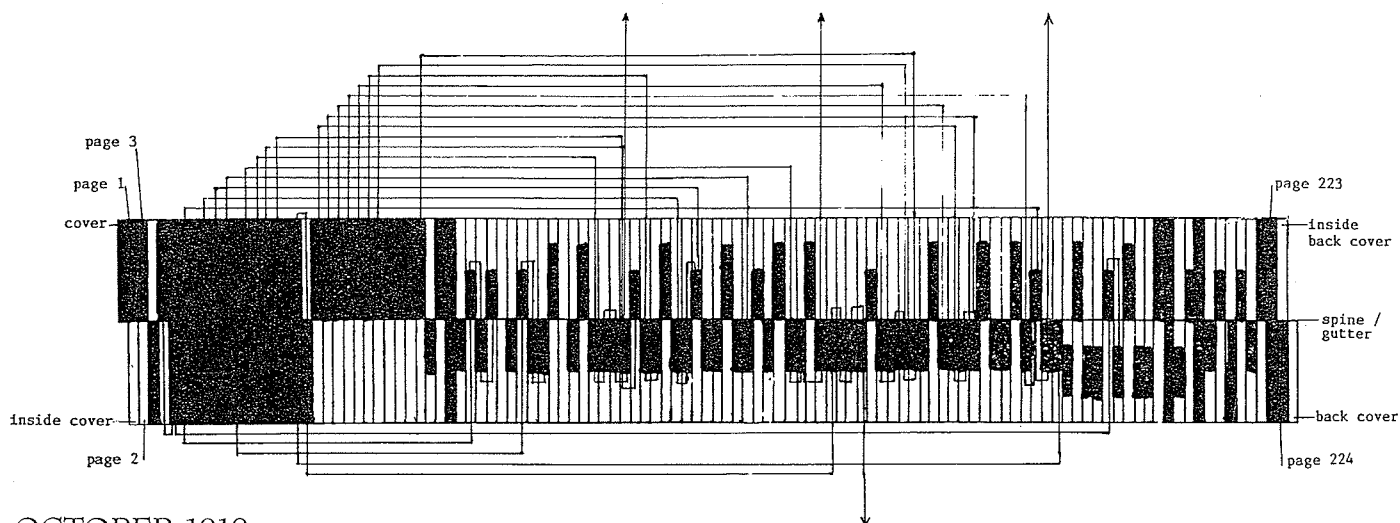
FIG. 2 LHJ, October 1939, p. 11.



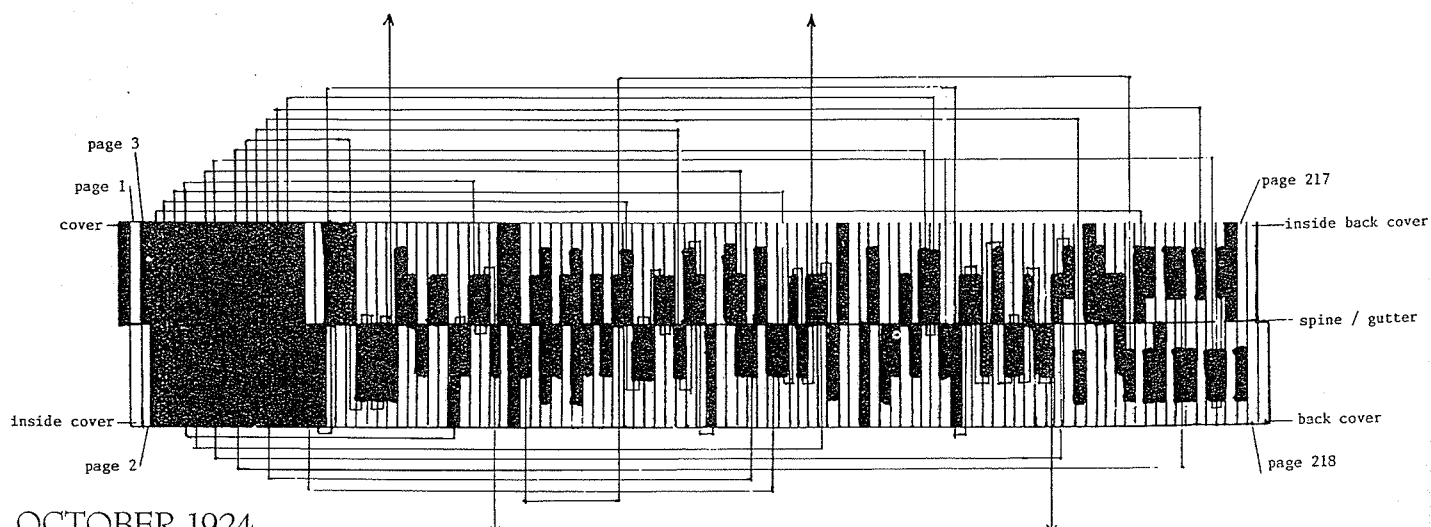
# LADIES' HOME JOURNAL BOOK AND PAGE LAYOUTS by Sally Stein



OCTOBER 1914

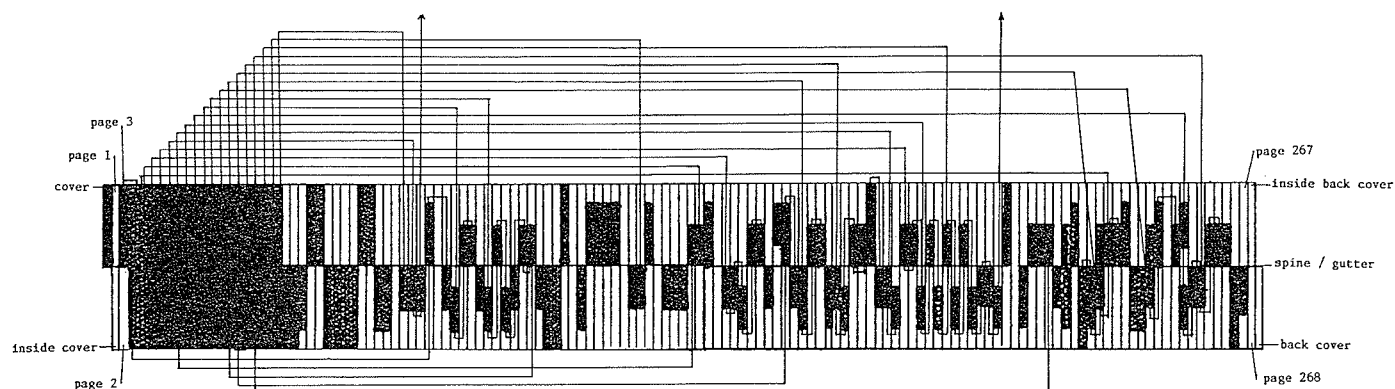


OCTOBER 1919

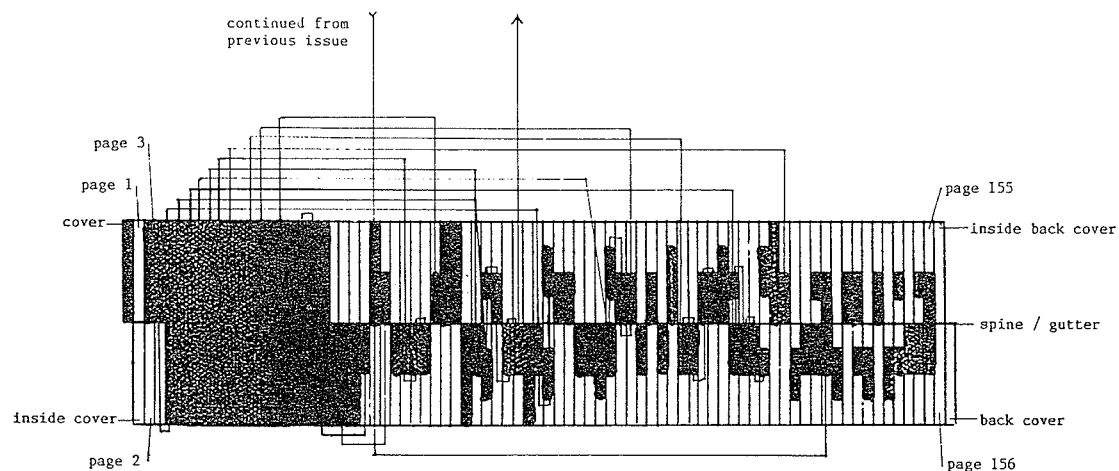


OCTOBER 1924

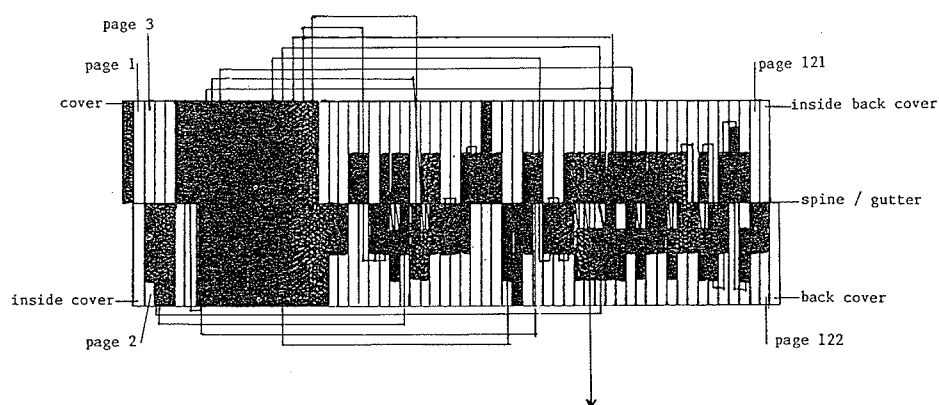
**LADIES' HOME JOURNAL BOOK AND PAGE LAYOUTS** by Sally Stein



OCTOBER 1929



OCTOBER 1934



OCTOBER 1939

# LADIES' HOME JOURNAL



FIG. 3 LHJ, October 1929, cover.

almost all the editorial contents was finally realized. Moreover, the 1939 page flow was achieved with fewer large jumps; as indicated by only twelve external links in the chart, the flow itself was more continuous. Thus, while the typical magazine reader of this period may have believed that the magazine could be consumed piecemeal, in "scraps of time," the diagrams reveal that the magazine was being redesigned to consume an extended period of time.

At the same time that the magazine succeeded in connecting almost all of its interior pages, there were considerably fewer texts explicitly leading to or from earlier or later issues. While this helped create a more integrated, overall text, serialization was not abandoned completely. By 1939, advertising literature stressed the desirability of newsstand sales (supposedly attracting impulse shoppers) which would have been bolstered by dramatic serialization. Accordingly, in the October 1939 issue, the most gripping narrative—illustrated to underscore the title, "Another Woman," by positioning the wife precariously at the right-hand edge of the page (Fig. 2)—breaks off exactly when the wife is confronted with the necessity of getting a divorce. In case the reader failed to sustain concern for the wife's plight through the rest of the issue, the editor's closing column, "Journal's End" (equating the magazine with a kind of journey) reminded the reader that this cliff-hanger would not be resolved until the next month. Serialization, therefore, was being used more sparingly, and its use indicated those topics thought to be most compelling for *Journal* readers. But it still served a strategic function in insuring the month-to-month loyalty of the magazine reader.

The same set of graphs also reveals a major change in layout within the double-page spread. As early as 1919, a marked shift appeared in the placement of editorial material in relation to ads. In 1914, between pages 60 and 99, two narrow bars of editorial columns floated in a sea of ads. By 1919, these columns were pushed together at the center of the double page. By the 1939 issue, excepting the inside cover and inside back pages, which commanded higher ad rates, there was some portion of editorial matter at the front of each double spread. Thus, over a twenty-five year period, a system of layout emerged which anchored the bulk of advertising to a constant editorial presence

at its center. In effect, there was always an editorial voice so that the reader would never forget the "educational" value of the magazine.

Though it is difficult to uncover an articulated philosophy which determined these changes in layout (the art directors rarely published articles on their work), a similarly paternalistic ideology is apparent when comparing other choices made by the art directors between 1929 and 1939. Two covers, ten years apart, have an almost antithetical message. The 1929 mother-as-mature-flapper relies for its effect upon the state of amazement conveyed by the pint-sized child and pet collie at her side (Fig. 3). In contrast, the woman on the October 1939 cover has obviously relinquished her pedestal (Fig. 4). Whatever she has lost in terms of high fashion she has "gained" in terms of direct resemblance to her daughter, moving towards the other ideal of mother-as-older-sister. And she is really "moving," animated in a way which seems directly to encourage her child to master difficult balance problems like bike-riding. We can assume from the line "The Magazine Women Believe In" which has been added to the *Journal* logos that trust has become a crucial selling point. The reader can trust what she learns in the *Journal* in the same way that the daughter, though still tottering, seems assured of a safe upbringing.



FIG. 4 LHJ, October 1939, cover.

The theme of supervised mobility depicted in the cover graphic, as well as the motherly tone of the "Journal's End" column, suggests that in the late 1930s the magazine was consciously projecting an image of itself as a vicarious trip, while providing many assurances that the viewer would travel safely. Guided though this journey may have been, a final look at these graphs indicates that it hardly shielded the reader from overexposure to the continuous lure of advertisements. On the contrary, the development of a systematic layout principle with a continuous editorial thread meant that even if one chose to look only at editorial features, one would not miss a single double page, and therefore not a single ad. Moreover, the same graphs also indicate that the full-page spreads and clusters of page spreads which characterize the front of the magazine were replaced by smaller and smaller blocks of columns towards the back, where the editorial content thinned out and was constantly interspersed with advertising. A parallel format is the late-night televised movie (pre-cable, or VCR ad-zapping), which, as it progresses, is cut at shorter and shorter intervals, interrupted by increasingly brief ads. If a compelling program has been established, the viewer stays turned all the same and even grows to accept this format as part of an evening's entertainment.

The *Journal* was always an illustrated magazine but the pre-





FIG. 5  
LHJ, October 1939,  
pp. 20, 21.



FIG. 6  
LHJ, October 1939,  
pp. 22, 23.



FIG. 7  
LHJ, October 1939,  
pp. 24, 25.

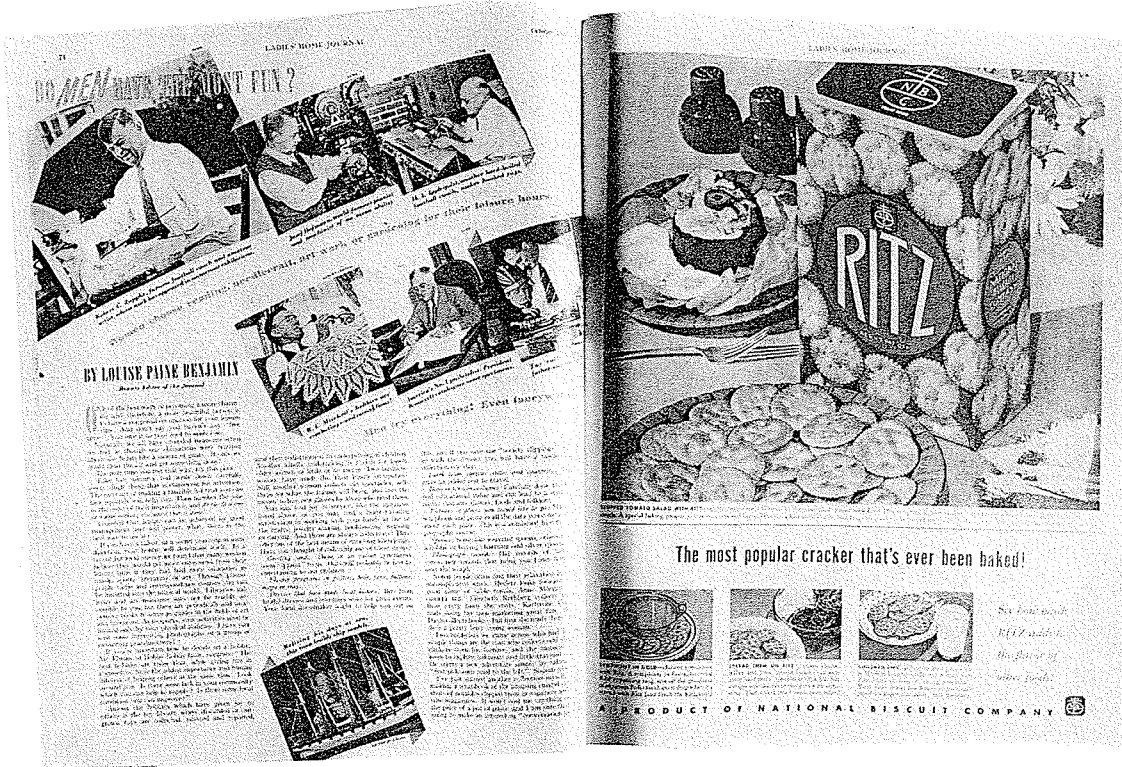


FIG. 8 LHJ, October 1939, pp. 74,75.

dominant modes of illustration changed significantly in this period. While photographic reproductions gradually replaced a large portion of the traditional drawings, color printing was introduced with great fanfare and quickly became the most privileged visual rhetoric of the women's magazine.

As early as the December 1911 issue, the editorial column on the first page of the *Journal* held out the idea of a color-filled magazine as a sort of promissory note which would accrue to the loyal reader: "No feature we have ever introduced in the magazine has met with satisfaction expressed over our color pages. This has encouraged us to add to the number." What also encouraged the publisher in this novel venture was the prospect of increased ad revenues; once color's mass appeal had been established, advertising readily paid the higher page rates for this proven method of commanding the reader's attention.

While the volume of color work rose most sharply between 1914 and 1919, the number of color pages continued to expand long after the initial novelty had worn off. The editorial page of the October '29 issue headlined the magazine's new use of color photography, a technology developed quite obviously to accommodate new marketing strategies. After a decade of successful marketing based on color ads, the assembly lines of the late 1920s began turning out goods in assorted shades. If the consumer needed any encouragement to buy these novel commodities, advertisers were quick to insinuate that the colorless life was not worth living. The prize for the most desperate attempt to keep abreast of the color craze belongs to Kodak; six years before the photographic manufacturer was able to offer amateurs a practical color film, it had already conceded the priority of capturing color in 1929 when the conventional, black box-camera was refinished in a variety of hues, to serve as "Fashion Accents...for Picture Takers that Reflect the Rainbow."

The Depression left its mark on both the content and physical features of the magazine. During the '30s, the overall length of the magazine, which had expanded greatly from 1914 to 1929, shrank back to the 1914 size. However, while the number of color pages per issue decreased, the proportion of color to black and white remained strong. A large number of advertisers continued to invest in color, though the need for economy was evident in the number of ads which began utilizing a dramatic

genre of black and white photography. Notwithstanding the rise of straight black and white photography in the 1930s women's magazine, the decrease in volume of color printing was somewhat obscured by a marked change in the positioning of color pages between 1934 and 1939. A body of color images was still featured at the crucial beginning of each issue, with smaller runs of color at the middle, and again at the very end of the *Journal*—thus maintaining the image of the magazine as a luxurious commodity in its own right.

As the color page in the Depression came to represent a more serious investment, we can assume that it was designed to be as arresting as possible. To appreciate fully the way these brilliant color images figured as "occasions" within the reading process, we would need to study the variety of color images within the extended flow of magazine material. A reading of a single page is insufficient; at most it would demonstrate that the graphic artists of the 1930s were as adept with the grammar of diverse graphic codes as was the anonymous artist who illustrated the 1913 domestic efficiency book. What is needed is a sequential reading (optimally, a *number* of serial readings since, as discussed earlier, the magazine did not work by a single continuum). Though space does not permit a review of an entire magazine issue, a look only at a selected run of pages might suggest the way a montage principle was increasingly at work in the cumulative meanings produced by the magazine.

In the run of six pages of editorial fashion in the October '39 *Journal*, the first pair of pages was geared to the high-fashion market. The layout was sophisticated in its fanning diagonals and bold, alternating pattern of black and white and color photos (Fig 5). The second spread was aimed at women with less money who could only afford to spruce up with accessories. The double-page still used color printing to feature the Fall shades for handbags, shoes, and gloves; however, the models themselves were pictured in black and white. The intended selling point was hardly difficult to grasp: a bright note of color provided by a new bag would do wonders, as demonstrated by the graphic effect of small colorful accents on an otherwise monochrome page (Fig 6). The final fashion spread was devoted to women with even less money. Its color scheme was the most resolutely gay, and with its stress on "feminine" floral colors

was a return to stylized, diminutive figure sketches. Here photography was reserved for the portrait closest to center, mounted with a second photo of an ornate gilt frame and compared in the caption to a Joshua Reynolds painting. Though more than a little surreal in its effect, the art historical reference, brought up-to-date in "living color," was clearly intended to lend a pseudo-aristocratic dignity to women without means but with the considerable time, skill, and ambition to remain "in fashion" by sewing their own clothes from patterns (Fig. 7).

On these three double pages of editorial fashion, the use of type and graphics ranged from the contemporary, "modernist" style of *Vogue* to a modified version of traditional pattern book illustrations. In other words, each of these three spreads spoke to a different strata of the magazine's somewhat diversified readership. But the consistent fact of color on all three double-spreads at the heart of the editorial section of the magazine glossed over these differences and conveyed the editor's conviction that all the readers assigned the same high value to beauty, that the ideal of glamour was democratic and unifying.

While the run of editorial fashion pages achieved a tight coherence, the graphic codes were articulated just as clearly in the endless juxtapositions which occurred in each issue between nominally unrelated ads and editorial columns, pictures and texts. Consider the interaction between the last full-page editorial column and the fairly typical studio ad in color facing it (Fig. 8). The column asked whether men were more adventurous, and thus more fulfilled than women, in their choice of hobbies. The headlined query was set in cool, cyan blue type—the

advertising archives indicates that ad agencies sought to control the placement of their ads and, conversely, that magazines tried their utmost to maintain agency goodwill by "sensitive" layout. No matter how calculated, the recurrence of these meaningful juxtapositions suggests a new form of cultural communication. This subject needs further study, but for now I would propose that the separate but integrated codes of color and black and white enhanced the magazine in two, non-economic ways: formally, such divisions provided a dynamic rhythm to the flow of the magazine; functionally, the magazine became a richer vehicle for this diversity, fulfilling the consumer's desire for both Truth and Beauty, and maintaining the illusion that these were easily distinguishable categories of experience.

Though having devoted most space to the importance of changes in format and color, I must at least point out a different type of innovation in magazine advertising of the 1930s. Not only was this innovation particular to the Depression years, but it signalled the limits of the magazine as a perfectly rationalized marketing vehicle as compared with emerging modern media. Throughout this analysis, I have tried to suggest the strength of various graphic appeals by describing the page or the ad as "speaking" to the magazine reader. In a discussion of visual effects, the expression invites charges of mixing metaphors. I have used it deliberately, for the idea arguably informed most of the conscious changes in the magazines; moreover, by the 1930s, the idea of the "speaking" graphic was achieved in a fairly literal sense as well.

Throughout the 1920s, a common mode of selling was the



FIG. 9 LHJ, October 1939, pp. 100, 101.

one spot of color on this page. Directly below the headline, scenes of men at play were presented by means of black and white photography for added documentary authority. The implication was that women should follow their examples, without acknowledging that a young mother with children, trying also to redecorate her home and "keep herself up," had enough on her hands without worrying about upgrading her hobbies. But any anxiety aroused by invidious comparisons with men's pastimes was resolved as soon as the eye moved to the right. Nothing documented on the left matched the sheer vividness of the well-ordered table on which the brilliant RITZ crackers package served both as central ornament and principle source of nourishment.

Of course, many of these editorial/ad juxtapositions were not calculated—though my research so far in publishing and

personality endorsement. In women's magazines, film stars and "sociolites" most frequently appeared in this role, in the form of chatty "direct testimony" along with a photographic portrait. This recipe had the virtue of human interest, but the product itself was often upstaged. A 1924 ad for laundry soap attempted to resolve this contradiction by replacing the standard portrait and testimony with a picture of pastel baby clothes accompanied by the headline, "If Clothes could talk . . ." which was followed by the pitch, "We Want Fels Naptha!" A dramatic form was still needed, but the objective was clear.

In the same period that the sound film replaced the silent, a new genre of printed ad began to replace the older testimonial. The hallmarks of this genre were speech balloons and a serial strip form, emphasizing terse dialogue and abbreviated sequen-



tial activity which revolved around the product (Fig. 9). Though similar in look to newspaper comics, probably radio ads were as influential a source for this trend (the ad agencies after all were creating many of the popular radio programs of the 1930s, programs which moved seamlessly from entertainment to product endorsement). In some cases, these cartoons may have provided a visual guide to audio ads women were hearing with growing regularity on radio. Whether or not they were exact transcriptions of radio ads, they certainly anticipated the storyboards for condensed dramas—consisting largely of close-ups—which would make their debut as televised commercials.

Though radio competed with magazines for audiences and advertising money, the two media were quite complementary. While no magazine could match the perfect continuity of commercial broadcast radio programming, a flow which could accompany the practice of housework, radio was unable to reveal the "look" of a commodified, modernized domestic world. Thus before World War II, magazines played a central role in developing the visible materiality of consumer culture. Furthermore, the murky antinomies of modernized *women's* magazines—between editorial and advertising copy, between "pleasurable" color and "instructive" monochrome images and text, between the rhetoric of "scientific" housework and the rhetoric of romance—trained the female viewer for the distinctive flow of messages delivered by the predominant cultural institution of the postwar era: tv.

Far more work needs to be done on the continuity between these two forms of mass culture which have profound affect upon, and appeal for, women. We need to comprehend better the ways these institutional forms structure meaning. We also need to pursue the *actual* and *differing* ways these messages are received—how they are integrated into a larger complex pattern of experiences, and also how they are resisted (at least partially) because of their inconsistency with the logic of our experiences.



1 Robert and Helen Lynd, *Middletown* (New York, 1956), p. 235.

2 The present article represents a much abbreviated version of a 1980 paper written as a graduate student in Nancy F. Cott's Women's Studies seminar, Yale University. In looking for a method with which to analyze the changing structure of women's magazines, I found little specifically on magazines or print media in general; on the other hand, recent work on related issues of commercial culture challenged me to pursue this theme, especially the innovative study of the strip coauthored by Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas* (Cambridge, Mass., 1977), and Raymond Williams' more critical cultural analysis of the "flow" of television, *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* (New York, 1977). Since writing my first version of this article, a considerable body of new work on reception *vis-à-vis* the "flow" of modern commercial media has been produced: in particular, the collectively produced series of videotapes by Paper Tiger Television which offers critical (and also witty) readings of a wide range of contemporary periodicals (see Martha Gever, "Meet the Press: On Paper Tiger Television," *Afterimage*, Vol. 11, No. 4, November 1983, pp. 7–11); Tania Modleski's study of the tradition of commercial women's culture spanning Gothics to Soap Operas (though omitting women's magazines), *Loving with a Vengeance* (Hamden, Conn., 1982); and Nick Browne's recent article, "The Political Economy of the Television (Super) Text," *Quarterly Review of Film Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (Summer 1984), pp. 174–182, pursues

the issues raised by Raymond Williams' earlier work on television.

For this version, I am greatly indebted for editorial assistance to Lucy Lippard and Allan Sekula.

3 See for example, Robert S. Lynd with the assistance of Alice C. Hanson, "The People as Consumer," in *Recent Social Trends in the United States* (New York, 1933) pp. 871–4.

4 See David Montgomery, *Workers' Control in America: Studies in the History of Work, Technology and Labor Struggles* (Cambridge, 1979), especially, pp. 122–127; Loren Baritz, *The Servants of Power* (New York, 1965), pp. 28–54; and Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital* (New York, 1974).

5 On Gilman's contradictory position regarding efficiency and the transformation of traditional women's work, see Dolores Hayden, "Charlotte Perkins Gilman and the Kitchenless Home," *Radical History Review*, 21 (March 1980) pp. 225–247.

6 Ruth Schwartz Cowan explores these issues in, "The Industrial Revolution in the Home: Household Technology and Social Change in the Twentieth Century," *Technology and Culture*, XVII, 1976, 16, 21–23, and at greater length in her later book, *More Work for Mother* (New York, 1983).

7 For a more detailed discussion of this composite illustration, see my earlier essay, "The Composite Photographic Image and the Composition of Consumer Ideology," *Art Journal*, Spring 1981, pp. 39–45.

8 Frederick Winslow Taylor, *The Principles of Scientific Management* (New York, 1915), p. 94.

9 Lilian Gilbreth, *The Psychology of Management* (New York, 1914), p. 246.

LHJ, October 1914, cover.

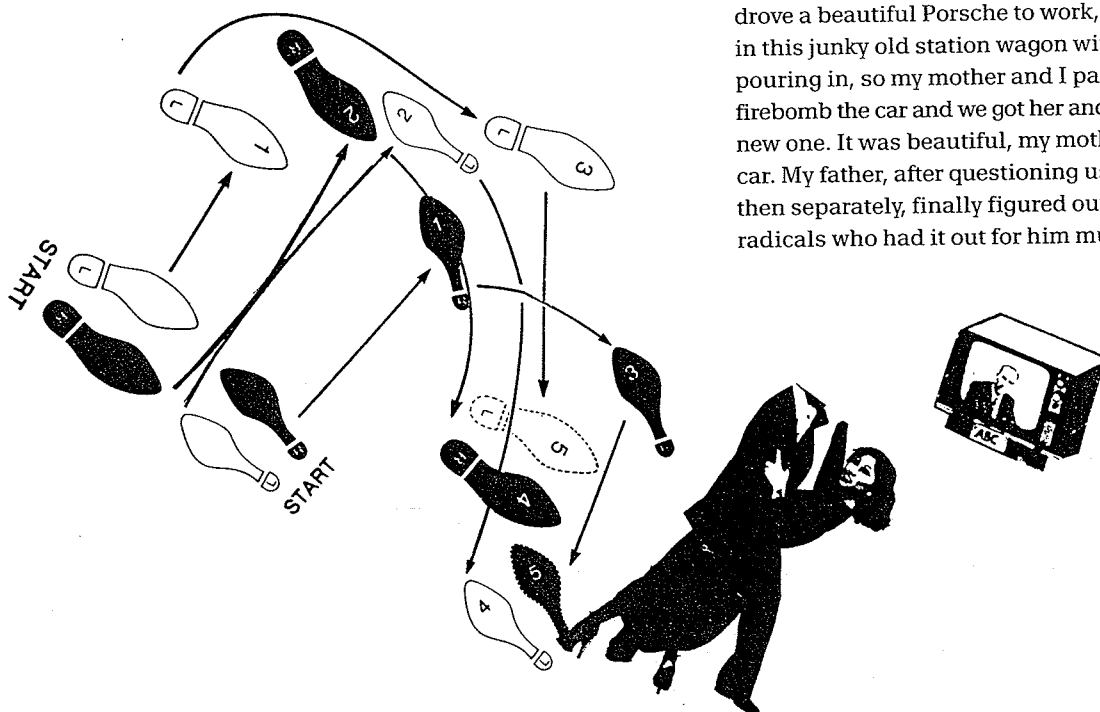


# tango fatalé

*This excerpt, "Terrorist Housewife," is from the play Tango Fatalé co-authored by Linda Hartinian and Iliaria Freccia.*

...when I was little we had a very old TV. It was so old that it used to smoke while we watched it. My father was too cheap to buy a new one. Also the picture wasn't so good either. Anyway, my mother felt that our health was in danger, or at least our eyes, and she wanted a new one or at least one that was OK. I know she felt that everyone was going to benefit from getting a new TV and of course she was right about that; we all watched 5 or 6 hours of TV a day, I mean TV watching was important in 1956, but most people had only one TV in a household, that TV was a kind of sacred object. It made us all into one people with one great mind, but there were of course a couple of different channels. My father, I don't know for sure, because I don't see him anymore, was insensitive to the problem I guess so I suppose my mother took an action. Now, I don't know how she came to have this idea to take this action. I don't believe she planned it,

she was always unpredictable and more violent than some of the other mothers in my neighborhood, what does a little kid know about that stuff anyway, I must have been 7 years old. So anyway, one day in the morning before school, I'm sitting in front of the piano brushing my hair, my mother is vacuuming the carpet really fast and is still in her bathrobe. Suddenly without any warning at all, she picks up the vacuum like an axe and smashes the shit out of our TV. I was terrified all right. It came out of nowhere, I thought my mother must have gone insane and of course since she wasn't very pleasant in the morning, I mean, who is? There wasn't much explanation afterwards, either, just a lot of bitter muttering. It was like she had just murdered something right in front of me with no thought other than to destroy. Later she flushed my goldfish still alive down the toilet, but that was personal and I'm pretty sure it wasn't a terrorist act. Anyway, we got a slightly better TV a few days later and I eventually put two and two together. Like I said, later we got a new car sort of the same way. I didn't mention that my father was a policeman, he drove a beautiful Porsche to work, but WE had to ride in this junky old station wagon with exhaust fumes pouring in, so my mother and I paid some guy to firebomb the car and we got her and my little sisters a new one. It was beautiful, my mother really loved that car. My father, after questioning us first together and then separately, finally figured out that some black radicals who had it out for him must have done it.



# Sorry I Find It So Difficult to Write



Sorry I find it so difficult to write to you, I'm becoming  
 more and more disapproving as I grow older. I can't ~~afford~~  
 put your way of life at all now, and I just can't come to  
 with anything you would like, do, it's just a complete break with  
 in my own mind. It's a pity it had to take so long, you  
 would have done with a stranger's influence when you were  
 young enough to be affected by it

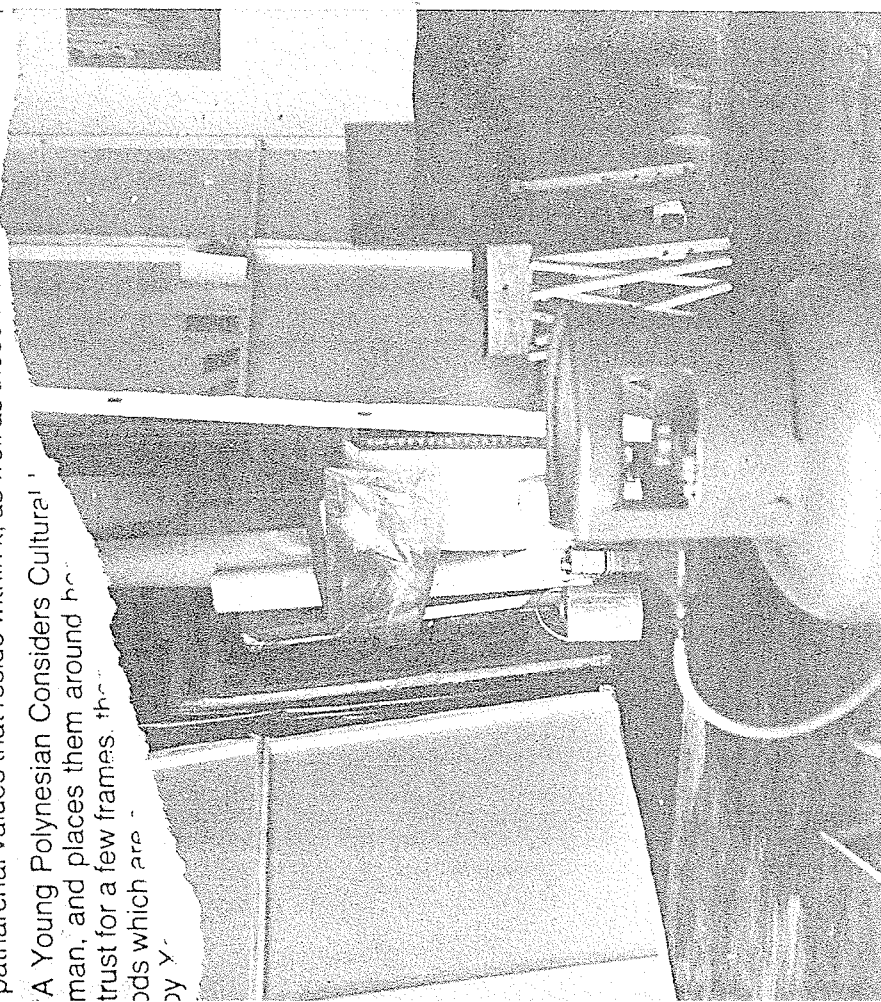


...the male part of the working class. All the  
...definition of the worker's condition the lot of the male  
...sent from the analysis of the labour market on the one hand,  
...domestic work and its exploitation is taken as given on the other.'

he nineteenth century, the Pacific Islands of New Zealand were settled mostly by immigrants who wished to  
in an egalitarian, non-racist society. But in the twentieth century these very ideals have created the ogre of  
rmality'. To be 'normal' is to live as dictated by the white bourgeoisie, who now find it against their interest to  
either non-racist or socialist. I feel that the Maori culture is part of my heritage even though I am a first  
eration Pakeha.

ynesian women have to fight for respect for their own culture as a way of life, but at the same time combat the  
patriarchal values that reside within it, as well as those within the dominant European culture.

A Young Polynesian Considers Culture!  
man, and places them around her  
trust for a few frames, the  
ods which are  
by Y-



Alexis Hunter is a New Zealand-born painter who lives in London.  
She often curates women's art exhibitions.

# Nancine, Lili & Chloe

Catherine Texier

I was watching Lili come down the stairs, my feet naked on the hallway tiles. Her hair, short and curly, waved like a crest above her head. She pressed her hand on her face to iron out the night wrinkles. When she took me in her arms, I saw the bulge of her breasts in the opening of her pale nylon dressing-gown.

Coming out of the kitchen, my grandmother Nancine frowned and told Lili (her daughter, my mother), to tighten her robe, to try to be decent in front of her child. We walked one by one along the corridor lined by high wood bookshelves, Nancine last, holding the big enamel coated coffee pot wrapped in a wash cloth. She poured the coffee and the steaming milk in our bowls, set side by side on the oil cloth, and opened the last issue of *Modes et Travaux*. There was always a stack of magazines on a low table by the window. They were used as constant references, and *Modes et Travaux*, a journal with a flair for pillow embroideries and crocheted dresses, was Nancine's bible and book of etiquette.

With an authoritative finger she leafed through the pages of the magazine. She pointed to the models with a nail filed to a sharp oval, to clothes with prettyish, concealed shapes, with modest waists, innocent pink piping, and flowered prints. She oozed with pleasure and anticipation.

"That would look good on you, Chloe. Look at this little suit."

**MARIE-CLAIRE — July 1966.** The skirts are all cut above the knee, the hair is bobbed, or long and teased. Black eyeliner, fake eyelashes. Pale mouths, white with a touch of mauve.

"Isn't it smart with the white blouse underneath?"

When Nancine spoke she smacked her tongue, savoring each syllable like a rosary, bead by bead, squeezing the last word in her throat as if swallowing our gaze and our attention at the same time.

Grudgingly I approved the suit, blew a docile yes. Lili sniffed, wiping her mouth with the back of her hand, stretching her neck to see the model.

**ELLE — July 1966.** Catherine Deneuve and Brigitte Bardot, the blonds with the pouts, both Vadim's ex-lovers, wear their long hair tousled, bangs sexily disarrayed and hanging below the eyebrows.

"With your napkin, Lili. Not with your hand."

Lili's mood flipped like a pancake, her forehead hardened. Tension tight-

ened up her face, her body; her fingers played with her belt, her mouth twitched. I heard her breath come out with a hissing sound. Nancine gave her a cold look, her pale eyes narrowing, the irises crouched under her thick brow like two little ferocious beasts, enjoying their victory over chaos. Then, lowering her head, she licked the tip of her fingers to thumb the pages more easily, the pages gliding smoothly and regularly, one on top of the other.

"What about that dress, Chloe, look how pretty it is!"

With the flat of her hand Nancine pushed the magazine towards my bowl. Her finger, swollen and twisted by arthritis, was pointing to a navy-blue schoolgirl's dress with a round collar, and a pleated skirt coming down to the calves.

— Brigitte Bardot, in a pink and white checked bikini, runs on a Mediterranean beach splashed

with sun. Her photograph illustrates an article entitled "How to Keep Your Knees Young?" in the August issue of *Elle*. "Look at our B.B.! She shows her knees. They look like beautiful smooth pebbles. You too can make your knees beautiful."

The tension spread through Lili's body. Rage lifted her fingers, her shoulders, her lips. She grabbed her bowl and held it half-way up to her chin, fighting against the waves of hate. I saw them pulse on the side of her neck. Then they exploded. The bowl crashed against the table, the spoon against the plate, a fist, two fists one after the other, two bombs on the red and white checked oilcloth.

"Enough is enough. Chloe is my daughter. Nobody is going to tell her what to wear. And least of all you."

The door slammed so hard I thought the glass windows would fall off the frame.

Nancine swung her chin, that was strong and stubborn and locked her mouth with fierce willpower; she made me witness my mother's impudence, in order to weed from me the smallest germs of evil.



—Something is stirring in London according to *Elle*. Midlength mini-skirts, op and pop. Mary Quant and Carnaby Street. The key words are sex and pleasure. Jean Shrimpton pops out of the page, flaring nostrils, huge blue eyes circled by spread-out fake eyelashes mascaraed over, one by one; her hair is like a lioness' mane.

"At least you are a good girl, Chloe."

—"A woman must always feel like she is behind a man", says Anna Karina in a May 1966 interview. The star of Godard's movies, black bangs and dark beauty, adds, "A woman's condition is to be in the background."

Her dry hand with its translucent skin stretched over blue veins settled upon mine. She smelled of lavender soap. A gold wedding ring shone on her finger. Her nails were done with clear polish. I could feel how satisfied she was to see me so docile. She had me wrapped up in her laces, her mauve and pale blue crocheted shawls. The sun drew a golden triangle through the French door, threw milky drops of light upon the collection of liquor glasses displayed in their glass case.

"I can't get no satisfaction. I can't get no..."

"What are you singing?"

"Nothing."

I felt like falling asleep.

**MARIE-CLAIRE** — July 1966. Monica Vitti is interviewed. She is gorgeous. Her face full of freckles. Another blond with a pout. She says: "A man must be able to create, first and foremost. The woman who helps the man she loves to create better, she is his true woman. The big difference is that I could drop everything for him, including my work, whereas he would drop everything but his work. ... In summer my skin is covered with freckles. Too bad. When I met Michelangelo I had freckles. Too bad. A man's love is not stopped by these details".

Lili's room was a joyful mess of scattered shoes, underwear rolled up under the chairs, books piled high on the night table and on the floor, knick-knacks brought back from Italy and Greece, with paintings and snapshots that, most of the time, she did not bother to hang on the walls. Her disorder held its ground against the invasion of the house. As soon as you opened the door you were hit by the smell of English cigarettes and perfume and you forgot the rest.

She was sitting on her bed, her toenails freshly polished and held apart by small cotton balls, skimming through a fashion magazine, looking at photos with bright velvety colors, im-

Catherine Texier is a French writer living in New York. Her first novel, *Chloe l'Atlantique*, was published in Paris, 1983. She is currently at work on her second. She is co-editor of *Between C and D* magazine.

ages of princesses, of stars made up to perfection, delicately jeweled, promising happiness. She didn't read the same magazines as Nancine, and she touched them sensually, with the palm of her hand, savoring the glossiness of the paper, the smell of fresh ink. She pointed to embroidered bras, panties in peach-colored elastic lace, arched pumps with high heels, while I, standing in front of the mirror, tried to straighten the thick brown curls I hated with brush and hair-dryer, and wrapped myself in a cloud of acrid smelling lacquer that caked the hair hard but guaranteed a perfect hold against winds and kisses.

"What do you think of these pumps?"

"Let me see? Hmm. Not bad."

I had not moved from the mirror. I was too busy trying to roll between thumb and finger a lock that was supposed to curve under the chin like the others.

**ELLE**—October 1966. "In America they don't speak of love anymore, but of sex." The pictures show young Americans with their hair cut in bangs like the Beatles and wearing blue jeans, the girls with knee-high socks. Someone claims: "Virginity is dead. Nancy Sinatra's song: 'These boots are made for walking' is a hit in France..."

Lili laughed.

"You're not listening to me. You didn't even see what I was showing to you!"

We both sat on the unmade bed. I felt her warm thigh through her robe. We were bent over photos of stretched calves, low-necked blouses revealing small breasts, enchanting smiles.

"I like that one."

It was a dress in purple wool, cut above the knee, a belt tied around the hips.

"And look at these fish net stockings!"

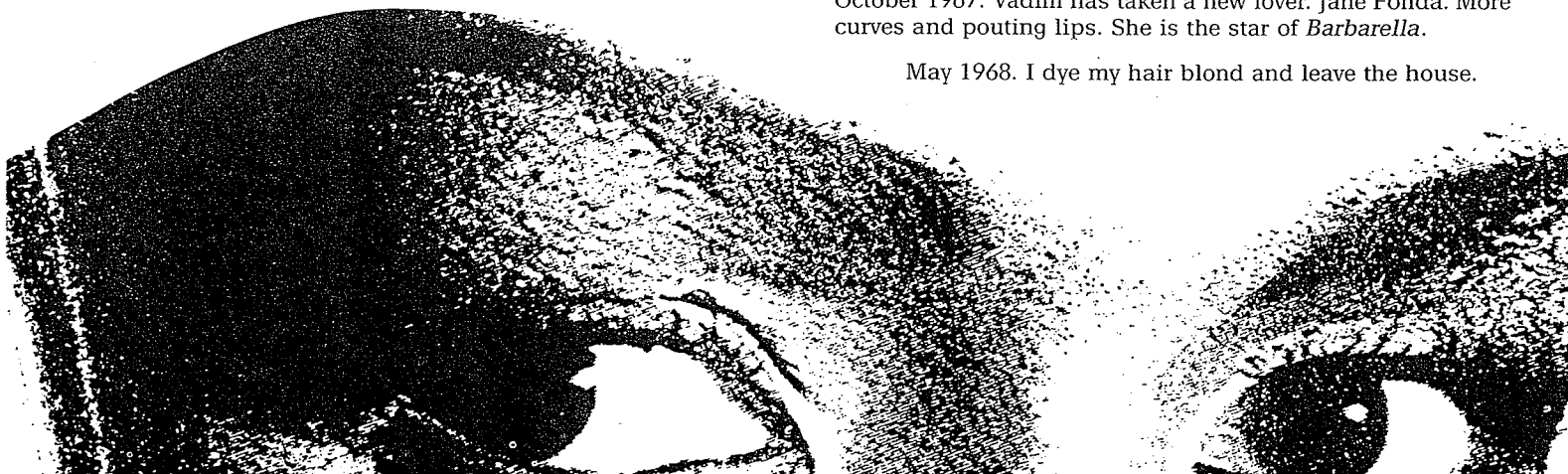
—There is a full page photograph of Juliette Greco, the existentialists' idol from the fifties. Her words have a sneer that you don't see in the picture. She says: "My work is abnormal. It's a man's work. It is not my role."

I was having breakfast at the kitchen table, pouring over the glossy pages of *Elle*, when Nancine emerged from the basement, an armful of freshly clean laundry held tight against her chest. She leant over my shoulder. "What are you reading again! When I think that you have studied Latin and Greek! It's these magazines that are giving you these ideas. And these skirts that get shorter every season. Look at you. Pretty soon you're going to show your thighs. What a shame! What a shame!"

—Mireille Darc, the new French star, is all teeth and skinny legs like a grasshopper. She just made a movie called *Galia*, a mid-sixties hit. *Galia* is about girls who work and make love with men. **FREE LOVE.**

October 1967. Vadim has taken a new lover. Jane Fonda. More curves and pouting lips. She is the star of *Barbarella*.

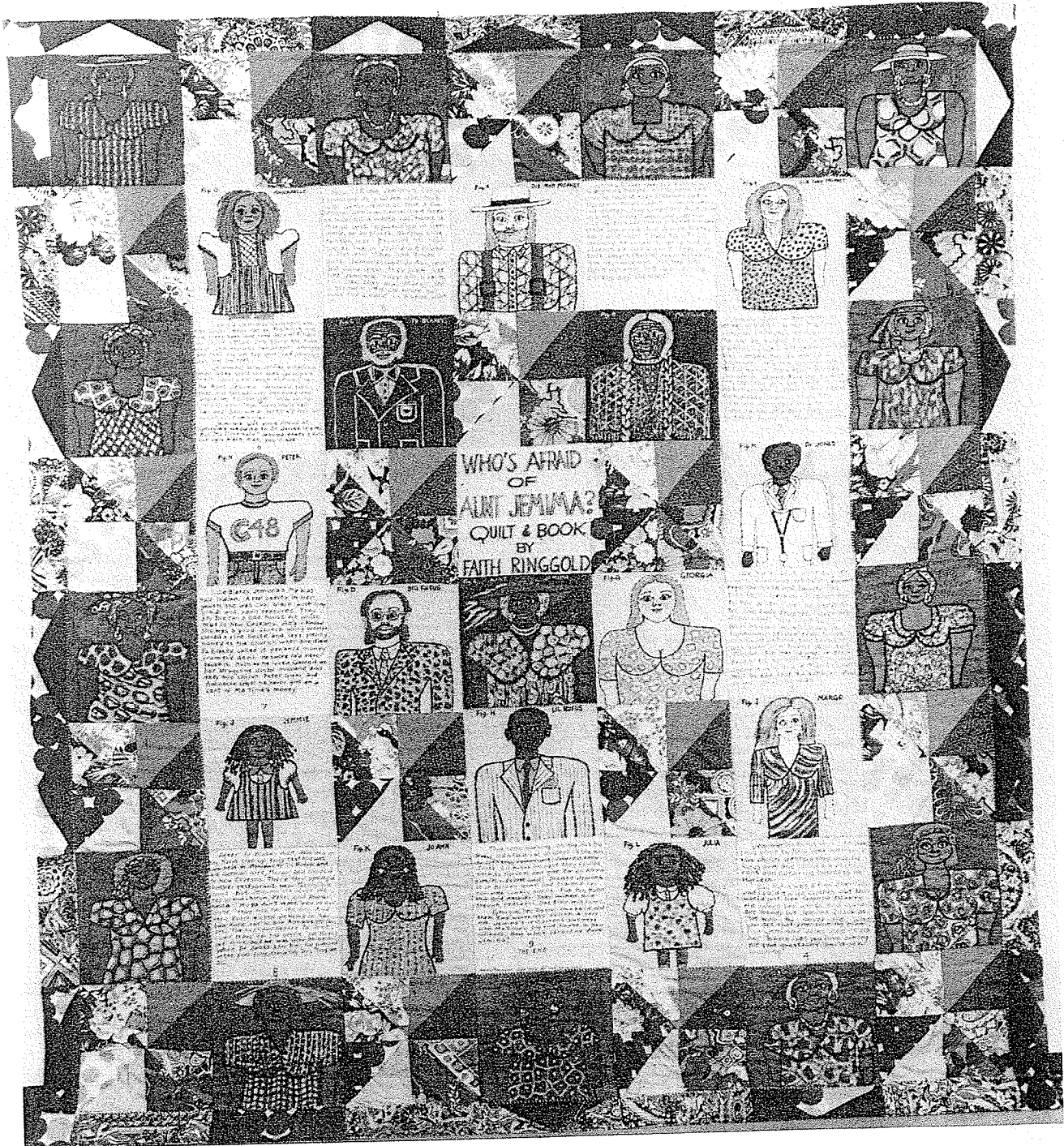
May 1968. I dye my hair blond and leave the house.



# Who's A F R A I D of Aunt Jemima?

## QUILT AND BOOK

Faith Ringgold



Faith Ringgold is a painter, sculptor, and printmaker currently working in mixed media and storytelling in the form of quilts and performances. She lives in New York City and is a professor of art at the University of California in La Jolla.

Jemima Blakey (*fig. A*) didn't come from no ordinary people. Her Granma and Granpa bought they freedom out a slavery in New Orleans. Granma Jemima Blakey—they called her Aunt Jemima too—made cakes and catered fine parties for them plantation owners in Louisiana. And Granpa Blakey was a first-class tailor too. From memory he could make a suit of clothes fit like a glove. They was sure smart people, them Blakeys. And Jemima was just like 'em, hard-working, and God-fearing till the day she died.

Jemima could do anything she set her mind to. When Ma Tillie (*fig. B*) and Pa Blakey (*fig. C*), Jemima's Ma and Pa, forbid her to marry Big Rufus Cook (*fig. D*) on account a they wanted her to marry a preacher. Jemima up and married Big Rufus anyway, and they run off to Tampa, Florida to work for Ole Man and Ole Lady Prophet (*figs. E, F*) cookin, cleanin and takin care a they chirrun somethin Jemima never had to do livin in her Ma and Pa's comfortable home in New Orleans.

Ole Man Prophet used to joke that Jemima was his heir. "Jemima keep my house and family like they hers. I reckon I'll leave 'em to her when I die," he used to tell Ole Lady Prophet. "Over my dead body," she used to say. Well as God would have it, lightening struck they house one night whilst the servants was away and burnt it to the ground. Ain nar' a one of them Prophets survive. And, praise God, she was.

Jemima & Big Rufus was rich now. They come to New York with they chirrun Georgia (*fig. G*) and Lil Rufus (*fig. H*) and opened a restaurant and catering business in Harlem.

Big Rufus was a fine chef too, and could tailor clothes out this world just like Granpa Blakey. He looked like white, and couldn't see nobody but Jemima, black as she was. No—never did. "Where you get that fine-looking man from Jemima?" folks used to ask her. "Where I get you from asking me that question?" she'd say, laughing.

Now Lil Rufus, Jemima's baby, handsome as a Greek god, took color after Jemima's side a the family. Jemima likena died when he married a white gal, name a Margo (*fig. I*) he picked up in Germany, of all places, during that Korean War. Brought her home too, to live in Jemima's house in Harlem. They had three girls: Jemmie (*fig. J*), JoAnn (*fig. K*) and Julia (*fig. L*). They look just like Jemima. They ain look nothin like they Ma, Margo, she a scrawny little ole white gal. Love the ground Lil Rufus walk on.

Georgia, Jemima's daughter, was high yaller likena her pa, Big Rufus, and had green eyes and long straight hair she could sit on. Only thing she took after Jemima was her shape. Georgia was real big up top and had skinny legs and big feet.

Jemima'd blow up like a balloon when folks say'd she was Georgia's maid. Georgia'd laugh and call her ma Aunt Jemima. Jemima'd take that piss tail gal over her knee and whoop her till she quit. "You ain no more'n your ma," Jemima'd tell her, and Georgia'd screw up her lil' horse face an holler.

Jemima was some proud at Georgia's wedding to Dr. Jones (*fig. M*). But Ma Tillie said, "Jemima, that's a evil ole ugly black man, you'll see."

Tillie Blakey, Jemima's Ma, was half Indian. A real beauty in her youth, she was coal black with long braids and keen features. They say she ran a bad house for white men in New Orleans. All's I know she was a good church-going woman owned a fine house and left plenty money to the church when she died. Pa Blakey called it penance money from the devil. He swore he'd never touch it. Much as he loved Georgia and her struggling doctor husband, and they two chirrun Peter (*fig. N*) and Annabelle (*fig. O*), he never give em a cent of Ma Tillie's money.

After Pa Blakey died, Jemima and Big Rufus give they restaurant business in Harlem to Lil Rufus and his German wife Margo, and moved to New Orleans. There they opened another restaurant near Georgia's house.

But Jemima ain never see her grand chirrun, Peter and Annabelle. "My Pa don't want you in our house," they told her one day. And then Peter kicked Jemima in her bad knee and he and Annabelle ran off. The next day before Dr. Jones could leave for his office, Lil Rufus was there, and he was mad as hell. When Dr. Jones saw him, he jumped in the pool fully dressed, bag an all.

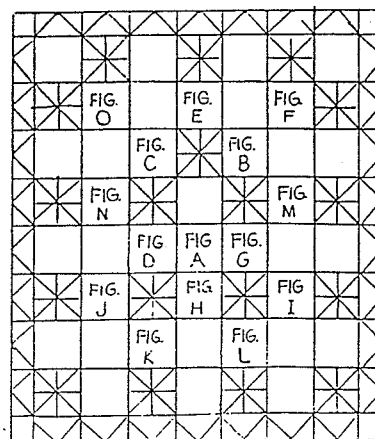
That same morning Jemima and Big Rufus had a fatal car accident on the way to open they restaurant. God rest they souls. Lil Rufus brought they bodies back to Harlem, and give 'em an African funeral—Praise God! Dressed Jemima in an African gown and braided her hair with cowrie shells. Put Big Rufus in a gold dashiki. They looked nice though, peaceful, like they was home.

Georgia, her doctor husband, and them two worthless chirrun a hers got Jemima's restaurant business and Ma Tillie's big fine house in New Orleans. Now, who's afraid of Aunt Jemima?

THE END

## CHARACTERS

- A** Jemima Blakey  
Aunt Jemima
- B** Ma Tillie  
Jemima's mother
- C** Pa Blakey  
Jemima's father
- D** Big Rufus  
Jemima's husband
- E** Ole Man Prophet  
Jemima's employer
- F** Ole Lady Prophet  
Jemima's employer
- G** Georgia  
Jemima's daughter
- H** Lil Rufus  
Jemima's son
- I** Margo  
Lil Rufus' wife
- J** Jemmie  
Lil Rufus & Margo's daughter
- K** JoAnn  
Lil Rufus & Margo's daughter
- L** Julia  
Lil Rufus & Margo's daughter
- M** Dr. Jones  
Georgia's husband
- N** Peter  
Dr. Jones & Georgia's son
- O** Annabelle  
Dr. Jones & Georgia's daughter





I'll be 40 May 10th, if I live to see it. I left Virginia when I was 4 and went to school in Newburgh, N.Y. I stopped in 10th grade 'cause my mother had too many kids in school and she said she couldn't give me the type of clothes like a high-school girl should have. My father had 21 children. There's 18 of us living, but he's been married three times. Only my mother's kids were living at home. She had 12.

I was the oldest girl, yeah.... listen, I had to give them their bath, make sure they got their homework. I had to get up at 5AM to get breakfast ready, then I had to pack their lunches and get the kids out to school. Then I had to go to work at Dupex Bags. I was only making \$30 a week but I had to turn over half of that every time. I remember one time I talked back to Daddy 'cause he told me to give my mother one half and him the other half. I told him, "Well, it's no use me working."

My father worked in a junkyard down by the Hudson River. I never had no life at home, really, because: well, my father used to make me take all my clothes off and he'd whip me with switches he got down at the river. I called them tree branches 'cause that's what they seemed like to me. I was striped like a tiger all the way up and I was just coming into womanhood—June apples—I have much more than that now. I was bloody everywhere he hit me: nothing but welts.

One time I had to stay home from high school for two weeks 'cause he slapped me and all five fingers was on my face. I asked my mother if he was my real father. I got to the point where I threatened to commit suicide. I was gonna take any pill I saw lying around. Finally, I called Family Services and my mother agreed to let me live with my godmother. When the cops came to pick me up, Daddy pulled a gun on them. He said, "Nobody tells me how to raise my kids!"

I think about my father a lot. I think the reason I don't have any kids is that he could have damaged my female organs. I said on many days that I'll be glad when he dies and, you'd better believe, when he died I really didn't take it too hard.

Anyway, when I was 16 I went to live with my godmother in Pennsylvania. I had a janitor's job at Westinghouse. I had to lift those heavy buckets and those mops and stuff—I wasn't supposed to be doing that kind of work. I have syncope so I get seizures and dizzy spells. The doctor told me they come from anxiety. After 6 or 8 months at Westinghouse I was terminated. Every job I've ever had, I was terminated.

When I was in Pennsylvania, I paid \$20 and I took a high-school test. It took three nights. Some of the girls who took it had just got out of school and they missed by more points than I did. I was really amazed at myself, 'cause I only missed it by 12 points. I'm gonna take another one if welfare pays for it.

I was 24 when I got married, but I never had no life with my husband, really. He first started me drinking. We separated after 20 years and that was one of the reasons. I mean, it's all very interesting, the things people tell what they do under the influence of alcohol. It's really ridiculous: they get in jail and then they don't remember nothing about it. I ain't never been that far to extremes.

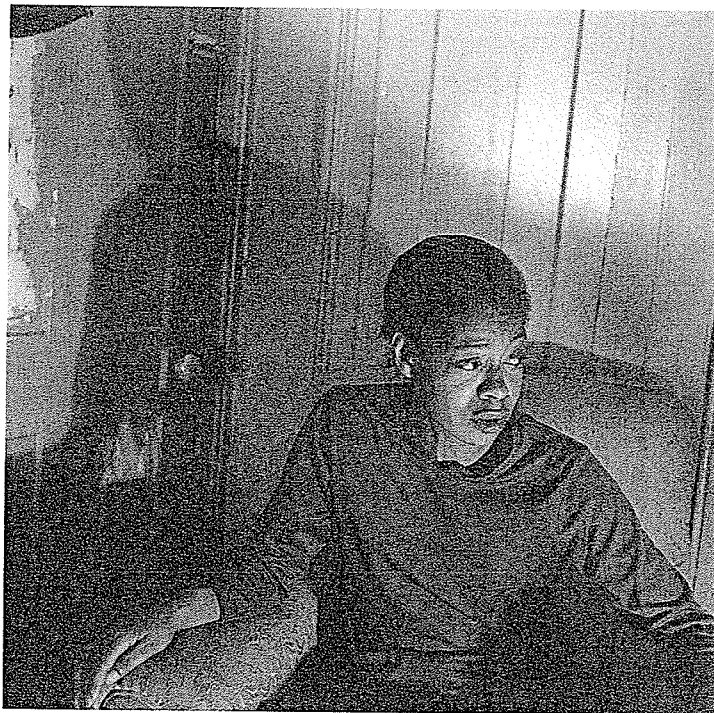
I used to go to the mental health clinic. The doctor knows more than I do. He seemed to think that I didn't need to come there anymore, so I didn't go back. I guess he just got tired.

Right now, I'm not working, and, let me tell you, the welfare in Newburgh is really nasty. I want to work, but I can't go working in places for six months and then get sick and welfare knows that. I get to thinking about how I didn't get no education. I'm not hard to catch on to things, but what can I do? Every job you see in the papers you need experience, but if you don't have the training you don't get the experience. The only work I do now is when my uncle moves stuff—sometimes he asks me to help him. There's something about it I don't like, but it keeps me from staying in the house all day, looking at the windows and the walls. I feel much more relaxed. Right now, I'm waiting to hear to get on SSI. I sit here worrying every day, watching for the mailman. I'm scared somebody will steal my mail.

'Course, I never go no place unless it's shopping, to the wash, or something. I guess because there's something that's in me now that don't bother about going nowhere. Since I started attending A.A. meetings it's really good, but the meetings didn't start till 9 pm, so Miss Taylor started having them at noon. I asked her to 'cause I get scared a lot of the time, walking at night by myself. When I was 24, I got raped and that is something I'll never get over. The judge—and he ain't nothing either—he says, "All you had to do was cross your legs and he

couldn't have raped you." But the man was very violent. He pulled me into the car and wrang my wrists and stuff. I couldn't get out of the car 'cause he didn't stop at no red lights. I looked around for something to hit him with in the car, but I couldn't find nothing. It was a terrible experience. When I got home, I called the police. A detective came and made me get out of the bathtub so I could identify the man. We had to put so much pressure on the judge, but finally they locked him up, after me and my sister went to the pastor and got some aid from him and some of his members. For about four years I felt very unclean, no matter how much I washed.

As far as life goes, I didn't have too much, but I was always the type of person to help people; I really like to do that. I don't have many visitors. If Miss Taylor at the A.A. had a bigger place, maybe I could meet more people, but very seldom do I see another woman there. I tried to get one of my girlfriends to go but she didn't give a damn one way or another. If we had a bigger place, Miss Taylor said, we could help kids to plant seeds, or somebody could teach sewing or whatever they know. But what are we going to do now? We barely have room to walk.



*Gladys Canning*

I was very fortunate because my mother and my aunt were both singers and my grandfather was a ballroom dancer, so they started my training very early: when I was about four. I went to Professor O'Brien's Normal School of Dancing. It was 6 days a week. We had Interpretive on Monday, Egyptian on Tuesday, Spanish on Wednesday, acrobatics on Thursday, tap on Friday and ballet on Saturday. It was a very rich and very esoteric education because the teacher was very classical. We all wore tunics and on Egyptian night we came out of mummy cages. I went there during my most formative years: 5 years with Professor O'Brien and his wife at the piano.

Nobody said anything about a career, but I performed at an early age with my mother and my aunt. My mother started taking singing lessons when I was born—as an outlet. She worked for ten years professionally after that. She loved jazz, so it was her influence that got me into it. She was a very soulful person. Of course, my father worked 16 hours a day and was never home, so that I could get such a good education. He was a very dogmatic Italian father. Yet, even though he was very old-fashioned, it was always as if I were expected to be independent. It was never any question of saying: "Well, when you grow up you'll get married and you won't need all this." The tradition of the females in my family was very strong: they were all workers. However, nobody ever wants their son or daughter to go into show business, even if they're in it themselves. They're always hoping you'll turn into an historian or something, so I was never guided.

I was 15 when my parents got divorced. I was going to Alice Duffy's, who had a very typical dance school—much more expensive, but very good! My mother's agent came to one of the recitals and said, "She's had enough of this teacher." He sent me to Stanley Brown's in Boston. I would go into Boston to study every day after school. I never got much of an education, obviously, of any intellectual type. I mean, I was 15 in Boston, hanging around—I was fortunate enough to meet a group of college people. We would go and talk in Hayes and Bickfords and they kinda accepted me as a mascot—a kooky mascot with dyed red hair and black eyes: the odd one. So I was getting educated.

By the time I was married, I already had a thorough education in dance and music, not an intellectual one, but in those days people didn't talk about dance like they do now. If you had talent, you did it.

Dance is so strenuous, it's so hard, that I didn't feel much competition with men or much argument until I was married. In fact, other than the sexual problem of being pursued everytime I turned around, I wouldn't say that I was influenced or tied up in the whole thing of feeling female, or what that meant or that I had problems. I would have a hell of a lot of problems when I would go into a producer's or director's office. That was awful! That was a nightmare! And continually a nightmare! I would become evil! Evil! And the more evil I got, the more lecherous they got! Some gals have wonderful techniques that I learned

too late, of complete ingenuousness and naivete. Even though they might be the raunchiest people in the world, when they walked in there they didn't know a thing. I'd go in there and I'd say "OK baby, I dare ya! Go ahead!" Well, needless to say, they did! That was terrible! In those days I was very voluptuous. I looked like they should come on to me. It's very unfortunate that your physical type should demand that kind of response. It was appalling, humiliating and awful.

I was afraid of the hard shell I needed to form, the aggressiveness, but I was also afraid of being made into something I wasn't. I mean, when you're in this business, you're a commodity. I had managers that would decide who I would be. One manager had the idea that would be a combination of Carol Channing, Marcel Marceau and Charlie Chaplin. I got sent to the hairdressers and I got dressed a certain way, had to go out with certain people and couldn't hang out in the jazz joints that I always did. I got a contract to sign for MGM, but I was supposed to play, you know, tootsies under the table before I could sign the contract. I became a very distorted creature. It was a desper-

ateness and a real desolateness and I wasn't an expert at taking care of myself. I lived too hard.

I never wanted to get married. I never saw myself in that position. My career had really been snowballing, but it also had a tremendous amount of hard knocks: it was a very vicious profession. I was getting a little evil and paranoid and I didn't like myself too much. I was at a low ebb. A man came along and said, "I'll take care of you, because if I don't, you'll die." Well, I believed it!

He was an artist, a painter. We had children right away and moved to the country, and led a very creative life. Four years after I got married, I went back to dancing under great duress. It was never really possible to dance when I was married. I would get terrible migraines because the hassle at home was so great. I

did start working with a composer, doing avant-garde things. I enjoyed what I did with him very much. We did some good work, but I wasn't having a career. I was home with my children, farming, loading manure, feeding the pigs and watching my husband paint. He really made a point that I couldn't bring money into the house. I'd make \$25 and he'd say, "Well, I can make \$25 in five minutes. It takes you three days, so why bother!" I didn't think that, well, I'm making that now, later I'll make a little more. I accepted that small position, saying that it's true. Yet, we led a very interesting life—insulated but interesting. I don't resent it for a minute. I think I would have, if, when we got divorced, I hadn't had all those years of training and found myself with nothing. I did have my career before. I had something!

I never in my wildest dreams thought of picking up my career again, or ever thought I wasn't at the end of it. I was 34–35, that, for a dancer is old. The things that have opened up and what life has taught me since, have shocked me so much I still can't believe it! I finally feel strong enough to deal with that push-pull foxtrot affair with success. I wouldn't be gobbled up. I do feel that my time has come. I'm definitely on that plane.



*Brenda Bufalino*

# Not a Nice The Return of

## REFERENDUM TABLE OF DEPARTMENTS

### Basin of Seine

- 1 Seine
- 2 Seine-et-Oise
- 3 Seine-et-Marne
- 4 Seine-et-Normandie
- 5 Eure
- 6 Eure-et-Loire

## BERENICE REYNAUD

1958, 1959, 1960.... IN PARIS, General de Gaulle institutes the Fifth Republic and organizes a referendum to end the Algerian war. At home, the political situation is much discussed, and De Gaulle is presented as a "crypto-communist" who is "selling out" our colonies. My mother is no less virulent than my father, and I admire her political clarity, the firmness of her belief, her determination....

But today she is nothing but sweetness. It is summertime in a small French village, the air smells of fresh grass and wild flowers, and we are walking hand in hand in a cemetery. The memory of this sun-drenched afternoon is blurred; I was a little girl. We had come to attend the burial of a neighbor of my grandmother's. But how did we happen to be strolling along after the ceremony? Alone together. Complicity. Bliss, Happiness....

Hand in hand with my mother—Mauricette Reynaud, Née Cartier. I'll call her Maury. Sensuous, a bit plump, brunette, large brown eyes, intelligent, energetic. Born 1913. Three years older than her husband. A bit too old when she had her first child. Married late, after my father's return from a POW camp. Remained childless for five years, crying, visiting gynecologist after gynecologist. There was nothing wrong with her. Maybe she didn't want to have children. *He* wanted some, and badly. So she had three. Me first, and two and a half years later, twin daughters. The

burden of this second and double motherhood destroyed her mental balance, and she gave way to hysterical tendencies. Years later, when she finally collapsed with a severe nervous breakdown, she would still deny there was anything wrong in her life: She was happy, she loved her husband, she loved her children, her situation was quite comfortable, she was just a bit "exhausted" by a bad flu and the amount of housework even the daily cleaning woman did not seem to alleviate.

She refused any psychoanalytical treatment, refused to break the appearance of satisfaction and wall of silence she had built around herself. She became a drug addict, her addiction created and encouraged by the doctors who could see no solution but tranquilizers. A classic case of what the French call *mauvaise foi*.

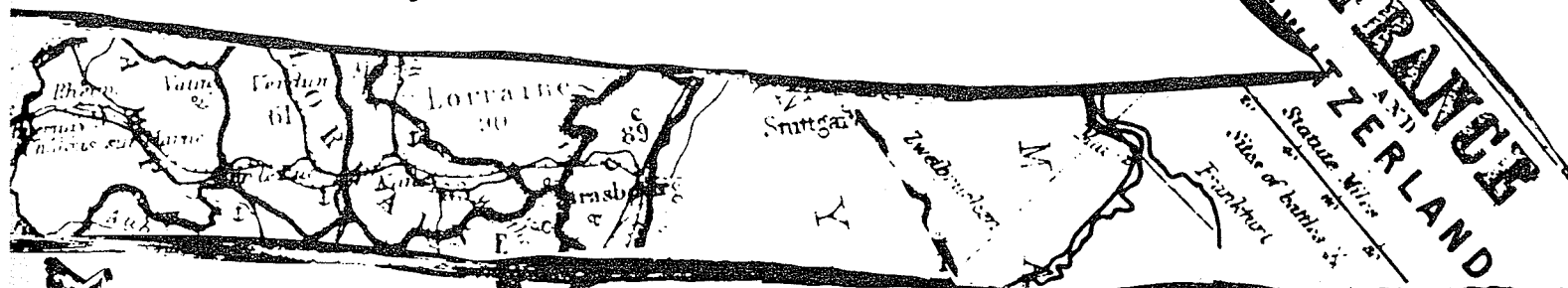
★ ★ ★

When I was born, Maury, who in her own words "had always considered motherly love the lowest form of animal instinct," discovered something unexpected. Pity I was a girl, I could have been her Savior as well as her Messiah. But, then, I could, at least, become what she had had neither the strength nor the opportunity to be. What that is exactly, I don't now, but I do know that it is not what I am. I should have been something else, should have achieved the "real life" that she had missed.

We were very close, Maury and I,



# Jewish girl: the Repressed



when I was an infant. She valued culture and verbal intelligence, so she taught me to read and write before other children. She talked to me as one adult to another, instead of feeding me baby-talk. She gave me the tools of my future development—my verbal skills, the very possibility of becoming an “intellectual” and a writer. What she had not bargained for was that one day I would use these skills for purposes other than those she had envisioned, and she must have felt completely betrayed.

★ ★ ★

My betrayal began on that sunny afternoon in the cemetery. I only realized it ten years later, when I finally talked to my father. But I betrayed her that day by not fully understanding what she meant to say.

I loved Maury passionately, more than I loved my remote and absent father. After his death, Maury told me that she had been “alone all her life”, adding, with her typical *mauvaise foi*, “except when your father was alive.” This was untrue. Maury was a loner, striving for a closeness with other human beings

she would not attain. She mistook the ecstatic experience of her first baby for such a closeness. She envisioned a world where the half-said would be fully understood. Instead, that afternoon on the cemetery, she entered a world of deception.

So she was talking to me with complete seriousness. She was putting her life story in my hands, as well as the story of three generations of women. She said she was partially Jewish on her mother’s side. But that I should not repeat it. Especially not in front of Daddy. Because it would not please him.

While the rest of that afternoon has more or less crumbled to dust, I have not forgotten those words. And like a cabbalist, I will probably spend the rest of my life deciphering them. For, as events were to prove, I must have misunderstood something. I too was imprisoned by a conception of human relationships based on total closeness, total transparency. I could not imagine, for example, that my father was ignorant of the “secret” with which I had just been entrusted. I thought he must know, but did not want it repeated. Why he wouldn’t want anyone else to know was a mystery to me. I may have mistaken this “secret” for some kind of “primal scene”—a knowledge shared by my parents alone, which I could now share, thanks to my mother’s generosity and confidence in me.

Nearly ten years later, fed up with the monotonous repetition of my father's antisemitism, I finally told him that his statements were in very poor taste, considering that "without a certain Jewish man his wife and daughters would not be alive today." He gave me a blank stare, and thought I was referring to Jesus Christ! I was thinking of Marx Lazare, Maury's great grandfather, who had arrived from Germany around 1840. I brushed away my father's pitiful argument that "Jesus Christ was not Jewish, since he was the son of God..." I mentioned Marx Lazare. I thought my father was upset to discover that I knew. In fact, he may very well have been upset to discover the fact itself. I never found out. I left home at seventeen after a terrible argument with him, and saw him only occasionally until his death in 1973. He was very fond of me, but we never managed to talk.

★ ★ ★

Maury was born in a small French town of 800 inhabitants. Her father, a surveyor, belonged to the local petty gentry. The landowners would invite him to hunting parties, but he did not make much money. My grandmother Marcell, *nee* Lazare, was born inside the brush factory built by her grandfather, Marx Lazare. He seems to have been a shrewd businessman. Readings and research in the history of female labor during the Industrial Revolution helped me figure out why he had chosen to locate his factory in this small peasant community. Women working in urban centers were indeed cheap, but you still had to pay them enough so that they could buy food at city prices. In the country, you had even cheaper labor—the clean, unsophisticated and undemanding daughters and wives of the local farm laborers, who lived at home and ate the products of their own gardens. It was a goldmine for a gifted entrepreneur who then marketed the products in Paris—only 80 miles away.

Since my mother had forbidden me to ever mention her Jewishness again, I have difficulty in reconstructing Marx Lazare's life. I saw only one photo of him—a tall black-bearded, imposing man with piercing eyes. That afternoon at the cemetery, Maury had described him as a free thinker, "which was very fashionable at the time." (For her, lack of religious feeling was a cardinal sin) Being "enlightened," he may have belonged to the German Jewish bourgeoisie. I know nothing about his family or where he came from. The only certainty is that he married a local peasant girl and had two sons. Maurice inherited the factory and married another gentle woman. He died of tuberculosis at 30, when my grandmother Marcelle, his

only child, was four. She was never sent to school but educated at home by private tutors. She lived with her mother and her mother's grandmother—a very devout Catholic. Marcelle remembered being afraid of Marx Lazare when she was little because he told her, "Your priests and all these people, they're telling you lies, you know."

At 19, an impoverished Marcelle passed an exam to become a postal clerk, but was rescued by Emile Cartier's courtship. They were married shortly before World War I; she became pregnant immediately with my mother, and had two boys shortly after. Maury grew up poor and respectable. She went to the village school, and later was sent to a Catholic boarding school nearby, where her schoolmates were of a very different stock. Daughters of the local landowners, they were bred to be married to landowners' sons. In their edu-

cation was invested the surplus value of the oldest form of capital in France: not stocks, bonds and factories, but arable land, cattle, fields, and forests, pre-Industrial Revolution capital, the owners of which are the most politically conservative, as well as the most antisemitic.

Later, when Maury could feel socially at ease thanks to her marriage, she insisted on spending every possible vacation in her mother's house, although they did not get along. She managed to introduce my father into the society of local landowners, to get him invited to their hunting parties and she often visited her former classmates in their mansions, dragging her three daughters along in her husband's convertible. The tea parties she attended were sweetly scented with re-

venge. She wanted to show that she "belonged" in the very territory where she had once been bitterly humiliated as a poor little Jewish girl.

This territory—the quiet splendor of Île de France, "the garden of France" celebrated by medieval writers—did not belong to our family. Marx Lazare was not only a foreigner, but a Jew. I do not know how his marriage with a local girl was arranged, but one thing is sure; he was rich, she was poor. He could "buy himself a wife." However, he had to capitulate on one point. He had to let her educate their sons as devout Catholics. Maybe he was in love with her, maybe she just got her own way, maybe he understood that you can't fight the tide. Maybe he even thought that marrying a Catholic girl would "wash away" his Jewishness and be good for business. Maurice, his older son, was also marked as a Jew. In spite of his fortune, he married a poor Catholic girl. No landowner would have given him his daughter.

For my mother and grandmother things were quite different. They were women, and they were poor. *Neither of them* managed to marry a man from the village or its immediate surroundings. Not only did the land not belong to them, they did not belong there. Exogamy in France is still rare. Recent statistics show that most people find a mate within 30 miles of their home. Marcelle married a man twelve years her senior who had recently arrived from northeast France. Maury remained

unmarried until age 32. In 1945, at the Liberation, she wed my father, whom she had met in Paris in the 1930s when they were student "pals." He probably would never have thought of marrying her had he not spent the better years of his youth in a German stalag. During the Occupation, nice young ladies became "war godmothers" and sent letters to comfort "our boys" in the camps. My father was only one of Maury's "God-sons." I don't know what happened between them, but finally Maury got what she wanted: a white wedding in the village church and a husband with "a position in life."

★ ★ ★

Was it the same day, the same afternoon, the same cemetery? Maury confided something else to me. She had loved another man before my father—the son of a local landowner. But he could not marry her because she was poor, and he did not want to "hurt" his

family. "Then he did not really love you, Mother," I said, trying to comfort her. I thought a man who had not loved my wonderful mother deeply enough to fight his family was unworthy of her; it was just as well she did not marry him. Besides wasn't father much better? Unfortunately, I don't think she did find father better at the time, and my childish attempt to comfort her was painful. She had expected my understanding and compassion for the loss of the great love of her life, but I did not give it to her.

I also blocked the message. What was she trying to tell me? Later, much later, too much later I started to put two and two together. It is indeed of no importance whether the first and second revelations took place at the same time and place. What counts is that they were designed to be read *together*, and for years I didn't do that.

The message, which articulated the "scene" of my parents' marriage, and

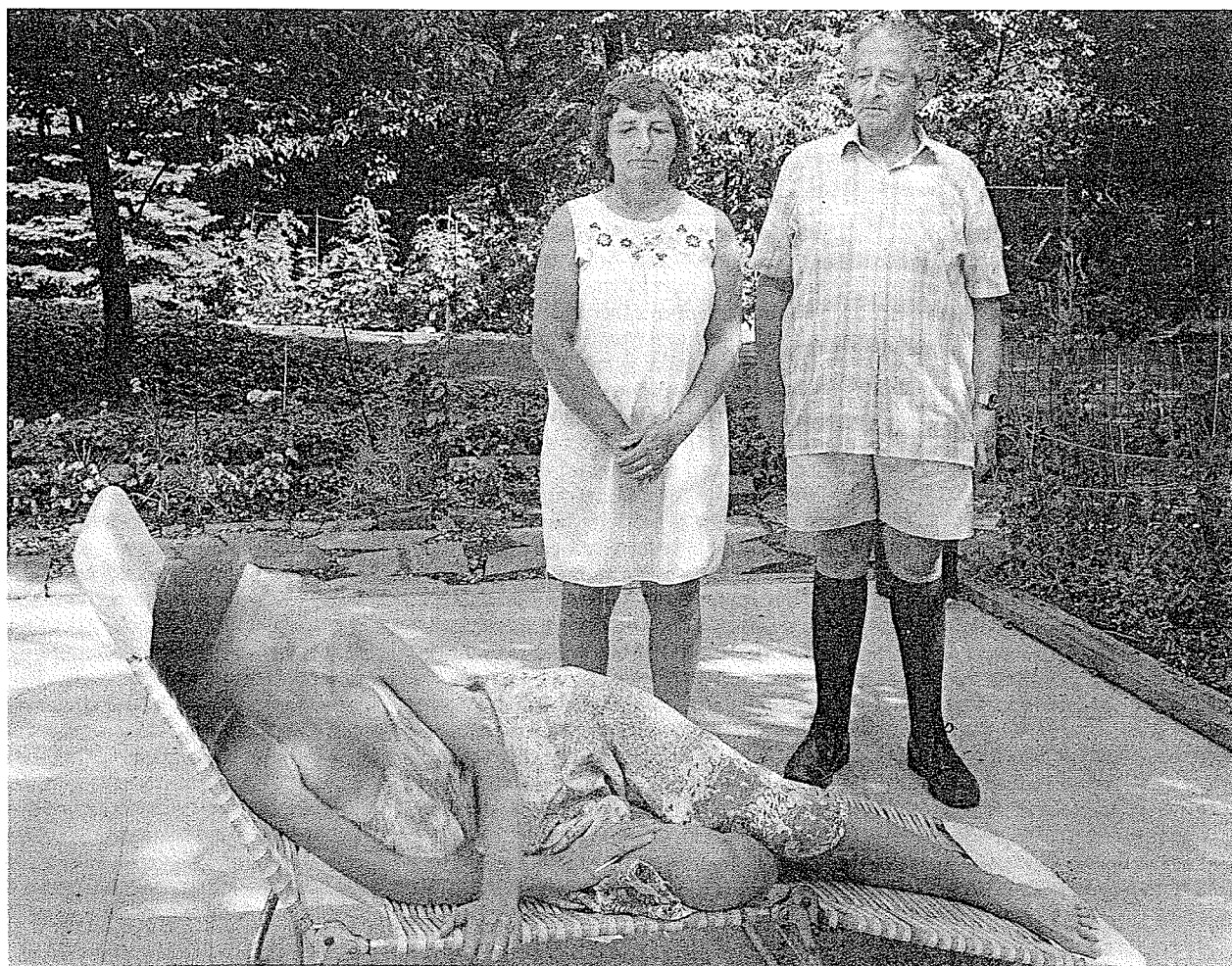
my mother's alienation in it, had several layers. First, Maury's first fiancé did not reject her only because she was poor, but because of her well-known Jewish background. Second, my father's family would not have approved of a semi-Jewish wife. There might have been something else, which frightens me so much that I barely dare facing it: had he known the truth, my father would have never married the grand-daughter of Maurice Lazare. Did I upset my parents' relationship by saying aloud what I knew of Maury's "dubious origin"—an expression used by French antisemites for people they suspect of not being 100% Aryan? What is the extent of my betrayal?

My father used to say to us, half seriously, half-joking: "If you ever marry an Englishman (he hated the English for obscure nationalistic reasons), a *Nègre* or a Jew, I'll never see you again." His antisemitism was a typical case of ideological reproduction. He had re-

---

Susan Eve Jahoda writes of her work:

*"Over the past two years I have been involved with making a series of images that inquire into family relationships. My purpose has been to explore the positions of individuals as members of a family, to represent them as links in a chain, each one separate and yet bound by defined roles. The images reproduced are part of a group of 18 mixed-media pieces originally conceived as part of an installation, based on my own family."*





ceived it from his upbringing as a young bourgeois, along with his education in a Jesuit college, his summer vacations at a beach house where his neighbors were the *jeunesse dorée* of Marseilles, the habit of being served by a maid; from his right-wing fellow students at an elite graduate school, his colleagues and business connections when he became an executive in a Merchant Marine company.

My father grew up in a world where things were in order; men were superior to women and *nègres*, who were a combination of monkeys and subhumans, sharing with women the same technical inability; Asiatics were cruel and not to be trusted in business; poor people deserved to be at the lower end of the social scale because of some congenital defect (stupidity, moral turpitude); and Jews were Jews, which was enough. His ideological statements were contradictory. He mistrusted the clergy but believed in god. One of his best friends was Jewish. He had particularly good relations with the Black sailors employed on the boats he managed, and he set up a pension system for the widows and children of the employees. He thought that Communism was a plague, but voted for Francois Mitterrand on a Socialist-Communist ticket to try to get rid of General de Gaulle. He favored the existence of Israel, hoping that "when all the Jews are put away there, they'll stop bothering us in our own countries," though I suspect that his hatred for Arabs played a significant role in this position.

Several factors determined the complex mixture of antisemitism, anti-democratism and nationalism that won over so many young French intellectuals in the thirties, when my parents met in Paris. My father was a good, uncomplicated student, without material prob-

lems, who was marginally attracted by the extreme right. Maury, on the contrary, struggled to survive and was enthusiastically studying too many things at once. Her intelligence in school had convinced the Sisters that she could achieve an academic career, so she went to the Sorbonne, but, for unclear reasons, she never managed to complete a degree. At the beginning of the war, she returned home and became a literature teacher—probably underpaid, due to her lack of degree—in the convent school where she had been educated. Summers, she tutored the daughters of the local landowners. She gladly gave up teaching when she married, striving to become a respectably idle bourgeois housewife. But I think she regretted it: she must have been an excellent teacher, and enjoyed her work.

She was even more passionately right-wing than my father. Her own father had been a convinced anti-Dreyfusard\*, and she explained proudly, "He thought that even if Dreyfus was innocent, the Socialists should not have soiled the honor of the Army as they did." What was in question was not Dreyfus' guilt, but the respect one pays to the Army's authority. But what nationalism can you expect from a Jew? Maury did not tell me her mother's opinion, but it is probable that she agreed with her husband, not only as a Christian, but also as a Jew. Sadly enough, the assimilated Jewish bourgeoisie was not pro-Dreyfus. Their discretion in the Affair may be explained by a natural desire to enjoy in peace their newly granted citizenship. In 1791, France had become the first European country to grant full citizenship to Jews, although the decrees were not fully enforced until 1830.

Marcelle's right-wing convictions reflected the plight of the once-rich, who feel they are above the populace and regret that democratic institutions give "those people" the same rights as themselves. As a *dame patronesse*, she did social work, taught catechism, and needlework to the children of farm laborers. Still social benefits were a plague, "encouraging the alcoholic and half-witted workers to make too many children." Once or twice, she came out in favor of sterilization for such unworthies. Maury agreed.

The key to the ideological apparatus of my mother and grandmother, however, was religion and a passionate



attachment to the land. Marx Lazare's Christian wife probably sought to redeem such an "unholy" marriage by making good Christians of her two boys. Since then, all the women on that side of my family have been pathologically, hysterically, religious. When I became an atheist at age fifteen, Maury had real fits, and "cried for me everytime she went to church." Her vision of the world was not less ordered than that of my father, but instead of being based on received ideas and simplistic manicheism, it was a theocratic order. Her royalism was not a youthful whim caught from brilliant right-wing students; she wanted the King back to restore a society where Church and State would not have diverging interests, where everybody would be rewarded and treated according to moral and spiritual values.

Maury's genuine love for the land was reinforced by a burning desire to find "roots" in an ancient and venerable peasant stock, whose blood and sweat have been feeding the French soil for centuries. Being idle and unsatisfied with her marriage she cultivated a collection of hobbies. Year after year she entered the competition organized by the magazine *Plaisir de France* on questions of French intellectual, artistic, or political history. She got involved in archeological excavations of the tomb of a Gallo-Roman chief near her native town, and, later, in the restoration of a flamboyant Gothic abbey.

Finally, she unraveled the genealogy of her family and my father's, although she was selective. On my father's side, she neglected the urban middle-class branches and discovered with delectation that there were still some Reynauds in a small village in the Lower Alps, raising goats and brewing a local wine. So her husband, too, was of peasant stock. On her side, she concentrated exclusively on the ancestors of her mother's mother, discovering a succession of small peasants who had inhabited the same forty square miles of land since the time of Louise XV.



Needless to say, she did not try to investigate her father's family and certainly not Marx Lazare's origins. What she wanted was to prove that she rightfully belonged to the land, to the village where she was born. She did not stop there. She established a certain matri-local power. Nine months out of twelve, she had to live in her husband's hometown, which she detested. But the other three months she insisted on spending with her children in her mother's house. My father had to join us during his month's vacation. In the village he was known as Miss Cartier's husband. She also convinced my father that he should be buried in her village graveyard, next to her father and her brother. This is where he rests, and Marcelle was buried there a few years later. As far as I know, Maury never put her husband's name on the tombstone. It is *her* territory, bought with a lifetime of alienation.

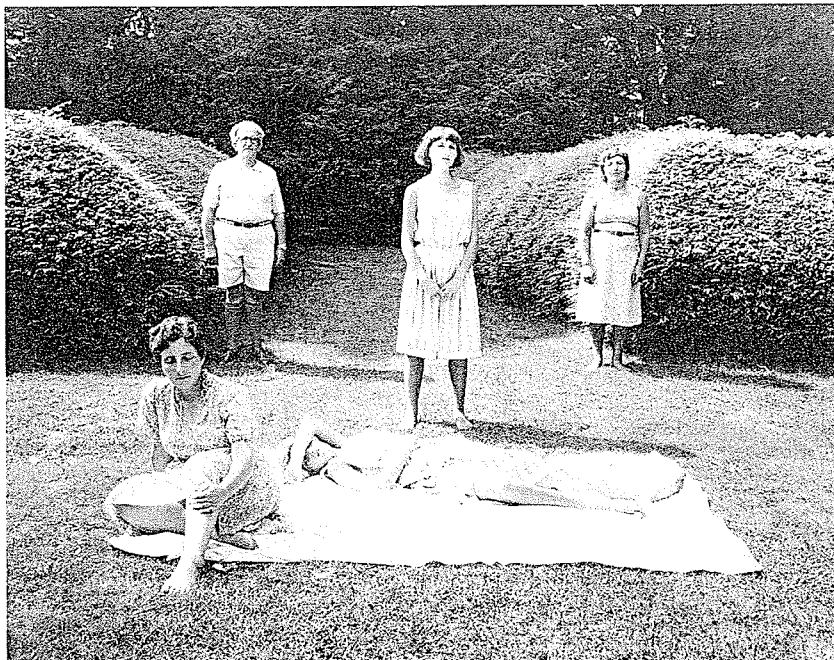
The two pillars of Maury's ideology were intrinsically linked: "I don't ask myself such questions! I have the simple faith of the old women in my village!" she said, bursting out into tears when I confided to her my first metaphysical doubts. I was puzzled, and Maury was starting to lose her grasp on me. She had fought against my father's anti-clericalism to have her daughters educated in an ultra-sophisticated Jesuit school. The theology I was taught there had nothing to do with the simple faith of a peasant, and we were even encouraged to doubt: "Who has never doubted has the faith of a child. An adult's faith is one who has overcome doubt." To prove to God how much I loved him, I decided to doubt as much as I could. I probably hoped to please Maury too. Her unexpected reaction filled me with a suspicion stronger than my metaphysical anxieties: no matter what I did or thought, I could probably never please her.

God, the King, the land: in short, Maury was reproducing the ideology of the very people who had rejected her: the landowners. She could have succeeded: she was so convinced that it was what she believed, what she always wanted to believe. There was just

one thing wrong in the picture. Traditionally, one of the cornerstones of this ideology has been antisemitism.

★ ★ ★

1963, 1964, 1965... Monotonous dinners at home. Agamemnon and Clytemnestra listen to the news, then talk politics. Electra sulks in a corner. Little Sisters, being twins, don't care much for the rest of the world. Then Agamemnon decides to talk about his day at work: "I was looking through the files of our employees and I see that somebody in the Company is called 'Rosenvallon' (Rose in the Valley) and I think:



Susan Eve Jahoda

what a beautiful name! And then, I realize "Rosenvallon is the translation of Rosenthal. This guy's a Jew!" Clytemnestra (icily): "I respect a Jew who has the courage of showing himself as a Jew. But these people who try to deceive others by changing their names are *really* despicable!"

Another day, Agamemnon tells a joke: "There's a shop with the inscription 'Abraham Isaac, Ice Creams. On the door, there is a poster: Forbidden to Jews. Levy passes down the street, looks at the inscription, the poster, and puzzled, enters the shop. Hey, he says to the shopowner why did you put Forbidden to Jews on your door? Abraham Isaac answers (fake yiddish accent): 'Have you tasted my ice-creams?' Electra: 'I don't understand.'" Agamemnon (annoyed because nobody's laughing): "His ice-creams were so *bad* that he only wanted Christians to eat them. Clytem-

nestra (dogmatic) "Usually, when people put Forbidden to Jews on their shops, it is because they don't like Jews."

Sometimes, Agamemnon feels historical: he quotes the Bible to prove that the Jews are indeed the worm that introduced evil into the heart of humanity: "Who started the first wars? The Jews. When they arrived in Canaan, they wiped out all the resident populations. And remember all their battles against Babylon." He cannot, however, prevent Clytemnestra, who is much better read in ancient history, from combatting his argument with a flood of erudition: the

Sumerians, Gilgamesh, Assurbanipal, Hamurabi, and illustrious others are mentioned in a turmoil of dates and archaeological data to prove that the invention of war should not be included in the endless list of Israel's sins. She will never get to the point, though. We'll never know what she was feeling *then*.

When I talk of alienation, daily repression, slow death, I remember my father at the dinner table, and the sum of these vulgar, ridiculous, banal small talks, Maury, that you were forced to listen to. You were not in trouble during the German occupation, no SS stopped in front of your house, you were such a good Christian. And then,

twenty years later, everything came pouring out of you: your hysteria, your chronic depressions, your nervous breakdowns, your permanent unhappiness. How did you find the pitiful courage to hide your feelings, to lie, day after day, to the people around you? But also, why did you not keep completely silent? Why did you have to tell *me*? Did you want to make me as unhappy as you were? Or did you expect me to do something else, something better than you, with this knowledge?

I never had right-wing friends, I never married an antisemite, but I have never been comfortable as to when and how to talk about my long-lost Jewish origin. Throughout the years, I have discovered a new area of uncertainty: the question of how Jewish I am.

Although I am only 1/16 Jewish by blood, perhaps the permanence of antisemitism makes it a moral duty for me

to claim my Jewishness. I know, however, that the truth is more obscure. Having three generations of Christians behind me, having spent twelve years in a convent school, I have no Jewish identity; the first definitions of Jewishness I have ever heard were *from the outside*.

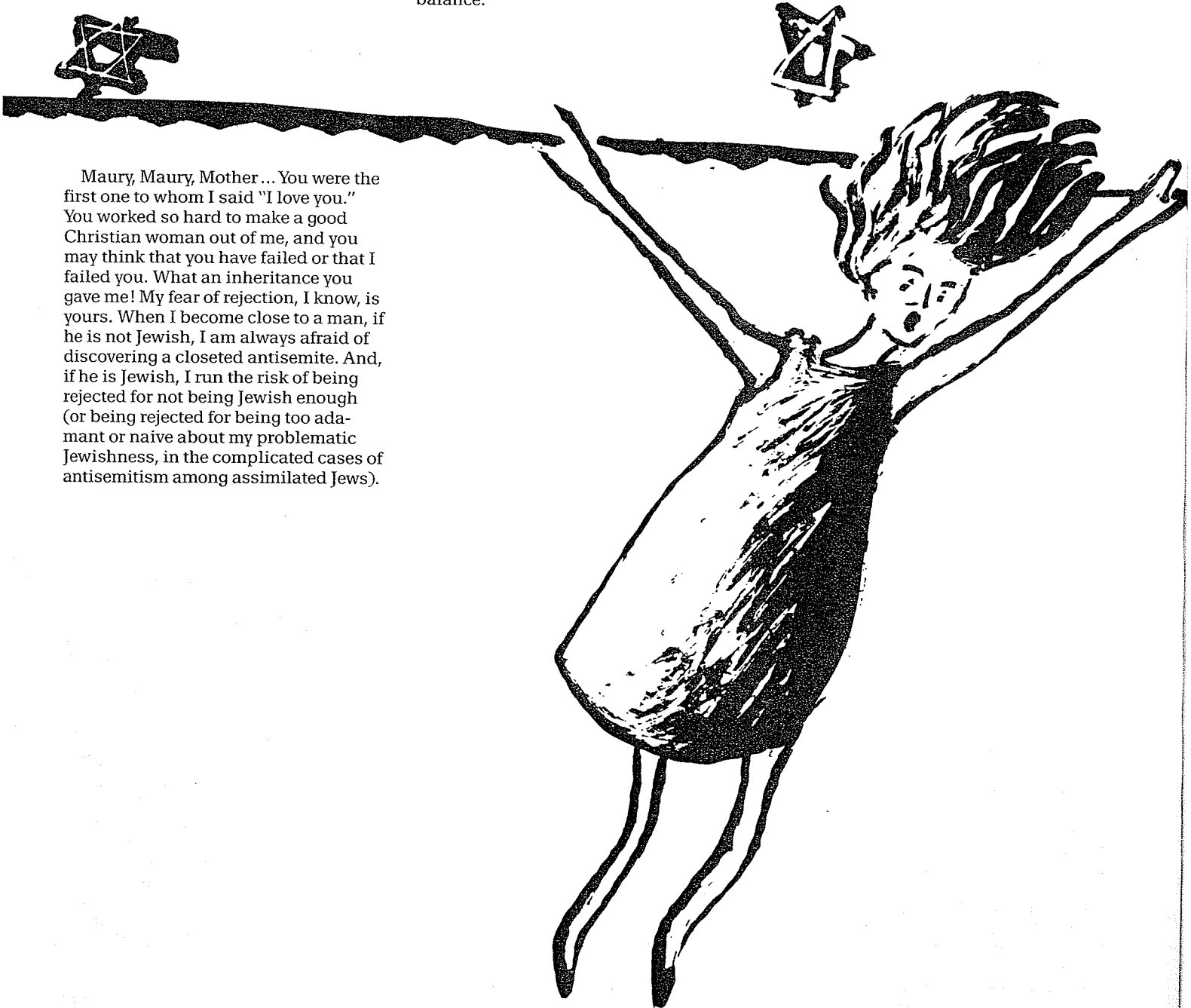
When talking about Jews my mother said "they." I can't and I won't. But I can't say "we" either. So the only thing left for me was to say "you"—as in "I love you." Looking back, I realize that I had fallen in love with, had crushes on, slept with, lived with, had wonderful friendships with, married, been psychoanalyzed by, Jewish men. Not exclusively, but they are a majority.

This fear is connected to that fact that in a man, especially in a Jewish man, I unconsciously seek my promised land, a territory where I could belong. A sweet, intoxicating, dangerous illusion...

Maury was striving for an identity as solid as iron and as compact as stone because she believed in the traditional values of a patriarchal society. A society that exchanges women as commodities and assigns a label to each of them. A society based on the respect of boundaries, races, nations, and tribes. From the point of view she adopted, her case was hopeless, and she made the best of it—at the expense of her personal happiness and emotional balance.

She believed in a closed, stable world, a world without forgiveness, a theocratic fortress. She used to quote the Bible: "The fathers ate sour grapes, and the sons' teeth are irritated." All her life she had ruminated the bitter taste in her mouth, forcing herself to smile until she couldn't take it anymore. There is a deadly courage, a real greatness in her attitude. Then comes a day when the daughters decide to spit the sour grapes on the ground and break the wall of silence. For the better or the worse. At least, for a long-awaited change...

Maury, Maury, Mother... You were the first one to whom I said "I love you." You worked so hard to make a good Christian woman out of me, and you may think that you have failed or that I failed you. What an inheritance you gave me! My fear of rejection, I know, is yours. When I become close to a man, if he is not Jewish, I am always afraid of discovering a closeted antisemite. And, if he is Jewish, I run the risk of being rejected for not being Jewish enough (or being rejected for being too adamant or naïve about my problematic Jewishness, in the complicated cases of antisemitism among assimilated Jews).





## Notes on the text, France, and antisemitism

**1** This fairy tale is so much about the mother-child relationship that I cannot help retelling it here. Once upon a time, there was a blonde fairy with hair so silky and so long that it flowed down her back to the floor like a veil. She was immortal, being a fairy, but had married a man, a mortal. Her infant son, therefore, was mortal too. She went to consult an old wizard who told her that if she wanted to ensure immortality to her son, she should tie a thread to his wrist and keep

tells the plight of a poor young rabbinical student who emigrates from Russia to New York at the turn of the century and eventually becomes a wealthy clothes manufacturer. The novel, currently out of print, was extremely influential in helping define the specific problems in the assimilation of orthodox Jews.

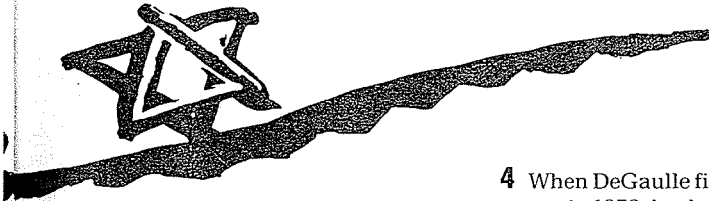
**3** During WWII, the French fleet was anchored in North Africa, at Mers-el-Kebbie. After the capitulation of the French army, the English, to prevent the Germans taking the fleet, destroyed it completely. This was viewed as an act of "atrocious" aggression by a part of French nationalistic opinion.

ing considering that Colonel Henri, Dreyfus's main accuser, had been arrested, had admitted his forgery, and had committed suicide. Finally, to appease the "dreyfusards", President Loubet "pardoned" Dreyfus in late 1899. But the poor Captain had to wait until 1906 to be judicially cleared. The "affaire Dreyfus" literally divided France in two factions and revived a strong current of antisemitism.

**6** "Dame patronesse": Lady from a good family, usually very devout and a bit narrow-minded, who spends her free time in various charitable activities. In spite of her impoverishment, my grandmother never worked, and, due to the cheapness and availability of female labor in the countryside, she had a maid, Juliette (hired in her mother's house as a teenager) nearly all her life. When Juliette died, she was replaced by a succession of cleaning ladies paid by my Mother with my Father's money.

**7** Jesuit schools are usually for young men only. However, thanks to the bequest of a French scientist, Mr. Chevreul, there are three Jesuit schools for women in France. They are run by nuns in civilian costumes, and are attached to the Jesuit order.

**8** These represent not, alas, a poetic reconstruction, but, in their plain vulgarity, three "arguments" that come to memory when I think of this time.



the other end of the thread in her hand. And this she eventually did. But the son grew up to be an adolescent, then a man, and the more he grew the more he found the thread too tight and too short. So his mother cut, one by one, her long hairs to add to the first thread, until the son could go to the other end of the universe. He finally became a sailor, and found himself one day by an unknown sea. "I want to go there, Mother", he said. But the fairy could not add another hair to the thread because she was now bald. So, the son, angry, broke the thread on his wrist, sailed on the unknown sea, and was drowned in a tempest. One can still see the fairy's hair flow through the sky in autumn. (I am retelling the story from memory).

**2** Abraham Cahan's novel, *The Rise of David Levinsky* (Grosset and Dunlap, New York, 1917)

**4** When DeGaulle first came to power in 1958, he thought it was still possible to keep Algeria a French territory, and he gave a famous speech, in which he celebrated a "France from Dunkerque—North of France—to Tamanhrasset—South of Algeria."

**5** In 1894, French-Jewish Army Captain Alfred Dreyfus was charged with espionage, sentenced on very slight evidence and deported to Devil's Island. The "Affaire" started when some people, including Dreyfus's brother, Mattieu, Bernard Lazare and Emile Zola, brought to the attention of the public the fact that some of the "proofs" against Dreyfus had been forged by some important members of the Army General Staff. Dreyfus was court-martialed a second time in 1899 and found guilty again. That was surpris-

---

Bérénice Reynaud is a writer and arts administrator living in New York City. Her work has been extensively published in French and English. She tries to keep herself bilingual, which is hard, since women are "naturally" excluded from language (Which language has she been excluded from, she asks?).

Illustration art by Nicky Lindeman, an artist and graphic designer. She is a designer for Gallery and Fact magazines and has exhibited her work in New York.

Susan Eve Jahoda is a visual artist living in New Jersey.

# Messages

from the Catholic Church,  
*through the lives of the saints, to young  
 girls and their mothers regarding  
 sex, child molestation, rape,  
 incest and the defense  
 of virginity and  
 The Faith ...*

## ST. REGINA

VIRGIN AND MARTYR

The life of this saint is shrouded in obscurity; all that we know about her is found in the Acts of her martyrdom. She was born in the 3rd century in Alise, the ancient Alesia where two hundred years earlier Vercingetorix had fought so valiantly against Caesar. Her mother died at her birth, and her father, a prominent pagan citizen, entrusted the child to a Christian nurse who baptized her.

When he learned of this fact, the father flew into a rage and repudiated his own daughter. Regina then went to live with her nurse, who possessed little means. The girl helped out by tending sheep where she communed with God in prayer and meditated on the lives of the saints.

In 251, at the age of fifteen, she attracted the eye of a man called Olybrius, the prefect of Gaul, who determined to have her as his wife. He sent for the girl and discovered that she was of noble birth and of the Christian faith. Chagrined, he attempted to have her deny her faith, but the saintly maiden resolutely refused and also spurned his proposal to marriage. Thereupon, Olybrius had her thrown into prison.

Regina remained incarcerated, chained to the wall, while Olybrius went to ward off the incursions of the barbarians. On his return, he found the saint even more determined to refuse to sacrifice to idols and to preserve her vow of virginity. In a rage, he had recourse to whippings, scorchings, burning pincers, and iron combs—all to no avail as the grace of God sustained the saint. All the while, she continued to praise God and defy Olybrius. In the end, her throat was severed and she went forth to meet her heavenly Bridegroom.

*Prepared by Mary Moran, a New York artist and parochial school graduate.*



## ST. AGNES

VIRGIN AND MARTYR

PATRON OF THE CHILDREN OF MARY

St. Agnes suffered martyrdom during the bloody persecution of the Emperor Diocletian around 304 at the age of thirteen and became one of the best known and most highly regarded of the Roman martyrs. Her name is still retained in the First Eucharistic Prayer for Holy Mass.

The Acts of her Passion, which date back only to the 5th century, are considered to be not entirely reliable but they do tell us something about her. The young noblemen of Rome, attracted by her wealth and beauty, vied with one another in endeavoring to obtain her hand in marriage, but she refused them all, saying that she had chosen a Spouse who could not be seen with mortal eyes. Her suitors, in hope of shaking her constancy, accused her of being a Christian. She was brought before a judge and remained unswayed by either his kindness or his threats. Fires were kindled, instruments of torture were placed before her eyes, but immovable in her constancy, she surveyed them with heroic calmness. She was sent to a house of prostitution, but the sight of her inspired such awe that not one of the wicked youths of the city dared approach her. One, bolder than the others, was suddenly struck with blindness and fell trembling.

The youthful saint came forth from this den of infamy uncontaminated in mind and body, and still a pure spouse of Christ. The most prominent among her suitors was now so enraged that he incited the judge still more against her. The heroic Virgin was condemned to be beheaded. "She went to the place of execution, says St. Ambrose, "more cheerfully than others go to their wedding."

Amid the tears of the spectators the instrument of death fell, and she went to meet the Immortal Spouse whom she had loved better than her life. She was buried on the Via Nomentana, and Constantine erected a church in her honor.



## ST. DYMPHNA

VIRGIN AND MARTYR

PATRONESS OF THE MENTALLY ILL

St. Dymphna was born in the 7th century. Her father, Damon, a chieftain of great wealth and power, was a pagan. Her mother was a very beautiful and devout Christian.

Dymphna was fourteen when her mother died. Damon is said to have been afflicted with a mental illness, brought on by his grief. He sent messengers throughout his own and other lands to find some woman of noble birth, resembling his wife, who would be willing to marry him. When none could be found, his evil advisers told him to marry his

own daughter. Dymphna fled from her castle together with Saint Gerebran, her confessor, and two other friends.

Damon found them in Belgium. He gave orders that the priest's head be cut off. Then Damon tried to persuade his daughter to return to Ireland with him. When she refused, he drew out his sword and struck off her head. She was only fifteen years of age then.

Dymphna received the crown of martyrdom in defense of her purity about the year 620. She is the patron of those suffering from nervous and mental afflictions. Many miracles have taken place at her shrine, built on the spot where she was buried in Gheel, Belgium.

Reference Source  
*Lives of the Saints*, revision of  
 the original edition of Rev.  
 Hugo Hoever, S.O.Cist., Ph.D.,  
 Catholic Book Publishing,  
 New York, 1977.

## ST. SOLANGE

VIRGIN AND MARTYR  
 INVOKED IN TIME OF DROUGHT

St. Solange, the patroness of the province of Berry in France, was born at Villemont near Bourges in the 9th century. After the example of her poor but devout parents, the child was deeply religious and at the age of seven she is said to have taken a vow of chastity.

As she grew up, she was given the task of looking after the family sheep, and she obtained a great affinity for and power over animals. This saintly virgin also was endowed with the power of healing and effected many cures of the sick. Her fame spread throughout the country and everyone became aware of her beauty and holiness.

One day about the year 880, while she was tending her flock, one of the sons of the Count of Poitiers named Bernard approached and made advances toward her. Her resistance only served to inflame the attacker all the more, and he attempted to set her on the horse he was riding. Calling forth all her strength, the young girl twisted free and slid off the horse but was seriously injured by the fall. Driven by a demonic fury, the youth then thrust his sword into her, killing her on the spot.

In 1281, an altar was erected in her honor in the cemetery of the Church of St. Martin-du-Cros, as a result of the legend which said that St. Solange had arisen after being stabbed and carried her head in her hands up to that church.



*Devotional paintings by Joni Wehrli, an artist living in New York. Top left: Virgin of the Rocks, 1985. Lower left: St. Veronica, 1983. Top right: Venus Reclining in her Shell, 1985. Lower right: Annunciation, 1984-85. All paintings: acrylic on wood panel.*



©1985, Joni Wehrli. Photo: Ross Andelman.

## ST. MARIA GORETTI

VIRGIN AND MARTYR  
 PATRONESS OF YOUTH

St. Maria Goretti, called by Pope Pius XII "the Saint Agnes of the 20th century," was born on a small farm near Ancone, Italy, in 1890. The third of seven children, she was in the words of her mother, "happy, good, open-hearted, without whim, but with a sense and seriousness beyond her years, and never disobedient." Her father died when she was nine, and Maria helped out with the younger children and the housework while her mother ran the farm. She received First Communion at eleven and strove with all her strength to do better each day.

Six months later, this heroic maiden was severely tried for her faith. The Goretti family shared a home with the partner of their father and his son, Alexander, a wicked-minded youth who began making sinful advances toward Maria. She repelled them immediately but said nothing about them for he threatened to kill her and her mother if she did. Finally, lust drove the tragic Alexander to attack outright, but again the saint resisted him with all her strength, crying out repeatedly. "No, it's a sin! God does not want it!" Whereupon, the attacker, overwhelmed by fear and anger, began to strike at her blindly with a long dagger, and several blows passed clear through her body.

St. Maria was rushed to the hospital at Nettuno and the surgeons worked feverishly to save her life, but soon it became evident that nothing could be done. The next morning she was given Communion, but first queried about her attitude toward Alexander. She replied clearly that she forgave him, that she would pray for his repentance, and that she hoped to see him in heaven. On July 6, 1902, this saintly maiden died and went to meet her heavenly Spouse for whose love she had been willing to give her life.

On July 25, 1950, she was raised to sainthood, with her mother, brothers, and sisters present, a unique event in the history of the Church. By that time her prayers for her murderer had long since been heard and answered. After serving eight years of imprisonment, Alexander had a change of heart; released for good behavior after twenty-seven years, he hastened to beg forgiveness of the saint's mother and then became a Capuchin lay-brother, who gave evidence at the canonical enquiry about Blessed Maria and lived to see her canonized.



# Me and the TV Stars

LESLIE SIMON

*from Jazz is for white girls, too*

When I was 8 years old, a girl on the block told me I looked like Rosemary Clooney and I was glaaaaad because I thought she was beautiful and sang real good. Hit Parade.

And everyone else liked Geeeeee-zelle McKenzie the best because she was more beautiful but I always liked the ones people felt a little sorry for. Could not STAND Annette Funicello—everybody talking about how sweet she was. I knew she wasn't.

So when the grown-ups had a talent show, me and 2 girl friends signed up for a singing trio spot. The guys in the band laughed at our 8-year-old selves and said they didn't know how they could accompany us but when we started blowing

"Come on-a my house

My house come on-a"

they knew just what to do and did what I didn't know then was called improvising.

They did fine—made me happy. We were good and I stood in the middle because it was my idea and I looked like Rosemary Clooney.



A few weeks ago I heard about her now being 47 years old and her coming back after being 200 pounds and hallucinating and my 8-year-old self shivered. "I don't want that to happen to me." And my 28-year-old self wondered at women losing themselves to drugs, to food, to alcohol, to madness over and over again. So hard for women to be healthy when they're good. Women aren't supposed to be smart or write books or get famous.

All those suicides.

All those lost lives.

And there was Rosemary Clooney staring out of a picture that said she said she lost 65 of the 80 pounds she gained. O! but she was different, her hands folded and her legs crossed like we were supposed to do in kindergarten and her face smiling.

Was she happy now?

Leslie Simon's most recent book, *High Desire* (Wingbow Press) is about female sexuality. She teaches Women's Studies at City College of San Francisco.

Opposite: Patricia Jones is a poet, art reviewer, performance artist, program coordinator of the Poetry Project at St. Mark's, and the former managing coordinator for Heresies. She is the author of *Mythologizing, Alwas* (Telephone Books, 1981, Guilford, Ct.).



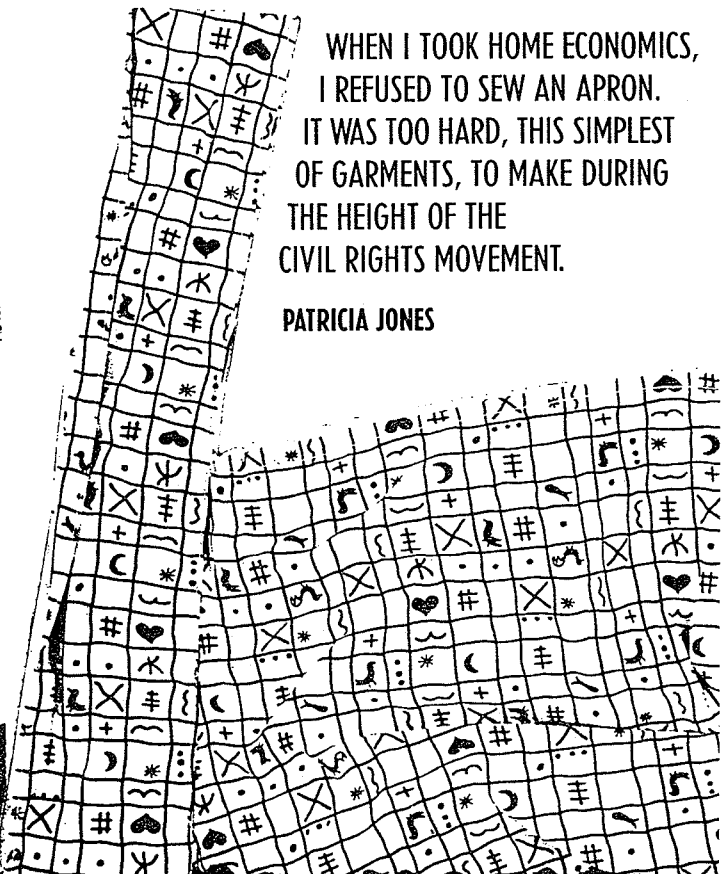
## Mammies

BLACK TV MAIDS WORE APRONS, TOO. THEY TOOK THEIR CUE FROM BERNICE, THE CHARACTER PLAYED BY ETHEL WATERS IN **A MEMBER OF THE WEDDING**. BERNICE WAS THE ULTIMATE IN LIBERAL MAMMYDOM. SHE TAKES GOOD CARE OF HER WHITE CHARGES, YET GETS TO TALK ABOUT HER HOPES AND FRUSTRATIONS. GOOD FOR HER. TV MAIDS DID NOT HAVE TO ROLL THEIR EYES. THEY COULD BE BOTH JOLLY AND DIGNIFIED. BUT LIKE THEIR MOVIE PREDECESSORS, THEY TOO WERE STERILE, NEVER, NO CHILDREN BORN FROM THEIR WOMBS.

BLACK WOMEN LIKE MY RELATIVES WHO WORKED AS MAIDS WOULD NOT WEAR APRONS WHEN CLEANING THEIR OWN HOMES. THEY WORE HOUSEDRESSES AND FLAT, INEXPENSIVE HOUSE SHOES, TIED UP THEIR HAIR IN BRIGHT BANDANNAS OR BLACK HAIR NETS. SMALL REBELLION. THESE WOMEN, MOTHERS THEMSELVES, PASSED ON THEIR HOPES AND FRUSTRATIONS.

WHEN I TOOK HOME ECONOMICS, I REFUSED TO SEW AN APRON. IT WAS TOO HARD, THIS SIMPLEST OF GARMENTS, TO MAKE DURING THE HEIGHT OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT.

PATRICIA JONES





## Motherlove

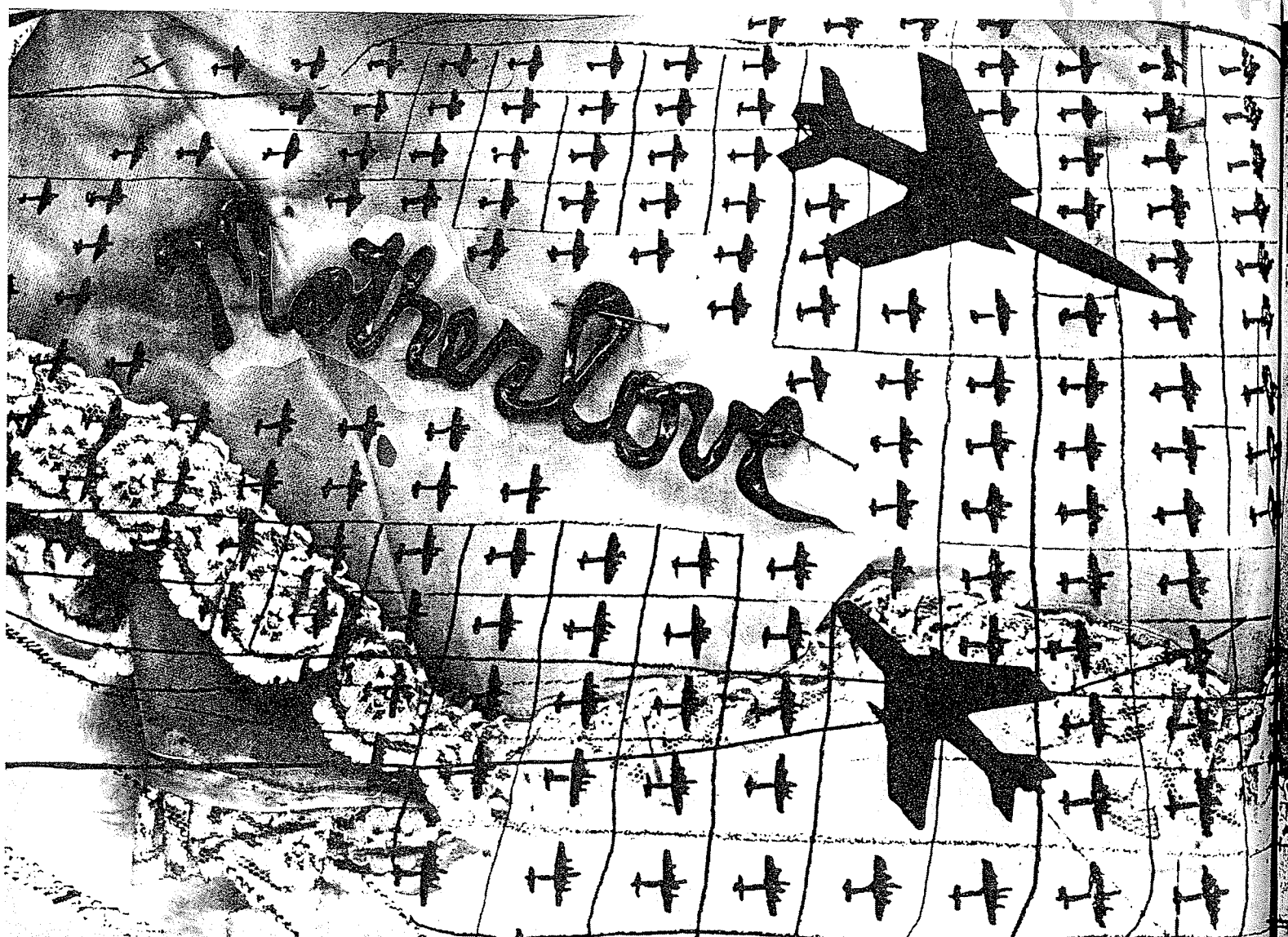


In the middle to the late 1940s, during World War II, my mother was an aeronautical engineer. Designer of jet engines. She started as a draftsman for Westinghouse at the age of 18, while putting herself through N.Y.U. By the end of her sophomore year, she completed every science, math and engineering course they had to offer and left school to be a designer. Somewhere I have a picture of her sitting in front of an incredibly complicated-looking machine that she once told me was her invention.

From there she went on to design airplane engines. She loved flying and was going to flying school to get

her pilot's license when the F.B.I. came and told her to stop. They didn't tell her she couldn't design airplanes ... just that she would never be allowed to fly them. After all, she was German born ... and this was wartime.

In 1947, she married my father, a chemist, and continued to work for a short while. When my father decided that he wanted to work outdoors, they moved to a logging camp in Maine. I was born there in 1948. My father was drafted in 1951 and decided to make the Marine Corps his career. Thereafter life was a series of moves from military base to trailer camp to housing project. My mother stopped work-





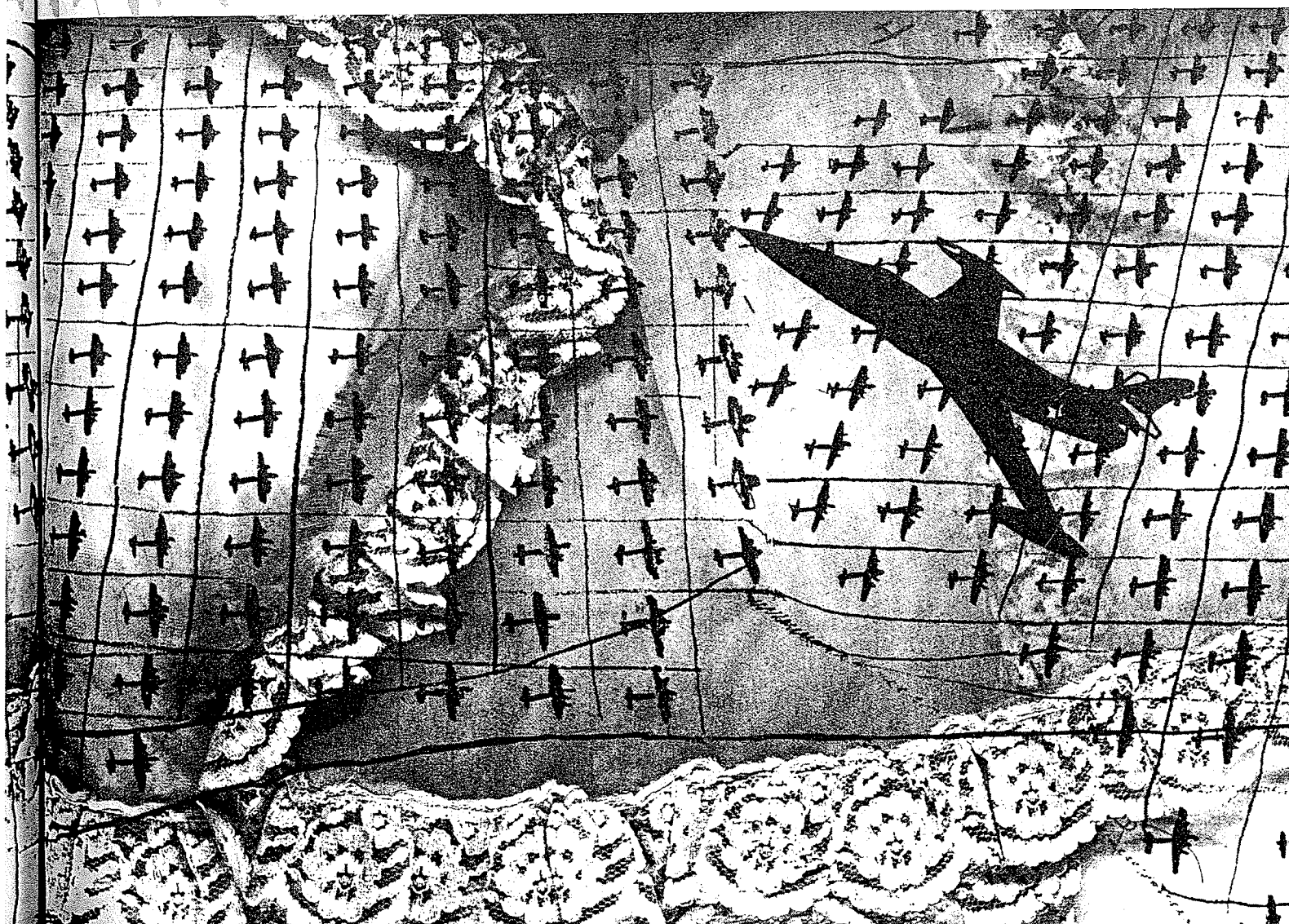
ing outside the house until I was 12. At that point, my father was shipped overseas and we went to live, my mother, my brother and I, with my grandparents. Mother went to work as a secretary for Phelps Dodge Copper Company. She had a gentleman caller. Went to the opera on Friday nights. Took my brother and I into the city on an occasional Saturday for a movie or museum. She seemed happy but it was a little hard for me to tell because we didn't get along very well. We had a history of never knowing what the other was feeling until it was too late.


After about a year and a half, my

father came home, and mother quit her job. A couple of days after she quit, as we were packing to go south, some management people came from Phelps Dodge and offered her a position of immense responsibility at a salary about five times what my father was making.

She turned it down. Years later, she told me that she didn't want to make more money than my father. Years later, I began to obsess about the clothes, toys, schooling and god knows what else I had done without because "A wife should never earn more than her husband. It's not good for his ego."

Sandra De Sando and Sharon Demarest are artists working in Brooklyn, NY. They worked collaboratively making bookworks for two years.





# WAR, WOMEN, AND *Lipstick*

## FAN MAGS IN THE FORTIES

• • • • •  
BY JANE GAINES

The fan mags of the 1940s claimed to Tell All about the stars' intimate lives, but their real subject was their readers' intimate problems. They differed from the old scandal-hungry "fanzines" of the '20s and '30s, which had helped to lure audiences back into movie theatres when business fell off just before the Talkies. Around the mid-'30s, fan-mag gossip, in addition to motion pictures themselves, came under the surveillance of the Federal Production Code. Hollywood studios kept close watch for potentially libelous or unfavorable stories by blacklisting writers through the Hays Office and checking copy before it went to print.

After 1935, when the major fan magazine publishers moved their offices from New York to Hollywood, stories became tame and preachy.<sup>1</sup> In 1939, *Glamour of Hollywood* became *Glamour* and in 1944, *Stardom* became *Seventeen*.<sup>2</sup> During the war years, star gossip thus became a glitzy sheen over this new hybrid product—daughter of the romance-confession magazine and the fashion-beauty guide. The largest-circulation fan magazines, published by MacFadden, Fawcett, and Dell, were designed to

"discover" the working-class woman consumer and to deliver her to the advertisers. Because these magazine test vehicles responded rapidly to readers' interests and went quickly in and out of print, they offer clues to patterns in working-class women's consciousness, to the way class differences affected gender differentiation and the way history further deflects social distinctions.

Fan magazines during the war years used stars to lend credibility to advertisers' claims and to define "respectability" for their readers. Why were Hollywood stars—synonymous with vulgarity and sex scandal during the '20s and '30s—suddenly representative of taste, breeding, and propriety? The archetypal star success story began with the small-town girl who lived above a dime store in a tiny but neat and clean apartment with a single potted plant in a tin can on the fire escape. Her Hollywood initiation included the improvement of her grammar and diction. For working-class fans, becoming a star meant social mobility. The fan magazines doted on women like Joan Crawford, who had so thoroughly "bettered" themselves.

tion," models for fashionable spending in a society that had evolved from a production to a consumption economy.<sup>4</sup> Yet in the fan magazines, consumption idolatry on the scale of swimming pools and limousines was discouraged. During the war years, the Hollywood poolside and nightclub life style was unpopular not only because luxury goods were unavailable, but also because extravagance was unpatriotic. Stars, incredibly, were recast as models of practicality, constraint and thrift, "smart shoppers" who "knew good value." "Fearless" told readers in 1943 that Ann Sheridan would not install a swimming pool until she had paid off her mortgage, that she bought Victory Bonds with her egg money, and paid her taxes with proceeds from her walnut crop. The message was, "Don't wish for what you can't afford, but do wish for something better than what you've got."

If the wartime fan magazines preached caution and good sense in their advice columns and editorials, a glance through their other pages suggests a different message. Star studio glamour portraits—8 x 10" glossies of actresses with glycerine-tipped lips—were alluring invitations to reverie and aspiration, even when reproduced on the cheap newsprint of the war years. Glamour—combining glitter and *amour*, the perfect amalgam of money and love—was absorbed into every topic of interest to women, so that the most "down-to-earth" advice about washing woollens and powdering girdles became imbued with romantic possibilities.

Since the '40s, the mass circulation magazine beauty advice column has continued to make its contribution to continued oppression by imprisoning woman within and through her body. It rationalizes and justifies painful and often impossible physical ideals; it cheers and admonishes women readers in their battle with biological givens. Most significantly, it never allows a moment of doubt about the rules, immersing the reader in a reservoir of knowledge, so that beauty tricks and illusions would be necessary to fill out her social reality. In the war years, these columns alluded vaguely to the unfavorable consequences of failure to adhere to such beauty rigors as regular body hair removal, nightly hosiery washing, and walking with toes pointed, tummy tight. No more than a hint at the ill effects of beauty care delinquency was necessary. Inconsistent and oblivious to logic, "beauty knowledge" is self-referential, tautological, needlessly repetitive. ("Leg loveliness" equals "glamour dividends," so leg loveliness pays off.) Roland Barthes has noted that a

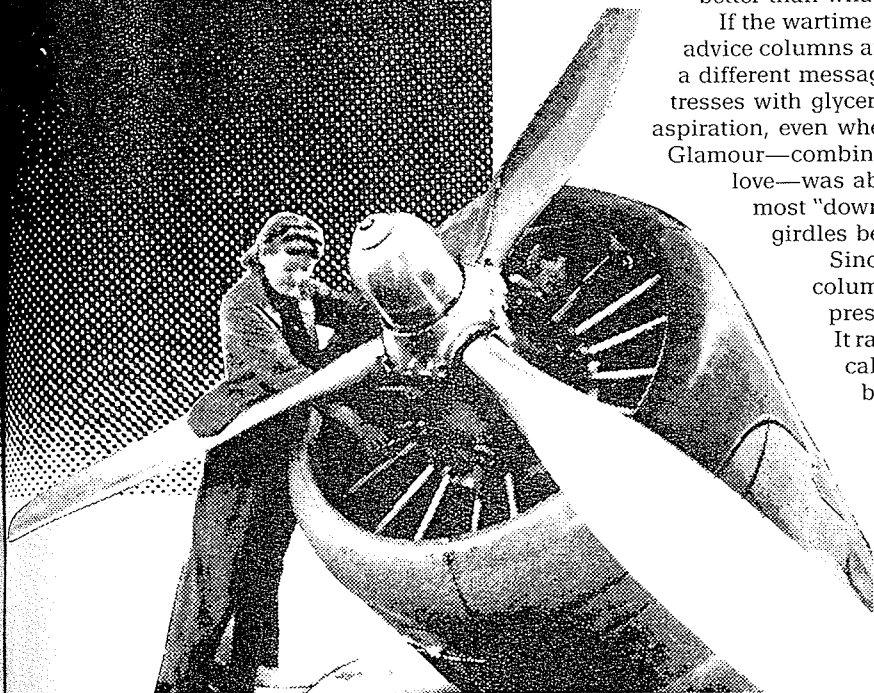
tautology requires the edge of authority to succeed, which explains the success of parental discourse which answers "why" with "because."<sup>5</sup> The *Photoplay* column on leg loveliness ("From Hem to Toes") acquires authority from Willys, the "Hollywood Stocking King" who not only invented beige and suntone hosiery, but created Ginger Rogers' latex mesh dance stockings. Tautologically, "because leg loveliness is his business, Willys knows the importance of well-groomed, pretty legs." The stars authorized the trivial and elevated the inconsequential: "An unpreserved dress or an uneven hemline can ruin the romantic career of the prettiest girl in town," warned Claudete Colbert.<sup>6</sup>

Beauty knowledge, dedicated to its own self-evidence, can be harnessed to more elevated concepts, so that in wartime, skin care and make-up ritual could become a patriotic duty. Along with such ordinary objects as rubber tires and canned goods, lipstick was elevated to a symbol of democracy and freedom. The fan magazines linked lipstick with courage and emotional fortitude. A Tangee advertisement showed two women in overalls, one taking over the controls of an airplane; Lipstick, it said, is "an instrument of personal morale that helps her conceal heartbreak or sorrow; gives her self-confidence when it's badly needed..."<sup>7</sup> The image of glistening lips, defying weather, sorrow, and drudgery helped to eroticize a bleak work situation with no men in sight. The combination of lipstick and overalls reassured women that they could step into "men's work" without losing "feminine attributes," and held at bay the fear that the new "tough girls" might be lesbians.<sup>8</sup>

For publishers, the supreme function of fan magazines was to channel fantasy and envy into practical consumption. Once associated with a star, inexpensive bath soap and powder, for instance, were invested with an aura of wealth and luxury. The fan magazines upheld absolute social distinctions, as reflected in consumption hierarchies—a fox fur was preferable to a beaver coat. At the same time, the magazines despised social overreach and ostentation. To flatter the working-class reader, the stars had to be "brought down"; to encourage middle-class aspirations had to be "held up." Often, the same star was demoted one month and elevated the next.

During the war years, the monthly column written by "Fearless" in *Photoplay-Movie-Mirror* revealed that although the stars seemed to have everything, they were basically the same kind of people as their fans. Lana Turner, although she wore sables with a clinging white jersey to the premiere of *Yank in the R.A.F.*, had rented the fur; Olivia de Havilland posed before an elegant house in a posh neighborhood because she actually lived in a more modest home.<sup>3</sup> As if to reassure readers that their own tastes were not too cheap, their cultural preferences not too low-brow, the magazines criticized stars for cultivating interests in opera, painting, classical music, and literature. Betty Hutton, whose best friend was her hairdresser, according to *Modern Screen* in August 1943, was quoted as saying that anything more than light reading gave her a headache.

Sociologists have understood film stars as "idols of consump-







## BUSTLES?

Even if there's one around, give it to the Scrap Drive because there's no place for bustles in 1943. More than there's a place for a gal who's just sitting around and let other people win the war. When you come right down to it—it's a question of WHAT you're going to do.

That's where Embry-Riddle—America's largest, private aviation school—comes in. Our Aviation to Women can help you along the road—either to Services or Industry, a career or war time job. There are twenty-two Specialist courses to train you for positions of responsibility. Get in the War Effort—don't waste what YOU have to offer!

Send for "The War and Your Part in Aviation." Address Dep't. C



Even if there's one around, give it to the Scrap Drive because there's no place for bustles in 1943 any more than there's a place for a gal who's just willing to sit around and let other people win the war for her. When you come right down to it—it's a question of WHAT you're going to do.

That's where Embry-Riddle—America's largest, private aviation school—comes in. Our Aviation Advisor to Women can help you along the road—either to the Services or Industry, a career or war time job. There are twenty-two Specialist courses to train you for positions of responsibility. Get in the War Effort—but don't waste what YOU have to offer!

differences in the graffiti on the walls of the men's and women's lavatories at Moore Dry Dock as evidence that the women were far more "preoccupied" with sex than the men. On a national scale, this kind of observation accelerated into concern about female "sex delinquency." These fears centered on young women who either ran away from home or were without respectable middle-class backgrounds. Make-up could signify sexual laxity to community moral arbiters, while images of prettified factory workers could symbolize women's sacrifice to the nation. Thus young women's experimentation with rouge and eye

make-up could be either a declaration of recalci-

trance or proof of conformity. It could be read either as a result of financial independence or as a general defiance of authority. But as a plea for social acceptance (by men), it contained an unfortunate irony.

For young working-class women, such sexual expression was more significant than it could possibly have been for middle-class women, whose wartime mobility and financial opportunity did not offer, relatively, such drastic changes in her dependence upon either home or husband.<sup>11</sup> Outbursts of sexual and financial freedom among working-class women were a greater threat to hierarchies within home and work worlds. Those who sought adventure and excitement in the nocturnal company of men, and "made themselves up" for the occasion, risked condemnation and punishment for following their socialization to its logical conclusions. There are parallels between women's use of cosmetics to challenge existing order—parental or social—and the fan actively resisting and transforming what she was supposed to absorb passively.

Antonio Gramsci's concept of "common sense" as a way of theorizing the condensed form of ideology at the level of everyday life illuminates the way borrowed, then internalized notions

of beauty and love became integrated into popular wisdom through star gossip and beauty advice.<sup>12</sup> Many women may have related to fan magazines with scepticism, taking what they read with a grain of salt, even mocking the proscriptive advice and vapid gossip as a form of entertainment in itself. "Common sense" contains information gleaned from estimating the distance between imposed versions of reality and personal counter experience. Richard Dyer has described common sense as "blinker" in its inability to see beyond or above the immediate, but "wise" in its negotiation of the immediate business of living.<sup>13</sup> Common sense, for all its incoherence, its undigested truisms, remedies, and bromides, is grounded in the hard necessities of daily life. Although

But if lipstick was an emblem of high femininity, it was also a sign of low female sexuality. Some of the discrepancies between the symbolic function of lipstick in wartime, conventional attitudes towards make-up, and young women's expressive use of cosmetics, are important illustrations of the struggle over meaning in sexually-charged social practices and symbology. Katherine Archibald's *Wartime Shipyard*, a sociological study of the Moore Dry Dock Company in Oakland, California, in 1942, brings together the themes of cosmetics and dress as they relate to economics, social class, and sexuality. Dress regulations for women in the yard were stricter than in the office, and women guards checked for jewelry and stray curls. The literal connection between dangerous sexual distraction and beauty devices was demonstrated by the case of the wife of a philandering shipyard official who, with handkerchief and nail polish remover, forced the young women working for him to remove their make-up. The "vastly experimental young girls" and "giddy charmers" (as Archibald, then a student at Stanford, describes the women workers) delighted in taunting both the female guards and male workers by revealing, beneath their work clothes, as much thigh or then taboo "sweater" as possible.<sup>9</sup>

These conflicts reflect clashes between the make-shift position whereby women "belonged" at work during the war and traditional wisdom about "woman's place in the home." Just as unstable was the national version of correct female sexual behavior. For the duration, prostitution was redefined, as women were prosecuted for sexual activity which did not involve emotional sincerity.<sup>10</sup> Archibald interprets



women turned to fan magazines for information as well as diversion, readers' letters to the editors offer a crude indicator of opposition to versions of the world that might not match up with readers' experiences. For instance, one woman wrote to *Photoplay-Movie-Mirror* that she was tired of the sympathetic, pitying portrayals of Lana Turner. She was particularly offended by the description of Lana as "the lonely, almost friendless beauty, so young, so talented, who walked the path of a strange fate." Turner, whose multiple marriages (two to the same man) were difficult for the magazine to rationalize, was not talented, argued the reader, and "If Lana Turner is lonely, Hitler is kind-hearted."<sup>14</sup>

Such isolated outbursts did not cohere into a challenge to the fan mag philosophy, nor even pose a real irritant. They were easily integrated into the magazines' portrait of their readership as "frank," "honest," and even "outspoken." Nevertheless, women's mass circulation magazines raised issues of social adjustment in the '40s in the absence of other vehicles for dealing with the problems of young women coming to maturity. Stories about the stars were adapted to offer solutions to perplexing



personal problems. For instance, "What Kind of a Woman Will Your Man Come Home To?" in *Photoplay*, November, 1944, purports to be about Ann Sothorn's wartime marriage, but actually addresses marital adjustment to pregnancy. "How I Keep My Husband from Getting Jealous," *Silver Screen*, April 1942, is about the pros and cons of marrying an older man as much as it is gossip about Rita Hayworth's first marriage, at seventeen, to a thirty-four-year-old man. An article by Veronica Lake in *Photoplay*, January 1943—"Are You a Woman Without a Man?"—deals with the sexual behavior issue popularly known as "wartime morality."<sup>15</sup>

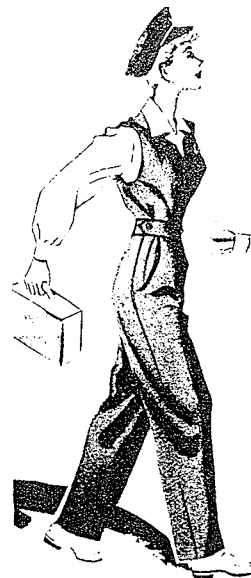
For young women, then, the war introduced a wider range of possibilities, which in turn introduced new dilemmas, such as whether or not to marry a man in the service, with whom a young woman should associate while so many men were away, and what "favors" she should allow men. The fan magazines contradicted themselves in their advice, first recommending wartime marriage, then warning against it; scolding young women for infidelities, while encouraging them to date others if the men they loved were overseas. Veronica Lake rationalized this

## "What? Defense Clothes Launched at Palm Springs?"

Indirectly yes! "Victory Volunteers" are as typically California as the slacks made by this high fashion sportswear house. Designed with the same originality, tailored with the same care. As for safety features—they're California industry-tested not a stone's throw from the designing rooms (California distance, of course) at Lockheed, Douglas, North American, Vega, Vulree.

Sketched: "The New Vitorall"  
At leading stores. Or write to

**HOLLYWOOD PREMIERE**  
1240 S. Main Street, Los Angeles, California



Indirectly yes! "Victory Volunteers" are as typically California as the slacks made by this high fashion sportswear house. Designed with the same originality, tailored with the same care. As for safety features—they're California industry-tested not a stone's throw from the designing rooms (California distance, of course) at Lockheed, Douglas, North American, Vega, Vulree.  
Sketched: "The New Vitorall"  
At leading stores. Or write to

practice as a kind of "emergency measure"

which should be practiced because "a life without masculine society is abnormal." Fan magazines allow the reader to assume two sexual identities—one the safe position of judging the star's scandalous life, the other the dangerous position of admitting vicarious desires. Beyond such glimpses of the stars' intimate lives, fan magazines also offered some information to the sexually underinformed. And women were still curious about sexuality after years of married life. The suggestion that women might find company with each other was conspicuously missing from the fan magazines.

Current feminist work on romance fiction such as that being done by Janice Radway and Alison Light,<sup>16</sup> emphasizes the educative function of romance fiction which keeps women hopeful and expectant within their often emotionally unfulfilling roles as wives and mothers. Light's reading of Daphne duMaurier's *Rebecca* explains the co-existence of sexual allure and pragmatism in the '40s fan magazines. She notes that the largest audience for romance fiction is middle-aged housewives and teenaged women. McFadden Publishing Company's postwar studies of mass circulation magazine customers showed a high proportion of readers in the same groups.<sup>17</sup> Light suggests that these two stages of life are "moments" at which the impossibility of being "successfully feminine" is most dramatically felt. Romance fiction offers a way to maintain "a space for psychic pleasures," a kind of "literary anorexia... a protest against and a restatement of oppression."

Of course the fan mags never yielded up the real lives of the stars. Although full of miscellaneous detail (wedding snapshots, beauty secrets, confessions straight from the star's mouth as told to the only truly sympathetic ear—the fan mag reporter), they were mainly residue of star life. The candid photograph of

an estranged couple, snapped "just a few short weeks before at the Trocadero," revealed as much, or as little, about the sexual underside of Hollywood as even the most faithful reader would ever know. Similarly, the study of these magazines leaves the feminist critic with some nagging questions. Our most sophisticated tools of structural analysis can't tell us who read fan magazines, in what spirit or mood, or in what social context. Were they read on magazine stands next to bus stops, in waiting rooms, or under the dryers at beauty parlors? Or maybe they were never read at all, but purchased only for images, to cut up, tack on walls, or paste into scrapbooks.

What I have done so far—hypothesize the correspondences between beauty, romance, and common sense—seems relatively easy. It makes it possible to suggest that common sense is a source from which individuals draw, but that they can recombine or recontextualize existing sign-vehicles in order to create new meanings. Or consumers may use commodities in ways that alter or subvert their intended use-values—like using lipstick to write on mirrors. Somewhat more difficult is the task of locating the disjunction between dominant versions of reality and women's experiences of how things really come down. Terry Lovell attributes this mismatch to a safe space within and in spite of the dominant ideology: social relations are lived *within* the confines of the dominant, but they are also lived in a con-

text of "good sense." They exist, she says, in "contradictory and sometimes incoherent ways which escape the categories of the dominant ideology. They are expressed in the wordless recognition of a glance or laugh exchanged, for instance, between women in occasional acknowledgement of the disparity between ideology and experience."<sup>18</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Murphy McHenry, "Dishing That Fan Mag Guff," *Variety*, 24 September, 1936, p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> Association of National Advertisers, *Magazine Circulation Analysis, 1937-48* (New York: 1949).

<sup>3</sup> *Photoplay-Movie-Mirror* 21, No. 1 (June, 1942), p. 77.

<sup>4</sup> Leo Lowenthal, "The Triumph of Mass Idols," in *Literature, Popular Culture and Society* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1961), pp. 109-140.

<sup>5</sup> Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (Paris, 1957; New York: Hill and Wang, 1972), pp. 152-153.

<sup>6</sup> *Photoplay-Movie-Mirror*, September, 1943, p. 40.

<sup>7</sup> *Photoplay-Movie-Mirror*, September, 1943, p. 79.

<sup>8</sup> In *Public Journal* (New York: Viking, 1945), pp. 19-21, Max Lerner's description of the "New Amazons" coming out of the factories hints at this phobia. For more on how the overalls culture provided a "cover" for lesbians during the war, see Alan Bérubé, "Marching to a Different Drummer: Lesbians and Gay GIs in World War II," in eds. Ann Snitow, Christine Stansell, and Sharon Thompson, *Powers of Desire* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983), p. 89.

<sup>9</sup> Katherine Archibald, *Wartime Shipyard* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1947), pp. 22, 32.

<sup>10</sup> Karen Anderson, *Wartime Women* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981), p. 104.

<sup>11</sup> In "Working-Class Women and Recruitment Propaganda during World War II: Class Differences in the Portrayal of War Work," (*Signs* 8, No. 4, 1983: 672-687), Maureen Honey has shown in her comparison of fiction in the *Saturday Evening Post* and *True Story* that the working-class confession magazine consistently steered around portrayals of women as equal to their male co-workers. In the *Saturday Evening Post* fiction, however, middle-class women war workers triumphed as leaders in the defense effort. In these leadership roles the middle-class women were often superior to working-class males.





<sup>12</sup>Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, Eds. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971), p. 328.

<sup>13</sup>Richard Dyer, "Introduction," *Coronation Street* (London: British Film Institute, 1981), p. 2.

<sup>14</sup>*Photoplay-Movie-Mirror* January, 1943, p. 64.

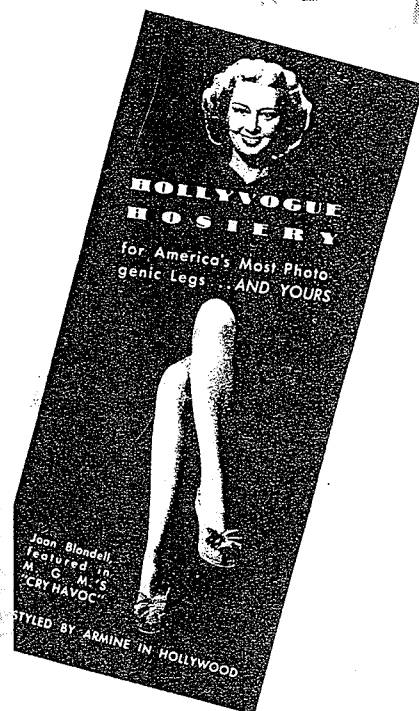
<sup>15</sup>Veronica Lake, "Are You a Woman Without a Man?" *Photoplay-Movie-Mirror*, 22, No. 2 (January, 1943), p. 65.

<sup>16</sup>Janice Radway, *Reading the Romance* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1984); Janice Radway, "Women Read the Romance: The Interaction of Text and Context," *Feminist Studies* 9, No. 1 (Spring 1983): p. 53-87; Alison Light, "'Returning to Manderley'—Romance Fiction, Female Sexuality and Class," *Feminist Review* 16 (Summer 1984): 7-25.

<sup>17</sup>For a description of these studies, see Lee Rainwater, et. al., *Workingman's Wife: Her Personality, World, and Life Style* (New York: Oceana, 1959).

<sup>18</sup>Terry Lovell, "The Social Relations of Cultural Production: Absent Centre of a New Discourse," in Simon Clarke, et. al., eds., *One-Dimensional Marxism* (London: Alison and Busby, 1980), p. 246.

Jane Gaines teaches film in the English Department at Duke University and is co-editing a collection of feminist work with Charlotte Herzog entitled *Fabrications: Body and Costume in Our Screen History*.



## My Mother's Body

*My mother's body was soft  
and round  
and warm to snuggle into.  
I would run  
to the softness of her side,  
to her thighs  
for comfort.*

*But as she hid  
her softness from the world,  
hid her naked body  
from her children,  
so I learned.*

*My mother did not see  
my softness change and grow,  
becoming rounder,  
hips and breasts emerging,  
becoming more and more  
like her.*

*And she did not see me  
leaving the home  
that was my body,  
coming to believe  
that it had betrayed me  
by being too big,  
too soft and round,  
too unwieldy to trust.*

*And when my bloods came  
I did not tell her  
until a week later,  
and told no-one else.  
There was no celebration  
of womanhood,  
only more hiding,  
hiding my blood  
as I have hidden my body  
even from myself.*

*Now I wear red on my wrist  
at moontimes,  
and my body, still big,  
is slowly emerging.  
Slowly I come out of hiding  
as I begin to trust,  
as I begin to touch,  
as I begin, slowly,  
to come home  
to my body.*

V.S.

Bonnie Lucas, WORLD'S GREATEST MOM. Collage on fabric, 34" x 20" x 2".



Victoria Singer is a poet, songwriter, student, and activist whose work draws together the threads of feminism, spirituality, and the struggles for world peace and indigenous peoples' survival. She lives in Santa Cruz, CA.

Bonnie Lucas is an artist who lives and works in New York City.

## From a Series of Delightful Hate Poems

*I figure on a kind of hell for you, mama,  
And hope on justice.  
So after they arraign you for your sins,  
They're going to lock you out.*

*They won't lock you in.  
Because you'd like that.  
You'd be right at home  
With your smells and your tv guide  
And your denture creme  
And your little bottle of wine.  
And your flowers trussed up with wires inside  
That don't need watering.  
No. They're going to lock you out.  
They're going to turn you loose  
In the streets full of jiving blacks  
And longhairs who mumble over rented books  
And tired hookers looking for any street to cross  
And sly kids conning their way down the block  
And gays holding hands  
Who, when you stare, stare right back.*

*You'll squirm and pinch your nose, mama,  
And click your tongue,  
And mutter through a rigid little mouth  
About how it was in Long Beach  
Where, the story goes, you spent an unsoiled youth  
And were escorted, yes ESCORTED, by fraternity men  
Who never balled, or wept or cursed,  
Or needed watering.*

*So mama,  
you wore a fish-net gown  
And swam the crystal streams of old Long Beach  
Right down to the source  
Which, unfortunately, dried up with you.*

*But now, let's bait the hook.  
At the end of each day  
We'll settle you for the night  
In one of those porno houses.  
Sit you down and make you watch grand sex  
On the crystal screen.  
And those bodies, all tangled  
In their glistening parts,  
They'll come at you like worms  
And you'll squint and squirm  
And snap shut your angry heart  
The way you did  
When my father came to you.*

Joan Raymund



Bonnie Lucas, #1 DAUGHTER.  
Collage on fabric, 36" x 21" x 2".

Joan Raymund is a poet from  
Thousand Oaks, California.

# WOMAN IN A SAWMILL,

**W**hile you are still young, your family moved to this small lumber town. It was once famous. Then it was burned to the ground. Now it is being rebuilt. You are lucky to come here. You are at a certain height to allow you to work in the sawmill safely. When the other workers swing the lumber around, you are short enough for the lumber to pass over your head without hitting you. This makes the whole operation much more efficient; you are required to run around with a clipboard showing people various orders and designs. There is flat cutting at this mill; there is chopping and laminating and pressing. There is also a woodworking shop where they receive orders for various cut-out shapes. The only problem with this job is that you keep growing, so everyone has to be careful. They are liable for anything that might happen to you: cuts, slips, bangs on the head. So they measure you every week.

Every week a mustachioed foreman comes out with a steel tape measure, sticks it up your spine and hooks it on top of your head.

"You're O.K.," he laughs, and pats your behind. You run off with another order.

The small town grows. There are many orders; everyone works very hard at the mill.

One day an order comes in from a new burlesque house in town. They want a sign. You take the order to the woodworking shop because this is a complicated design: the figure of a woman.

You're in the shop. Nobody knows how to do the figure of a woman. Everyone is scratching their heads and pulling their mustaches. They draw various figures on the boards; then erase all of them. Finally, you're still hanging around intrigued by all this; they notice you. First, they laugh; then they ask you to turn around.

"O.K.," says the foreman, "We can't lose. Let's try it."

They make you lie down on a 4 x 8' board. Then one guy stands over you with a pencil and draws around the edges of your body. When they finish, it looks like a gingerbread man. So they start all over and make you lie down sideways. Fetal position stretched out. They draw around you, pencil close around your body. When you get up, it's perfect. They cut you out and add a few details. They deliver the sign to the burlesque house where it's hung up over the street. It swings in the wind.

After this, everyone looks at you differently. When the guy comes to measure you, he says that he has to measure all the dimensions of your body because they're planning on remodeling the mill and want to make sure that the corridors are wide enough for everyone, even when you are turned sideways. So every week now the foreman measures your budding chest, your hips and your ass, as well as your height. Then he marks it down on the wall. People come around on their coffee breaks to note any changes in your measurement.

You don't know what week it happened, but, one week or one month, you are just too tall. No one really notices because they are intent on the other measurements of your body.

One day you are standing there and, being the wrong height for the sawmill, get cracked on the back of the head with a two by four. Perhaps it wasn't your height, although your height was really too tall for the yard. Perhaps it was some new short guy they hired. But it really doesn't matter, you are on the floor in the sawdust. You're knocked out.

Who knows what happened while you were out! When you came to, nobody was around. Before you could move, you felt smooth strictures on your body, especially the torso. At first you thought they might be bandages, but when you maneuvered your head into position you could see that you were dressed in a tight silver lamé costume—high cut legs, low cut bosom. Silver platform shoes. You didn't dare look in a mirror. There was no mirror, except for the huge mill blade that took up most of the floor in this room.

You looked in the blade mirror and saw that you could quit this job and go to work in the burlesque house. When you turn around to look at your ass, you notice there's a note on it. You take off the note and read it. It says: Happy Birthday, from the guys. P.S. You're too tall.

**ANNE PITRONE**

from *The Recession Diary*



# 1966

Sharon Gilbert, ETYMOGRAPHY. Mixed media.

Sharon Gilbert is an artist living in New York City.

You walk out into the open evening, a few blocks down the main street, over to the burlesque house. They hire you right away. But, they say, do you have an act? You say you'll have to think about this. In the back room, with an old satin dressing gown thrown over your shoulders, you sit at the desk next to the radiator. You try to think of an act.

You could dedicate your act to the guys at the sawmill—wear little blade earrings and dance on logs in a pool of silver water. You could dedicate your act to your parents, i.e. only do the act once and then forget about it. Or, you could dedicate your act to both the guys and your parents. You could have electric saws strapped to your wrists. Then you could saw off all your clothes piece by piece, shivering and shimmying and shaking as you went. Then you could saw off your fingers and throw them into the audience. Your left arm, your leg. You could saw off every part and throw it to them. The people at the burlesque house think that this is a great idea since they'll only have to pay you once. You can go on stage that very night.

When you go out onto the stage the lights are burning up into your face, but you can still see the audience: all the guys from the mill have shown up, as well as the regulars. It's packed. People are shouting encouragement from every corner. They're proud. You lift up your little saws on your wrists and turn them on. The audience gets very excited. Then you start slicing. You throw the silver remnants into the audience as you bare your arms, legs, breasts and ass. Everybody's shouting. But as you try to finish your act, as you look at your left breast with extreme care and bring both whirling saws toward it lovingly, the audience lets out a huge gasp and grabs out for you. Men rush the stage in sensual terror. As they tackle you, your saws hit the floor of the wooden stage and start throwing up sawdust in every direction. The pink stuff sticks to everything, gets in your eyes, mixes with the silver oil on your skin. You saw all around in a mixed effort to get up and finish your act, also to ward off your assailants/saviours. You saw all around, flailing your arms in every direction. You saw the backdrop, the stage, the front row. By this time, the audience has run out in terror and you seem to be alone with a bunch of lumber.

Not seeing the managers, you pick up your tattered outfit and walk out into the street. You walk home, arms weighted and balanced by the electric saws. When you get to your front door, you stand on the porch suppressing an attempt to saw it all down. You wait outside until your mother comes to the door. She knows something's out there by the sound of your saws. She takes one look at you, then unstraps the saws from your

wrists in the same jerky way that she used to push your mittens on and off your uncontrollable arms when you were a baby. She puts the saws down on the coffee table and takes you upstairs, takes off the remnants of your costume and puts you in a hot tub.

The next day you are invited into the manager's office at the sawmill.

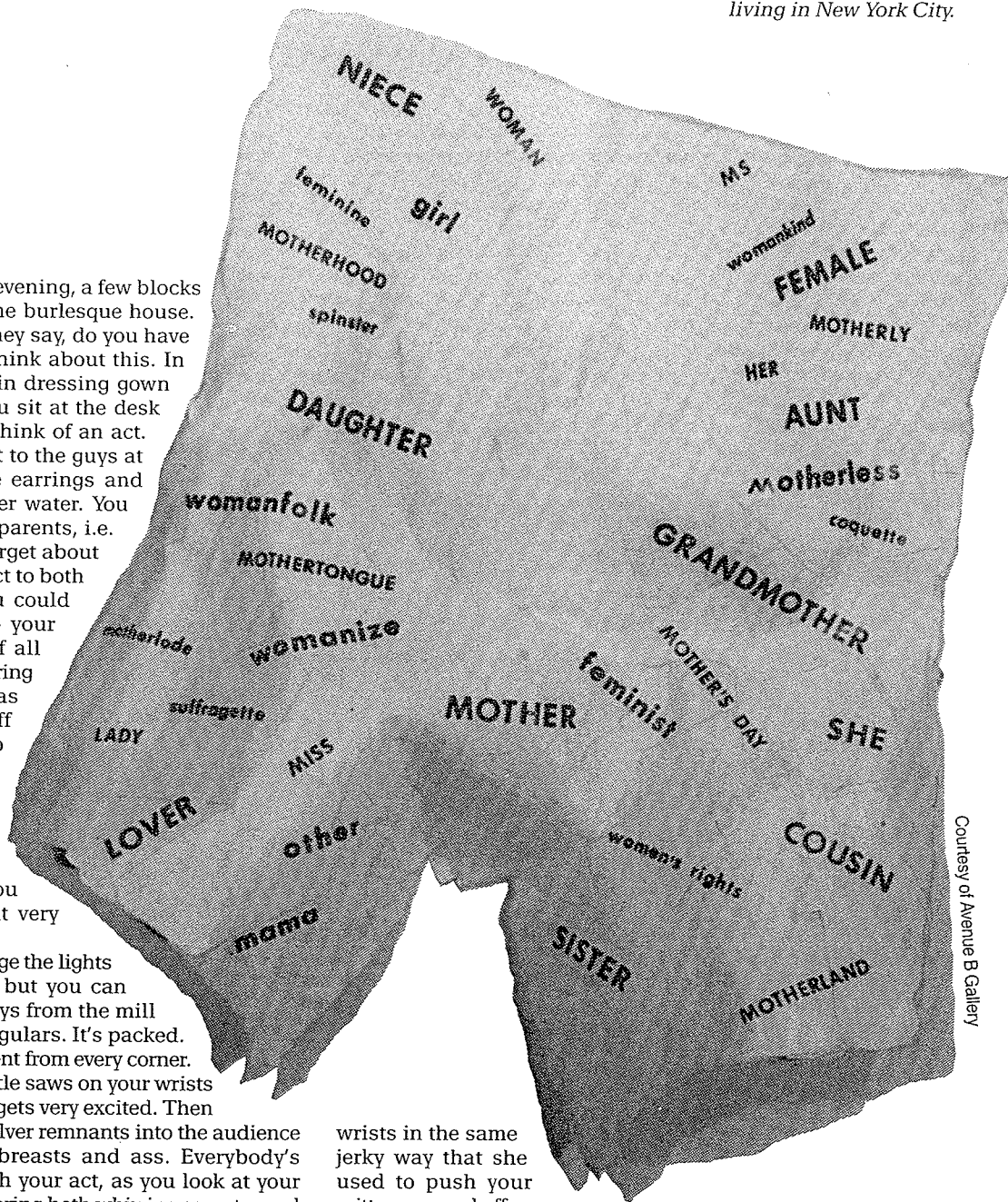
"You know what this means," he says, looking at the negligee calendar on the wall. "You can't work here any more. Sorry."

You straighten out your clothes, get up to walk out.

"I'll send your last pay," he calls out as you walk to the front of the yard.

Everyone looks up sadly with dusty eyelashes as you leave. You close the grey door to this temporary building; then walk out into the street. A few blocks down, the burlesque house stands blankly. A pink cut-out of your body swings on its hinges noisily. Not long after this you leave your town for good.

Anne Pitrone is an artist and designer living in New York.



Courtesy of Avenue B Gallery

SHE SAT AMONG THE WOMEN AND SAID SHE WAS DYING. How melodramatic, I thought. She said her refrigerator was never empty, but she was dying of starvation. What a good line, I thought. But something in the color of her skin made her claims plausible.

She told us how it had begun. Or at least how she thought it had begun. She said that she had been enormous. That she had been through every diet program — through Weight Watchers, through behavior modification, through Overeaters Anonymous, through fasting. The list read like a bibliography of diet books. In each she lost weight. Sometimes forty or even sixty pounds. But at 290 pounds that doesn't make much of a difference.

She said she was tired of it all. Tired of being fat, tired of working as a telephone operator, tired of endless dieting and endless failure.

## HER REFRIGERATOR

She decided to go to her doctor. She hated going to see him, since it always meant a new diet and new failure. But this time she went with something in mind. She had heard about intestinal bypass surgery. She read about it in a woman's magazine. Occasionally she fantasized about it. Usually in the midst of a diet she would imagine it—being able to eat whatever she wanted, whenever she wanted. And never gain weight. Every dieter's dream, every diet's promise. Even before she heard of this surgery she wondered why there wasn't an operation where they just carved off the extra fat. Later she learned that such an operation exists, but intestinal by-pass seemed so

BY MICKI McGEE



much simpler. Just by-pass the small intestines so the food isn't digested. And besides, it would leave fewer scars.

Her doctor thought the surgery was a good idea. After all, dieting hadn't gotten her anywhere. He recommended a surgeon at the University Hospital who had successfully performed such operations.

Next she spoke with her husband. At first he hesitated. The cost seemed prohibitive—\$10,000–15,000. Then he reconsidered. Blue Cross would cover it since they could show it was for health, rather than cosmetic purposes. He imagined his wife after the surgery. Would she be slender? Would she be svelte?

The operation date was set. It took only four hours. After four days in intensive care and ten days recuperating in the

hospital she was able to return home. Already she had lost 25 pounds. She was elated watching her flesh seem to melt before her eyes. Watching the scale drop pound after pound she hardly noticed the pain in her stomach. Or maybe she just ignored it. Even the constant diarrhea didn't bother her, not until she returned to work.

She was a telephone information operator. She told us that she had one 15-minute break for every four hours of work. Plus a half an hour for lunch. Her constant running to the restroom soon became a nuisance. Her supervisor became more and

# WAS NEVER EMPTY

more irritated at having to cover her calls while she ran to the toilet. The foul-smelling gas she expelled made her increasingly unpopular among her fellow operators. Within a month back on the job she had to quit.

She decided to wait six months to look for work. After all, she knew she'd have a better chance at a good paying job when her weight was lower. Besides, in a few months these bothersome side effects may have ended.

Now it was nine months later. She was still unemployed. She had nearly reached a normal weight, but the side effects con-

She sat among the women and asked if we could imagine what it is like to have gas so foul you repulse yourself. In medi-

# BYPASS

cal journals they call it troublesome flatulence.

She asked if we could imagine how it feels to have diarrhea every day. In medical journals they call it 3-8 loose stools per day.

She asked if we could imagine how it feels to have your bones and muscles weakening. In medical journals they call it electrolyte depletion—hypocalcemia, hypokalemia, and hypomagnesemia.

She asked if we could imagine how it feels to have your joints stiffening with arthritis at the age of 33. In medical journals they call it tenosynovitis of the hands, wrists and elbows and symmetric polyarthritis involving the hands, shoulders, knees and feet.

She asked if we could imagine what it feels like to watch your skin turning yellow with jaundice and to wonder if hepatitis or cirrhosis will follow. In medical journals they say the cause of this interesting syndrome, resembling alcoholic liver disease, is unknown. Three mechanisms for the liver damage have been proposed: 1) amino acid deficiency, 2) toxic damage from bacterial product of the defunctionalized small intestine segment or 3) toxic damage from an abnormal bile salt metabolite.

She asked if we could imagine how it feels to be starving while eating continually. In medical texts they call it jejunoileal by-pass surgery.

## SHE SPENT LOTS OF TIME COOKING



She asked if we could imagine how it feels to watch yourself dying of surgically induced starvation. In medical journals they call it a 5% mortality rate, a 22% failure rate and a 58% incident of major complications.

She said in two weeks she would have the surgery reversed. She didn't return to the group.

You can read about exotic atrocities. You can read about infibulation, cliterectomy, foot binding, suttee. And sometimes you hear about coat hanger abor-

## HER APPETITE WAS INSATIABLE



tions. Sometimes you hear about forced sterilizations. You seldom hear about operations performed at the University Hospital, down the road from the La Jolla University campus. These operations are necessary, after all. These operations, they say, are performed to save lives. These operations are performed in the interest of health.

# SURGERY



## BUT EVERYTHING SHE ATE WENT RIGHT THROUGH HER

A 5% mortality rate, a 22% failure rate, a 58% incidence of major complications.

We know she is part of the 58%.

We know she is part of the 22%.

We do not know if she is part of the 5%.

### SOURCES

Dano, P. & Hahn-Pedersen, J. "Improvement in Quality of Life Following Jejunoileal Bypass Surgery for Obesity," *Scandinavian Journal of Gastro-enterology* 1977, 12:769-75.

Halverson, J., et al. "Jejunoileal Bypass for Morbid Obesity: A Critical Appraisal," *American Journal of Medicine*, March 1978.

Stunkard, A., et al. "Obesity, Social Class and Mental Illness," *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Sept. 15, 1962, 138-42.

Renolds, T. "Medical Complications of Intestinal Bypass Surgery," *Advances in Internal Medicine* 23:47-59, 1978.

Micki McGee is an artist living in New York City.



## Portrait from Totonicapan

*She is not naked  
nakedness means rape.  
She is not happy  
happiness knows again living  
with natural ways of dying.  
Even living with all its hardship.  
She is not talkative.  
Her husband pleaded and  
for that they filled  
his mouth with things  
she never said.  
She is not young now  
nor mother with child now  
now that her child is gone  
the one the army chose  
to bayonet through the belly  
to stick it as a warning  
to the tree of deities in Ceiba.  
If you look in her eyes  
they tell this story.*

---

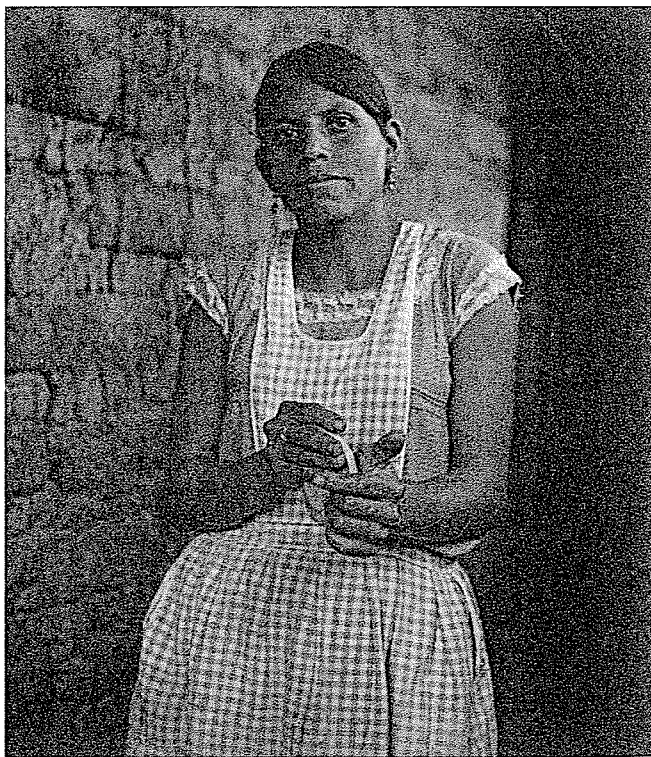
Zoe Anglesey

Marilyn Anderson is a photographer from Rochester, New York. She has photographed and documented women's lives in Central America.

Zoe Anglesey's book, *Central America, poems and translations in Spanish*, will be published by Editorial Universitaria Centro Americana (EPUCA) in a bilingual edition in 1986.



Marilyn Anderson, WOMAN FROM QUEZALTENANGO.



Marilyn Anderson, YOUNG WOMAN OF JACALTENANGO  
MAKING TORTILLAS.



**March 6, 1982**

*All last week you preened before the mirror,  
viewing emerging breasts, then covering them  
with gauze-thin blouse  
and grinning: getting bigger, huh?  
The week before you wore army fatigues  
leveling breasts and teenage freckles,  
tawny fuzz along your legs.*

*A woman. Beginning.*

*Today you don fatigues again.*

*Today you pack knapsack and canteen,  
lace boots over heavy socks  
and answer the call Reagan and Haig have slung  
at your 12 years.*

*Yours and so many others ...*

*kids 14, 15, 18, so many others who will go  
and some of them stay, their mothers shouting  
before the Honduran Embassy: "Give us  
our sons' bodies back, give us back their bodies!"*

*At least that.*

*All last week you preened before the mirror,  
moving loose to new rhythms  
long weekend nights. Junior High math. Sunday beach.  
Today you went off to the staccato of continuous news dispatches  
and I, in my trench, carry your young breasts  
in my proud and lonely eyes.*

*Margaret Randall  
Managua*

*Margaret Randall, poet, photographer, feminist, mother, lived for 23 years in Latin America and recently returned to the U.S. where she teaches Women's Studies at the University of New Mexico. She has a new book (Women Brave in the Face of Danger, Crossing Press) and is fighting an immigration battle to be allowed to remain in the U.S.*

*Colleen McKay specializes in portrait and documentary photography and has traveled extensively in Nicaragua. She lives in New York City.*



Colleen McKay, MATAGALPA, NICARAUGUA.

# ONE MOTHER OF A MOUNTAIN

BY SANDRA JOY JACKSON-OPOKU

Going somewhere just to be going. That's all I was doing. Just going somewhere to be going. Oh, but did it sound good though! Shirley called me up, say: ■ "You want to go to Montreal? I got to get out a this dead-ass town for a minute. Got some people I know up there and girl, you betta get ready come go with me." ■ Montreal. What did I know about Montreal? Not a thing. But just the name of it, child. The word sounded so elegant and sexy. Tall, thin, serious-looking men with little mustaches and French accents must live in a city with that kind a name. A place where people sipped wine and served up crepes and caviar on crystal. A city where a woman was likely to fall in love. Did I want to go to Montreal? ■ Hell, yes. Just tell me what time the plane leaves. ■ Wasn't until we

were way up high in that cool, air-conditioned cabin in the sky did it occur to me.

"Shirley. Any Black people in Montreal?"

Shirley clicked her teeth at my ignorance.

"Course yes, girl. What you think my friends are?"

So I settled on back in my seat to sip on the complimentary wine the stewardess had handed around. Then I sat up again.

"Shirley. They speak French up there in Montreal, don't they? Well," I answer to her bored nod, "how we supposed to talk to the people? You know any French?"

My slow-wittedness must a been too much for my girl Shirley to take. She shook her head and rolled her eyes on up to the airplane ceiling.

"Darlene child, you don't need to know no *language*."

"Oh. Tell me something, then." I still wasn't what you might call convinced, but then, who was I to argue?

"Just relax, girl." All Shirley need to do is step on a plane and she turn sophisticated. She smiled a superior little smile. "You gone enjoy Montreal."

How Shirley know what I'm gone enjoy? Far as I know she ain't never been to Montreal either. And much as I like her, I got to admit that Shirley's the kind a woman pretend she know something when she don't. Always been. Me, I believe in doing like my momma say. "If you don't know, ask!"

By the time the plane landed, I'd nearly worn out my eyes trying to sightsee from the air. I mean, this here was some sure enough excitement! Me—Darlene Lou Williams who ain't never been further from Detroit than Toledo. In Montreal! I shook Shirley awake.

"Wake up, girl. We here."

My first glimpse of the city was a little disappointing. Right off the bat, Montreal wasn't looking a whole lot different from Detroit. It was a lot cleaner, sure. A whole lot of tall, fancy skyscrapers rubbing sides with buildings of old stone. It might have been the same Detroit women walking the twilight streets

in winter coats or the occasional fur. It might almost have been Detroit.

But, no. It *felt* a bit different, now that I started taking it in. Something fresh and foreign in the way the streetlights fell across the sidewalk. A different rhythm in the movement of traffic and pedestrians. Street signs at intersections written both in English and French.

With my taxi window rolled half-way down, I could hear snatches of a language that wasn't mine. I was in Montreal. Quebec. *Canada!* I gobbled it down with my eyes and ears. I even sniffed the air to see if it smelled different. It did. Don't ask me how. One thing had me worried, though.

"Shirley, where all the Black folks at?"

"Oh. They around," she blasé back. "They around. And let down that window, will you? You letting cold air in the cab."

The hotel wasn't the best. Wasn't really nasty or nothing, but you could tell it had seen better years. Wood kind a dusty and rubbed down. Rugs faded, with a few bare spots. And a faint and musty odor hung in the lobby that reminded me of old folks.

A nice-looking li'l ole brother carried up our bags for us. ("Course, I didn't see no reason for him to bother, but Shirley wouldn't have it any other way. "Let him carry that!" she hisses when I go to grab my grip. "That's what he here for.")

Riding up to the eighth floor, the brother be eyeing me on the sly. You know those little mirrors always be stuck for some reason, in the corners of elevators? I glance up there to pat my hair and I catch his eye, steady on me.

I give him a little smile, cause I know I'm looking good. I may be a big woman, but I do try to keep myself up. And I know when I be looking good. Today's one a them days. Got on a sharp little sharkskin suit, and every piece a gold I own.

("You don't need to be wearing all that white." On our way to the airport, Shirley come narrowing her eyes at me. "White ain't practical to travel in and, you know ..." She let the words trail

off, but I *do* know. She trying to say I'm to big to wear white. But I don't care, cause I *know* when I'm looking sharp. Besides which, this is all woman, every ounce. Ain' every man likes his woman looking like a refugee from the potato famine. Plenty brothers I know appreciate a lady with a little cushioning on her).

Like this li'l ole brother carrying our bags into the room. I hand him a hefty tip, he flash me a wink and gone. Too bad he so little. It's hard to get interested in a man you could crush in the clinches.

"Why you flirting with that old nothing Negro?" Shirley want to know. She all up in the full-length mirror, hit it first thing. Eyeing her spare little behind in Calvin Kleins.

"Flirting? All I was doing was being nice. After all, we all Black folks. It don't hurt to be nice. Course, he was kind a cute, wasn't he?"

"A bellhop. Nothing but a lowly li'l bellhop." When a man a bellhop, I guess cute don't enter into it. (Just between you and me, I think the girl's jaws got tight cause the man ain't so much as cracked a glance in her direction. Shirley not the kind a woman take kindly to being ignored. Especially by a man).

I hadn't hardly sat down good, getting ready to pull off the sling-back pumps, when Shirley was ready to hit the streets.

"Let's get out of here. But first, you need to change. That white's too dressy. Slip on some jeans or something."

"Out? Shirley, why don't we catch a little rest first?" I was wrung out and my feet were killing me. Good as they looked in those narrow slingbacks, my toes didn't take too kindly to being crammed together so tight.

"You should a napped on the plane, like I did. Come let's go, girl. Plenty a rest back home in Detroit. We in Montreal now. What you want to hang around the hotel for?"

So into the jeans (didn't do me half the justice of the shark-skin suit) and out the door I went, right behind Shirley.

It had gotten good and dark, and the Montreal streets had a slick quality to them. There was a light rain falling and the night was cool, brightly lit.

Shirley be the walkingest woman! Up this street and down the next. Peeping up at dresses in this, or that darkened store window. My feet begging me for mercy all the way along. Ain't no way you can enjoy window-shopping when your feet be painin' you.

We finally stopped at a little restaurant, had us a bit to eat. I wasn't all that hungry, cause I had eaten on the plane. But I didn't object. It felt so good to be sitting down, honey.

"Where you want to go next?" We hadn't gotten our dinner down good and here Shirley go again, itching to get back out in the streets. She whipped a guide book out of her purse. "You want to check out a disco? We got time. They say they don't close until three in the morning."

"Hey, what about these here friends of yours? Don't you want to look them up?" Cause I didn't look forward to no evening disco-ing on my poor swollen feet. Maybe Shirley's friends had someplace quiet where we could set down.

For some reason, Shirley looked real closed and uneasy at that suggestion.

"Well." She sips her 'some kind a liquor.' "I *guess* we could go by and see them. If they at home."

"Why don't you call them and see?"

We hunted up a public phone after walking (what seemed to my feet like) another hundred miles.

"Moss" Shirley was yelling into the receiver. "Shirley Ann Moss. Yes, Moss...I met you in Milwaukee, you and your husband...Um, yes. Madeline Brown's daughter's wedding. Y'all said to look you up if I ever came to Montreal..."

That Shirley. Got us traipsing off to Canada, coming to see "friends" that don't even remember her. That girl is a mess.

"Right now," she was saying. "Me and a friend a mine...Uhn-huhn. Just got in this evening...Uhn-huhn. Well, anytime. How about tonight?...Really? Alright!"

When she hung up she was looking pleased and surprised.

"They say come right over. They're having some friends by for drinks."

Montreal night was one of shiny lights and deep, deep darks. Slick wet streets, white bright lights. A raw full moon shining like a white nickel against off-black velvet. And something tall looming in the sky met that moon in a point. I really ought to wear those eyeglasses I paid so much money for. What was that, a building? A tower? It almost seemed like something living, but tall as that thing was, wasn't no way it could be alive. Could it?

I didn't study on it long, though. The tires of the taxi moving on the ground was making such a wet and comforting sound. Just the right kind of rhythm to lull you to sleep. I had to fight it hard. Cause tired as I was, once I gave in wouldn't nothing be able to wake me.

"How well do you know these friends of yours, Shirley?"

"They're good friends of my friend Maddy." Her chin jutted out "Very good friends. Came down to Milwaukee for her daughter's wedding."

"Hmmmph." If these friends were anything like Shirley's hincty, social-climbing little girlfriend, Maddy Brown, I didn't want no parts of them.

It was high-priced luxury we pulled up in front of. I could tell that even without my glasses. Had landscaped lawns and uniformed doorman, if you please. Shirley smirked proudly, like she owned the place.

"Class," she whispers, and nudged me in the side. I nodded, but couldn't help thinking that without the potted plants and doorman, it wouldn't look a whole lot different than those highrise housing projects home in Detroit.

Stepped into the people's apartment and like to fell over, child. Shag carpeting was so thick you sunk in up to your ankles.

A few friends over for drinks? Lord, child this was a full-blown party going on here. It was so crammed with folks, me and Shirley had to elbow our way through. Me and my sore feet made for an empty seat at the dining table. Shirley, with a stiff smile stretched across her face (she was *impressed*, honey) went off looking for her friends.

People might a thought I was a junkie that night. Cause I set myself down to that table and commenced to nodding. I couldn't help it. I propped my elbows up, put my head in my hands, and nodded down.

Don't know how long I sat there, half-asleep, longing for my hotel bed. But some people sitting down to the table kind a shook me awake. They came carrying conversation with them. A short, scraggly-headed man with a French accent. A thin, intense-looking darkskin sister. Him, gesturing and expostulatin'. Her, nodding and staring and asking questions. The stuff sounded serious to me.

"We are ze largest French-speaking city outside of Parees." The boy sounded just like them Frenchmen in the movies. "Over sixty-percent of zis citee is Francophone. So why must everyone speak English in order to get ahead? Eh?"

The girl scooped closer, leaning over in a listening way.

"Uhm-hmm." She nodded, staring at him with the blackest eyes. "But don't you think people should learn both languages? We are a bilingual country."

Some of the scraggly brown hair fell across the fellow's face. He reached up an impatient hand to push it back.

"But don't you see?" he was saying earnestly. "Ze English-speaking minority does not find eet necessary to learn French. Eet is because zey have zee power, no?"

"French and English-speaking Canadians must learn to live together," the girl recited, like something out of a schoolbook. Even to my unschooled ear, it sounded like a crock a crap.

"No, no, no!" The fellow was good and frustrated. He shook his head, sending those scraggly locks all over it again. "We do live together. Zis ees not ze point. Eet is language, eet is culture which separates us. Not so?"

"We are all Canadians," the dark sister say stubbornly, lean-

ing all up in his face. "No matter which language or culture."

"Ah, yes," he raises one finger in revelation. "But you must have felt it—ze racism. You, as a Black in a land of whites."

By now I was interested. I felt like leaning over with a "Tell it, brother!", but the man had continued on.

"So you must see zat we Francophones in Montreal feel it. Ze Engleesh is ze language of commerce, of politics. You cannot get a good job without eet. Eet is almost as in South Africa, yes? Ze majority is ruled by ze minority. Don't you agree?"

I nodded. It made perfect sense when he put it like that. But this child was having none of it.

"I don't know anything about Africa," she say, like she proud of it or something. "I'm a Canadian."

"Yes, but you a *Black* Canadian." I bust out before I can stop myself. "Just like he's a French Canadian. Everybody here come from somewhere else. Lessen you a Indian."

And black as you are child, you need to be knowing something about Africa, I felt like saying. But didn't.

Honey, the sister turned and looked me up and down. You'd a thought one of them potted plants had got up and butt into the conversation. Then she whipped her head back without a word, ready to tune up the discussion with the French fellow again. But by then he was looking over at me. And asking me if I want to dance.

I was a head and a-half taller than him (and had a few pounds on him to boot), but what the hell? I kicked off them tight shoes, got up, and gave him my hand.

See, this is why I don't like dancing with no short fellows, particularly white ones. They get a woman with a little weight on her, all of a sudden they forget how to lead. And this little man, child he was a *mess*. I tried to lean into the step, give him a little confidence to pick up the lead. Do you know he took two steps backward and like to have fell over?

Honey, it was awful. One of them long records too, and he was determined to dance it to the end. Lucky the floor was crowded, couldn't nobody see what was going down. I put up with this shuffling little slow dance, the dude's head pressed against my bosom, and me looking down at a bald spot in the middle of his head. All that scraggly hair and he got the nerve to have a bald spot in the middle of his head. Don't that beat all? And Lord, he trying so hard to keep the beat that a sweat done popped out on the bald spot.

Merciful Heaven, the record finally ended. He led me on back

to the table (hadn't said not a word since he'd asked me to dance), pulled out my chair. And I ain't lying—

"Madame." He gave a little bow. "You dance like an angel."

I'm glad he walked away, cause I had to bust out laughing.

"Child," I said to the dark sister, still sitting hunched up at the table. "The man got two left feet."

Some people are just too saddity. She kind of half-turned toward me, looking down that long nose a hers. Like she didn't know what the hell I was talking about.

Well, I'd be damned if I was going to sit there and take somebody looking at me (as my momma would say) "in that tone a voice." I figure Miss Saddity's jaws got tight cause her friend had asked me to dance instead of her. I got up and switched, bare feet and all, right into the next room. Which happened to be the kitchen. From then on I started to enjoy myself.

Shirley's so-called friends were in there (a lively little West Indian couple) frying plantain and hiding from their guests. I liked them. Beverly and Neville were worlds away from Maddy Brown. Just some plain, down-home type a folks who just happened to live up in Bourgie Heights and teach at the university. At least Neville did. Beverly say she run some kind of shop selling Bahamian handicrafts. I spent the evening with them in the kitchen greasing, drinking, and loud-talking.

"I tell you something about these academic types," Neville dished me out a plate of rice and peas. Three dinners in a single evening was a lot even for me. But what the hell. This was *Montreal*, as Shirley was so fond of saying. "They don't know how to have a party. They come, sit around and talk politics, drink a little wine. Now when we talk party, we talking bout some good rum, good folk, and good food, sista."

"I heard *that*," I had to testify, my mouth full of it.

Time I came from out the kitchen, most of the people had gone. There was one couple left, dancing on the floor (and talk about clinches, honey—they slow-dragged it to every tune). And there was Shirley, that French fellow, and Miss Saddity sitting at the table.

"Shirley, I'm ready to go." I don't believe in hanging onto a party once the fun's gone out. Besides, Beverly and Neville yawning wide is good enough hint for me.

"Not yet," Shirley whisper back. "The night's still young, girl. We in Montreal."

So I sat down, trying to keep from yawning myself. Neville finished his drink and gone on to bed. Beverly going around



Cari Rosmarin, PLEISTOCENE. Oil on paper, 32" x 43".



picking up glasses and emptying ashtrays. And here Shirley sits, talking about some night still young. I swear, that girl is a mess.

"So you work in a library?" Shirley was smirking up into the French fellow's face. "How fascinating." Looked like Shirley had latched onto herself something. No wonder she was in no hurry to leave.

And here the man goes, blushing and hitching himself up like a little banty rooster.

"Well, yes," he says, important-like. "Ze university library has so many responsibilities..."

And I do believe Shirley's moving in on Miss Saddity's thunder. Miss S just hanging around on the edge of the conversation, looking pitiful and hopeful at the same time. The man shortage must be even worse here than in Detroit, if the sisters have to compete for little lopped-off fellows like this one here.

"And what do you do?"

Miss Saddity turn on me so sudden, the question so out of the blue that it threw me. I started to come back with a, "What do I do *when*?" When it occurred to me she meant, "for a living."

"I work in a hospital," I answered.

"Oh, really?" She look at me with such distaste, you'd think I said I worked in a zoo.

"Yes, Assistant Director of Communications," I snap back real crisp in my 'company' voice. Now chew on that for awhile, Miss Saddity.

Honey child, you'd a thought somebody had just told the broad we were long-lost kin. Do you know she had the nerve to look astounded? Then, for the first time since I'd seen her, she smiled.

"That's very interesting! Is that something in the journalism field?" The girl looked so pathetic smiling. I smiled back.

"Not exactly," I said. "But they're both in the communications line."

Miss Saddity did a complete about-face, turned into Miss Eager-Beaver. It kind a embarrassed me. Yes, she herself was in the communications field, a student of journalism. She studied at McGill University, where Neville taught. And she was thinking of going to graduate school in the States. Could I make any suggestions. She'd heard that Columbia was good, but was it the *best*? And how did I like working in the field? Was it challenging? And was I in Montreal in connection with my work? No, well there were so many opportunites for travel in journalism. And this, and that, and the other. Questions! When the girl let me loose, I was *tired*. Felt like I'd been through the fifth degree. Questions. I tried to tell the child that paging doctors over the hospital P.A. was a long way from writing stories in the *Tribune*. But she wouldn't listen long enough for me to get a good word in.

Shirley (Merciful Heavens) broke into this intimate conversation with some news of her own. Could she please see me in the kitchen? The girl was looking as smug as a housecat with a mouthful of canary and I soon found out why.

"Darlene," she leaned up against the refrigerator, looking dreamy. "I met a man."

"I know. Henri, the librarian."

"I'm taking him back to the room with me. Do you mind?"

Mind? I was flabbergasted. My hotel room? She must a been talking about some other hotel room. I knew she couldn't be talking about *mine*. Not with my poor body crying, no *screaming* for sleep. And Shirley Ann Moss wants to roll around *my* bed with some old French white fellow? Impossible.

"He ain't white." Shirley shakes her California curls. "He is Jewish, I'll have you know."

Now see, I ain't never been one to judge. If that's the way you want to go, that's okay by me. But don't lie about it, you know?

"Girl, you too much." I mean it. The girl amazes me. "Jewish is a religion, not a race. Being Jewish don't keep him from being white."

"So. Maybe he is. But he works, don't he? Got a good job.

And it ain't as no *bellhop*, either."

"Careful, Shirley," I warn. "The Lord don't like ugly, and I'm not too crazy about it myself. Don't mess with me."

Shirley frowns and smacks her lips. "Darlene, you just too straight-laced. You ought to loosen up, girl. We here to enjoy ourselves. We in..."

"Montreal," I finished for her. "I know we in Montreal. Where (if you remember) I don't know a solitary soul. Where the hell I'm supposed to sleep tonight while you're entertaining? And how come the guy can't take you to his place? He must be married."

"No." But Shirley looks worried. "It's just that he lives so far out in the suburbs, the drive would take forever..."

"He's married." I'm convinced. And also resigned. If Shirley wants to have her fun, let her. "Just find a place for me to sack out and soon, so you and M'sieur can get down to the good times."

Beverly was called in for a conference.

"So you and Henri got together." She gives our girl Shirley an appraising glance. A knowing smile. "He always has liked his women dark." Then she turned to me.

"You could have slept on the sofa y'know, if it hadn't been for that." She pointed. Through a counter cut into the kitchen wall, past the dining area we could see into the livingroom. It was a heaving shadow of someone snoring on the couch.

"Who's that?"

Beverly shrugged. "Some drunk fool. Now where we goin' to sleep you, child? I guess you could sleep over Cedella's."

"Who's Cedella? Not that Black Canadian girl." Miss Saddity didn't look like no Cedella to me. Seemed like Penelope or Millicent would be more in her line.

Beverly pooted with her mouth. "Canadian, me backside. If that girl ain't Bahamian, then I ain't. Some man find her in Nassau seven years ago, bring her here, marry and divorce her. Now she call herself Canadian."

It was decided that I'd sleep over at Cedella's. Beverly tugged my arm on the way out the kitchen and whispered.

"What Cedella have to say about Henri and your friend?"

"She didn't say nothing. Why? Why should she have something to say about it?"

Beverly shook her head. "Let's just say, Cedella may have thought she had a claim staked out in that area. She gone be a bit surprised."

A bit? Walking in there where the three of them stood, their coats already on, I'm more than a little uneasy. Cause Miss Cedella-Saddity's looking mighty blissful, like maybe she's expecting to take her stuff home with her. Poor thing. I'm sure that she (smiling up in Henri's face) don't yet know the lay of the land.

"Cedella, you mind putting up Darlene for the evening?"

"Oh. No, of course not." But Cedella's looking around with puzzled eyes, an open mouth, and a look that says, 'Darlene definitely not the one I was planning on taking home.'

So out the door, arm in arm, go Miss Shirley and Mr. Henri Hotshot. Cedella's eyes follow them, like a puppy left alone at home. Me and Beverly exchange a look.

"Cedella don't live far. You want me to give you a ride?"

I open my mouth to say "Yes, Lordy," but Cedella beat me to the punch. She stand there, shaking her head like she's coming out of a trance.

"No, we'll walk it. I could use the walk."

I went and got my coat, followed her out the door, fuming. During the evening inside, snow had dusted the Montreal streets. A few flakes were still drifting in the air as we crunched our way across the street. These shoes definitely *weren't* made for walking. Especially in no snow. My poor toes, cold and squeezed together, protested silently. They'd be good and swole up, come tomorrow.

The hell it wasn't far. Cedella walked me uphill, through a courtyard, across a low bridge over a slow, snow-covered river,

around a couple of corners and finally...

We stopped in front of a building that looked just like the rest of the row it was joined to. Rowhouses we would have called them in Detroit. Except these looked odd—no stone steps or stoops, but long black iron staircases stretching up three stories, looking to me like fire escapes stuck to the front of the house.

Before I climbed down the stairs to Cedella's basement apartment, I got that peculiar feeling. The feeling someone was looking over my shoulder. I turned, and of course there was no one. Only the quiet street and above it the once-clear sky, now cloudy with snow. But against the soft black of that night sky, was something softer and blacker still. Something solid and substantial looming in the light of moon. Tomorrow I would find out what it was.

Cedella's apartment was nothing more than a couple of rooms wedged between a maze of pipes and fixtures.

That couch of hers was looking awfully inviting, so I made a beeline for it. Cedella disappeared in the direction of another room. I had pulled off my shoes, about to stretch out and get comfortable. When here she come, sailing back in with a tray and two big cups of coffee on it.

Coffee. Now what I want with coffee at this time a night? Sleep was so heavy on me that I felt drunk. My mind so dull and tired that I had reached for the cup and was drinking from it before I knew what I was doing.



"So," Cedella plopped down on the couch beside me, stretched her thin little face in a grin. And launched full speed ahead into verbal assault. "Tell me all about your job as a journalist in the States."

Lord, where do they make these people? Please tell me, so I can call up and have them break the mold.

She went at me like a cat worrying a cold dead mouse. Questions. "When did I?" and "How did I like?" and "How long does it take?" Questions. She prized answers out of my sleepy mouth and threw them away before they were even out good. Couldn't hardly wait til I'd answered one, before she was pinning me with another one. Looking at me with bright big eyes and nodding, nodding, nodding. And wasn't listening to a word I said.

"This is really my first time out the country," I was answering some inquiry or another.

The girl's head went to nodding again, barely stopping for her to take a sip of coffee. Nodding. One or two, "uhm-hmm's" to go with it.

"Go on," she bobs. "Go on."

"I'm a little tired, Cedella." I had to try and put a stop to this. This kind a thing could go on all night. "Been on my feet since early this morning. Packing, traveling, unpacking. You know."

"Uhm-hmm, uhm-hmm." Bright eyes in dark face, peering at me over the top of her cup. She looked like a dark little bird, sipping coffee. "Did you have a nice flight?"

That was when I went from feeling irritated, to feeling sorry. Poor Cedella. A child-sized woman in sweater too big that hung past her wrists. Sitting, sipping coffee at three in the blessed morning with her legs tucked under her. Busy making manic conversation with a near stranger. Cedella nodded again, though I had said nothing. I couldn't help shaking my head. *Poor child.*

"Watch it, woman," Hank Harris would a said if he'd been there and could see inside my head. "You *mother* is coming out."

My ex-husband always maintained that for a woman with no young ones, I did more than my share of mothering. Said that forever playing somebody's momma was bound to be my undoing. He ought to know, he played the baby often enough when we were together.

Still, I had to admit the man had a point. Else, why was I sitting there fighting sleep in a basement apartment somewhere in Montreal? And the chattering little bird that was keeping me up, I suddenly had the urge to take in my arms and tell her "It's alright." Alright that she had to come home in want of a man, cause my friend Shirley had walked off with him. That I understood how loneliness could come down in the dead of the night, and you'd almost want to talk to walls, just to be talking to someone.

Course I didn't press the girl to my bosom. I did just as good. Gave her a smile, and an ear. Forced back sleep, talked a little, listened a lot, answered questions and drank coffee until near five o'clock in the morning.

When the girl was all talked out, I couldn't have told you what we'd talked about to save my life. But it was over, thank

Helen Oji, *SPIRIT LAKE #1*. Oil, acrylic, and mixed media on linen, 88" x 66".

Helen Oji is a visual artist in New York City. This work was made possible with the assistance of a grant from Ariania Foundation for the Arts, Inc.

goodness. I finally got to curl up in a corner of that lumpy couch and close my eyes. But not for long.

Seems like hadn't but a minute passed when that crazy child wasn't shaking me awake, saying I had a phone call. Shirley on the line, just as cheerful as though it wasn't nine o'clock.

"Hey, girl. What it is?"

"Shirley, you out a your mind. What you calling me so early for? Get on back to sleep, girl, and let me do the same."

"Wait a minute," Shirley calls out before I could hang up. "I got to talk to you about something."

"Aw, hell." I struggle up into a sitting position. "You gone worry me to death. What you want? And where'd you get this number from?"

Shirley paused. Her normally boisterous voice turned meek and squeaky.

"Henri," she finally answered. "He gave it to me."

"Oh, *did* he now? Lucky he happened to have it with him, wasn't it? Did he know it by heart, or was it written down in his little black book? And how is little ole Henry this morning, all curled up in *my* bed?" Hank always did say I be a' evil woman first thing in the morning.

"He's just fine," Shirley snap back. "And don't be sarcastic. Look, what time you planning on coming back here?"

"I don't know, girl. Whatever time I get there. Why?"

"Well," Shirley's voice goes squeaky again. "Try to make it late, huh? Not before one o'clock, at least. Alright?"

"Girl, you mean to tell me ya'll ain't finish with it yet? I didn't think that little man had it in him."

"Don't be so backwards, Darlene Williams. This ain't Detroit, you know. This is..."

"If you tell me Montreal one more time, I'm a kill you."

That Moss woman is a peck a trouble! Maybe if she hadn't come waking me up, I would have stayed sleep until one o'clock. Maybe. Wasn't no guarantee of that with Cedella on the case.

You ever heard of a night owl that likes to get up early? Honey, if Cedella was bee-busy last night, you should a seen her that morning.

"Oh, good. You're awake," she bustles in. "Come on in the kitchen."

Grumbling, I hie myself up from that lousy couch and follow her into that cubicle she call a kitchen. Thinking that since she didn't succeed in talking me to death last night, aim to finish me off this morning.

"Now, drink up," she pressed another cup of coffee on me. "We've got a big day ahead of us."

"We?" I'm sitting at the kitchen table, my head as heavy as a bowling bowl. Trying to peel open my eyelids. "I don't remember us making any plans for today."

"I thought I'd take you around, show you the city. There's so much to see in Montreal—the Underground City, and the..."

"I can't go nowhere looking like this," I protest, pointing to my slept-in jeans.

"You look fine." The little liar. "Really, you do. Just a little rumped, but you can use my iron. I wish I had something to fit you, but..."

She incline her head in my direction, and I hurry up and say it before she does. "I know you don't, honey. I'd take two a you to make one a me. Anybody can see that."

I went along with the plans Cedella had cooked up cause I couldn't think of a way to get out of it. And didn't have nothing better to do between ten and one o'clock. With hot coffee sloshing around inside, I tried in vain to take the bed wrinkles out of my jeans.

And then we were out in the city. The snow had melted, leaving little patches of wet on the ground. I breathed in the cool, soft air and looked around.

And then it jumped on me. That dark center of a presence I'd only sensed last night. There it was, a proud brown lady sitting pretty. Right smack dab in the center of the city, no less.

"Jesus," I couldn't help but call the Lord's name. "If that

ain't one mother of a mountain!"

"Oh, that." Cedella waved her hand carelessly at the majestic lady with trees in her skirt. I had stopped in the sidewalk to look, and she nudged me on. "You haven't seen the mountain? That's where the city's name comes from. *Mont Real*. The Royal Mountain."

"The Royal Mountain," I repeated, turning around for another look. "Ain't that something. And wouldn't I like to go up there. They let folks climb it?"

"Yes, but you don't want to go up there at this time of year." Cedella was firmly guiding me down the street. "There's skiing there when we have snow. And it's nice in the summertime—there's a park and look-out point. But right now, there's nothing up there but mud. Now, come on. I want to take you to see..."

I followed her down the street, but kept turning back for a peek up at that Royal Mountain. A mountain in the middle of the city. How do you like that?

"Old Montreal isn't far from here," Cedella was saying. "It's just a twenty minute walk."

"No." I stopped right in the sidewalk, obstinate as a mule. My feet had decided for me. I was walking nowhere this day. "Don't they have buses or trains in this city? Why everybody got to walk where they're going?"

Cedella, like that Royal Mountain, looked different in the daylight. Her skin ashier, her face more pinched, her expression somewhere between a crochety old woman and a pouty child.

"Alright," she smacks her lips. "We can take the Metro, if you insist. Though why you'd want to ride on a beautiful day like this..."

We rode. The Metro was heaven, honey. Wasn't nothing like I'd imagine a subway to be. The station was like a museum, hung with pictures and works of art. Train rode just as quiet, and *clean*. I couldn't help thinking sadly, how they'd mess all this up inside a week, back home in Detroit.

The ride was much too short. Less than ten minutes later we were out and walking.

Looking and walking around this here Old Montreal wasn't as bad as I'd thought. The sun was out and so were the folks. Nothing like Sunday morning in Detroit. People walked the streets like they were on their way places, but not in a hurry. Vendors sold things from stands along the road, flowers and fruit and postcards. Children romped as children will, throwing things to each other and calling out in a fast language it seemed I knew, but just couldn't understand. I knew I was in a foreign country, but it wasn't really that foreign to me. The place was really waking me up.

But honey, would the child ever stop talking? Determined to play the tour guide, she wouldn't so much as let me sit down to rest my feet and just drink in the new sights. She just *had* to show me every old church and courtyard and cobblestone street. In the meantime, in between time, she chattered. This morning the subject was herself.

"I don't know whether to take French or Spanish," she fretted. "There's a language requirement at university. I just can't decide."

"Folks here speak French, don't they?" I reasoned, not really caring. Those cobblestones were murdering my feet. "Take French."

"Ye-e-es." Her black eyes got wide, she cocked her head to the side like a noisy little blackbird. "But since I may be relocating to the States, maybe Spanish would help me more. Especially in a journalism career. What do you think?"

"I wouldn't know." I was getting tired of this girl and her chatter. "Do to suit yourself."

Cedella stopped in the street and narrowed her eyes at me. "You don't seem at all like a journalist," she accused. "One would never know it from your conversation."

I came to a halt too, put my hands on my hips. We faced





Helen Oji, SPIRIT LAKE #2. Oil, acrylic, and mixed media on linen, 88" x 66".

each other down in a silent duel, Dodge City on cobblestones. This little fool needed some serious talking to, and I was just the one to do the job.

"So *what?*" A hussy. "Your conversation ain't exactly sparkling either, if I may say so. And I don't told you I don't know how many times, that I work in Hospital Communications, not journalism. You don't listen, that's your problem."

We stood squared off for half a minute. Staring each other down. I wasn't going to give an inch, I was ready to stand there all day if need be. But finally, it was Cedella who turned away. You ever seen somebody punch the air out of a paper bag? That's how the girl's face just—collapsed. I felt a little sorry for her, but hell. Hadn't she asked for it?

"I know I'm not being a good hostess. I'm sorry. I've been needing someone to talk to, and well. You have such a kind face. Forgive me for talking too much." She grabbed my hand. "Come, we'll go to the Underground City. You'll like it there."

I followed behind her, feeling a bit miffed. She'd gone and switched gears on me, turned from sassy to sorry and I'd made my point. Or had I? Cause why was I running up behind her

again, on my way to some Underground City (God only knew what that was, sounded like someplace moles lived) when all I wanted to see was the view from the top of the Royal Mountain?

She stopped us at a bench in front of a little corner market just off the wharf. An old man in a plaid cap and dirty white apron came out to stand guard over his fruits and vegetables. These people be the same everyplace—see some Black people coming and automatically figure you there to steal from them. Cedella settled her thin butt on the bench, and a little old woman (looking like a pile of old clothes) got up and moved to the other end. Cedella patted the space she'd left.

"Sit down," she invited. "We wait here for the bus."

"Bus? Can't we get where we're going on that Metro?"

Cedella shook her head. I had no choice but to join her.

Sitting there between Cedella and the unsociable old woman, with the suspicious shopkeeper hanging in the background, we waited. Nobody passed, no one came to buy anything, no one said a word. Time might have been standing still. I sat there in my wrinkled jeans, my butt sore against the hard bench. Smelling ripe tomatoes, freshly-cut flowers, a breeze from the harbour,



and the faint odor of cat piss. Which wasn't exactly what I had in mind when Shirley asked me to come go to Montreal.

"When is this bus coming?" I shifted on the bench, feeling splinters catch in my jeans. "It's taking forever."

The thin voice startled me. I'd almost forgotten that old lady sitting there at the other end.

"Sunday morning," she say in a voice that sounds like rust. "Always a wait on a Sunday morning."

"Indeed it t'is," shopkeeper chime in with a British accent. "A pity. Poor people always have to wait. No other way to get to church on a Sunday. You wait and you wait. What else can you do?"

Now me, I sure wasn't in the mood for no waiting. Turning into a statue, sitting on a bench with splinters in my ass. Shoot, for all I know, them old folks could a been sitting there from time immemorial, waiting on the god-damned bus. But Cedella's black eyes come to life. Head start to nodding. Something tell me the girl don't mind waiting. *Like* to wait, in fact. She pounced into the old folk's conversation like a cat among pigeons.

"Uhm-hmm, uhm-hmm." She lean across me, focusing in on the old lady. "It is a shame, isn't it? A real shame."

The more pointless the conversation became, the more intense was Cedella. Probing the old folks with questions. From late buses to long lines at the butcher shop to the price of vegetables. Seem like every word, every gesture was a jewel to that girl. She hung onto the old peoples' words, hoarding them like nuggets of gold. They loved it, of course. Which old folks wouldn't? They talked happily about the lives they used to have, what happened back in the good old days when the world was right. Cedella urged them on and on.

Cedella must a been practicing for that career she loved to talk so much about. One in investigative journalism. She had a bad Barbara Walters complex. The girl was an expert in meddling, rummaging in the trashcans of people's lives. Too busy pretending to be engrossed in other folk's stories, she ain't got none of her own to tell.

But even as I sat there, congratulating myself on my amazing insight, something hit me. Me and Cedella, maybe we were of a kind.

If her thing was investigative journalism, then mine was being the professional mother. The big, comfortable woman with the "kind face" and ready ear. Ready to be a pillow and a pillar to everybody but myself. Helping folks live their lives. Meanwhile, where was my own life? Pushed up here in the momma corner you don't have much to do with the world except watch it pass you by.

Old Hank was right. Self-sacrifice might not save your soul, but it sure would ruin your life. Turning yourself into a pocket, as the poet says, "for folks to dump their changes in."

Well, honey I'm here to tell you. This woman has had it. Ain't no sense a me playing momma to no more big-ass grown folks. I'd be damned if I was going to sit on a bench like a pile of old clothes, squeezed between a manic chatterbox, two old folks, and pigeon shit. Shit. Not when I'd blown two whole weeks worth of pay following that Shirley to Montreal. I decided to see to it right then and there that Darlene Lou Harris Williams got out and got her own.

It started with me getting up from that splintery bench, waving goodbye to Cedella and company, and walking out into an unfamiliar street in an unfamiliar city.

The next thing would be to turn Shirley's overnighter out the hotel room I was half-paying for, so I could take a long bath, put on some make-up, a white suit, and all my gold. And get out in the streets again.

I aimed to find a way to get to the top of that Royal Mountain. I was going to get up there and see what it looked like on the other side. Don't care if I did get my feet muddy.

I hitched up my rumpled jeans and hailed a passing taxi.

Sandra Jackson-Opoku is a writer living in Chicago.

## Of My Mother's Mother's Mother

*When i was one  
great grandmother came up  
from red earth of Nuevo Laredo  
but just after cold blasts  
of winter  
she went back  
Had fought over me  
with the other abuelita  
both believing each knew best  
about baby girls  
kept a lock of my golden curls  
in her memory  
"Cabellitos de oro" she called me  
in all her letters*

*(In summer still my hair creates  
a crown of red and gold  
stolen from the sun  
betraying Indian blood)*

*She died six years ago when  
we were planning a big trip  
South*

*Lives in each strand of hair  
waits in my womb  
rocks in that empty chair  
in the front room  
smiles when i take a cutting  
from a thriving plant  
place it in fresh water  
to root*

A. Castillo

Anna Castillo is the author of *Women Are Not Roses*, University of Houston, Cute Publico Press, 1984 (poems) and *The Mixquiahuala Letters*, State University of New York at Binghamton, Bilingual Review Press, 1986 (a novel).



## STORY OF ELZA

Elza carves her body to make it perfect. Brown gray color woman thirty seven years old and several extra pounds she leaves her country to keep house for a traditional banker's family. Her intention is to purchase an affluent trousseau to offer it later wrapped in white virginity to the husband-to-be. For three years she labours and acquires two pairs of silver candelabra thirteen lacy nightgowns seven negligees six Murano vases forty-six pieces of cut-crystal glass ornaments eighteen hand-crocheted mantles and muffs and twelve ninety-six by fifty-two inches tablecloths. She searches for blue eyes and red freckles desires gathered at leisure reading hours. She cares for madame's children washes silk underpants cooks loin of veal with caramelized apples bastes rabbits with mustard sauce and mixes leeks and celery for frothy mousses. She shops for blenders Cuisinarts electric can openers waffle makers VCRs and computerized weight-watcher scales.

Still looking for the husband-to-be she begins the layette of her daughter-to-be. She buys pink knitted jumpsuits with lacy collared little shirts hand-made acrylic blankets wool mittens and disposable diapers. The nameless future husband is expected to honor virginity produce sweet light-skinned baby girl and live his life as the reflector of her models.

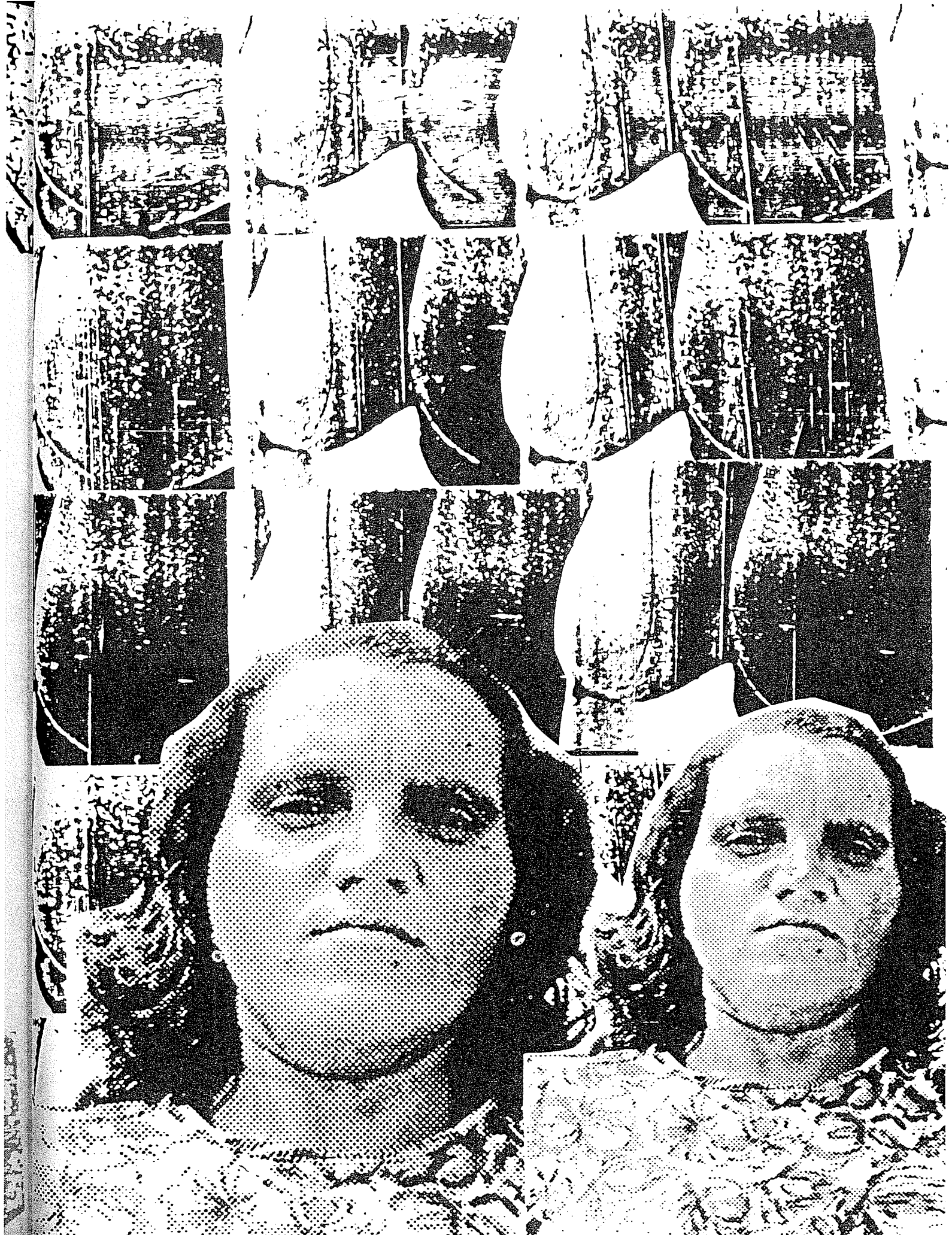
She keeps in secrecy the surgery of three years ago when four pounds of breasts were chopped away with interruption of future milk flowing. She keeps in secrecy the surgery of two years ago when several layers of intestine were severed to shape her curves Sophia Loren style.

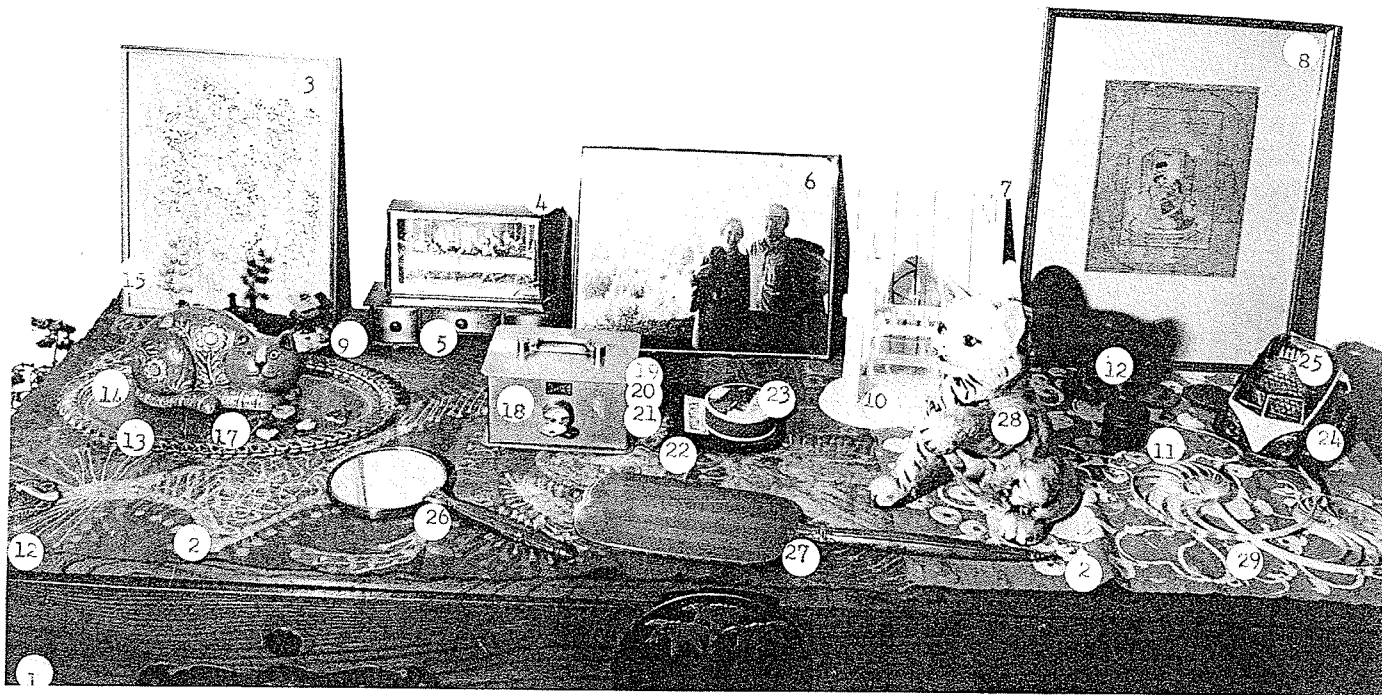
At sunrise Elza dreams of being devoured by boxes of items and has difficulty in breathing seeing walking remembering her listening to mother's short stories with her nine sisters and brothers. At sunset she wishes for man's desire to penetrate her forty birth days and yet she is ready to settle for anything to cover the shame of her spinsterhood. If she could only find a husband to crown her as the mother of her daughter...

Sleeping she keeps her hymen intact to honestly wear orange blossoms on her wedding day as she stores her fears of bloody wedding nights.

Her older sister follows her path into fairyland. She buys pink knitted jumpsuits with lacy collared little shirts hand-made acrylic blankets wool mittens and disposable diapers. The nameless future husband is expected to honor virginity produce sweet light-skinned baby girl and live his life as the reflector of her models.

*Josely Carvalho is a Brazilian artist living in New York and working with silkscreen, painting, poetry, and installations.*





# OBJECTS ON MY DRESSER

## SONYA RAPPAPORT

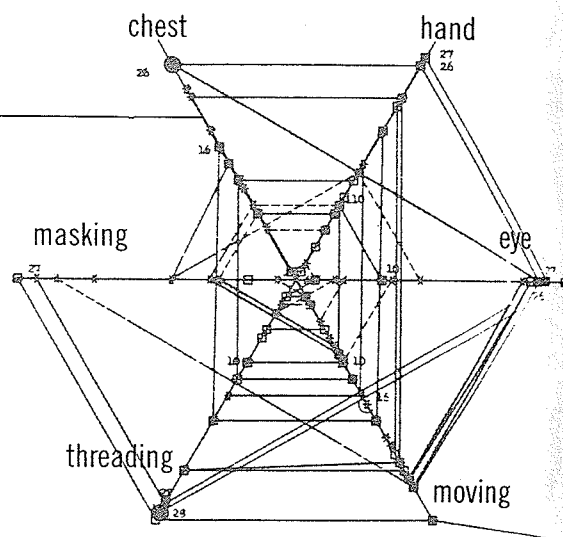
### OBJECTS ON MY DRESSER & assigned words

- 1 Tansu / Holder
- 2a Batik / Sea
- 2b Batik / Love
- 3 Genn Drawing / Snakey
- 4 Last Supper Dresser / Spiritual
- 5 Wood Slice / Chip
- 6 Hava & Elias Photo / Love
- 7 Nevelson Relief / Grow
- 8 Indian Drawing / Love
- 9 Crystal Knobs / See Thru
- 10 Thread Wheel / Holder
- 11 Tack Box / Holder
- 12 Cymbals / Love
- 13 Oval Glass Tray / See Thru
- 14 Cat Bank / Child
- 15 Plastic Foliage / Grow
- 16 Ceramic Hearts / Love
- 17 Screw / Screwed
- 18 Steel Bank / Holder
- 19 Pennies / Money
- 20 Envelope Change Purse / Holder
- 21 Silver Dollars / Silver Money
- 22 Satin Pocket / Pocket
- 23 Typewriter Ribbon Can / Snow Love
- 24 Toy Auto / Car
- 25 Furniture Cups / See Thru
- 26 Mirror / See
- 27 Silver Mirror / Silver See
- 28 Mother's Ceramic Cat / Mother
- 29 Shell Slices / Sea

### IMAGES CORRELATED TO THE OBJECTS & assigned words

- 1C Victorian Dresser / Elegance
- 2C Sea Object Sculpture / Prickly
- 3C Turtle / Crawly
- 4C Sea Snakes / Slithery
- 5C Doll's Eye / Seeing
- 6C El Greco "Gentleman" / Passion
- 7C Trees / Growing
- 8C Love at First Bite / Sex
- 9C Chess Game / Game
- 10C Ferris Wheel / Game
- 11C Antique Iranian Ink Well / Exquisite
- 12C Strip Teaser's Bosom / Sex
- 13C Photo of Countess Holding Frame / See Thru
- 14C Proportions by Durer / Child
- 15C Growing Flower / Grow
- 16C Strawberries / Luscious
- 17C Drawing by Judith Bernstein / Sex
- 18C Casket / Death
- 19C Painting of Circles / Discs
- 20C Man's Slipper / Slip-Her
- 21C Bill-Joke Postcard / Money-Joke
- 22C Photo of Judith Bernstein / Sexy
- 23C Chippendale Furniture / Elegance
- 24C Kienholz' Dodge '38 / Sex
- 25C Labor-Ynth at Chartres / Labor-Ynth
- 26C Drawing by John Graham / Spiritual
- 27C Mask Sculpture / Mask
- 28C Cow on Grid Drawing / Mother-Ambivalence
- 29C Ear / Hear

Grid of tradition, a rigid structure.



In analyzing the objects that had accumulated on my dresser I was searching for behavior patterns as documentation that reflected the culture in which I live. The objects were given numbers for identity and use as data in computer programs that described their shape, color, material, value and source.

I proceeded to understand the motivation for my keeping the objects when I made a correlated set of images that related to the objects. Words were then assigned to each set. In discussions with psychiatric social worker Winifred De Vos, a netweb of underlying meanings emerged from the image to image and image to word associations.

The set of objects and the set of related images became one set of object-images in the future phases of the work. Themes reoccurring in the dialogues established the words for the six axes of the web structure upon which the images can be placed.



From the  
**Barbie Calendar**  
by Stacy Godlesky



*May*

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

The warm May sun brings out Barbie's blossoming radiance. Her fresh glow is sure to add flavor to anyone's afternoon.

*October*

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

All heads turn as Barbie enters the Halloween Masquerade Ball. She certainly is the most beautiful of all.



Stacy Godlesky is an artist now living in New Jersey.

*The Barbie Calendar Series is a satire on white middle-class norms and the traditional female role in American society. ... As I sought out each appropriate environment, dressed her accordingly, and obsessively did her hair, I could not help but feel the same type of love for her as I felt when I was young. S.G.*

# manna

## A PERFORMANCE PIECE BY LENORA CHAMPAGNE

*The set is a kitchen with refrigerator, stove, and sink (either full-size or miniature) and white enamel table. An ironing board with an x-ray on top and white fluorescent tubes below is against the wall. A clothesline is suspended across the space.*

*The performer enters from offstage, if possible through the audience. Only the neon lights below the ironing board are illuminated. She carries an enamel washtub on her hip, and lights her way with a flashlight. She enters during TAPE.*

**TAPE ON** Dearest children, After months of not hearing from your mother, this letter will shock you, no doubt. We have had an unbelievable week in Louisiana, cold, ice, and snow. The school has been closed all week, first because of boiler trouble, then because of driving conditions. Here, remember, we are not prepared. Faucets break, electricity fails, etc. Very, very fortunately, we continued as usual here. With pipes in the foundation, we feel no inconvenience. Insulation helps also. The heat in home remains. How fortunate I have felt. **TAPE OFF**

*The performer is dressed in a blue housecoat that snaps in front and wears pink cloth slippers on her feet. When she enters the kitchen (during the tape) she snaps on a light, pours herself a cup of coffee, and sips it meditatively. She shakes a sheet out of the enamel washtub and hangs it on the clothesline. (This sheet will be the projection screen for the slides that will follow.) She addresses the next words to the audience.*

"There is a correspondence between my mother and me. She sends all her children reams of carbon copy letters typed on a manual Royal typewriter that is older than I am."

**TAPE ON** She was conceived under a palm tree, the first of nine children born to Walter and Myrtis, themselves the off-spring of Edmire and Guizelle, Alma and Walter. The first fruit of the union between Champagne and Thibeaux.

**TAPE OFF**

*As this tape is heard, she "hangs" from the clothesline by the arms before the sheet/screen. The projector light is turned onto her, so that she is framed in a square of white light.*

*When the voice on the tape ends, she takes her arms down and one by one unsnaps the snaps on the housecoat, saying*

"La voila. Les creves faims arrivent. Les creves faims de Lafayettee."

**TAPE ON (Cajun music.)**

*She slips out of housecoat, freezes for a moment with it extended behind her, then hangs it by one shoulder to the clothesline. She takes the housecoat off the line and puts it on over the blue-and-white checked housedress she was wearing under the housecoat.*

**TAPE ON (Cajun music.)**

*She dances over to the refrigerator and removes a chicken from it. She and the chicken dance or wrestle to the taped music.*

*When the singing stops, but while the music continues, she addresses the audience.*

"My mother went to a convent school—the kind where the nuns didn't let girls see *Gone with the Wind* because Clark Gable says "damn." Her youngest sister, my godmother, would become a nun, and we'd go visit her at the convent in New Orleans. My mother packed sandwiches—chicken salad—and milk. She'd put ice in the milk to chill it. I thought ice in milk was disgusting so I'd refuse to drink it.

Later, she took me to see Audrey Hepburn in *The Nun's Story*, which is when I first became interested in oysters. Her father visits her in the convent, and takes her out to a restaurant.

Photo: Darlene Delbecq



rant, and she can have anything on the menu she wants, and she orders oysters. All that time in the convent, and she wants oysters. Hmmmm, I thought. They must be good."

*As the singing comes up on the soundtrack, the first slide comes on.*

**SLIDE (hand-lettered)** "Don't mix milk and fish!"

*As the voices go down and the music continues, she stuffs the chicken and says,*

"When I was little, there was a movie theatre across the street from our house, but we didn't go often, because Mama didn't want us exposed to "undesirable elements," which, in her opinion, included most people in Port Barre. Once when she was away I got my grandmother to let me see *Samson and Delilah* because it was based on a Bible story. It was very exciting, I got to see this woman naked from behind and watched Victor Mature squish everyone by knocking out support beams. I didn't

think my mother would find out, but she must have, because right after she got home the movie theatre burned down. I didn't get to see many movies for a while after that."

TAPE OFF

SLIDE of Lenora as Baby comes on.

"This is me as a baby. You can already see from the contemplative pose that I'm going to be a serious person."

TAPE ON I suppose you're preparing for performance. I would imagine the play is humorous. Of course, it could be on the serious side. which is it?

TAPE OFF

SLIDE of Lenora as Angel (First Communion photo).

"Here I am as the perfect little girl I tried hard to be."

TAPE ON You are so perfect in an imperfect world that I want you to remain that way. I hate to see you put yourself in any position which will tarnish you; and remember, ...

SLIDE of Lenora in first grade.

TAPE ON ...no one is above temptation.

SLIDE of Lenora with dolls under arms, mother and siblings.

"This is my mother, who was about my age—maybe a year or

Photos: Mary Mallot



cal sense—was when I was playing under the ironing board and my mother dropped the iron on my shoulder—accidentally, of course. I was so surprised I didn't cry at first. She rushed me to the doctor, who took a picture of it. It was my first x-ray. He told her not to worry. "Young bones are tender. They bend, but they don't break."

TAPE ON Cajun music, then to grandmother saying, ... That's how you get that boudin taste.

She wrings out rag and awkwardly wipes at invisible spots on table, counter, etc.

"I took good care of my dolls. However, animals didn't fare as well. Mama didn't want dogs in the house and didn't like cats, so we were only allowed to have fish and baby chicks as pets. We'd come home from visiting my grandmother in Lafayette and the neighborhood dogs would have broken into the chicken coop and eaten all the chicks, or my best friend Andree would give the chicks a bath and they'd die of pneumonia, or, worst of all, you'd step on them accidentally. I did that once, and felt guilty for days.

The one chick that grew to maturity started pecking us, so we refused to go outside anymore. One time it chased Keith from the store to the house. The trail was marked by apples that he'd thrown at the chicken in his flight. So my mother had Louise wring its neck and we had a big chicken gumbo. It was a memorable meal. Everyone sat around the dinner table and stared at their plates in silence. Only my parents ate. Later, my mother said it was understandable. "After all, it was your pet."



so younger—when this photograph was taken. That's Keith and Randall on her lap—Myrna was unfortunately cut out of the photo when the slide was made—there's James, and here I am, with the dolls in my arms. I think this picture speaks for itself? Good."

TAPE ON (MaMom and boudin.)

MaMom, can you tell me how to make boudin?

Oh, no, scha, mais where you gonna get de ingredients?

Lenora and I just wanted to know.

Well, you have to boil all, like the feet of the pig.

The feet?

No, you take the head, and the liver and some of the meat, and of course the head, but I don't know how to clean the head. Uncle Loule and them, they boil all that.

During the tape, she walks over to the ironing board, tips it over at a slant against the wall, and leans on it (like an analyst's couch).

"My first traumatic experience—and I mean that in the medi-

TAPE ON Heaven knows, I did not do much for Christmas, but more cooking, and all is time-consuming. And this cold spell! I declare, I don't know how you put up with it. I will take the mild winters. It is beautiful, that is all I can say. We had ice first, icicles all over bare trees, fences, etc., then snow. I found the sky at daybreak and dusk was inspiring. I know where artists get inspiration for the beautiful scenes they can paint. I will appreciate winter scenes more for awhile. We get to where we think they are just made up.

TAPE ON When she was nine, a truck came and moved the old house, so they could build the new house. That winter, her father woke her up so she could see snow.

TAPE OFF

During the tapes, she puts bread in the toaster after taking it out of Evangeline Maid bread wrapper; glances at a newspaper, reaches over to toaster to remove toast.

Eating dry toast, she says,

"You didn't eat the skin," he said.



"No, I liked the meat, but I'm not interested in the skin."  
 "I even eat the bones," he said.  
 His plate was clean."

TAPE ON We heard a most interesting lecture on shrimp farming. I believe that would be sensible. We farm crawfish, why not shrimp?

SLIDE of Lenora as Miss P.B.H.S.

"Here I'd just been crowned Miss Port Barre High School. My mother encouraged competition, because she thought it would prepare us for life's disappointments and build character."

TAPE ON I say, one has to do both win and lose. It can't be only one sided, even if that is what we would like.

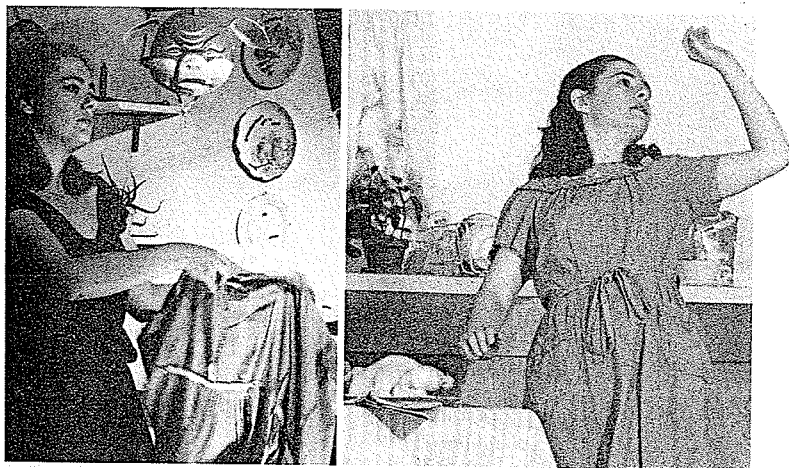
"Of course, it was only fun if you won."

SLIDE of Lenora before Miss Port Barre Contest.

"This photo was taken just before the Miss Port Barre Contest, which I also won."

SLIDE of Lenora after being crowned Miss Port Barre.

"I learned special skills from these contests, like putting vase-line on your teeth to make them shiny, and how to glide while walking—a matter of holding yourself erect and melting at the same time—and how to guard against erosion. Erosion is what we called the thing that happens when your mouth is locked in a smile and the edges start quivering, which threatens to col-



lapse the whole effect. (undermine the entire effect.)

"I'd just seen *Gone with the Wind*, and wanted a dress like the one Scarlett wore in the bar-be-que scene, so Mama asked Miss Mary Alice to make it for me."

SLIDE of Lenora in hoop skirt by oak tree; pick up truck in back.

"She did a real good job. I still wear this dress."

SLIDE of Lenora in black prom dress.

"I wore black to the senior prom, which mortified my mother. This dress was based on one that Olivia Hussey wore in *Romeo and Juliet*, which I'd seen with my boyfriend. We were going to lots of movies—he'd borrow his father's car, and we'd drive to Lafayette and see a film, have some food afterwards."

SLIDE of Lenora in close-up?

"We also saw *Camelot* together, and that spring I based my

valedictory address on something King Arthur said in that movie. 'We must not let our passions destroy our dreams.'"

TAPE ON Dear Lenora, I just want to say this to you. I gather you and Mike are about to break up. It is very obvious that when someone is more interested in school or a city than a boy, love is nowhere around. Until you can be ready to give yourself completely, put your interests last, your husband's first, a marriage situation is not there.

*During tape, she removes apron and hangs it up. She goes to the table, and deliberately, raises a fork.*

"La fourchette." (repeats) "La fourchette."

*Raises a knife.*

"Le couteau." (repeats) "Le couteau."

*Hands on table.*

"La table."

*How do you say, under the table?"*

"Sous la table."

"Mettre Keith sous la table!"

TAPE ON She went to Europe, and saw snow for the second time. In Challons-sur-Marne, as she crossed a bridge at nightfall, a dwarf lifted her up and tipped her sideways. The horizon tilted. The light was pink and silver over the river. Afterwards, as his idiot companion joined him in laughter, she walked away quickly, looking straight ahead.

"In 1975 I took a trip to Colorado with my boyfriend"

TAPE ON Dearest Lenora, How many times will you crush me, crush me to the bone? This trip with Michael—how revolting and upsetting to me. I do not blame Mike one bit—I still love him and think he is a great guy. It is you I am crushed over.

I am unable to find words to express the way I feel. I have said a thousand times, women are the ones who lead men down. I cannot believe Mike can think the same of you after you go on a camping trip with him. What a beautiful story to tell your children, if you ever have any. The whole principle behind the trip sickens me: that you should get to know him better. My dear, that is not the way to get to know him. You have given people opportunity to talk so often, I wonder what next you will do to make me anything but proud of you.

I am hoping you will reconsider your Colorado plans. The plan is most distasteful to me. Remember, women should be placed on a pedestal, looked up to, not down at. Strange how little you consider what other people may think of you. I could tell you why the headaches, but you wouldn't listen. Love, Mama

*The performer does a dance during this tape during which she removes the blue and white checked housedress to reveal a blue tunic beneath it.*

SLIDE of Lenora reading on bed.

"I had just begun working on my dissertation when my friend Tina Freeman took this photograph. The dress I'm wearing is one my mother wore during her final pregnancy. I would finish the thesis in nine months.

While I was writing it, I received this letter from a former boyfriend.

*(working on it)*

*She takes the letter from the freezer and reads the following excerpt:*

"How did I feel when you told me you were pregnant? Elated in some ways, but fearful that something would have to be done



that would affect the nice secure little life I had created. Difficult explanations would have had to be given, living situations would have to be altered, etc. Basically, I didn't want to take full responsibility for what I had had a hand in doing.

However, and here is the crux of my predicament, I was and am strongly against abortion. I think it's a convenient way not to face the consequences of your actions. Lenora, I don't want to go into arguments about this. It's just the way I feel. And at the time, to help pay for what I considered to be morally wrong *even though it was the solution I secretly wanted* was impossible. Still is. I also felt at the time to try to convince you otherwise would only add to your anguish over the situation (got to give myself some credit) and would only serve to increase the trauma of the event.

The one thing that bothered me about the whole situation—and this will be hard for you to read—is that it was your conscious decision that caused the pregnancy in the first place. You had a diaphragm that could have been used, but I remember you telling me later that you didn't want to ruin the romance of the situation. A choice on your part, and another factor which made me less inclined to put up any money to pay for the abortion.

The abortion seemed like an easy solution because it caused the least disturbance in our lives as we had thus far constructed them. We denied a possible human life, but also denied the possibilities of our own, by being afraid to say yes we did this and yes it will cause a radical change in our existences. Avoid, avoid, avoid. Stupid now, to me, but I also hope that I won't do the same thing again. We were so secure and smug in our intellectual concepts of our own superiority and maturity—but we were just kids."

*She puts the letter back in the envelope. Puts the envelope in a paper bag.*

"My mother used to make chicken head masks for us out of brown paper bags from my father's store."

*Looks at the paper bag.*

"I got this bag at the stationery store. I save paper bags because it's hard for me to throw things away or let them go, so I held on to it when I saw there was a message printed on it. "Caring is the art of sharing, sharing is the art of loving, loving is the art of living." Hmmm, I thought, maybe my mother is a love artist."

**TAPE ON** For me, it has proven true, that when you give yourself for the happiness of others, only then are you truly happy. Definitely not that I feel everyone must marry, but if not, to help someone, is self-fulfilling. I believe contentment, like peace and justice, must start in each human heart, and unless it starts there, it does not start.

*During the preceding tape, she lowers her hand over the bowl of plum tomatoes and cups her hand over one. She hums a mournful dirge, and moves over to the clothesline after the tape is finished. She puts her head in the pig mask (it remains pinned to the clothesline) and does a silent dance with slow, Oriental-style movements.*

*She removes the mask, and standing still before the audience, sings the following song to the tune of the dirge.*



Photo: Mary Mallot



Photo: Mary Mallot

The evening after  
the abortion  
she had a dream of  
an Arctic wasteland.

The ice was covered  
with dying seal pups  
their lifeless bodies  
were in the thousands

and the air was  
filled with their souls.

And she knew she  
in this country  
was a stranger.

And she knew she  
would never be  
her mother.  
She would be  
an Other.

And she waited to see  
who she would be.

SLIDE of Lenora in Rome.

"This is my mother—I mean, it's me. When Tina showed it to me, I was startled by the resemblance to my mother. It's not the face—it's in the legs. And in the skirt, which is here, from the fifties.

"I'm not really like my mother, but I am like her, and I like her. And I love her.

"When I was a child, a round red Chinese box sat on my mother's dresser. I asked where it came from, and she told me the nuns gave it to her for writing the best short story in seventh grade. When I left home I asked her for it, and now it sits on my dresser."

SLIDE (color) of Lenora in Alaska comes up.

*All other lights go out. She shines a flashlight into the audience, and as she runs it over the faces of the audience and begins walking out of the space, she tells the dream of Heterosexual Love.*

"In my dream, I was in a room with men in suits and ties—professors at Columbia University—who were discussing theatre architecture. I burst out that they were all wrong: the place for theatre is in the streets. It's already happening there. Museums, I said, should have large public exhibitions about time, like science fairs. Then all the people would come.

"Then Cindy filmed me and this man making love. She had a super-8 camera, so she asked, "Does this make me a cinematographer?" First I saw things from the perspective of making love—I was a lover in the act—then from the perspective of the camera. On film, our bodies were in close-up, abstracted, interlocking limbs in luminous color. Then a telephone rang, and he picked it up, the camera panning past his teeth—he was smiling—to his eyes, then to my mouth. I said, "There's nothing to eat." That meant it was a political film. Some people who saw the film later said they didn't like me speaking—that it made things too obvious.

"Then we packed a silver suitcase, like a camera case, and went to the street, where it was snowing. We screened the film on a busy sidewalk, where people could stop and watch. Behind the screen was a big movie marquee, with the title, *Heterosexual Love*."

*Flashlight is switched off; slide is switched off; houselights come up.*

## THE END

Lenora Champagne is a New York-based performer, director, writer, and teacher. A native of Louisiana, she is Artist-in-Residence at Trinity College, 1985–86.

Opposite: Sabra Moore is an artist living in New York City. She comes from a line of quiltmakers in East Texas.

Then Jesus said, "Two men were in de  
One was a great deal, while the oth  
were both so poor t  
to think no mor

fe  
po  
sins,  
me m  
Th  
"Thy t

**E ROBES FOR SPRING**  
[B] Glitter-print. Acetate  
gleam in the pattern, the pip-  
the buttons. Inverted  
[C] N  
little v

\$3.98

ARTIFACT, Commerce, Texas.

"I cut out paperdolls from the Sears catalog & kept them in my Bible story book."

*Chippin' in*



# TERROR TALES

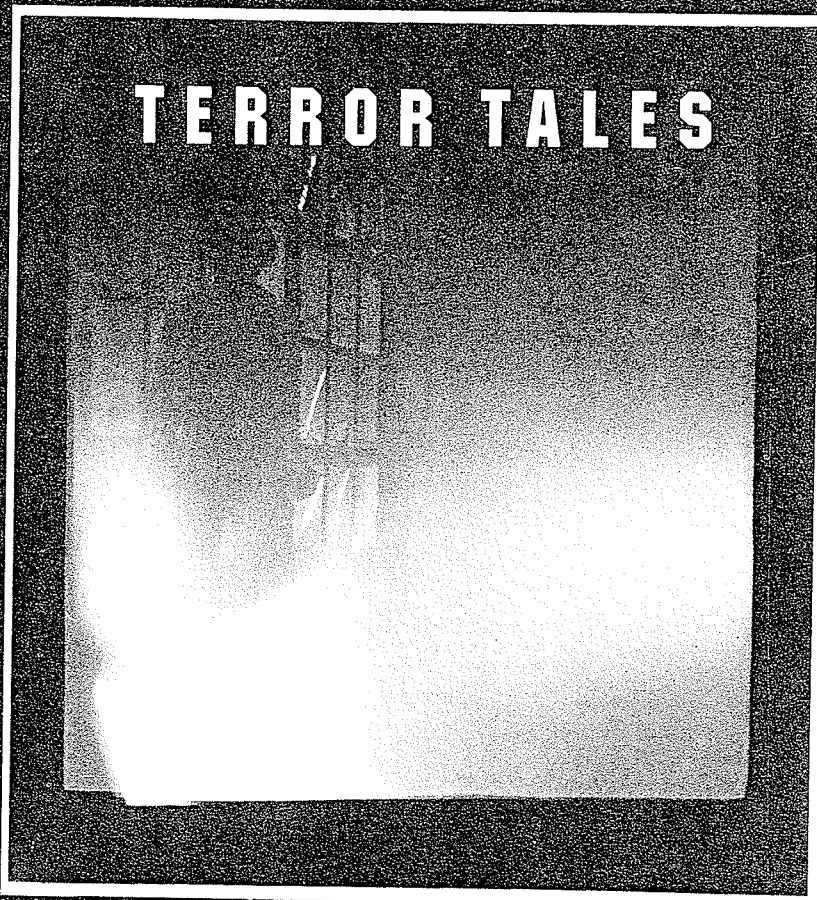


Photo: Kay Kenny

*I had a mommy  
I had a daddy  
Mommy had a sister  
and they liked  
to beat on me  
after daddy went to work  
Then when he left  
they beat me anytime  
I'd get so sick  
with asthma  
and lie choking for my breath  
then they'd both leave the room  
I'd pray for each night  
for daddy to come home  
and comfort me  
but he called just last week*

Aisha Eshe

*I had a mommy  
I had a daddy  
Mommy had a sister  
and they liked  
to call me ugly  
after daddy went to work  
Then when he left  
they'd say I was ugly anytime  
and dark  
and stupid  
not like my little brother  
who had the "Felton" blood  
"a true blue-blooded  
white nigger"  
I'd pray each night  
for God to make me pretty  
with long straight hair  
like all the rest  
but I lost my "fry comb"  
just last week*

*I had a mommy  
I had a daddy  
Mommy had a sister  
and they liked  
to keep me hungry  
after daddy went to work  
Then when he left  
they'd keep me hungry all the time  
Somedays I'd steal cakes  
from the corner store  
or beg for pennies  
in downtown Harrisburg  
or make a meal of sugar water  
and sleep  
I'd pray each night  
for God to bring  
my daddy home,  
and make mommy nice to me,  
with auntie gone,  
but Aunt Marge called just last week  
and mommy died  
on the floor beside me*

Aisha Eshe has had her poetry widely published. Her collection *I Usta Be Afraid of the Night* was published in 1984. She is the mother of four children and a graduate student of Iowa State University.



# WILD BEAUTIES



Michele Godwin, MONOTYPE. 1985.

My mother resisted attempts to shape her feminine identity. During the Second World War, she worked in the steel mills while the men were away. Unfortunately, women were fired after the war. I heard her say how much she preferred mill labor and pay to the servant roles of Mammy and Butterfly McQueen in "Gone With the Wind." Mammy, if you recall, apologized to Rhett Butler because his child was not a boy. Completely devoted to bratty Scarlett O'Hara, Mammy became the conscience of Rhett and Scarlett, who were "mules" masquerading as "racehorses."

Because life was always such a struggle to survive, my mother could not direct her energies to the upkeep of white children. White wives did not pay their workers properly and white husbands often tried to seduce my proud lovely mother. Consequently, mother married to keep her own family united. For a hobby, she kept a garden of red and white morning glories, lanky golden flowers, and wild red roses. The garden symbolized her passion for wild gentleness. Before marrying my father, she had borne three other children by different men whom she refused to marry. To defy her religious mother, my mother ran her own love affairs. She loved my father for raising all her kids as his.

By Carole Gregory

Once I overheard a conversation between Mother and an immigrant nun regarding salvation. "You have to face God for yourself. Nobody can do that for you, let alone a dead statue," mother remarked. (This was also her answer to my grandmother who only planted greens, tomatoes, and a garden which could be eaten.) We did not have a washing machine and Mother washed on a scrubboard. To end the conversation with the nun, Mother walked the length of the sheet as she slowly stretched it across her clothesline and pinned it with a clothespin. Her back signalled that she was through talking about sending me to a Catholic church.

Undaunted by a woman washing her husband's clothes by hand, the nun pursued her own line of reasoning. "Saint Stanislaus is a saint for everyone," the voice repeated. The nun was stiff like the white shirts my mother dipped in Argo starch. Her long habit was crowned by a black and white hood under which blue eyes stared. In vain she followed our back fence and the clothesline. Her church—a Polish one in a neighborhood of Poles, Italians, Southern Blacks, Hungarians, Czechs, and Irish—later bought our house and turned mother's garden into a parking lot. The women from these families were housewives in the 1950s and few were moviegoers.

Stories of the Apple in the Garden of Eden and wicked Delilah shaped my feminine identity more than movies or magazines. I felt ashamed because Eve had caused Adam's Fall, but I admired Delilah for being unholy. Females in my church were good and young children were Ultragood. I watched all other women carefully and was fascinated by my mother and the nun. There we were: women in the Garden.

My mother was a tuna-fish sandwich-maker who stretched that with mayonnaise to feed a husband and four children. She subscribed to *Ebony* and *Jet*, magazines which carried ads telling women to bleach their skin and to straighten their hair. Mother ignored make-up except for Sundays, but she believed that a broken mirror could mean seven years of bad luck for a woman as beautiful as she. The nun, a nurse of God, seemed too careful and fearful of Him.

"When these people speak in English, they want us to be servants," I told my mother. She added that I should never worship a false god. This could be the steel-mill paychecks, paint on your fingernails, or any obsession. For example, my sister Beverly worshipped horror movies with Dracula power since my mother said that she should have been a bad boy. Most of society's conventions were someone else's god and Mother scorned them. She even ignored my report card of straight A's for six years.

My teenage reading years were spent in another immigrant neighborhood with only a few Black American families. The Bible was also the major "book" in their lives. Black mothers were supported by welfare, work as hospital aides, domestic work, and underemployed husbands. The whites were cooks at bakeries, recipients of social security and welfare, and housewives. In *Ebony* I read Mrs. Belafonte's story on why Harry divorced her and married a white woman. In the 1950s we did not see interracial images and most women felt insulted by the exposure of yellow women in bikinis to illustrate our imitation of whiteness. By this time, my father had left my mother and she was immersed in the mysteries of hiding pain in the church. The immigrant women were dependent upon Arthur Godfrey's radio voice to interpret their world. Very few people read the movie star magazines. Being born, remaining a virgin, getting married, and raising children were still the main customs. Men were good breadwinners or bums. I enjoyed weddings with half-drunk grooms and brides wearing long white gowns. Live bands played at Black and white receptions in the streets. We danced merrily and twisted crêpe paper in reds and greens to decorate cars in the wedding party.

Yet, my eldest sister was not to be outdone. Connie was a *Seventeen*, *Vogue*, *True Confessions* fanatic. She begged my mother to buy her Lana Turner's

colorful sweaters, Elizabeth Taylor's make-up, and Marilyn Monroe's high heels. My sister even named her daughter "Rhonda" after Rhonda Fleming. I resented "stars" and the make-up society so intensely that I almost missed Dorothy Danridge in "Carmen Jones."

Under no circumstances could I ever discuss the erotic feelings which "Carmen Jones" aroused in me. My mother had become silent about sexuality. Although I was a virgin on my wedding day to please her and my husband, I could not tell a bird from a bee. Mother, who once explained why the birds migrated South, now drank whiskey privately and prayed daily like a numbed nun. Poverty had taken away her speech.

Hollywood did mislead me. Carmen Jones, the temptress, and AWOL Joe convinced me that as an adult I would have to transform my virginal being into a "magic pussy." A woman's vagina could solve all of her problems and not her head. Carmen had used hers. Through her songs, her brown-sugar skin, Carmen had persuaded Joe to free her wrists from the handcuffs. Afterwards, they were shackled up in a small hotel room. Before our eyes, Carmen's "magic pussy" had made Joe a "love slave." A strong soldier was reduced to using his breath to blow the polish dry on Carmen's toenails. With a magic pussy, I could one day find a magic penis and wiggle my way to eternal romance, a high-paying job, and children. Little did I know that I had witnessed an ancient virgin-whore fantasy in modern male culture. Only the American's Women's Movement encouraged an exploration of the image of women in society.

As Mother's three girls matured, we were bombarded with *Good Housekeeping* and *Ladies' Home Journal* with stories about the presidents' wives. Also, pornographic magazines never crossed our doorstep and my two younger brothers did not marry concubines. Photographs of the tears streaming from the widows of Malcolm X and Dr. Martin L. King deepened my understanding of humanity. My mother's love for flowers created the strongest impression, however. Memories of those gardens comfort me. In my imaginative writings, I have associated a garden with femininity, devotion, and the cultivation of wild beauty.

## MY MOTHER




---

Carole Gregory lectures on women's literature and teaches Afro-American literature at the Borough of Manhattan Community College in New York City.

Michele Godwin is an artist living and working in New York City.

# MY MOTHER

Here is Anna Podolsky, my mother, handing out leaflets. It was important work to her. She would go to street corner meetings in the thirties and forties and give out these leaflets and talk with the people standing about of specific issues, about their rights and strengths, the dignity of work and the need for socialism. She did this work tirelessly.

In 1917, during an action picketing the White House for the women's vote, she was arrested and sentenced to thirty days in the Occaquan workhouse.

## ANNA PODOLSKY

She spoke up for unionism on her job (women's shirtwaists). She was often fired for this activity and was once stabbed in the face while picketing.

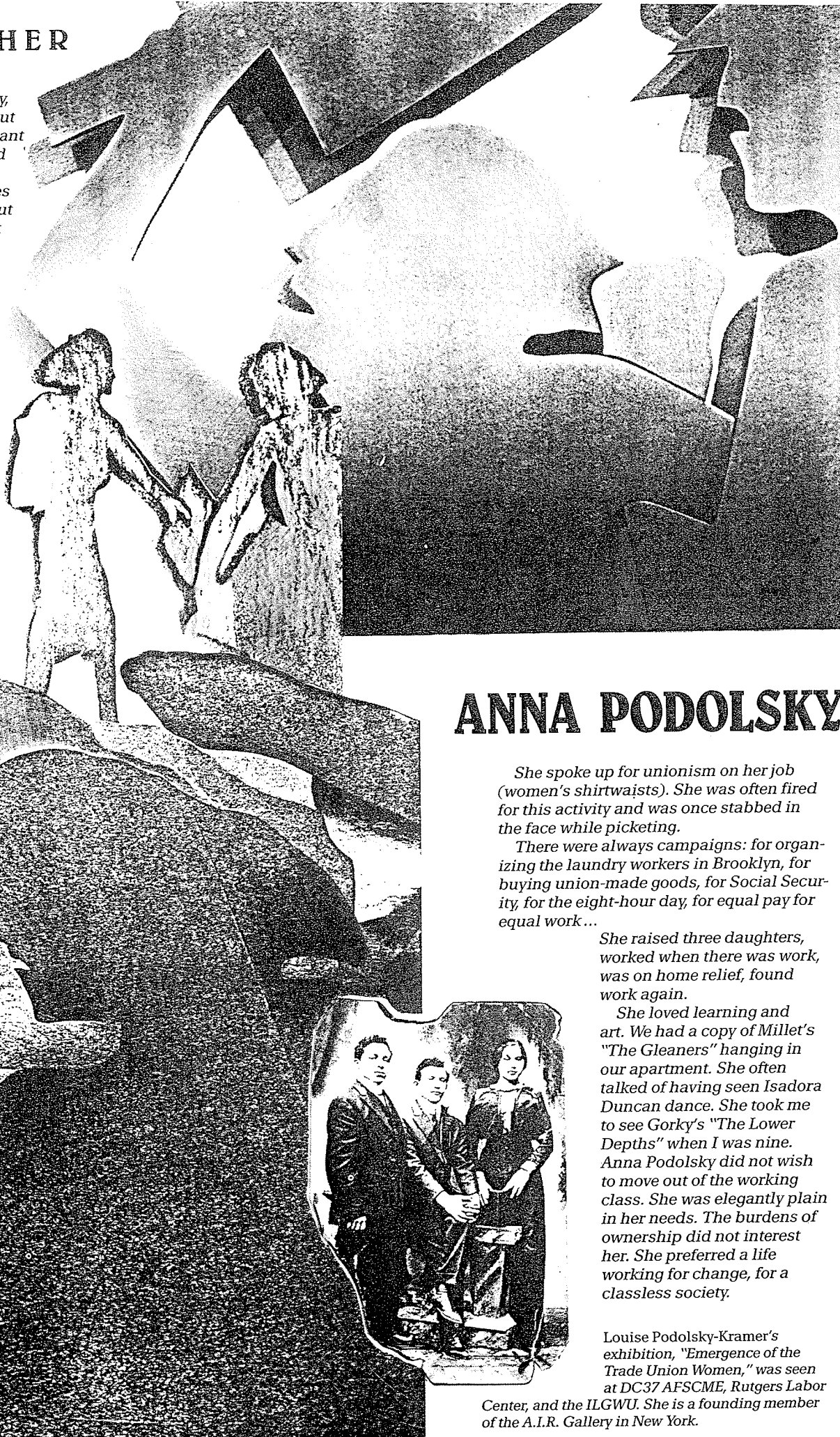
There were always campaigns: for organizing the laundry workers in Brooklyn, for buying union-made goods, for Social Security, for the eight-hour day, for equal pay for equal work...

She raised three daughters, worked when there was work, was on home relief, found work again.

She loved learning and art. We had a copy of Millet's "The Gleaners" hanging in our apartment. She often talked of having seen Isadora Duncan dance. She took me to see Gorky's "The Lower Depths" when I was nine. Anna Podolsky did not wish to move out of the working class. She was elegantly plain in her needs. The burdens of ownership did not interest her. She preferred a life working for change, for a classless society.

Louise Podolsky-Kramer's exhibition, "Emergence of the Trade Union Women," was seen at DC37 AFSCME, Rutgers Labor

Center, and the ILGWU. She is a founding member of the A.I.R. Gallery in New York.





# The CLASS STRUGGLES of the

by Mariana Valverde

LIKE ALL OTHER PRODUCTS in our society, women's magazines are geared toward specific markets, toward specific classes or sub-classes. These classes or sub-classes are never directly named. Women's specific class experiences are ignored and covered up with a thick layer of superficial distinctions. We seem to have a rich variety of magazines—for the housewife, for the woman executive, even for the female body-builder. These differences among women are presented as differences in *lifestyle*. The criteria dividing the different types of mythical female reader have to do with each woman's apparently arbitrary choice of consumer goods, and her equally arbitrary choice of that elusive product called style, savvy, or glamour. (*Savvy* and *Glamour* are, significantly, the titles of two magazines.)

The superficial differences in lifestyle conceal, and even crush, the very real differences in class and racial experiences. And this crushing is not simply elimination of all class factors: it is the imposition of the ideology of one class on all other classes. It is not that the female characters of the articles, fiction and ads of women's magazines just don't have a class: the point is that they all pretend that class does not exist, while trumpeting the values of consumer capitalism. Upward mobility, consumerism, competitiveness, keeping up with the Joneses... these values are presented as universally valid, as the only values.

*Cosmopolitan* and *Ms.* are two publications which are primarily aimed at younger urban working women in white-collar jobs. They also both assume that their readers, even if they are married, are not self-defined housewives/mothers. The two magazines thus appeal to the same rapidly growing market sector, and stand in contrast to the traditional women's magazines, which were aimed at housewives. Their views on womanhood and femininity are obviously different—*Ms.* is feminist, *Cosmo* is not; one tries to constitute the reader as 'Ms.,' the

other as 'girl'—but there are some striking similarities in the class ideology upheld by both of them.

I will first examine *Cosmopolitan*, analyzing its attempts to orient the reader through her class struggles (which are inextricable from her sex/gender struggles, insofar as upward mobility is usually achieved through a middle-class husband/lover). Then I will turn to *Ms.* magazine's attempt to constitute its readership as a group of autonomously middle-class women, that is, women whose upward mobility does not hinge on that of their men. The means advocated by *Cosmo* and by *Ms.* for women to rise to, or stay in, the middle class, are different, but this should not obscure the fact that the goal is the same: constituting an image of 'real women' as necessarily white and middle-class.

JUDGING FROM both articles and ads, the glamour of the *Cosmo* girl is built on the shifting sands of social insecurity. The same issue of the magazine will tell her that she needs to go on a diet, but that her breasts are too small; that she is gorgeous, but that she needs a complete facial. Virtually every issue has a quiz which she can use to find out if she's really in love, or if she should get married (seriously!), or whether she has the right fashion sense. Her own self-image and intuition are supposed to take a back seat to the pseudo-science of psychological quizzes.

The *Cosmo* girl appears as dashing and carefree when she is out in public; but she has spent many hours agonizing in private and doing all the work necessary to produce a feminine image. Shaving one's legs, curling one's hair, applying make-up, eye-shadow and lipstick, trying on different clothes (which one has spent hours, if not days, shopping for) ... it's a wonder she has time to go out at all.

A secretary who followed even half the advice lavished upon her by Helen Gurley Brown and her minions would spend more time on her job of creating

femininity than at her workplace. The labor of producing femininity is highly skilled (a fact not recognized by feminists), and it is, like housework, invisible. The whole point is to create a general impression, an overall image, and to minimize, even obliterate, all the painstaking details that went into producing the image. The men in her life will be fascinated, in a general, vague way, by her appearance—but she wouldn't want them to know just what she did to her face or exactly how she shaves her legs. The details of the labor of femininity are somehow obscene, and not to be talked about in mixed company. Its skills take as long to acquire as those of a carpenter; but they are neither rewarded financially nor acknowledged socially. They're supposed to be 'inborn.' But because they are not, publishing conglomerates make millions from teaching us these skills.

The sort of femininity promoted by cosmetic ads and quizzes trivializing life choices is not, moreover, class neutral. The *Cosmo* girl is neither an heiress nor a factory worker. She is usually portrayed as having an unremarkable feminine job. (The details of her work are never mentioned in economics textbooks.) The *Cosmo* girl has to struggle to stay afloat; she has to keep up with the latest fashions so as not to fall behind the other girls at the office. The inherent insecurity of her job is presented as inner anxiety about appearance, and exploited so as to sell both products and the magazine itself.

A good example of the exploitation of this insecurity is a feature (under the heading "Social You") entitled "25 ways to appear more worldly." The piece opens thus: "Do you chatter on endlessly about your diet... or naively gawk at a passing celeb? Refine your style with our insider's guide to savoir-faire!" The article then gives women helpful hints not about how to actually be elegant, but about how to appear to be elegant. It's assumed that natural ease is beyond the capacities of most women; elegance, like femininity, is



# Cosmo Girl



skilled work. The reader is first told that she should look as though she just threw some clothes on, even if she has had to spend hours to create that 'unstudied' look. Then she is given this bit of advice:

"Don't party with your problems. Everyone gets depressed sometimes... but don't use social gatherings as a forum for airing your grievances. At a soiree, never instigate the type of soul-searching discussion best savoured with your therapist. Refer to an unfortunate incident in your life only if you can be amusing about it."

The class bias of this advice is blatant indeed. Her grievances as a working woman have to be turned into 'amusing' tidbits for cocktail parties, while the real anger she feels has to be reserved for the therapist that she's supposed to have.

The end result of reading dozens of similar hints is to make the reader feel truly boorish. In this way, the shitty job she has or the lack of eligible men can be seen as her own fault, for not being sophisticated enough to get out of both the job ghetto and celibacy by means of Mr. Right. Blaming the victim strikes again.

We must not, however, underestimate the strength of the *Cosmo* girl. She may look like a 'dumb blonde' on the outside, but she's no fool. She makes her own choices, gets in and out of relationships easily, and does not put up with the more blatant manifestations of male power. For instance, sexual harassment has received attention in *Cosmo*, and readers have been urged never to put up with unwanted sexual attention. This is in contrast to the glamorizing of sexual harassment in women's formula romances. (See Margaret Ann Jensen, *Love's Sweet Romance: The Harlequin Story*. Toronto, Women's Press, 1984.) Also, *Cosmo* encourages a sexual aggressiveness which breaks through the traditional feminine stereotype—although the advice columns on how to get the man you want specify that you should carry out your campaign without being explicitly aggressive, because unfeminine behaviour will scare away your man.

The *Cosmo* ideology, then, does encourage women to be assertive and independent—but only up to a point. The bottom line of the *Cosmo* empire is after all the heterosexist notion that everything that one does (buying clothes,

travelling, exercising) may be good but it's mainly a means to the greater good of being attractive to men. *Cosmo* thinks of itself as progressive because it does not tell women to stay by one particular man no matter what; but compulsory heterosexuality functions at the collective level as well as indi-

vidually, and in some senses the woman who chooses to 'play the field' is more dependent on the dictates of femininity than the woman who only has to worry about one man's opinion.

One man's opinion might be changed over time; but male opinion in general is

difficult to challenge. The *Cosmo* girl can't make demands on

men in general. She has to accept the game as it is, and can only hope to improve her position in it vis-a-vis other women.

IN THE SINGLES SCENE, women are not sisters to one another; they're competitors. Women compete for the attention of the right man—and 'right' is a matter of class as well as charm, as we see in a true confessions *Cosmo* article entitled "My Life with a Playboy."



# and the Ms.

"When I met Randy, I was going through a particularly bleak period... I'd moved to New York, gotten a job on a women's magazine, and occupied my off-hours with beautiful, slightly exotic men. They'd had novel jobs and even odder life styles: an artist... a divorced househusband with two kids, an itinerant jazz musician... I swore the next time I got involved, the man would have to be someone I could introduce to my parents, someone who'd want to take me to dinner and the ballet. I was sure I'd found the man in Randy Tate. Randy was fantastically attractive and successful. His job was interesting but not strange, his life style exciting but not absurd."

The Mr. Right in question is an 'entertainment lawyer.' He thus has all the marks of the establishment, but with an extra dash of glamour. His own class position (or life style, in *Cosmo's* euphemism) is totally middle-class, but he knows 'exciting' famous people and is thus exempted from middle-class boredom. In the end, his glamour gets the better of him, and she has to dump him because he won't stop sleeping around—a good indication of the impossibility of reconciling security and glamor. But he is still presented as the ideal, the utopian hope of the girl who won't give up glamour in her search for respectable class affiliation.

Even if she were to give up her ambition to be glamorous, however, the *Cosmo* bride would not necessarily be guaranteed security. She knows this, and so makes some attempt at establishing her independence, at acquiring the kind of cheekiness you need to survive in the marketplace. And yet, it's such an uphill battle, and it adds another level of work to her already arduous work of femininity... it would be so nice to lean on a good solid lawyer... and so the vicious circle goes on, never resolved.

Even if she resolutely makes a choice

to pursue her career, the *Cosmo* girl is advised never to let go of her femininity, never to let those skills acquired by reading *Seventeen* get rusty. One article actually suggests that even if she has to wear staid, high-necked blouses and dark-coloured suits to work, she should at least wear lacy black underwear, in case she's called upon to prove her true gender in bed.

In this way, economic and emotional independence (which are the only reliable sources of security) are, while not exactly delegitimized, de-emphasized, and subordinated to the dictates of compulsory heterosexuality. She can get an MBA and gain access to the middle class on her own merits: but she must never stop fluttering her eyelashes at the company president, for being successful is impossible unless she has a man to prove it. Women of all classes are kept in perpetual thrall to what middle-class men consider attractive, because, in the *Cosmo* ideology, there is no fun and excitement without heterosexuality, and middle-class heterosexuality at that. *Cosmo* glamorizes the tyranny of class as well as the tyranny of gender, then; it encourages women to acquire the skills of fascinating femininity so that they can better manage this double tyranny without ever openly confronting it.

## Ms. magazine: making it on your own

WHEN *Ms. MAGAZINE* HIT the newsstands, in the spring of 1972, the women's movement was even less aware of class and race issues than it is today. The preview issue had an article by Gloria Steinem on sisterhood, which downplayed racial differences among women and virtually ignored class differences. Although the issue had two short articles on Black women (one of whom was on welfare), it was clear that the general drift of the magazine was determined by and for middle-class white women.

The next issue (Vol. 1, no. 1) had a self-criticism of the preview issue, which among other things recognized

# Woman

that "blue-collar women were included in a marginal way" (i.e., not at all). However, the only blue-collar women in the next couple of issues were those in the Bell telephone ads (Bell was courting feminists by announcing that women were being hired as telephone installers). Even more significantly, *Ms.* did not make an attempt to court the pink-collar reader by publishing relevant articles and ads, even though pink-collar workers are a mainstay of the women's mags market. Perhaps they bought *Ms.* and read the articles on relationships and on general feminist issues; but they would have been put off by the lengthy highbrow articles which graced the first few issues.

As far as one can tell by its content, the early *Ms.* went out to find readers primarily among college-educated single working women, and then, very quickly, also among married women. Having had experience in other women's magazines, the early contributors and managers undoubtedly saw the market for women's magazines as divided into mags for housewives vs. mags for single girls, and they cleverly tried to appeal to both. They also made some feeble efforts at including Black women, but I suspect Black women were not taken in by it. In any case, class was even more invisible than race. Occasionally there would be an article on women welders, or something about microtechnology in the office: but for every such article there were probably four on "how Mrs. Jean Smith, mother of five, went back to law school and succeeded."

Some of the early issues had advertising that would have appealed to working-class women. There were the Bell ads mentioned earlier, and the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union also paid for handsome full-page ads featuring a portrait of Mother Jones. These have slowly disappeared, replaced by ads for the 'successful woman': liquor, cars and car insurance, word processors and stereos—articles traditionally advertised in middle-class men's magazines—now

constitute at least half of the advertising in *Ms.* (The other half is made up of cosmetics, diet products, medicines, tampons, etc.) The number of hard liquor ads is particularly remarkable, for these are always geared to the elite. Beer ads, by contrast, are conspicuous by their absence.

The message implicit in these ads is that a woman doesn't need a man in order to be successful (read 'middle-class'). Single women or married but economically independent women can invest in durable goods, just as men do. They do not have to drink Diet Coke and eat salad off plastic plates while waiting for marriage to change their life style as well as their class. They can become successful, Scotch-drinking professionals, hubby or no hubby. How filing clerks feel about this glorification of the executive woman, history does not record, or at least *Ms.*' version of history.

Of course, *Ms.* does sometimes write about women on welfare or in minimum-wage jobs. But these articles tend to stick out like sore thumbs. Occasionally there will be information about organizing attempts (e.g., about 9-to-5, the American office workers' union); but any class uneasiness caused by such articles is quickly dispelled as the reader turns the page to a six-page spread on expensive, color-coordinated jogging outfits.

There is one final comparison that I would like to make between the *Cosmo* girl and the *Ms.* woman. This concerns the magazines' role in developing the skills involved in producing femininity.

At first sight it would appear that *Ms.* has successfully eliminated the arduous process of 'putting on one's face', insofar as diet and cosmetics advice do not figure prominently in the magazine, and most of the women featured in it do not talk endlessly about diets and looks. And yet, there is still a correct feminine appearance that *Ms.* seeks to uphold, and that its readers are encouraged to reproduce in their own persons. Very high heels and slinky underwear are 'out': but the dress-for-success look is

everywhere. The obsession with food may have been relegated to the back burner, but it has not been eliminated or even seriously tackled: the fact that Gloria Steinem herself panics when she weighs more than 110 pounds and alternates between starvation and binging on sweets (facts candidly revealed in *Cosmo*, incidentally) should give us pause.

Even more importantly, although looks in and of themselves are downgraded, one's "style" is crucial. The ideal *Ms.* woman is a charming, energetic, heterosexual white woman, maintaining a solid relationship with a man while at the same time holding a "meaningful" job. The unemployed woman, the Indian woman, the lesbian, the immigrant woman, and all other women who couldn't care less about Geraldine Ferraro and her millions, are relegated to cameo appearances. Their "lifestyles" (as opposed to their oppression) are described as being those of "minorities." The "average" reader may find these lifestyles interesting to read about: but the accounts will not directly challenge the class and race privileges of the supposedly average middle- or upper-class reader.

It is more or less inevitable that an American magazine, feminist or not, will reflect at least some of the class ideology of American society. And it is equally true that despite this class bias *Ms.* has done all women a service: articles about abortion or lesbian rights, about non-sexist children's books, about health problems of women, can be and are useful to most women regardless of race or class, and do represent a significant break from the relentless apoliticism of women's mags. Nevertheless, the class and race bias of the magazine helps to perpetuate the hegemony of a certain group of women over the very definition of feminism. We might all agree that reproductive rights are important to our movement: but some of us might also add that taking away the right of public-sector workers to strike is an attack on women's rights—and this is just the sort of issue that *Ms.*

tends to neglect. Also, women who are right out of the labor market altogether—Native and Black women on family allowances, for instance—could be offended by much of the advertising in *Ms.*, and even by some of the articles. What do they care about \$75 jogging shoes? Or about how best to invest one's inheritance?

Perhaps the best indicator of class bias is that whenever an article about working-class women appears, it's their jobs that are discussed. They are newsworthy because they are working class. Instead, articles about middle-class women do not problematize their class status; it's taken for granted. What is seen as problematic is how they are going to choose a daycare center, or how they can get the man they live with to do more housework. Being a lawyer or an executive is seen as an absolute good, the sort of thing we'd all want for our daughters if not for ourselves. The fact that for every executive woman there are six or eight or twenty clerical workers is not mentioned; it's as if one woman's poverty were somehow unconnected to other women's escape from poverty. Being poor might be an 'issue' that is reported on by 'sensitive' woman reporters; being middle-class is not an issue at all. Similarly, being non-white is an issue, and one reads an article about a certain Black woman to find out what it's like; but being white is not an issue. Womanhood—and feminism itself—is presented as being *in principle* white and middle-class (and heterosexual!). Other kinds of womanhood, other types of feminism, are seen as 'interesting' minority concerns.

*Cosmopolitan* doesn't even talk about equal pay and affirmative action, and it constantly repeats that a woman without the Right Man is next to nothing. In that sense, it's very oppressive, especially to its large working-class readership, because it reinforces the bourgeois idea that one can make it if one tries hard enough, because it's one's looks and glamor that make one the person one is. It encourages women to compete with each other for male favors, and

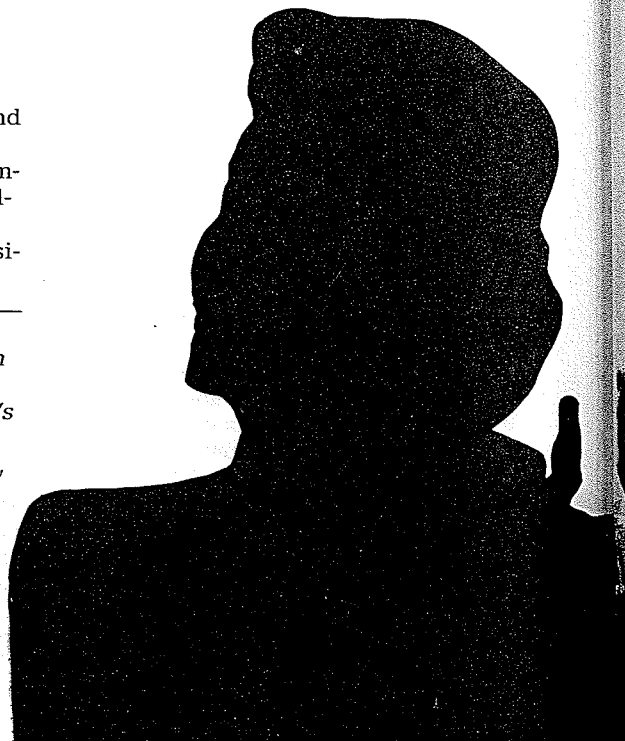
to use men to buy a one-way ticket into the middle class. It is thus both classist and heterosexist.

*Ms.* will name such issues as affirmative action, and it encourages women to rely more on each other and less on Mr. Right. However, it does not speak for, or address, working-class women. It sometimes speaks *about* them, even analyzing the real causes of women's marginal status in the labour force—but the overwhelming flavor of the magazine is middle-class and white. The women characters in its fiction, for instance, are seldom anything but middle-class. Women are encouraged to find security in their own class affiliation, not their husbands', and to re-define glamour so that it's less a matter of cosmetics and more a matter of confidence and success. But while seeking independent access into the dominant class, women are not encouraged to question the very basis of the class system that divides women as well as men. In a very American way, *Ms.* cheerfully says: "Yes, you can do anything—win an Olympic gold medal, become the VP of your company." But the system which allocates gold medals and dollars to a privileged few, and which is built on the basis of a vast army of unglamorous and insecure foot soldiers, is taken for granted.

That the principles of collectivity and non-competition might some day be applied to the economy, not just to women's self-help groups, is not a possibility which any American mainstream magazine, however feminist, can possibly afford to contemplate.

---

Mariana Valverde has been active in feminist, lesbian, and Latin American solidarity activities in Toronto for a number of years. She teaches Women's Studies at the University of Toronto and is completing a book entitled *Sex, Power and Pleasure*, to be released in October 1985 by Women's Press, Toronto.





## La Secretaria

*Es una música de carrusel, la voz de humo. Es una promesa que persigo hasta la bohadilla más alta del edificio, hasta desangrarme en la rueda.*

*Subo desapercibida después de las cinco la cuesta de las escaleras. Veo a cada vuelta la ciudad alejarse a vuelo de pájaro, porque los ascensores son para la compañía. Yo me he apartado aunque recuerdo el tintineo del vodka y las risa como aliento común.*

*Todos los viernes había fiesta. Oía una voz fantasma en la luz apagada de los corredores, pero yo iba detrás del cenáculo fluorescente de los jefes, en espíritu aunque fuera asistía a las fiestas.*

*Mis amigos murieron como reses y resustitaron como cerdos; volví a mi casa y vi mi propia ruindad.*

*Oigo la voz más y más. Siempre que trabajo tarde, abro la puerta de la escalera oscura, baja la voz como humo.*

*La sigo pero las veces que subo la sorpresa es que no llego siempre a ese piso final; tropiezo otra vez con la luz de las caras, mujeres y hombres. La figura en el último cuarto me muestra una por una la calavera de los amigos, pero El desaparece también como un traidor.*

*Una vez que llegué después de muchas vueltas me mostró Su lengua. Yo no quisiera ese silencio; la dividió en fichas como dominó; las puso en fila sobre las baldosas. Yo era la ratona; acurrucada sobre el piso helado; jugando con los dados de la lengua uní dos números. Volamos cada vez más alto sobre Nueva York; las luces de la ciudad se volvieron reflejo de los dados. El edificio me estremecía como brújula en campo magnético.*

*No conoz el secreto de los números; miro la cara del Sin Nombre cuya promesa oigo en los corredores, en el timbre sin fin del teléfono. Pero El guarda su lengua en la caja; no le interesa todavía mi aprendizaje.*

## The Secretary

*It's a carousel music, the voice of smoke. It's a promise I follow, up to the skyscraper's top-story garret, up to the point of losing my blood on the spindle.*

*I climb the stairway slope unseen after five. At every turn I see the city go off as the bird flies, the lifts being meant for the company. I've kept away, though I can remember the tinkling of vodka, the laughter like communal breath.*

*There were parties each Friday. In the extinguished light of the corridors I'd hear a ghost voice, but I was in search of the bosses' fluorescent cenacle; even if in spirit I went to the parties.*

*My friends died as oxen and were resurrected as pigs; I went back home and saw my own ruination.*

*I hear the voice more and more. Whenever I work late, I open the door to the pitch-dark stairwell, the voice comes down like smoke.*

*I follow, but whenever I've climbed it—surprise—I don't always get to that last floor; I run across light from the faces, women and men. The shape in the last room shows me singly the skulls of my friends, but He disappears as well, like a traitor.*

*Once when I'd arrived after many turnings He showed me His tongue. I do not desire that silence; He divided it up in pieces like dominos; He set them in a row on the stone tiles. I was the mouse; crouched on the ice-cold floor; playing with the dice of that tongue I joined two numbers. Up we flew over New York, and higher; the city lights became sparks of dice. The skyscraper shivered like a needle in a magnetic field.*

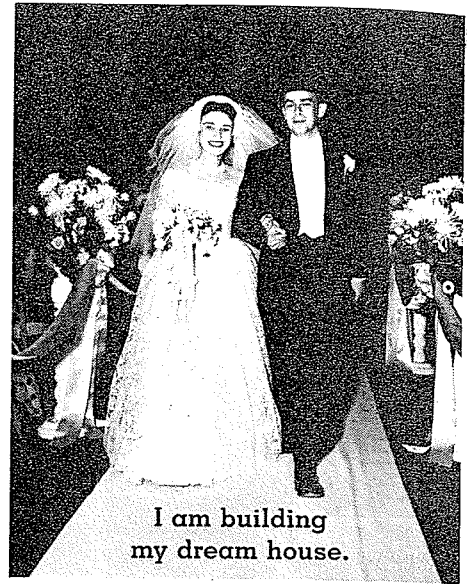
*I do not know the secret of the numbers; I look at the face of the No-Name whose promise I hear in the halls, in the endless ringing of the telephone. But He keeps His tongue in the cashbox; He hasn't yet any interest in my apprenticeship.*

Adelaida López

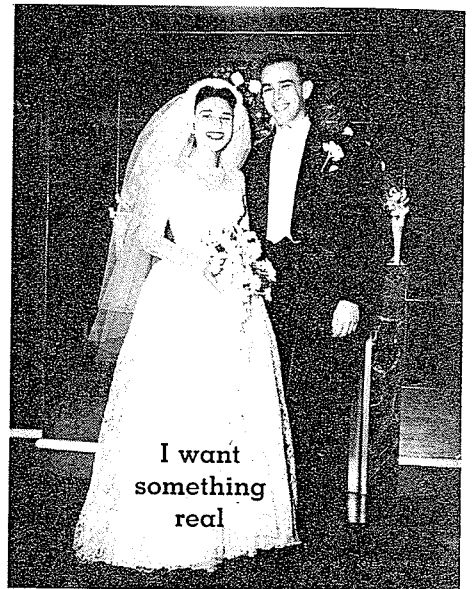
Translated by Elizabeth Macklin

Adelaida Lopez is a poet and teacher living in Memphis, Tennessee.

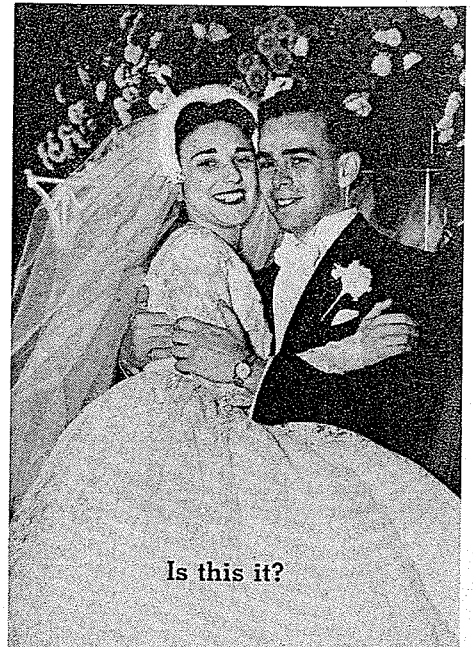
# DON'T FALL IN LOVE



I am building  
my dream house.



I want  
something  
real



Is this it?

10/12/65

To The hardworking man of  
the house

He works all day & some  
times the night, And he will  
not stop to have a bit of  
home with us. Oh Dad!  
Oh he works so hard for  
us his children say come  
home some he always  
say he can't. But  
he stays home on Sat. & Sun.  
Thankgoodnes for that. But he  
can't come home on the Jewish  
holidays, he works even on his  
aniversary. What do you say  
to that, ha

from his  
children  
Butt

Mother

She is so busy she  
never has time for fun.  
That's my dear young  
mother, poor her, her work  
is never done. He help her  
little. We love her so. I wonder  
if she knows. Mother, I can never  
love you more. Every day  
I love you, day in day  
out, day all about I love  
you so!

June 15, 1965

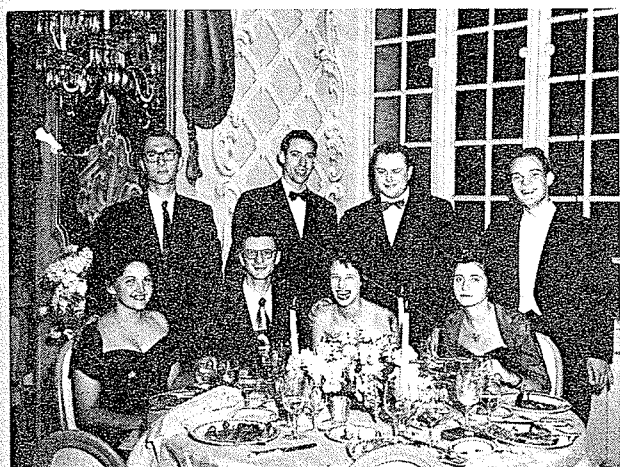
Dear Dad,

My Father is a lawyer  
he always does his job  
When there is something to be  
done. Who's the one to do it?  
Done. Who's the Best  
my Dad? Yes the world  
Dad in the world.  
My Father, sometimes  
says I don't like his sense of  
humor but he knows I do.  
Oh how I Love my Father  
So. Why can't a man & woman  
be more like a man & woman  
is so nice & easy to stand.  
Why can't my Mother be  
more like my Dad? My Dad  
never gets angry like my  
Mom.

# WITH A DREAMER



If this is it, I might as well be comfortable.



But not too comfortable



MARCH 12

Woke up + watched TV.  
PLAYED WITH CATHY WENT  
+ got comics and ice cream.  
Came back head had  
dinner had a terrible  
day, + had a big fight  
with mom and dad  
READ WROTE AND WENT  
TO BED KNOWING I  
HAD REALLY MEAN  
PARENTS

APRIL 24

Woke up

Pennelope Goodfriend's photographs focus on the conflicts of time and change. They reflect the abyss between the role models that have shaped our realities and the ways we have accepted them. don't fall in love with a dreamer addresses these issues once again. The texts on the left are excerpts from a child's school assignments, letters and diary notations. The innocent naïveté on the parent's faces as they seemingly unquestion-

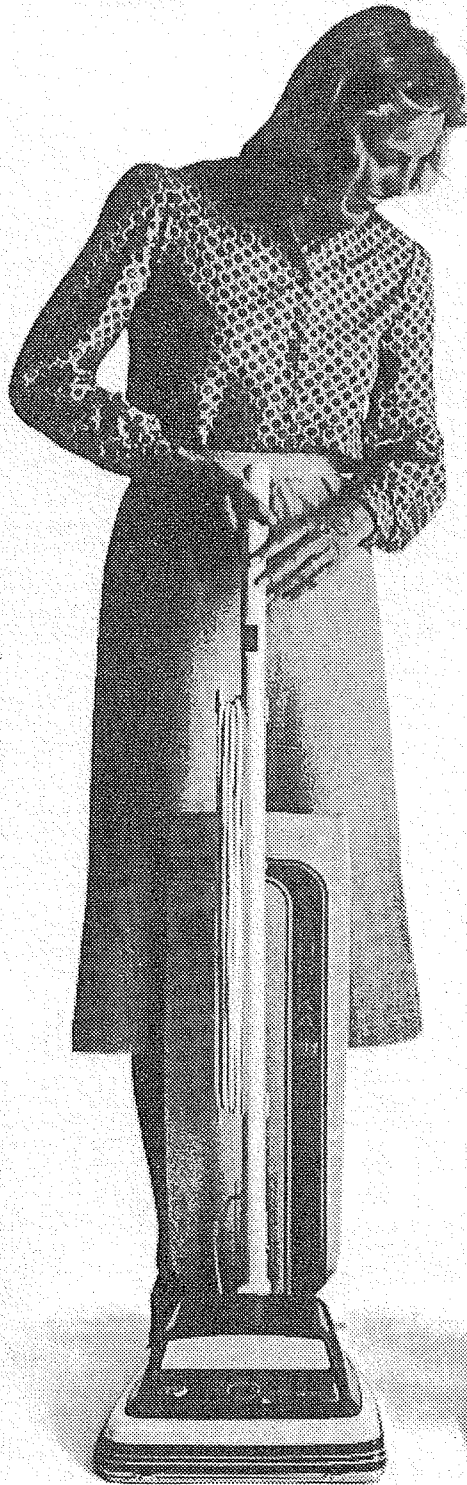
APRIL 25

Woke up

ingly accept the rites of passage compliment the child's youthful directness of speech. Much is revealed about the priorities and values we adopt so young. We see that on some days the recording and reaffirmation of the reality of waking up is the most important issue of the day. As time progresses, we see in the mother's look, that her absolute innocence and trust has changed and perhaps another "waking up" has occurred.

Or I'll  
fall asleep.

**All Eureka ESP vacuum  
cleaners have 50% more power.  
With one small exception.**



June Weston Howard, '47 wrote that her daughter is a freshman at Smith this year. That's the third generation for the Westons and she and husband Jack are very proud.

THIS IS A REAL EUREKA ESP VACUUM CLEANER.

June also noted that she and her husband are divorcing. She'd like to hear from classmates in similar straits.

THIS IS A TOY EUREKA ESP VACUUM CLEANER. IT HAS A BATTERY POWERED MOTOR THAT SOUNDS REAL AND INFLATES THE PLASTIC BAG.

Thank goodness, it's not all bad news. Jack will continue to pay for their daughter's education.

BUY THE REAL ESP FOR YOURSELF,  
AND WE'LL GIVE YOU THE TOY  
FOR YOUR LITTLE HELPER.

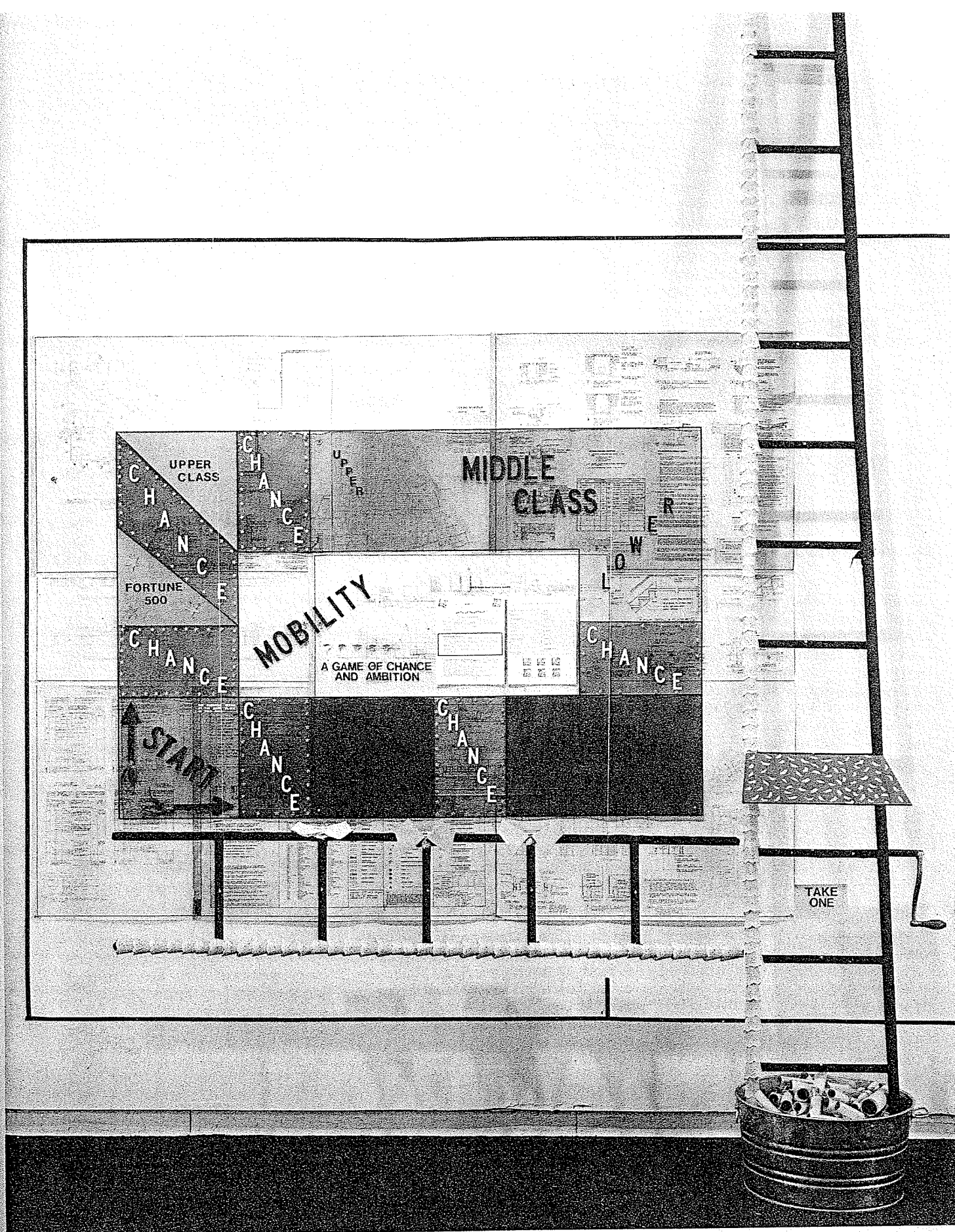


**EUREKA  
Mother-Daughter Vac Offer.**

Available at participating  
Eureka dealers while supplies last.  
The Eureka Company, Bloomington, IL 61701.  
Division of National Union Electric Corp.

*Barbara Osborn works as a curator  
and distributor of independent  
media productions.*





Lyn Hughes, MOBILITY: A GAME OF CHANCE AND AMBITION. Mixed media.

Lynn Hughes is an artist and teacher at Columbia University in New York City.

Ya' Got Class, Real Class was performed in October of 1980 at LACE (Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions) as part of a performance series called Public Spirit: Live Art L.A. The other performers in the piece were Susan Kuhner, Janet Wilson, and Diane Silberstein. We were technically assisted by Bia Lowe, Jane Thurmond, Sandra Wilson, and Cheri Gaulke.

**Pre-show:** As audience enters, everyone is asked to pay either \$1, \$2, or \$3 admission. Based on this choice, they receive either a red, yellow, or blue badge to wear. They receive a program, scorecard and a pencil. They are seated in one of three seating sections, based on their badge color. Background music on tape consists of disco tunes about class ("Workin' Day and Night" by Michael Jackson, "Money" by the O'Jays, "These Are the Breaks" by Kurtis Blow, and "Everybody Wants to Be Bourgie, Bourgie" by Gladys Knight and the Pips. This last song serves as the theme music to the game.)

Vicki and Terry enter, in street clothes, introduce themselves, briefly talk about the importance of understanding our class backgrounds. They also explain that the audience will be asked to participate and that it's essential to the performance. Then Vicki and Terry exit.

Diane, dressed in bathing suit and high heels, enters with applause sign. She explains that she needs the audience to respond enthusiastically whenever she appears with her sign. She exits. Theme music up.

\* JW — [offstage]: Live from our studios in downtown Los Angeles, it's time to play Ya' Got Class, Real Class, the American game of making it, the game that proves that no matter where you start out, you can always get ahead! With your host, Susan Kuhner!

Applause. Susan enters

☞ SK — Thanks, JW! I almost didn't make it here tonight—my Jaguar's been in the shop, and when I went to pick it up this afternoon, it wasn't ready! All because the parts weren't delivered because of some strike on the east coast. Isn't it infuriating how a group of laborers clear across the country can mess it

# Ya' Got Class, REAL CLASS!

A PERFORMANCE BY

Vicki Stolsen &  
Terry Wolverton

up for those of us trying to get our jobs done?

\* JW — The nerve! What did you do?

☞ SK — Fortunately, I had my American Express Gold Card with me, so I walked across the street to Hertz and rented a car, and got to work on time.

\* JW — [Laughs] Sounds like a commercial, Susan!

☞ SK — Yes, never leave home without it! But enough of my hard-luck stories, [to audience] welcome to our show, Ya' Got Class, Real Class. I can tell you're a classy audience tonight! And it's a good thing too, because as you know, on Ya' Got Class, Real Class, everyone gets to play! Before JW introduces tonight's contestants, let me take a moment to explain how you'll be playing our game. You have been seated in three sections—we call them classes:

the Red Class, the Yellow Class, and the Blue Class. These correspond to the classes on our gameboard. The goal is to move up to a higher class! You in the audience have received scorecards and pencils. During the course of our game we'll be asking our contestants questions about their family backgrounds, education, current occupations, and life-

styles. On your scorecard you'll notice corresponding questions. All you have to do is answer them—truthfully—and give yourself the number of points indicated. You'll move up through tallying your points, while our contestants move up along our scoreboard. You'll also be asked to help us judge some of the contestants' responses. Our questions and point scales have been prepared by the firm of White, White and White, an independent status rating corporation in Del Mar, California. Our distinguished panel of judges is composed of a representative of a Fortune 500 corporation, one of the editors of *Vogue* magazine, and a member of a distinguished family who traces his ancestors back to British royalty. So, without further ado, JW, who are our two ambitious competitors this evening?

\* JW — Our first contestant tonight comes from Seattle, Washington. Now living in Los Angeles, she has spent the last few years writing, producing, and performing Off-Broadway. Currently employed by Lily Tomlin, she is also a photographer and a student of political science. Please welcome Vicki Stolsen!

Theme music up. Applause. V enters.

☞ SK — Hello, Vicki, and welcome to Ya' Got Class, Real Class.

★ VS — This is too much! I can't believe I'm really here.

☞ SK — Thrilling, isn't it? So, you're a student of political science? Let me ask you an educated question: What do you think of this year's three-man presidential campaign?

★ VS — I think I'll vote for Angela Davis!

☞ SK — [Taken aback, but laughs it off] Oh, a women's libber? Ok, JW, who is our second contestant tonight?

\* JW — Our next contestant pulled up roots from Detroit to move to L.A. four years ago.

☞ SK — Smart move!

\* JW — She works as a teacher and free-lance publicist, but says her primary identity is that of an artist, working at writing and theater. Welcome, please, Terry Wolverton!

Theme music. Applause. T enters.

☞ SK — Welcome to our show, Terry.



So, you're a teacher? Where do you teach?

❁ TW — I teach classes at the Woman's Building.

❁ SK — The Woman's Building? Is that a private club?

❁ TW — No, it's a public center for women's culture. Anyone can join!

❁ SK — How democratic! Ok, it's time for our game. But before we begin, let me ask you both one question: Why do you want to play *Ya' Got Class, Real Class?* Vicki?

★ VS — My roommate bet me ten dollars that I couldn't even get on this show! I'm here to see what I can get out of it.

❁ SK — Well, that's direct. Let's hope that's a lot. Terry, what about you?

❁ TW — I'm playing because I can't afford to lose.

❁ SK — Well, I can see you take this very seriously. It's going to be quite a game. Now, you've both been briefed backstage on the rules of our game, but let me refresh your memories. These are the rules: *[She unrolls a huge scroll, 15 feet long, crammed with type in small print. She holds it up for just a few seconds, then rolls it up again.]* OK, got that? Remember, if you break a rule you can be immediately disqualified at the discretion of our judges. Good luck to you both. Only one of you can wind up a winner, but everybody gets to move ahead on *Ya' Got Class, Real Class*. We'll toss a coin for who goes first. Terry, you call it.

❁ TW — Tails!

❁ SK — *[Flips coin]* Oh, I'm sorry, it's heads. Part one of our game deals with your family background. Vicki, you can be the first to answer this question about your racial heritage. Tell us, has there ever been any non-white blood in your family?

★ VS — Not a drop, Susan.

❁ SK — Excellent! That entitles you to move three squares ahead. You're almost out of the red class. You're off to a good start!

★ VS — And I didn't even have to do anything?

❁ SK — Terry, it's your turn to answer the same question.

❁ TW — Well, my father's father's father's father was a Native American.

❁ SK — You mean, an Indian? Oh, too bad. It doesn't even show! But since it's so far back, you can move ahead two squares. Audience, don't forget to rate yourselves. For our next question: When you were growing up, what was your father's career? Vicki, what was Papa Stolsen's pursuit?

★ VS — Dad was a bartender.

❁ SK — *[laughs]* Some of my best friends are bartenders. Terry, here's your chance to catch up. What was your father's profession?

❁ TW — He worked in a gas station.

❁ SK — Gas station? Well, interesting and useful jobs—I mean, think of a world without gasoline or dry martinis—but not very high scorers. Your fathers' trades don't rate a step ahead. You both have to stay where you are. Audience, give yourself points for that question. Moving on to our next question: Which of the following best describes your mother? Number 1, Humble Housewife. Number 2, Charitable Churchgoer. Number 3, Very Good Volunteer. Or Number 4, Scintillating Socialite? Terry?

❁ TW — Is there "none of the above"? My mother has worked all her life. She's a secretary.

★ VS — And my mother worked too, as a grocery checker in the supermarket.

❁ SK — We don't have that on our scale! Judges, what shall we do? *[Looks skyward, listens]* Terry and Vicki, I'm sure that second income helped to buy you a lot of nice things. However, it's an unfortunate strike against you that your mothers were absent in your formative years. We've decided not to penalize you by asking either of you to take a step back. Just stay there. Really, though, we've got to get moving or our home viewers will fall asleep! Our next question: When you were a little girl, what did you want to be when you grew up? Vicki?

★ VS — I never thought about it. I just assumed I'd get married and have kids, like my mother.

❁ SK — An old fashioned girl! What about you, Terry?

❁ TW — I wanted to be a writer and a teacher.

❁ SK — Very noble aspirations, Terry. Ok, Vicki, the tradition of motherhood is worth one step ahead. Terry, for your

early career goals, take two steps. Now we've got a tie! For you women in the audience, give yourself an extra ten points if your answer to the last question was "Marry a rich man." I'm going to ask you, Terry, to go off-stage into our sound-proof isolation booth. Vicki, it's your turn to tell us about yourself, your background, in your own words.

*SK exits. Lights change. V stretches rope along the floor and walks on it, trying to keep her balance, while she speaks:*

My dad was an only child, deserted by his father when he was eight years old and raised by his mother. My grandmother was a god-fearing woman who believed in hard work and the American dream. She spent forty years of her life typing documents for the federal government. My mother and father met at church. My mother's parents never liked my father. He wasn't good enough for their daughter. They had specific expectations for their daughter: she was to marry a respectable man at a respectable age and carry on their aspiring traditions. But in 1956 my mother got pregnant. She quit school, got married, and gave birth to my brother when she was sixteen. When I was born in 1958, my father was driving a tow-truck. He also drove a cab and worked at the steel mill, changing jobs frequently but always working for long hours at low pay. That left my mother to take care of us kids and deal with the bill collectors. We moved eight times before I was five, mostly because of evictions for not paying the rent. We never owned a home, and I never had a real bedroom. We finally settled in a one-bedroom house when I started school. My brother and I had rooms in the basement, no windows and just curtains for doors. Dad began bartending then, and he joined the union. With both kids in school, Mom started working at the supermarket across the street. She joined the union.

With two incomes our lifestyle improved. We got a washing machine. I got to go to camp. I got braces on my teeth, and started skiing lessons when I was twelve. The high school I went to included a lot of territory in its bound-





aries, and I met kids from all walks of life. Most of my friends had more money and their fathers had careers. I learned to lie and told them my father managed a bar. That made a difference in how they received me. My wealthier friends turned me on to a lot: I went sailing in the San Juan Islands; I spent a Christmas in Sun Valley; I learned how to water-ski behind their boats and spent my summers in their backyard swimming pools. It was fun but I soon felt out of place in the high school scene. I wasn't a jet-setter and I wasn't a jock and I wasn't particularly academic. So I transferred to an alternative school, the kind where contracts replaced grades, teachers were called by their first names, and everyone went around hugging each other. My parents weren't too thrilled but I convinced them it was the latest in education. While I was there I tried everything from kyacking and mountain climbing to gestalt therapy and massage. I loved it. When I graduated at 17, I was convinced I could do anything I wanted to do with my life. But the summer after high school I was out of the house and on my own, so I took the best-paying job I could find. That fall when all my old friends went off to college, I was working nights as a janitor at my old junior high school.

*Vexits. T enters, carrying a ladder. Throughout her story she climbs up and down rungs.*

❁ TW — My grandparents were teachers, from rural Ohio. They believed in education, good manners, and the grace of God. My mother dropped out of college to get married. She blamed her failure in life on that. Though she divorced her husband three years later, by that time she had a baby—me—to support. We moved to Detroit to live with her parents, and she got a job as a typist. Her life's dream at age 24 was that I would go to college and have a career, and not be stuck in a dead-end job. My grandparents bought me toys and clothes, little extras my mother couldn't afford. She remarried when I was five. My stepfather, Mac, left home at 14 to work in the auto factories. He met my mother when she was a typist at Mobil Oil, and he pumped gas at a

Mobil station. My grandparents disapproved. They thought he was crude and would be a bad influence on me. My mother continued to work to make ends meet. We lived in a ghetto neighborhood, so I was registered at a school under my grandmother's address, where I could get a better education. I was smart. I loved school. I saw my brains as my ticket to success. When I was older, Mac bought into a Shell station; my grandparents cashed in a life insurance policy and loaned us money for the down payment on a small house in a "nice" neighborhood. But we never fit in. My mother couldn't go to the bridge parties and church bazaars. She worked! Mac got dirty at his job, and rode a bicycle to work. He swore profusely, and never had any inhibitions about telling people off, especially when he was drunk. I was ashamed of him. I made sure people knew he was my step-father. I learned how to be very polite. Still, some parents didn't want their daughters to play with me. And I wasn't allowed to play with some girls, if my family perceived them as more lower class! My rich friends took for granted things I couldn't imagine: vacations to exotic places, music lessons, owning a bicycle, or going to camp. I got my first job at 15. I worked as a mail clerk, a babysitter, and finally at the local McDonalds. This gave me money to buy nicer clothes. In high school, a lot of the kids from the suburbs were into socialism. They looked down on me for not wearing ragged jeans and workshirts like them. After high school I won a scholarship to college from Chevrolet. I was disappointed that it wasn't enough money to go to art school or an Ivy League college where my smart friends were going. College was unreal! I worked as a waitress while I was in school. I got political, and gave up my dreams of making it in the middle class. But around other working people, I felt like I had to pretend not to act middle class.

*T exits. Lights up bright again. SK comes forward.*

❁ SK — Ok, audience, we're going to give you minute to think about your own backgrounds. [*Metronome ticks off*

*time*] Ok, send Vicki and Terry back out! Girls, our judges had a tough time with this one. None of them had ever experienced the kind of circumstances you described. But since you both have survived and prospered, we'll let each of you move one more square, in the interest of keeping the game moving! Our final question for part one—and I'm going to ask for the audience's help on this one—is this: What piece of advice did you get from your parents that inspired and motivated you towards making it? Vicki?

★ VS — My dad always told me never to cross a picket line and never to hire on as a scab. The only way for workers to make it was to join the union and stick together.

❁ SK — Imagine! Terry, how did your parents advise you in your climb to the top?

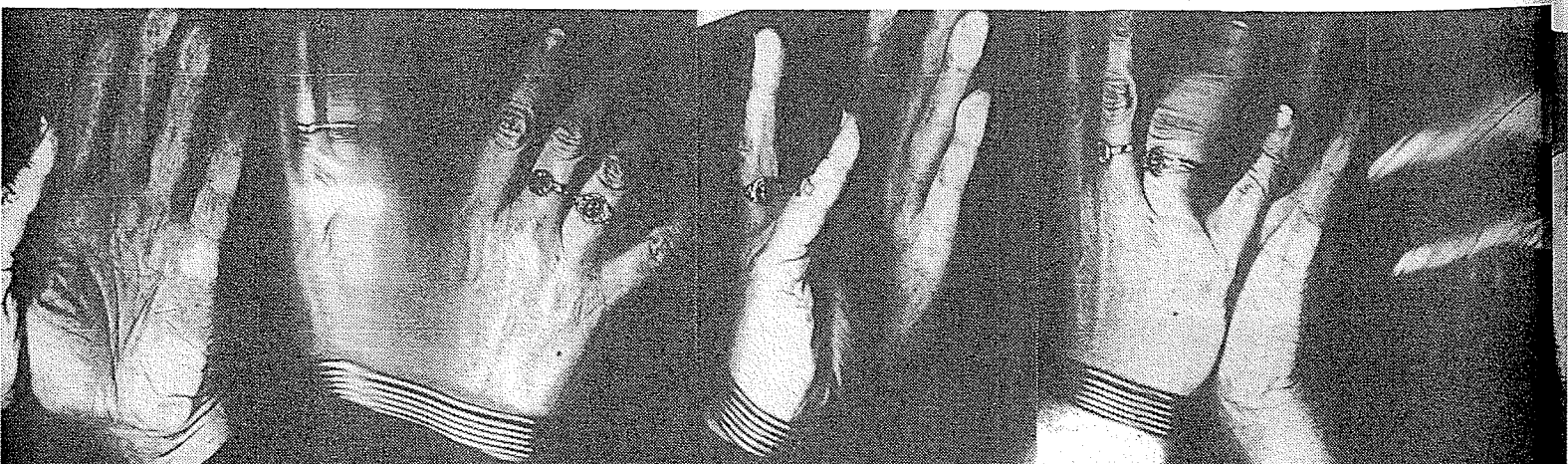
❁ TW — Gosh, it's hard to remember. Well, there one thing Mac always used to say.

❁ SK — And what's that?

❁ TW — He used to say "Fuck 'em! Fuck 'em all!"

❁ SK — Goodness! Well, audience, it's up to you. Please indicate with your applause which piece of parental advice seems the most crucial to success. Vicki? [*Applause*] or Terry? [*Applause*] Ok, that unties the game. Since neither of you made much progress in this round it's going to be much harder to reach the Blue Class and qualify for our Grand Prize. But nothing is impossible in this land of opportunity. Everyone has a chance to move ahead in *Ya' Got Class, Real Class*. You girls can take a minute to relax while JW tells the audience about our prizes.

\* JW — Well, Vicki and Terry won't want to miss out on a chance at our Grand Prize today—a luxury condominium in Marina Del Rey! However, even if nobody qualifies for that prize, we still have quite a line-up. Today's winner will receive: a wardrobe of designer blue jeans by such names as Calvin Klein, Gloria Vanderbilt, and Jordache. Also a year's supply of Perrier water, the sparkling beverage that's captivated France, and now, America. And, dinner for two at a Beverly Hills restaurant so exclusive that we can't even tell





you the name of it. That's all for the winner. The runner-up will receive a beautiful tote bag by Gucci and an afternoon at the InstaTan Tanning Salon in Santa Monica. Ok, Susan, now back to you.

### Applause

☞ SK — Thanks, JW, those prizes sound just great. Now let's bring back Vicki Stolsen and Terry Wolverton. Return to your places on the board. Now the next part of our game deals with current lifestyles. Oh, Vicki, I think you were only on that square.

★ VS — Was I? I could have sworn I was here. Ooops, sorry!

☞ SK — So we'll be dealing with your current lifestyles, and you'll have a chance to make up for a lot of lost points in your backgrounds. And you in the audience, ask yourselves these questions too. Ready? Ok, for our first question: From what college or university did you graduate and with what degree? Terry?

☺ TW — I graduated from Thomas Jefferson College.

☞ SK — Hmm. I've never heard of it? Is it a private school?

☺ TW — No, no, it's a state college. It was an experimental school. But it doesn't exist anymore.

☞ SK — I see. Well, what was your degree?

☺ TW — I got a B.Ph. in women's studies. Bachelor of Philosophy.

☞ SK — BPh! Sounds like an ingredient in toothpaste! Try Colgate with BPh! Vicki, what about you?

★ VS — I didn't graduate.

☞ SK — Why not?

★ VS — Because I didn't go to college.

☞ SK — [aghast] What?

★ VS — Look, where I come from, college costs money. I didn't have any and neither did my parents. Besides, college never seemed important to me.

☞ SK — Not important? I don't know where you got that attitude but it's going to cost you a step ahead. Terry, it sure isn't the Ivy League, but you do get to move one square for graduating from college. My next question is: What's the most exciting vacation you've ever taken? Vicki?

★ VS — I went to Europe for eight

weeks.

☞ SK — That's lovely. Did your parents send you?

★ VS — I went with the money I got on unemployment.

☞ SK — Well, folks, that's our tax dollars at work. What about you, Terry?

☺ TW — I drove from California to Detroit last summer with a friend.

☞ SK — Isn't that nice? Vicki, for traveling abroad move ahead two squares. Terry, you get only one. Folks, rate your most exciting vacation, and take an extra five points if you wrote it off as a business expense! The next question is fairly simple. What kind of car do you drive? Vicki?

★ VS — I own a Pinto, but I usually ride my motorcycle.

☞ SK — A motorcycle! Aren't you adventurous! And what year is your ... Pinto?

★ VS — 1971.

☞ SK — Hmm. Vintage. Terry?

☞ SK — Well ... I *drive* a 1980 Mazda GLC wagon.

☞ SK — It must be nice to own a new car!

☺ TW — I don't exactly own it. It belongs to my ... uh ... roommate, and she lets me drive it.

☞ SK — So you don't own any kind of vehicle? You're lucky you don't have to take the bus! Vicki, you're in luck. For owning two vehicles, we're going to let you move ahead one square. Terry, you'd ordinarily have to forfeit a step, but since you have a new vehicle at your disposal, we'll let you stay where you are. Moving right along, give yourself five points for each of these appliances you own: stereo, camera, color television, home video unit, washer and dryer, microwave oven, food processor, slide projector, film projector or movie camera, or recreational vehicle. Terry, which of these items do you now own?

☺ TW — Well, I do have a stereo.

☞ SK — Pioneer? Marantz? Toshiba?

☺ TW — No, it's a General Electric. I got it with Green Stamps. And I have a Kodak Insta-matic. That's all.

☞ SK — Not very impressive, Terry. Get out and get yourself a credit card! Vicki, how about you?

★ VS — Well, I am a photographer. I have a Canon AE1 and three lenses.

And I just bought a portable stereo cassette player.

☞ SK — I'm not even going to ask you the brand name. For your camera, Vicki, move one square. Terry, I'm afraid your equipment just isn't good enough. Stay right there. Now answer this, how many years have you been in therapy and what did it cost? Vicki?

★ VS — Therapy? I can't even afford to go to the dentist!

☞ SK — That's too bad. It seems you could benefit so much from it. Terry?

☺ TW — Well, I've been in therapy off and on since I was thirteen, when I got arrested for shoplifting. But it's been mostly through social service organizations or school. It was free. Then I was in private therapy, paying on a sliding scale.

☞ SK — A what?

☺ TW — But I'm not in therapy now.

☞ SK — Vicki, you missed the boat on that one, you don't get to move ahead. Terry, I don't know what kind of free therapy you got, but the judges have said you can move ahead one square.

For you in the audience, give yourselves an extra ten points if you've taken EST, Scientology, Esalen, or Lifespring, or any other human potential training.

Now we want to know a little bit about your current occupations. Vicki, I understand you've been writing, producing and performing Off-Broadway. Tell us, how long did you live in New York?

★ VS — Oh, I never lived in New York.

☞ SK — Then I don't understand. Your application clearly reads "Off-Broadway."

★ VS — I never said Off-Broadway, New York. In Seattle I performed Off-Broadway on Capitol Hill, and in L.A. I've performed at the Woman's Building, Off-Broadway on North Spring Street.

☞ SK — Well, that seems a little dishonest, Vicki ... we could get the impression that you're trying to pass for something you're not. So, are you really employed by Lily Tomlin, as you said?

★ VS — Yes, I work for Lily Tomlin.

☞ SK — Well, OK, do you write her material?

★ VS — No, I empty her garbage.

☞ SK — Did you say *garbage*?

★ VS — Someone has to do it. I also sweep the walks and polish the doorknobs.



☛ SK — You're serious!

★ VS — Of course I'm serious. You see, I started out scrubbing urinals in schools, then I vacuumed lobbies in banks, eventually moved up to cleaning private houses, and now I empty the garbage for Lily Tomlin! I'd say I've reached the top of the line, wouldn't you?

☛ SK — Frankly, I'd say you were scraping the bottom of the barrel.

★ VS — The pay is good!

☛ SK — Some people will do anything for money.

★ VS — Some people have no choice.

☛ SK — Terry, you teach at the... uh ... Woman's Building. What is it you teach there?

☛ TW — I teach art and literature, and issues that are relevant to women.

☛ SK — What an unusual profession. Ok, audience, I need you to help me out. Raise your hands to indicate your vote. Who do you think earns a higher salary—Vicki? Raise your hands [Counts] or Terry? OK, Vicki, tell us what you made last year.

★ VS — \$6000. Before taxes.

☛ SK — But that's poverty level! Terry, what was your income from teaching?

☛ TW — Last year I earned one thousand five hundred dollars.

☛ SK — Well, at least you're not on welfare. I don't understand it folks, we've never had such a low score on that one. Vicki, as the "high scorer" you get to move one step ahead. Terry, you're not going anywhere. Now, I'd like to ask the two of you to go offstage and change your clothes for the next part of our game, the Style Show. We'll see how much fashion know-how our contestants have. In the meantime, I'd like to find out more about our audience. Who wants to make a deal? I've got five hundred dollars [waves bills] for anyone who has the key to a 1956 Mercedes Roadster in their pocket right now. No takers? How about a bank book showing an account of over ten grand? Remember, you've got to have it here to show it to me now, and it's also worth five hundred dollars. OK, this should be easy—I've got ten dollars for every major credit card you can show me. [People in audience begin whipping out their wallets, showing credit cards. SK dispenses bills]. Remember folks, if you've got it, flaunt it, that's how to get ahead on *Ya' Got Class, Real Class*, and that's what our contestants are about to do. JW, are we ready?

*Theme music. Vicki enters*

★ JW — Vicki is eager for fall in weather-ready wool and cotton sport suit. Traces of the Annie Hall look are evident in Vicki's attire—men's deep-pocket baggy pants, the loose-fitting blouse, the

nostalgic feel of a hand-me-down jacket. Vicki steps out in style in canvas shoes, simple and practical footwear in the dry seasons for which Los Angeles is famous. Proud of her non-traditional aesthetics, Vicki claims that people take notice when she enters a room and she holds her wardrobe responsible for many stimulating conversations with other fashion-conscious women. Her entire outfit was bought for the unbelievable sum of twenty dollars, proving that uniqueness rates its own value.

*Vicki exits. Applause. Music continues. Terry enters.*

★ JW — Terry sports an urban cowgirl approach in her Ralph Lauren designed boots. Baggy jeans tucked in are reminiscent of this year's jodhpurs. Her ponytail and paper-clip belt give a nod to carefree New Wave style, while her soft angora sweater reminds us that classic femininity is never out of fashion. Her fashion philosophy: if you can't be rich, be eccentric! She tells us that her outfit sells for \$200, proof that high fashion can be had on a budget.

*T exits. Applause. End of theme music. V and T return.*

☛ SK — Thanks, JW. Vicki, very nice. Terry, you certainly know how to dress.

☛ TW — I went to modeling school.

☛ SK — Oh, Eileen Ford? Barbizon?

☛ TW — No, I went to get a job at Burger King. They said they needed a hostess to greet customers, and they sent me to modeling school. Then I found out the job was really picking up people's trash and cleaning the bathrooms.

☛ SK — Shocking! We have the word from our judges. JW, tell us what they said.

★ JW — Well, Terry got points for her knowledge of current trends; however, our judges advise that you shouldn't wear all of them at once. Mix and match is alright for those rich enough not to

care, but for those who want to dress for success, a more consistent and coordinated approach is desirable. Both girls lose points for not maximizing their potential with make-up and jewelry. Vicki, our judges suggest you utilize your line of work by wearing one of the snappy new jumpsuits on the market this fall. Some are available in silk, some in parachute material, either way you can sport a proletarian look. All in all, Terry was awarded two squares, and Vicki was given one for her ingenuity in being able to buy *anything* for \$20.

☛ SK — Audience, rate yourselves on the cost of your outfits, and give yourself an extra five points for every designer label you're wearing. Now, I'm going to ask you a little about your artistic careers. Who do you know, and who knows you? You'll each have thirty seconds to tell about your most impressive accomplishments. Terry, go!

☛ TW — I've published a book of my poetry and prose.

I've been on television talk shows five times in the last year.

I've directed and produced over ten plays and performances in the last eight years. Some of these have been reviewed in magazines and newspapers. I've published in more than ten different publications.

☛ SK — OK, time's up! That's certainly an impressive list of credentials. Why haven't I heard of you? Have you been on Broadway?

☛ TW — No, I work in feminist theater. Most of my plays are for women only.

*Sound of horn.*

☛ SK — We can't count that either! Don't you have any real world experiences?

☛ TW — Well, my work's been written about in *High Performance*, the *L.A. Times*, the *Herald Examiner*, and the *Hollywood Reporter*. And I just published an article in *FUSE*, a Canadian art magazine. Does that count?

☛ SK — Yes, yes, take two squares for those credentials. How much money did you make from this work?

☛ TW — Almost none.

*Sound of horn.*

☛ SK — I'm sorry, step back one square. Vicki, now it's your turn. Remember, thirty seconds.

★ VS — I've performed in both Seattle and Los Angeles. I co-founded a theater company. In the last year my photography has been exhibited in three different shows. And I wrote and directed a film short.

☛ SK — That's time. So, Vicki, the theater company... you had your own performance space?

★ VS — No, we played on the streets, at rallies, and in demonstrations.



*Sound of horn.*

☞ **SK** — We don't count student shows, Vicki, anyone could do that. And our judges never heard of a women's living arts festival, so I'm afraid you gain nothing for that either. But we'll give you credit for your film if it was 16mm.

★ **VS** — It's super-eight.

☞ **SK** — Well, there's no way we can advance you with these credentials. Are you sure you're not forgetting something?

★ **VS** — Can I count the house I built?

☞ **SK** — Heavens, no!

★ **VS** — I didn't think that would fit your definition of success!

☞ **SK** — Don't get hostile, Vicki, it's not becoming. I can see that both of you want to be taken seriously for your work, but you really must stop wasting your time with these insignificant women's projects and move out into the real world, where you can have some impact, and become well-known. Ok, girls, this is our final question. If either of you do really well on this one, you can still make it up to the Blue Class and have a crack at our Grand Prize. Ok, it's multiple choice. Would you describe

been to college. We live in the Hollywood Hills, and drive a new car, eat in restaurants and drink Perrier! You can't write us off. We're consumers!

☞ **SK** — OK, the judges say we need a token gay, and you can be it. Vicki, I'm sorry, you are disqualified, and that means you won't receive the Gucci bag...

★ **VS** — You can't disqualify me. I quit! [to Terry] Designer jeans and dinner in Beverly Hills—that's really making it! Thanks, sister. [exits]

☞ **SK** — Terry, we're running out of time. You haven't qualified for our Grand Prize today, but you're still our winner.

dience on *Ya' Got Class, Real Class*.

*Applause. Theme music up. Susan exits.*

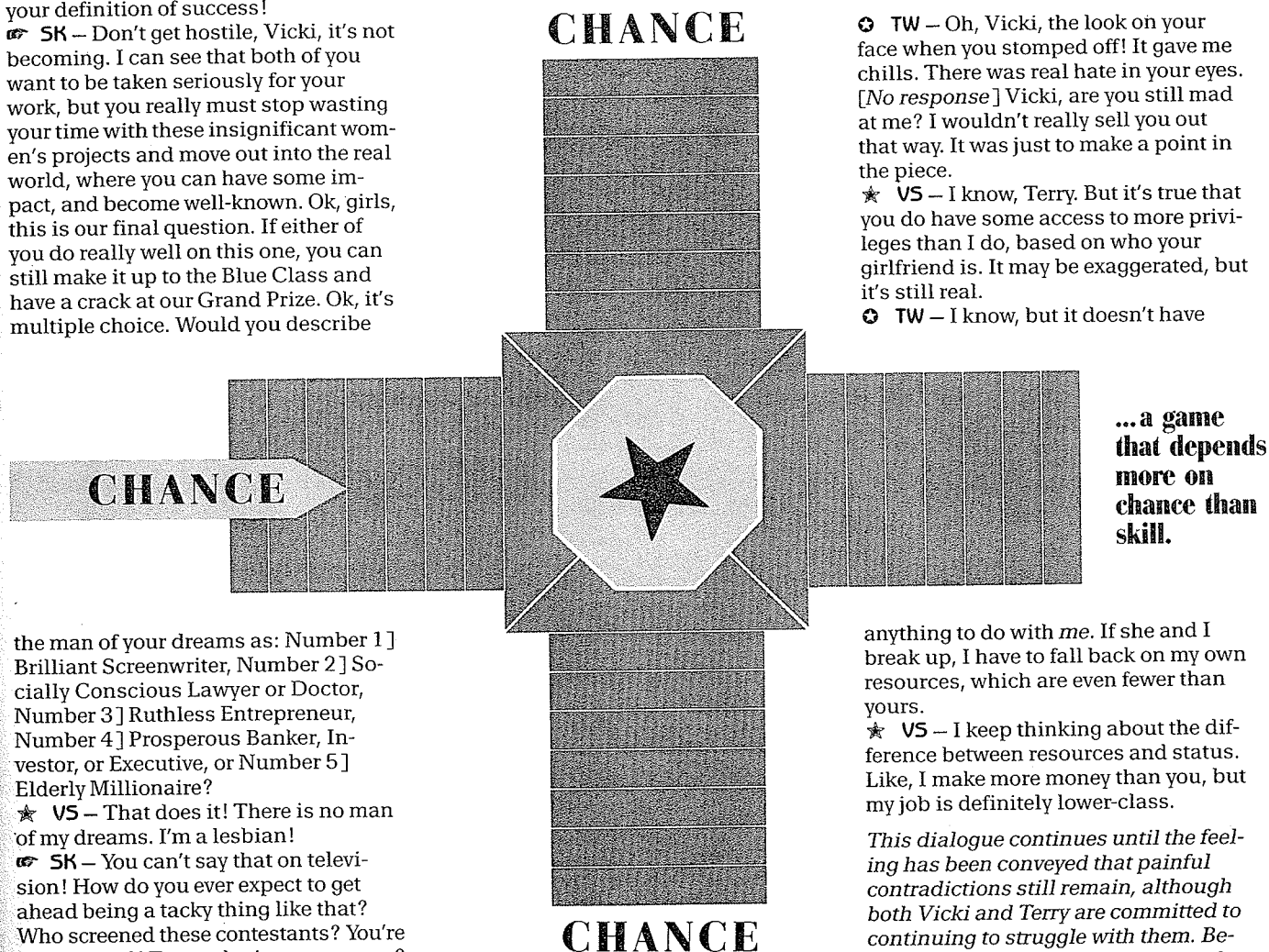
\* **JW** — If you'd like to be a contestant on *Ya' Got Class, Real Class*, mail a 3"x5" card with your name, address, race, family background, income, marital status, political ideology, and sexual preference to: Real Class, P.O. Box Double O Zero, L.A. 90000.

*Music stops. Lights change. Vicki and Terry enter in street clothes, and begin tearing down the set, pulling up the gameboard, etc. They semi-improvise their conversation.*

☉ **TW** — Oh, Vicki, the look on your face when you stomped off! It gave me chills. There was real hate in your eyes. [No response] Vicki, are you still mad at me? I wouldn't really sell you out that way. It was just to make a point in the piece.

★ **VS** — I know, Terry. But it's true that you do have some access to more privileges than I do, based on who your girlfriend is. It may be exaggerated, but it's still real.

☉ **TW** — I know, but it doesn't have



the man of your dreams as: Number 1] Brilliant Screenwriter, Number 2] Socially Conscious Lawyer or Doctor, Number 3] Ruthless Entrepreneur, Number 4] Prosperous Banker, Investor, or Executive, or Number 5] Elderly Millionaire?

★ **VS** — That does it! There is no man of my dreams. I'm a lesbian!

☞ **SK** — You can't say that on television! How do you ever expect to get ahead being a tacky thing like that? Who screened these contestants? You're disqualified! Terry, what's your answer?

☉ **TW** — I'm a lesbian too!

*V and T exchange looks, leave the gameboard to embrace in solidarity.*

☞ **SK** — [Trying to block their embrace from the audience's view]

What? This is a family game! What are the sponsors going to say? You're both disqualified!

*T abruptly breaks from V, returns to her square.*

☉ **TW** — Wait a minute! You can't disqualify me for being a lesbian! My lover is a very wealthy woman. We've both

Enjoy the prizes, dear, and good luck. Thanks for being our guest. [T exits]

Now you in the audience total up your points from your scorecard. Those using a pocket calculator take an extra ten points.

If you scored under 150 points, I'm going to ask you to move over here, into the Red Class. If you scored between 151 and 300, move yourselves into the Yellow Class. And if you scored above 300 points, come and proudly take your place in the Blue Class. [Everyone moves.] Congratulations, thanks for being such a wonderful au-

anything to do with me. If she and I break up, I have to fall back on my own resources, which are even fewer than yours.

★ **VS** — I keep thinking about the difference between resources and status. Like, I make more money than you, but my job is definitely lower-class.

*This dialogue continues until the feeling has been conveyed that painful contradictions still remain, although both Vicki and Terry are committed to continuing to struggle with them. Before they exit, arms clasped, they ask that the audience remain for a while and talk to another person sitting in the same Class section about the piece and any feelings they have, based on what they've seen and heard. Then V and T exit.*

*Terry Wolverton is a writer and performance artist who passionately believes that the purpose of art is to change the world from the inside out. Vicki Stolsen has worked in political theater in the Pacific Northwest and LA. She is now doing photography.*





Suzanne Opton, *FOUR WOMEN*, VERMONT 1980.

*Suzanne Opton is a photographer living and working in New York City.*



# My Mother Is A Tired Woman

My mother is a tired woman  
She wakes up in the morning tired  
She is tired from washing her face and brushing her teeth  
Eating makes her tired  
She is tired when she arrives at work  
She works through the day getting more and more tired  
By nightfall she's entirely exhausted  
She phones me to tell me how tired she is  
How yesterday she was sick and  
Now she's tired  
How she needs a vacation

When she returns from vacation  
She is tired  
Her face is tired under her tan  
She manages to make dinner but complains how tiring it is  
She is too tired to make love  
And at night she is so tired she can't sleep  
She is too tired to meet new people  
And tired of being bored  
She is too tired to give me her piano  
Which she is too tired to play  
Talking to me is tiresome  
Since she is already overtired

I must be careful never to tell her I'm tired  
For this incites a tirade on tiredness  
Which is her special domain  
Since she has been tired for twenty years  
She knows the sagging ropes  
She can go on for hours talking about varieties of tiredness  
She has studied all the rare and mysterious strains  
Why, she could be a teacher of the tired  
Lecturing to thirty bone-tired bodies  
First pontificating on world weariness  
Followed by a treatise on moral fatigue  
Assigning term papers on mental exhaustion  
Physical exhaustion, nervous exhaustion and  
Exhaustion from heat

It is tiring to talk to my mother  
I hang up the phone feeling dog-tired  
It is an effort to do my work  
Eating becomes tiring  
And the world seems a tired mess  
I remind myself I'm not really tired  
She is the one who is tired instead  
But as sure as night I can't sleep I'm so tired  
When morning comes I'm a weary wreck  
And I long for a vacation from my mother  
Whose yawn has spread to my face

Helane Levine-Keating

Helane Levine-Keating's poetry has appeared in various literary magazines. This poem belongs to a collection entitled Stepmother Poems. She is an assistant professor of English at Pace University in Manhattan.





## LET'S ALL KISS MOMMY GOODBYE

*Ida Applebroog is an artist working in New York City.  
Her work can be seen currently at the Ronald Feldman Gallery.*



I CAN'T PLEASE I CAN'T