

MATRIART

A Canadian Feminist Art Journal

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**Women
in Prison**

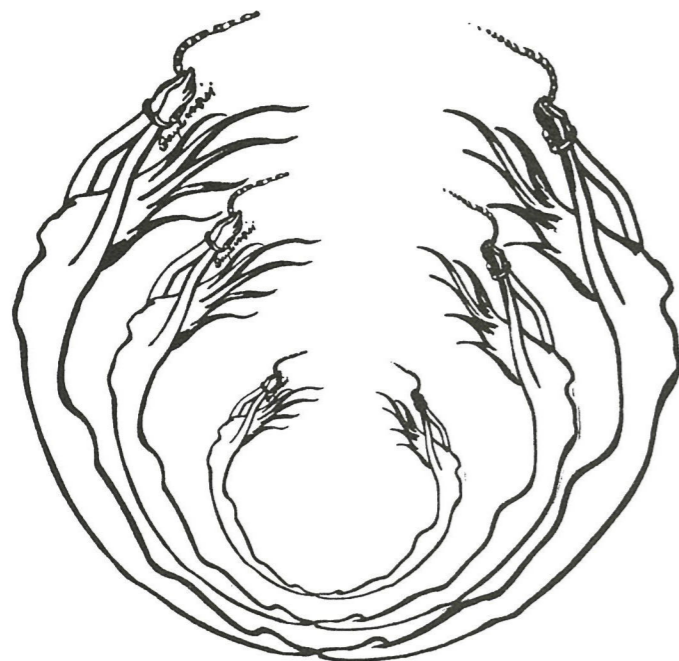
THE ART IN/OF SURVIVAL

By Gayle K. Horii

Surviving in the underworld of prisons is just that – an ART in survival. Relief within prisons is found only in the physical and creative arts and through the true friendships made with others imprisoned.

Ours is a cloistered world, one where every minute of our day and night is calculated and where we are forced to conform to inane rules and regulations; one where we are counted over and over and over again, keys smashing our senses as doors crash behind us locking us in coffin-like cages and cells.

The creative spirit within a woman's heart is the dominant path to survival. We rush to the art form, we reach for the pencil, the knitting needle, the clay: anything which will provide meaning and confirmation of our existence. With the most basic of tools, we fashion beauty and in that beauty, we are empowered and our woman-spirits survive. Art in prison is as much therapy as it is an obsession to create something beautiful with which to identify. It is an obsessive path through which we express the pain, the loss, the fear, and the anger that wells up within. When we feel we cannot take another minute, never mind another year, it is through art we survive.



"Corey – who once needed 70 stitches to close self-inflicted slashes on her wrists – said the self-mutilation actually made her feel better."

The introduction to this special issue on the art of "Women In Prison" is dedicated to a young woman whose smile I will never forget. In the three and one half years she did time at Prison for Women, Corine made all friends. I knew no one who didn't love her: except Corine. She began slashing herself mercilessly about a year after she arrived at Prison for Women in Kingston. She could never tell us what drove her to punish herself, but we knew the childhood abuse must have been brutal. Prison for Women multiplied her feelings of worthlessness and her self-hatred. News from the *Edmonton Sun* said she died June 15, 1992 from the after-effects of a drug-overdose just a few months after finally earning her full parole.

Like many simplistic comments about people in prison, the blame is placed on drug use. No one wants to ask why anyone needs drugs. As a sister-prisoner who knew Corine and tried to help and protect her when security came to take her to the hole – the "treatment" for slashing – I also knew that she had a secret interest in art. This was never nurtured and her creative spirit could not find the path to survival.

May the Great Light Welcome You Home to the Gentle Love of Sisterhood

In Memory of Women from Prison for Women, Kingston

Marlene Moore (Shaggy)	Dec 1988	Suicide
Pat Bear	Mar 1989	Suicide
Sandy Sayer	Oct 1989	Suicide
Marie Ledoux Custard	Feb 1990	Suicide
Careen Daignault	Sept 1990	Suicide
Janise Gamble Sanderson	Sept 1990	Accident
Johnie Neudorf (Musqua)	Nov 1990	Suicide
Patrice O'Donnell	Dec 1990	Aids
Lorna Jones	Feb 1991	Suicide
Corine Cole	June 1992	Accident

MATRIART

C O N T E N T S

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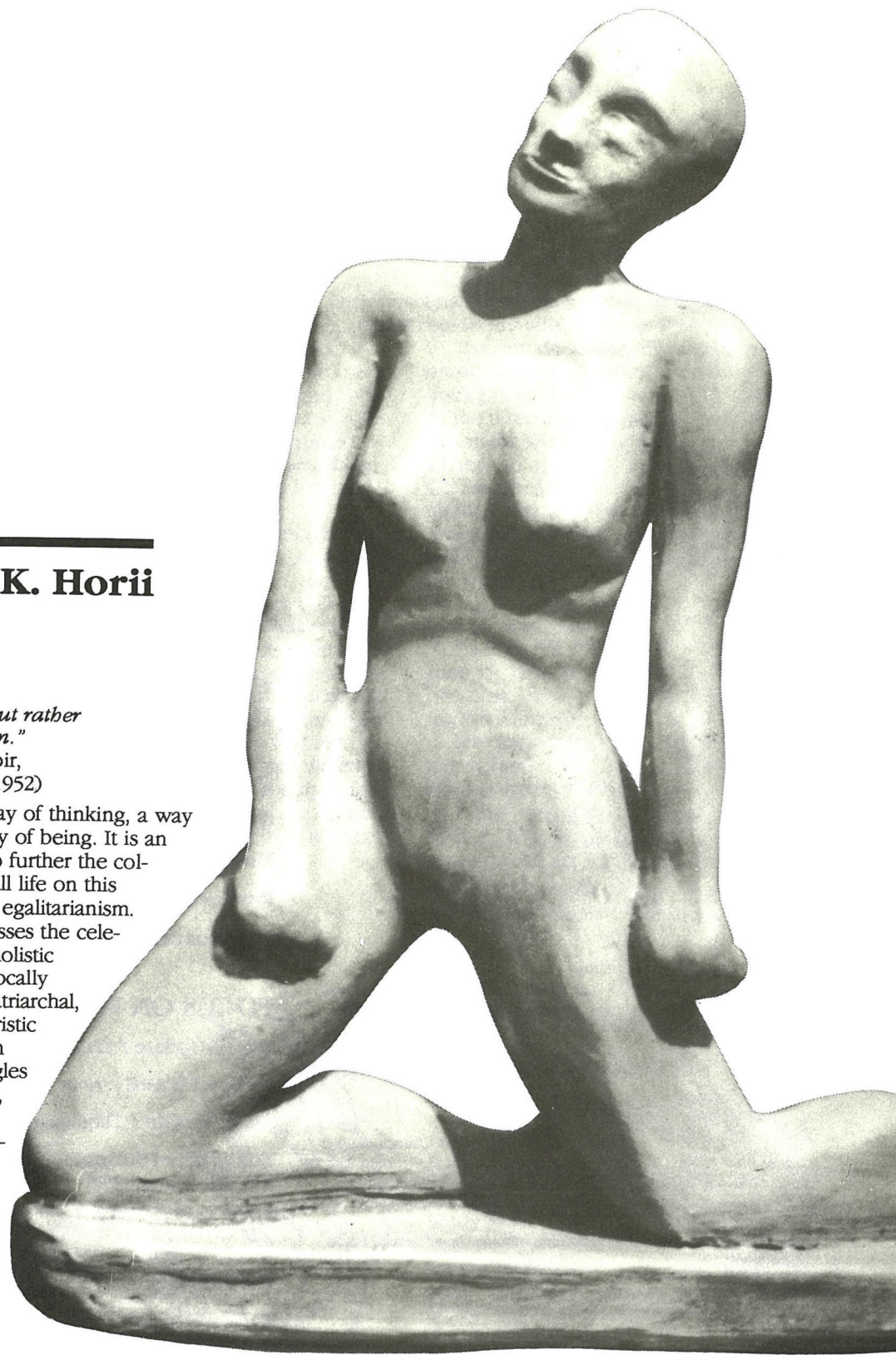
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By Gayle K. Horii

"One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman."

Simone de Beauvoir,
The Second Sex (1952)

Feminism is a way of thinking, a way of feeling and a way of being. It is an ideology inspired to further the collective interests of all life on this planet through true egalitarianism. Feminism encompasses the celebration of life in a holistic sense. It is unequivocally antithetical to the patriarchal, authoritarian, militaristic regime of the prison structure. The struggles of women in prison, albeit efforts of a pariah minority, represent the same struggles of all women. One is not born, but rather becomes a prisoner.



Gayle K. Horii, "Fit Lady," sculpture, 1991

NO SURRENDER

On any given day in Canada, approximately 1,450 women will suffer the degradation and brutalization of imprisonment. This will represent only 8% of provincially sentenced (less than two years) and 2.5% of federally sentenced (two years +) prisoners – overall, about 5.3% of the total 27,000+, incarcerated. Statistics reveal that 75% of the charges laid against women are for shoplifting, fraud, alcohol or drug offenses¹. And prior to its decriminalization in 1972, the largest single category of crime that resulted in the imprisonment of women was attempted suicide. In 1984, breaking and entering, theft and fraud were the offenses most likely to lead to the imprisonment of women – crimes of poverty.²

Being poor is a social problem for First Nation's people in Canada that appears inherited. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that Native people account for "up to 93% of women and 85% of men admitted to some provincial and territorial institutions, and 14% of women and 9% of men serving federal sentences."³

Yet, Native peoples make up only 2% of the Canadian population.⁴ Racism is inherently part of the discrimination in prisons.

In the years 1980 – 1984, 25% of the women serving sentences of two years or

more were women of colour. Yet, of the 419 federally sentenced women who were "permitted" to serve their sentences in their home provinces, 334 or 80% were caucasian. Thirty-five percent of the women forcibly imprisoned thousands of miles away from their homes and families at P4W, in Kingston, Ontario were women of colour.⁵ Discrimination in prisons is innate.

Analogous to the reality of women in prison is sexism itself, aimed primarily against women of colour and women of marginal means. Most women still remain "imprisoned" in job ghettos, in unpaid housekeeping roles and in the mythos of motherhood – all props of patriarchal capitalism.

"The idea of matriarchy is a myth at several levels. In Quebec, prestige was directly proportional to the number of children they produced ...women had no value in their own right, but only as mothers...they merely repeated and amplified in the home a discourse defined by clerical nationalists. Just as she 'kept' her husband's house, she 'kept' an ideology that was not her own."⁶

The message is: as long as you stay home and have babies, you are a good woman. A "bad woman," in addition to spending years in prison, may lose the opportunity to even bear children. And for the "good" woman who became "bad," there is the added punishment of having her children become wards of the court, continuing the cycle of disenfranchisement.

Identical to the patriarchal politics of "appropriate behaviour" directed to the general population of women is the "socialization of gender identity" (Kimball, 1990) transferred to "girls" inside the walls. The majority of "jobs" they are offered are the stereotypical female roles essential to the operation of any institution – cleaning, kitchen work, sewing, laundry, typing and clerical work. In addition to being unable to empower themselves through meaningful work in prison, women are demoted to the powerless status of "girls," who are required to become "ladies." And if this requirement is ignored, the punishment is severe – even irrational. A simple comparison bears this out. A three-day total lockdown in a men's penitentiary may occur due to a serious incident of violence, such

as a prisoner being stabbed to death. At Prison for Women, a three-day total lockdown was instituted for "a lesson in manners" (January, 1988). Ironically, this ubiquitous rationale can be traced to the efforts of well-meaning churchwomen like Elizabeth Fry who believed that the "fallen woman" could be reinstated in society's good graces if she was trained in the proper conduct – "proper" being defined by patriarchal Judeo-Christian ethics.

*"The state maintains its rule through force, but also through ideological hegemony. Patriarchal ideology is that of male supremacy, which conditions women to exhibit male-serving behaviour and to accept male-serving roles."*⁷

Yet, this same prison structure which purports to teach women in prison how to become ladies, demands strip-searches. After a ten-day lockdown in October, 1987, all women at P4W were ordered to perform this degradation as guards "searched" for a missing kitchen knife! Immediate obedience is expected when ordered to stand naked in front of several strangers, when told to squat over a mirror and bend over – all without batting an eyelash!

This constant degradation is in addition to the harsh treatment that many women prison-

ers have already endured. Her criminalization, the rebelliousness against the "status quo" may be due to the simple fact that she was sexually or physically abused as a child (up to 85% estimated at Prison for Women), or because she could not afford to pay a fine, or perhaps because she killed the man who beat her unmercifully. There is no empirical evidence to support the claim that a woman's criminality is due to her lack of manners, or lack of Calvinistic discipline! Women in prison have usually been beaten down in self-esteem long before they entered prison and are particularly ill-equipped to deal with the demagogic prison hierarchy who "emotionally disarm" them. Prisons exemplify the "politics of rape," all in the name of justice: *"the ultimate disrespect is, then, the exercise of the power of consent over another person. And this is exactly what rape is."*⁸

*"Agencies have a natural tendency to identify with the importance of their policy mandate and to develop norms and procedures that reinforce their biases."*⁹

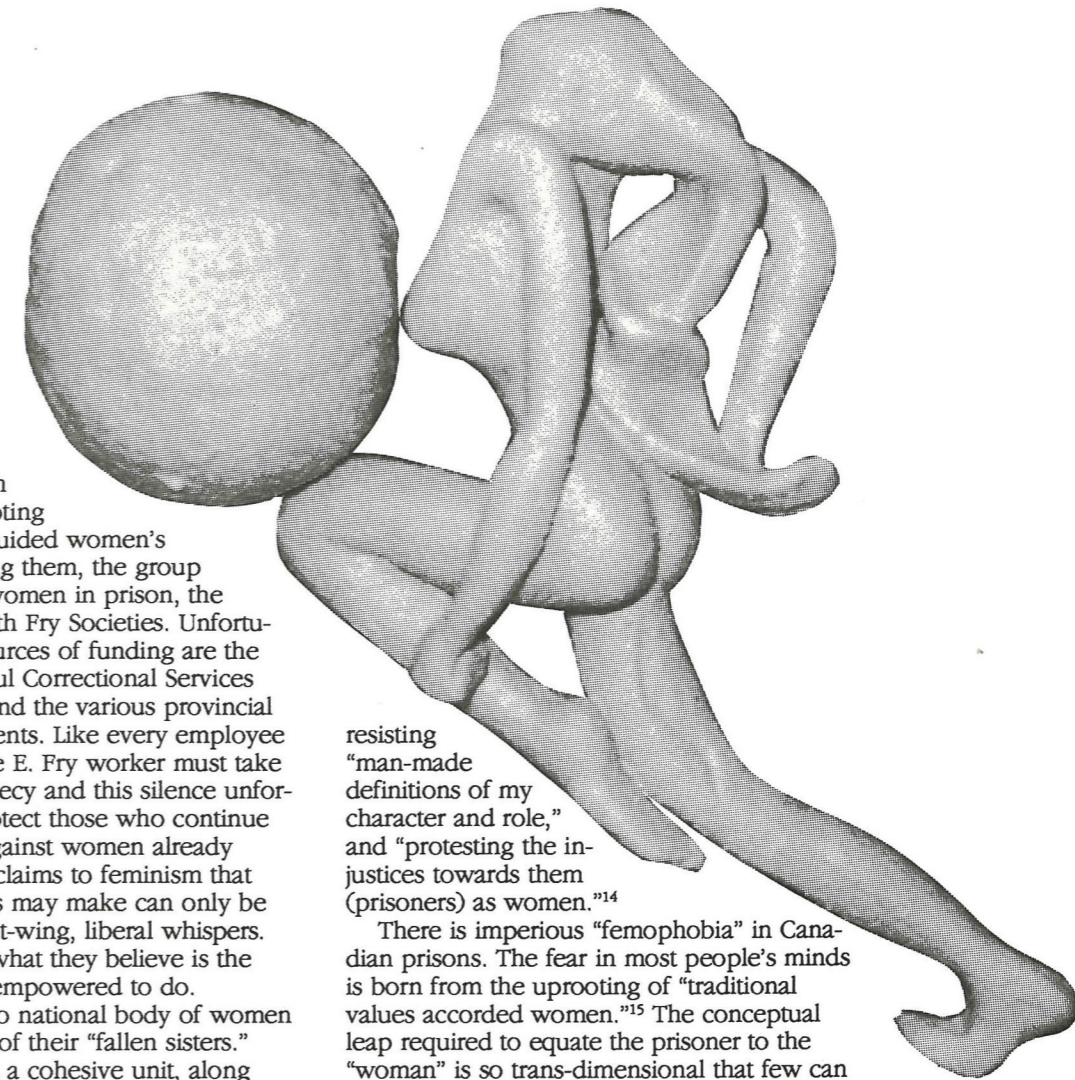
Successfully pervasive, and covert, this methodology has convinced many "token" women that sexism is not a legitimate complaint. These "token females" have stuffed their womanhood in to the snug pants of a male uniform. They enjoy the "manly discipline of orders given and orders obeyed"¹⁰ – certainly not feminist values! For what feminist could take a position that advertises: "For a starting salary of \$27,500 per annum, you may be required to strip a male prisoner, and look up his anus. You will be required to watch him defecate, urinate and masturbate?"

Yet, females do work in prisons. And if you were to poll the male prisoners, you would find them nearly unanimous in their disapproval. I am told it is far more degrading to have your testicles squeezed by a female guard, than a male guard. Still unresearched is the long-term ramifications of this degrading treatment of men by women.

"It is sickening to see so many of the newly freed using their freedom in mere imitation of

"The struggle of women in prison is very much a part of the struggle of feminists all over the globe. We are all enmeshed in forms of institutionalized hierarchies..."

Gayle K. Horii,
"Women's Heart,"
sculpture, sand
overglaze, 11" x 6"



*masculine vices."*¹¹

The woman prisoner meanwhile is held hostage by both females readily adopting male roles and misguided women's organizations. Among them, the group mandated to assist women in prison, the autonomous Elizabeth Fry Societies. Unfortunately, their only sources of funding are the monstrously powerful Correctional Services Canada in Ottawa, and the various provincial corrections departments. Like every employee of these services, the E. Fry worker must take a sworn oath of secrecy and this silence unfortunately helps to protect those who continue in their barbarism against women already over-powered. Any claims to feminism that many E. Fry workers may make can only be affirmed in very right-wing, liberal whispers. Yet, they are doing what they believe is the only thing they are empowered to do.

There simply is no national body of women to protect the rights of their "fallen sisters." The inability to form a cohesive unit, along with the few numbers of articulate women in prison spread across such a vast country, has enabled the harsh treatment of women in Canadian prisons to continue. The situation is comparable to the feminist movement where: *"feminist consciousness, like the organized women's movement, is fragmented along regional, sectoral, and class lines. Despite real advances, these divisions have prevented feminists from developing a collective assessment of past actions or a coherent strategy on a binational scale."*¹²

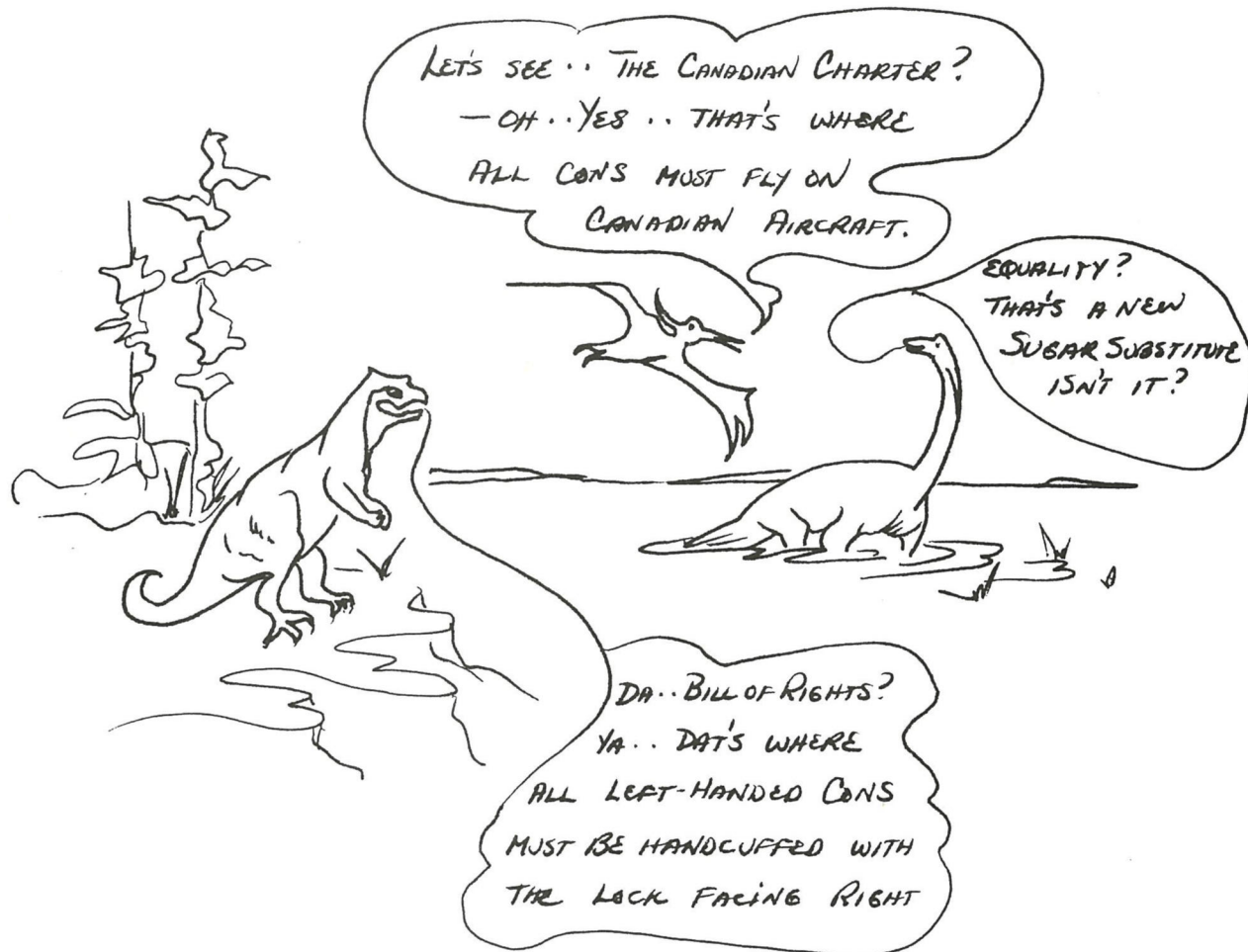
*"The transitional phases of valuation that our twentieth century has wrought, have prompted some women and men to search for their true identities, but the majority of both men and women still cling to traditional models. Sometimes, it is their situation as women which compels their attention."*¹³

As a woman raised in a conventional manner, and one who juggled motherhood, career, homemaking and wifery, I was in the traditional mode. But now, as a prisoner, my situation as a woman has indeed compelled me to pay attention to defining myself as a woman,

resisting "man-made definitions of my character and role," and "protesting the injustices towards them (prisoners) as women."¹⁴

There is imperious "femophobia" in Canadian prisons. The fear in most people's minds is born from the uprooting of "traditional values accorded women."¹⁵ The conceptual leap required to equate the prisoner to the "woman" is so trans-dimensional that few can resolve these diametrically opposed descriptors without fear. Just as women are often portrayed as subordinate to men with "traditional expectations about women to men relationships perpetuating patriarchal attitudes and structures,"¹⁶ the stereotyping of women in prisons also occurs. The very "unnaturalness" of a woman decidedly breaking the law, of behaving in an anti-authoritative way and/or in a violent manner creates shockwaves to the sensibilities of many people. It simply does not "compute."

The image of "mom" behind bars is irreconcilable with society's portrayal of women and thusly, the media prototype emerges – that women in prison must be excessively evil, depraved, loose and immoral. And it is the latter two categories which dominate the hatred of women in prison by other women who have been brainwashed by puritan ethics meant to control their own sexuality! The sexuality of women in prison is a fantasy which has dominated many media presentations about women in prison, resulting in the denial of any empathy. By contrast, the most



Gayle K. Horii

depraved male sexual offender is "treated" with therapy.

While the conditions in the abattoir in Kingston provoked seven women in twenty-six months (ending February 4, 1991) to hang themselves, male sex offenders have been granted more "humane" living conditions by way of millions of dollars in the construction of new duplexes and provisions of full programs, including university education and full pre-release pass programs.

The struggle of women in prison is very much a part of the struggle of feminists all over the globe. We are all enmeshed in forms of institutionalized hierarchies which are the reverse of the organic world inherent in the very nature of women. As women fight the oppression of discrimination in every form

and in particular the sexism of patriarchal structures, so women in prison fight against these same diabolical forces.

However, incarcerated women must also fight discrimination against them by other women – women both inside and outside of the walls. It is this additional struggle that tends to demoralize most imprisoned women in their battles to obtain equal benefits under the law as those that male prisoners receive.

Equal rights for women are included in the Canadian Constitution only because of the collective demands of feminists in Canada. Our political system, and our system of laws were never structured to include women. State authority was birthed out of a desire evoked by the Age of Enlightenment – to protect property rights – exclusively a male domain. Two hun-

dred years later, women are "treated" the same as men in punishment, but afforded far less "benefits" under the same law.

As Iona Campagnolo, former Liberal party leader, spoke before an audience of women, all political hopefuls: "Women are prisoners of gradualism, they are told that things are improving and that they must not rush things, they must wait. And so they wait, and wait, and wait."¹⁷

The end result is that virtually no meaningful or lasting progress for women in prison or for women outside of prison has been accomplished.

To bring about such progress, the feminist movement and the prisoner's support networks need to organize more effectively and develop a system of mutual priorities. Education must be first on the agenda.

As Elizabeth Stanton stated in 1890: "The strongest reason for giving woman the opportunities for higher education, for the full development of her faculties, for a complete emancipation from all forms of bondage, of custom, dependence, superstition, from all the crippling influences of fear – is the solitude and person responsibility of her own life."

In "wife assault there is a new focus – one which evolves from the pathology of why do they stay to liberation – how do they leave"¹⁸. A parallel focus is needed for imprisoned women: from the pathology of why do they stay involved in criminal activities to how can they empower themselves to the liberation from criminal activities. Equality is liberating.

On September 5, 1991 I won a federal Court of Appeal decision granting me an interlocutory injunction. This restrained the Correctional Services of Canada from forcibly transferring me to a facility which would deny me equal programming and facilities as those available to men, until the matter could be settled by the courts. On October 10, 1991, my recreational 'privileges' were taken from me. My 1991 Christmas pass was denied though two psychological reports were positive and I have no disciplinary convictions nor any poor performance notices. In fact all of my work performances remain excellent along with an A- grade point average nearing the end of my third year of university studies. My repeat nominations to the Matsqui Prisoner's Committee and the executive of the Matsqui Lifers' Organization are indications of the re-

gard that fellow prisoners have accorded me over the past three years. Attempts by the C.S.C. to intimidate me into giving up my efforts to gain equality are contemptuous. I will not be the one to put another nail into the coffin of women's equality.

As I await the final court date in which my application to obtain equal rights and benefits under the law will be heard, it is the ideology of feminism that has encouraged me to continue. Whether Section 15 of the Charter of Rights and Freedom ensures women in prison their equality remains to be decided. But, if Agnes MacPhail, Canada's first woman Member of Parliament were still alive, I know she would be on our side!

"When I hear men talk about women being the angel of home, I always, mentally at least, shrug my shoulders in doubt. I do not want to be the angel of any home; I want for myself what I want for other women, absolute equality. After that is secured, then men and women can take turns being angels."
(Agnes MacPhail, 1921)

One is not born equal, rather becomes, equal.

M

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 Johnson, 1986:intro. | 11 His Religion and Hers, |
| 2 Johnson, 1986:54. | Charlotte Perkins, |
| 3 Johnson, 1986:57 | 1923:54 |
| 4 Stats Canada, 1984 | 12 Maroney, 1987:85 |
| 5 Johnson, 1986:73 | 13 Fellman, 1989:191 |
| 6 Lamoureux, 1987:58,59 | 14 Fellman, 1989:192 |
| 7 Donovan, 1986:145 | 15 Kimball, Tape#3 |
| 8 Shafer and Frye, 1977:290 | 16 Radway, 1983:307 |
| 9 White, 1990:7 | 17 KNO Network, 1987 |
| 10 Brownmiller, 1975:32 | 18 Cousins – Tape #4 |

Gayle Horii was a stock broker for an international brokerage firm when she was sentenced to life imprisonment for the killing of her stepmother. She served the first three years of her sentence at Prison for Women, Kingston and has been incarcerated for the last three and a half years at Matsqui Penitentiary, Abbotsford, B.C. She is now within six months of eligibility for release on day parole.

Gayle K. Horii
Matsqui Penitentiary for Men
P.O. Box 4000
Abbotsford, B.C. V2S 4P3

THE

AN EXCERPT FROM THE PLAY

HANGING

A WORK IN PROGRESS

SHEET

By Theresa Ann Glaremin

The following is an excerpt from the play "The Hanging Sheet," a work in progress, by Theresa Ann Glaremin.

The action takes place at the Prison for Women from the winter of '88 to the winter of '91. The location is Kingston, Ontario. Women are hanging themselves in this prison and no one seems to know why. The living conditions, plus distance from family, seem to be the reasons why Native prisoners are hanging themselves.

Theresa Ann Glaremin is currently incarcerated at Prison for Women, P.O. BOX 515 Kingston, Ontario, K7L 4W7.

ACT I

The hospital area has high white ceilings which are in the process of being painted. There are two rooms: one an isolation unit, the other an open ward. The isolation unit has one bed, a dresser, and a sink with a toilet. It has a bar-covered window which has rust coloured burlap material hanging down for curtains. It is dirty and shabby. There is a mountain of dust rolling along the floor. The air is stale. The room has one wall that is half window which runs horizontally to meet the wooden door.

The other room in the ward has three beds, three night stands, a colour TV, and a mini fridge with a kettle and toaster on top of it. There is a large steel cabinet, painted white, which is open to expose sheets, towels and blankets. The beds all have shabby bedspreads on them. There are three barred windows, all covered with rust coloured burlap curtains. There is dust everywhere.

Leading off from these rooms is a long hallway and a wooden door which is always locked to cut off contact with the nurses. This door is only opened to let in other prisoners for admittance, for the meals or for the doctor.

There are two prisoners in the hospital, one in the isolation ward and the other standing by the door. A conversation is going on through the cracks of the door. Shaggy, the woman in the isolation ward, is pretty banged up. She is wearing a catheter. The other woman, T.A., is philosophical.

Shaggy: You got to get a message to the chairperson for me.

T.A.: Okay, Shaggy, I'll do whatever I can.

Shaggy: They beat me really bad this time. This fucken bag is getting on my nerves. The goon squad from across the road came over when I demanded to see the doctor from seg. I squirted my bag at them.

T.A.: Shaggy, can't you hang on a little longer? I don't know how long I'm going to be here. I'm in a lot of pain myself. When I get out I'll go straight to the prisoner's committee. I promise.

Shaggy: I can't take this pain...There is something terribly wrong with my insides. I can't take this pain much more.

T.A.: Shaggy, I care about you and I can't stand to see the state of your body right now. Why did you slash up so badly?

Shaggy: To stop the pain.

T.A.: Why did you try to hang yourself?

Shaggy: To stop the pain.

T.A.: Shaggy, will you help me commit suicide. I can't take the pain anymore either.

Shaggy: I don't ever want people to say that to me again. Do you hear me. (Bangs loudly on the locked door.) Don't give up. You belong to the world of the living. I don't want to die. That's not why I do this. I've been doing this for 13 years and I never died yet. It's a relief from the pain.

T.A.: Well, sister, I need relief right now. (Bends down in physical pain.)

Shaggy: What's wrong? Just a minute. (Goes to other door and screams for help. No one responds. She comes back to the isolation door.) You got to help me. I got to get out of here before they kill me.

T.A.: Look, I told you I would take care of that when I get out. We have gone through a lot in here over the past year, hey? Do you think we'll ever meet under any other conditions?

Shaggy: God, it hurts. It's getting worse. (She grabs onto the window.)

T.A.: Shaggy? Oh, my God! What is it?

Shaggy: Get help. Please get some help. (Shaggy begins to slide down the window. Her bruised face crunched against the window, her eyes popped open in distress. Her hands are turning white as she slides down and out of sight.)

T.A.: Shaggy? Shaggy? Help us! (She goes to the window and yells as loud as her pain will allow her to. She moves toward the door and bangs as loud as she can. She is in great pain and passes out on the floor.)

End of Act I

EPILOGUE...

Five of the nine characters in the play "The Hanging Sheet" have died as result of hanging. The sixth remains in a coma, unable to communicate. Studies show that 90% of the women in the prison are trying to survive the effects of past physical, sexual, emotional, and spiritual abuses. The CSC (Correctional Services of Canada) seems to think that closing the Prison for Women by 1994 and replacing it with five regional centres will correct the situation. Support groups are closely watching these events. **M**

CLAUDIA BURKE:

“Drawing so hard my hands hurt”

INTRODUCTION: PERSIMMON BLACKBRIDGE

When *Matriart* asked me if I wanted to write for this “Women in Prison” issue, I told them I’d rather do an interview with an artist I know, Claudia Burke. Claudia is an artist who was put in prison. Art wasn’t something given to her by benevolent prison authorities or occupational-therapist-artist-social workers. The artwork she did while she was locked up was her own work, for her own reasons.

Claudia has been through both the “mental health” and the “justice” systems. They are not entirely separate. Perhaps where they overlap most completely is within prisons for the “criminally insane,” like the Forensic Unit in B.C., where Claudia spent eight months.

In this oral history, Claudia describes some of the conditions of her institutionalization and speaks about her artwork during that time.

INSTITUTIONALIZATION

My first mental institution was when I was 17. I say this with great pride, because I have survived. Sort of, anyway. I was in a psych ward for two months. The whole hospital just had this feeling about it: like people who had been persecuted came there looking for amnesty and were persecuted even more. I ran away; they brought me back. I ran away again. They brought me back again. It didn’t help.

By the time I was 21, I had graduated to Crease Clinic at Riverview. This is where they dump you. It was like people had been collected from all over British Columbia and brought there as garbage. *People who freak out and have nervous breakdowns; who walk in*

the middle of the night and talk to themselves.

Every time I got out of an institution, I went back to the same small town where my family lived and the same small town persecution. It’s like when you watch chickens: they pick one to peck and they peck it bloody. Finally in 1988, I committed a crime and got myself arrested out of that place.

CLAUDIA GOES TO FORENSIC

After I was arrested, somebody sat me down and said, “Do you want to go to Oakalla [provincial prison for women in Burnaby, B.C.] or Forensic [prison for the criminally insane]?” And they said, “Choose Forensic. Oakalla is very tough.”

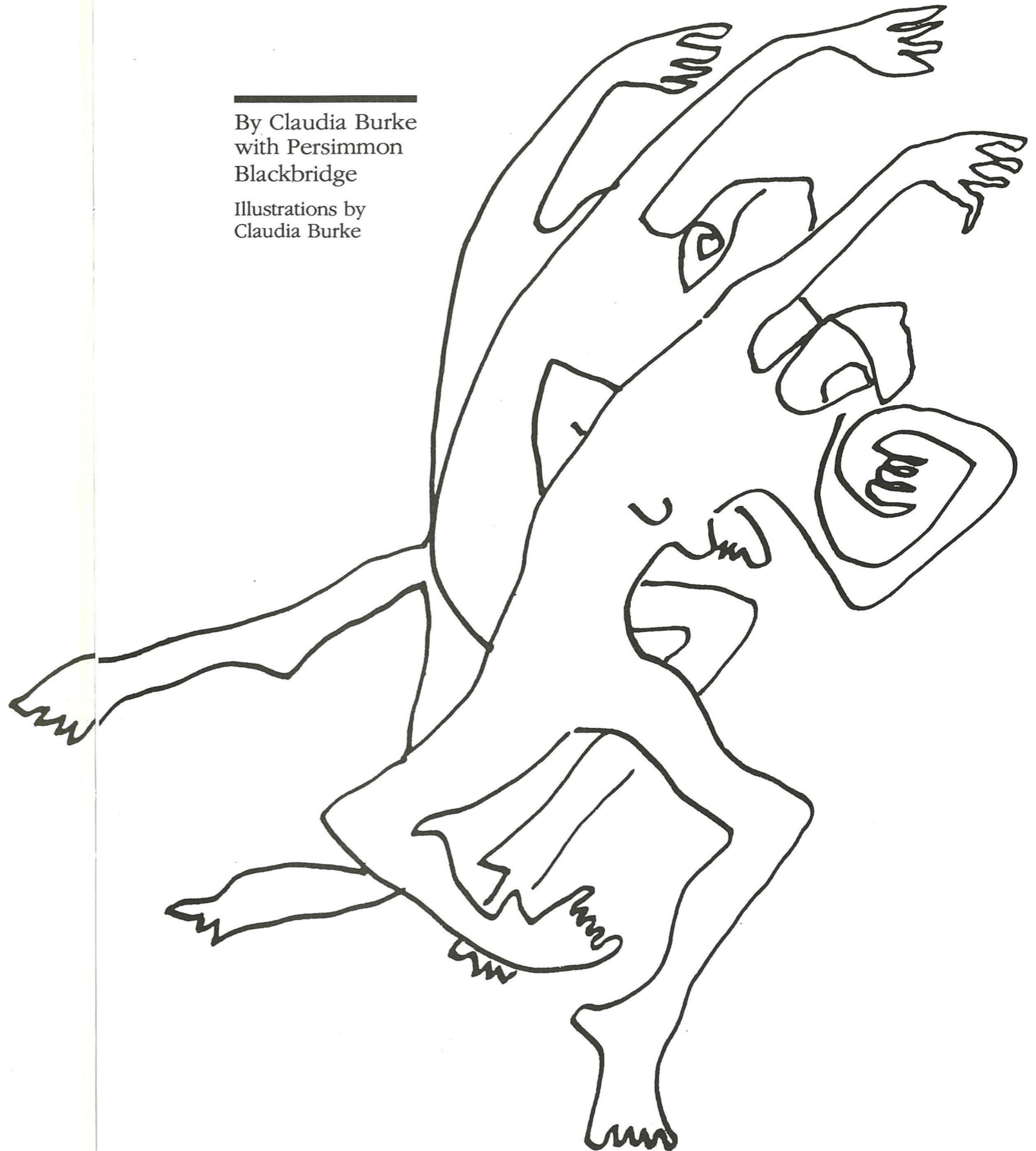
And it was true, Forensic was pretty decent in a lot of ways. It was way better than Crease. The nurses at Crease were bitter. They were hard and nasty; they were police-like. At Forensic, the staff would sit down and talk to you, you’re almost human.

But if I had gone to Oakalla, they would have set a trial date, first thing. In Forensic, there was no trial date set at first, because I was supposedly “too crazy” to stand trial. That’s the catch. They keep you in Forensic till they decide you’re mentally competent and then you get a trial date. At your trial, if the judge rules you’re not guilty by reason of insanity, you get put back in Forensic. You’re not sentenced to so many months or years; you just stay there till they decide you can go. I didn’t know that when I agreed to go to Forensic.

Before I could get a trial date, I had to be passed by the Review Panel. They’re the ones

By Claudia Burke
with Persimmon
Blackbridge

Illustrations by
Claudia Burke



who decide if you're sane enough to go to court. They would ask questions that they thought pertained to the state of your mental health. I saw them three times. By the last time, I had learned that I had to limit and control what I would talk about. When I first came in I was too scared and numb to keep my mouth closed.

I was in Forensic for eight months. Then I was sent to Triage [an emergency shelter where people generally spend 2-3 months and then move on] for 17 months. *I served two years before ever coming to trial.* And then I got three years probation. They don't usually keep people in prison for more than 3 months for doing what I did. *I did not kill anybody.*

MAKING ART IN FORENSIC

The inmates in Forensic were no different from people out in the world. They'd just had a hard time, drugs and the like. There are worse people. Most everybody had something that they did. They read, did needlepoint, went to school or work, watched television. I drew. All the time.

Mostly, I drew at a table in the common room. I would just sit there and draw: the backs of women, the fronts and sides of women, women crouching over. I drew with felt laundry marker pens on cheap typing paper. I liked using basic cheap materials. They suited what I was drawing and they suited my situation. I liked when the pens would start drying and I'd really have to work them to get the ink out.

The lines around the figures I call "energy shading." It's like finding a flow and a shape and creating energy around the shape with the direction and quality of the lines. When I shade around the side of the face, that's like the hidden side: the pain, the stuff that's not in the light. When I draw hands and feet curling inwards, it's the desperation, clutching and grasping for anything. *Or their hands are up like they're protecting their heads from mental rape.*



I don't usually draw from models unless I am infatuated with someone. Visually and emotionally infatuated: a little of both. Sometimes I draw someone and they are just a model, but I think that's objectifying. In Forensic, my drawings were mostly inner images coming out of me: a release for the anger, frustration and boredom. Everything that happened to me came out on paper. I did a couple of drawings on what it's like to be diagnosed as "schizophrenic." I drew one on having your tubes tied. I did quite a few on how television affects everyone's lives. And about the social behaviour of women amongst women. It all came spilling out of me and I had time to do it.

AMPUTATION AND ARTWORK

My feet were amputated when I was about twenty-three. When I woke up in the hospital, I just drew. When I got out of the hospital, I had my first exhibit. That exhibit was almost like carving on paper. I would press the pens so hard that my hands would hurt. I was drawing dancers.

I grew up watching dance. I had five years of dance training. I really loved drawing dancers. Women dancers. People would ask me why I never drew men dancing. When I tried to draw men dancers, I would just stiffen right up. It was like they had cartilage or something all through their bodies. Men can be beautiful dancers, I love watching men dance. But in drawing, I couldn't seem to make them move.

At that time, I was drawing a narrow concept of beautiful women, and that upsets me. I've never drawn really big women. All the dancers I did were thin. Fat women really aren't drawn much. Or, disabled women for that matter.

As I've come to terms with my amputation, the dancers have gone down onto their knees. I guess that's strange. Maybe I could have drawn amputated dancers doing incredible things, but then it wouldn't have the length of line. The drawing needs that length: I don't

By Jo-Ann Mayhew

On September 26, 1990, Federal Solicitor General Pierre H. Cadieux announced that the maximum security Prison for Women (P4W) in Kingston would be closed within four years. P4W will be replaced by five regional prisons for federally sentenced women.

I am a former resident of Antigonish, Nova Scotia, but I have been incarcerated at P4W in Kingston since 1985. In January 1992, I was present in the prison's gym when Doug Lewis announced that another penal facility for women would be built in Truro, Nova Scotia. As other Maritime women immediately spoke out against this location, my own heart sank at the news. Several days later I awoke in a nightmare state, my spirit was engulfed in

a feeling of deep shame for having contributed to work that was intended to assist in positive change for Federally Sentenced Women but was being politically sabotaged. I believed the current course of action will add to their hardship – for many more decades. Women will be isolated in Truro (like sisters in Burnaby or brothers in Port Cartier and Renous); the main product of such prison construction is not a social or moral restoration but a sinister method of creating employment and generating a new field of political patronage.

My lack of optimism is based on my knowledge of what is needed by women sentenced to long prison terms, what is practically possible to deliver and the real limitations of a rural Maritime area.

Being close to home and community is important for some women. But to varying degrees, all women doing a long federal bit need substantial, cumulative programming in areas of recovery from violence, substance abuse, all issues related to self-esteem, educational up-grading and job training. Even with about 100 women on its count, P4W has not been able to address these programming needs. The constant reply to requests for improvement has been "there are not enough women to justify the expense."

I suggest that if a prison-oriented community

such as Kingston, Ontario, has not been able to develop adequate resources to serve the women at P4W, it is highly unlikely that a community the size of Truro – which by its own submission is sorely lacking in women-centred programming and almost totally unfamiliar with the issues facing imprisoned women – will be able to do more than provide a warehouse for us. Moreover, I have seen nothing to indicate that the Truro community is pro-active on relevant but sensitive issues such as incest or marital rape. If the alternative location of Dartmouth-Halifax had been selected, a wider range of existing community resources could have been tapped. In addition, it is easier to access such resources with some degree of anonymity in a

larger metropolitan area. Unfortunately, this alternative location is a Liberal riding.

I realize that it is often said that politics is a "dirty business" but when the future lives of women are being sacrificed to pork barrelling interests, it is my opinion that the politicians are far more criminal than the women for whom these jails are being built.

This is the 13th time serious consideration has been given to closing the Prison for Women. Part of the reason that this has not occurred in the past is due to the extreme difficulty in resolving complex problems that result in imprisoning a few hundred women. The recent Task Force on Federally sentenced women had numerous positive recommendations as to how change could be accomplished so as to both limit the systemic neglect that has faced women and to

give them an opportunity to grow and rebuild their lives. I believe the selection of Truro as a location for a new facility addresses the problem of community dislocation, but fails completely in addressing the deeper complexity of the issues surrounding other needs attendant to female federal incarceration. In my opinion, it would be better for women to contend with the limitations and hardships that currently exist at P4W, than to risk a very uncertain future in what appears to be an even more limited provincial setting. However, if political "reality" makes it necessary for us to live with decisions from a pork barrel mentality, there is – as yet – no law that says we have to accept such decisions silently. **M**

TRURO: WOMEN DELIVERED TO A PORK BARREL DECISION

know why I think that. *Programming, I guess.*

I quit drawing dancers at the time of the "Oka Crisis." The last drawing I did was called "White Supremacist Dancers Doing Native Dance." I felt like there was something inside of me saying, "Ok, that's enough."

TRIAGE

When the Review Panel declared me fit to stand trial, I got out of Forensic on bail. But it wasn't free bail. I had to live at Triage under house arrest. I wasn't allowed out except with a staff person. Everyone else who lived there came and went as they pleased.

Triage was a turning point for me. There were interesting people there. There was a woman who worked with a disabled group and she put me in touch with them. I hadn't met any other disabled people before that, except for one guy who hid it. And the other clients there knew what was going on. They knew women get a shit deal: it wasn't like "hide it all and act nice."

What made it unbearable was that Triage wasn't wheelchair accessible. One of my stumps was ulcerating and I couldn't wear any prosthetics so I was in a wheelchair. The dorms were upstairs and everything else was downstairs. I had to crawl down the stairs to get to the washroom. It wasn't like the floors were clean or anything. If I wanted to go out with a staff member, they would carry my wheelchair for me and I would crawl up and down the cement steps on my hands and knees. I developed calluses on my knees. *It was cruel and unusual alright.*

MAKING ART IN OTHER INSTITUTIONS

I was drawing in Triage too. I would find a place where there wasn't anybody and I would start drawing and people would come over and interrupt me and I would be able to do one piece and that would be it. People there were always on the move. Triage was like a boat they would jump into and then they would jump out and swim for a while. It was like a life raft surrounded by people who were treading water. They would come up to the edge of the boat saying, "Help me, I'm drowning." And I was the worst: I had a wheelchair and wheelchairs don't float.

When I had visitors at Triage, it was like

getting one of those little kick boards. Mind you, every time they would leave, someone would steal the kick board. I have no idea where all those kick boards ended up. *They must have taken them out in the wide open ocean and kicked around with them.*

Making art in institutions is not so hard. A drawing class is just another institution, but it's not a life raft, it's a yacht. It's very clean. Forensic was like one of those little blow up kid's pools. They get warm in the sun and there's a little bit of water, but it's not very deep and you can slide on it. Whereas Crease Clinic was like the sewer. You were just drowning in shit and piss. I couldn't draw there.

GETTING OUT

At my trial I pleaded guilty, plain straight up guilty. Some of the staff at Triage wrote letters in support of me getting probation, as did the Disabled Women's Network. It was the prosecution that pleaded not guilty by reason of insanity. They wanted to prove I was crazy and stick me back in Forensic for a good long time. But I won.

Now I'm living at Mavis McMullen in Vancouver. There's nothing institutional here. It's not a halfway house, they don't give me my medication or anything. It's a place to live. It's like an urban kibbutz without the religion. You have your own space but you can also come together; there's support. I haven't done as much artwork in the last year. I don't want to feel that desperation, that struggle. I'd just as soon work in the garden. I don't know. I'm happy here. **M**



By Elaine Avila

JULIET BELMAS

On Prisons

Vancouver filmmaker Juliet Belmas first gained notoriety in the early eighties as a member of the "Squamish Five," an urban guerilla group opposed to nuclear war, exploitation of the environment and violent pornography. The "Squamish Five" practised direct action, using techniques ranging from spraypainting to bombing. Juliet Belmas was nineteen when she first became involved with the group. Six months after joining the "Squamish Five," she participated in the bombing of the Litton plant, an arms manufacturer. Her role was to place the warning phonecall to the plant. She was subsequently sentenced to twenty years in prison and served six years before being paroled in 1989.

Today, Juliet Belmas believes strongly in non-violent action, and has found art and

filmmaking to be an affirming way to advocate for others and raise questions about our culture.

Juliet attended the Emily Carr School of Art and Design while on parole. She graduated in May 1992 with a B.A. in Media, having specialized in filmmaking.

She has just completed an award-winning short film, *A Year Whose Days are Long*, about women in prison and the effect of prison on two Doukhobor girls. She has been awarded a Canada Council grant to develop the script for the feature length version, *Lead Dress*, which will continue to break through popular misconceptions about women in prison, women in media, and the Doukhobor community.

The media has portrayed Juliet as a reformed criminal, not long after portraying

her as Public Enemy Number One. We would like to present a view of her situation beyond the "good girl/bad girl" approach frequently used by mainstream media.

Elaine Avila: What is your experience of women in prison?

Juliet Belmas: Everything is determined by, and revolves around, parochialism. The experience a woman has in a Canadian prison is different from a man's experience because of gender socialization. The attitude is "if you love me, you'll do this," not "if you love yourself, you'll be assertive and you will not let men treat you in degrading ways."

Women are coddled in a sense, and are not encouraged to be assertive. This is especially true for women from poorer socioeconomic backgrounds. In prison it is more apparent than it is in society, but it is exactly the same. Like the "good girl/bad girl" syndrome - there are women who follow the rules.

EA: There is an authority looking over you all the time and deciding whether you are good or bad, when "good" really means "submissive"?

JB: There are lots of comments made in prison that women are easier to rehabilitate than men. Women who go to prison aren't good at asserting themselves. They have been put down by the parochial system at large.

For example, I met a female bank robber when I was in prison. I thought I was going to meet a really high spirited, independent woman acting as a free agent. But this woman's situation was a financial disaster. She thought that the only way to gain power was to commit these crimes so that she would have enough money to get herself out of a bad situation.

Most women who go to prison are there for financial crimes, such as welfare and unemployment insurance fraud. Women in prison for violent crimes usually have endured many years of abuse.

EA: One of the things that surprised me was that there are no set rules in prison. People can be punished for something which was not an offense a week earlier. For example, what constitutes contraband constantly changes.

JB: I was given an extra two weeks on my

sentence for having an apple in my prison cell. They thought I was going to use it for brew (homemade alcohol).

EA: Could you explain how sensory deprivation is used in the prison system?

JB: In the use of lighting: bright lights are on all the time. There is white noise all the time, the ventilation system is extremely loud. There are announcements all the time. The door locks are so loud that during visitation my guests would be jumping all the time. I wouldn't even hear the locks because I had become so desensitized.

EA: What paradigm of rehabilitation does the prison system in Canada use?

JB: I think people want prisoners to be punished. The system of Corrections monitors and punishes "when it is fit to do so accordingly." They have the authority to take any action whatsoever, at the expense of civil liberties, to maintain "the good order of the institution." Society has no right to send women who are not violent offenders to such a heavy duty environ-

ment. I had to learn bad habits in order to survive it. Many women kill themselves because they can't survive it. It's too harsh emotionally. A woman who has had her children ripped from her, her whole life turned upside down; I could full well imagine how she would just want to end it. Eighty percent of women in prison slash themselves, self-mutilate, or want to kill themselves. Slashing is a psychological release from pain. Women in prison are offered no alternative to this desperate expression of pain.

Women adapt because they want to survive. They don't want to fight. In one of my first films, *Pale Anguish Keeps*, I used a line from a woman who had just gotten out of six weeks of segregation in the Prison for Women in Kingston, Ontario. She said, "the only thing that was different in my life from a gerbil's was that I didn't have a running wheel to run away on. I could only climb the bars."

Rehabilitation in prisons is a myth. I am a prison abolitionist. Even the new electronic prisons, which do away with the traditional methods of security such as gates and seem to be more humane, are still extremely punitive and parochial. The new prison in B.C. has 113 cameras for the surveillance of 40 women. The

*"Prisons are cement tombs.
Prisons are built on fear and
absolute control."
This destroys life."*



electronic security is overdone and isolates the women as much as the traditional security systems.

Prisons are cement tombs. Prisons are built on fear and absolute control. This destroys life. Offenders can only rehabilitate through dynamic interaction with their community.

EA: What happens when you get out of prison?

JB: If you are an average prisoner you can't get a job. I scooped ice cream when I first got out of prison. The woman who hired me said, "what could she do to ice cream?" That was her rationale.

Employers don't usually ask what the crime was, or the circumstances surrounding the crime, for instance whether or not it had to do with protecting your child from abuse or defending yourself in a violent situation. They don't ask about that, they just ask if you have a criminal record.

EA: What do you think the most important thing someone outside prison can do to help women inside prison?

JB: Get in there. Prison works on a medical model, where they assume there is something wrong with the woman, but often she is reacting normally to conditions of life outside. She is not insane. She has a right to feel the way she does and she needs to be supported.

The Corrections system sees professionals as the new hope of the nineties. Unfortunately, these academics often hold up a measuring stick of middle class values to women who live a different reality. However, some women's groups are aware of women's lives, their hardship in the real world. Elizabeth Fry Society has a number of programs that are excellent. Women outside can help the women in prison gain political perspective on their crimes, help the women feel more secure and in control of their lives and therefore less degraded. This is rehabilitative. **M**

Elaine Avila is a freelance Theatre Director, Teacher, and Writer. She has worked for Families in Crisis, a domestic violence shelter in upstate New York, and enjoys making the connection between social justice and art, especially while teaching theatre to mentally challenged adults. She is currently co-writing the feature film Lead Dress with Juliet Belmas.

Grandview

My life there was a nightmare,
for 20 years I tried to forget.
The beating, the screams and horrors,
of my life and other girls I met.

My children silently watch me,
as I deal with the hurt and pain.
How in the world can they understand,
watching me relive it again and again?

The question everyone's asking is,
"Why now, after 20 long years?"
The answer is really quite simple,
no-one listened to our voices or tears.

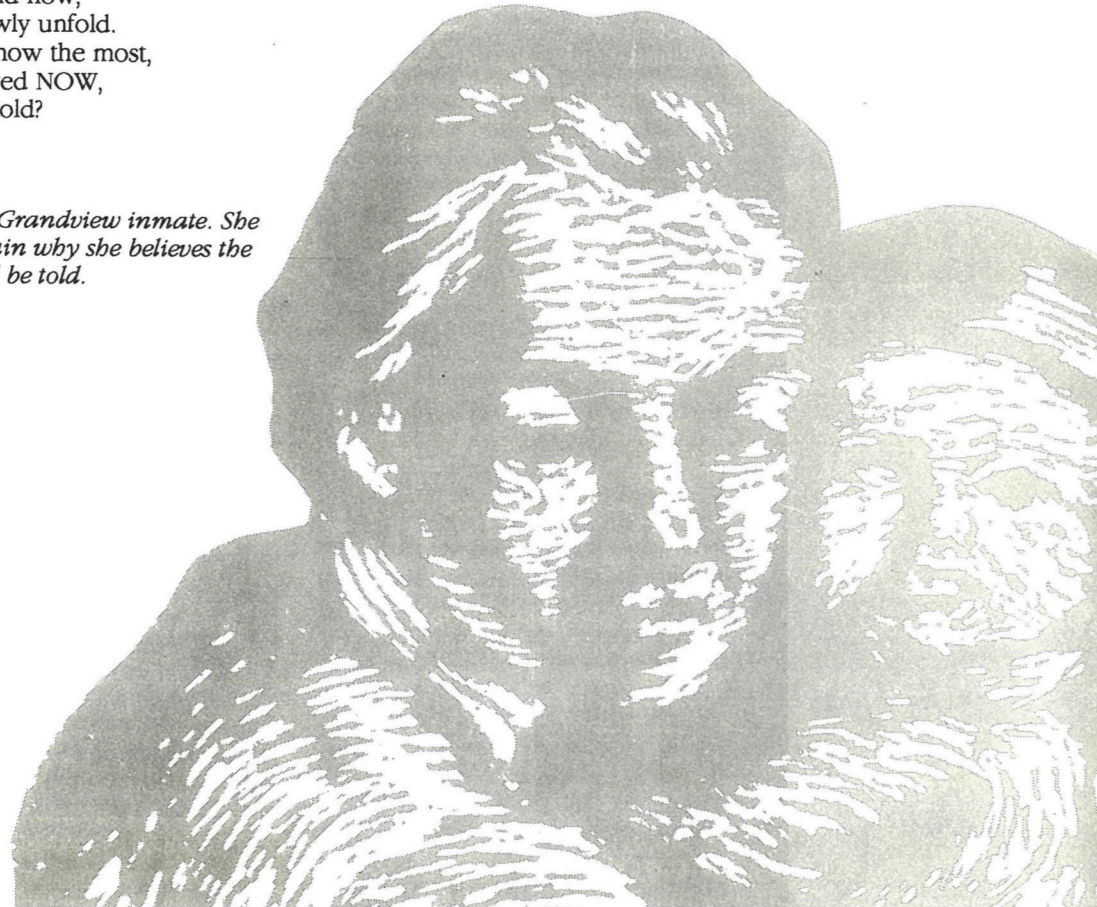
Now I struggle through each day,
sometimes wishing it would just end.
The pain is real and the memories hard,
its hard to believe I will mend.

I've been told to believe in a system,
that failed me time and time again.
The nightmares rock my very world,
sometimes I ask "am I still sane?"

I try to believe it will end now,
as I watch the truth slowly unfold.
What I really need to know the most,
can we finally be believed NOW,
and the TRUTH we all told?

Judi Harris

Judi Harris is a former Grandview inmate. She wrote this poem to explain why she believes the Grandview story should be told.



Mother In Prison

Well, I am a mother in prison.
I know you don't understand.
Society thinks its done the best for me.
They gave me a 10 year sentence.
with no regard for my family.
Now they want me to rehabilitate
before I leave.
They said you're not a person,
so get that out of your head.
You're not a wife and mother.
To the outside world you're dead.
You can't be while you're in here,
what you were before.
Now you're a Federal prisoner.
You're not a mother anymore.

Theresa Ann Glaremin

*An excerpt from the poem "Mother in Prison"
by Theresa Ann Glaremin, Prison for Women,
Kingston.*

I'm Tired of This Shit

The pompous asses
decorated in brass
In navy "altitudes"
Proud to Punch

the fuck out of your mind.

You have the keys
for now
but it's your house anyway

NOT MINE.

So keep the keys
I'll keep my heart

for ALL the Sisters
and ALL the Brothers
and ALL the Children.

I'm not cleaning my house
I'm cleaning my cage.

I'm not an inmate
I'm a prisoner.

I'm not a girl
I'm a woman
and
You don't own me.

*Gayle K. Horii
Matsqui Penitentiary
June 4, 1989*

*Gayle K. Horii, "Women Incar-
cerated - Past, Present, Future",
illustration*

The Senses are Five

The sight of a beautiful flower uplifts my heart
with awe.
I feel privileged.
Heady fragrances...I inhale deeply and feel joy.
The buzzing of a lone bee darting
to a pollen feast...golden liquid will delight.
Tenderly I feel the petal...caresses of
velvet...the touch of
love to my heart.

Meaningful communications, meaningful
feelings.

Evolution uses aesthetics to enlighten aligning
the pleasure
principle with the quality of life - feelings.

Degraded in prison, deprived of aesthetic
feed-back, the instincts of bare survival
heighten...prowling...fearful, the prisoner re-
turns to society desensitized and dehumanized.

Locusts swarm in readiness.

*Gayle K. Horii,
Matsqui Penitentiary
1992*

A COLLABORATIVE SCULPTURAL INSTALLATION

SCULPTURE BY

Persimmon Blackbridge

TEXT BY EX-PRISON INMATES

Geri Ferguson,
Michelle Kanashiro-Christensen,
Lynn MacDonald and Bea Walkus

DOING TIME

The following images
and text are excerpted
from this installation.

Lynn MacDonald – Strip Search

When I was transferred from one jail to another, they gave me a vaginal “exam” – whole hand style, before i left. After being in a van under the surveillance of a guard for the entire trip, they told me to strip for another vaginal exam upon arrival at the next jail. I refused. They told me that the doctor only worked twice a week and if i refused to let him “examine” me, i would be locked in isolation until he returned. I submitted. The full exam went like this – vaginal (speculum and bi-manually) and checks through all your bodyhair; nose; mouth; ears; between toes; bottoms of feet. We had lice shampoo squirted into our hands and had to rub it into our pubic hair and shampoo with it while one or two guards watched. We stood naked and spread-eagled while these guards circled us with clipboards noting our various scars, birthmarks, and tattoos. I flipped out when the nurse stuck her hand in me and stated, “You’ve been pregnant.” I COULDN’T STAND her having that knowledge without me telling her. I felt like they could start peeling me in layers, down to my raw nerves.

I started screaming at her/them, backing into the wall, hugging myself, threatening them. Fortunately, another nurse quickly covered me with a robe and led me to a chair. I got myself together (fast) – these outbursts are usually punished with isolation or worse.

Sculpture by Persimmon Blackbridge.

Photo by Susan Stewart.





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DOING TIME

Michelle Kanashiro-Christensen

I was in the basement doing laundry. My two oldest kids were upstairs, asleep, and I had my 3 month old daughter in a snuggie, she was a really colicky baby. I heard my door come in, they didn't knock, they didn't say nothing, they just kicked the door off. I came running upstairs 'cause I didn't know what was going on and I was worried about my kids, and all of a sudden there's a cop pointing a shotgun at me and my daughter. Then they tried to take my daughter away from me and I freaked. They dragged my older kids out of bed and sent them in the living room and they were crying and screaming and scared. The baby needed to be changed. Then the cops called the welfare and they brought in a social worker. She started talking about taking my kids. At this point I didn't even know what was happening. It was really scary. I'll never forget that feeling. Finally they let my son run to his grandmother's and she came over and got the kids. I told her, I don't know what's happening, all I know is I'm being arrested for something. Will you take the kids till we get it sorted out? I'll be home tonight. I was charged with conspiracy to import heroin, which I never did. I was convicted but I appealed and was found innocent 'cause the guy who really did it testified. All that time of waiting for trials I was in prison 27 months. They acquitted me but they never gave me back the 27 months. And they never gave me back custody of my kids, either. **M**

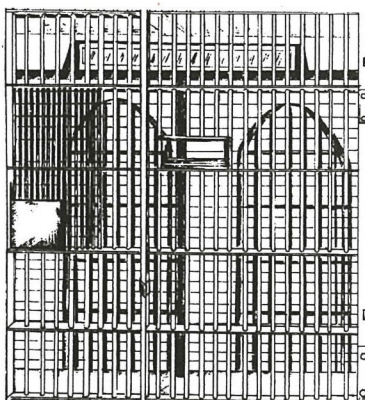
*Sculpture by Persimmon Blackbridge.
Photo by Susan Stewart.*

WOMEN IN CANADIAN PRISONS

By Gayle K. Horii

*"Brothers, I open up my heart
and tears to you
Remorse and bitterness fill my soul, I
hurt for all the
Others that hold a lot of animosity
inside of them."*

(Sandy Sayer, *Tightwire*, Prison for Women,
Summer 1989)



On October 12, 1989, Sandy strung herself from one of the twenty-seven bars of her cage on "B" range, which 'houses' twenty-four other women in Prison for Women (P4W). In a memorandum dated October 20, 1989, Debbie Meness, Executive Director of the Native Women's Association of Canada, informed the members: "On a much sadder note we have recently learned that a young aboriginal woman who was a provincial inmate serving her

sentence at P4W died by hanging herself. Her name is Sandy Sayer. She is from Saskatchewan and is survived by two young sons. She was due to be released in 7 weeks. Her death has shocked her sisters at P4W and her family, and friends in Saskatchewan." The fact that Sandy was serving a provincial sentence (less than two years) would have meant, had she been a man, serving the sentence in her home province. But for women considered a management problem (requesting legal rights) by any provincial authority, they are flown to P4W.

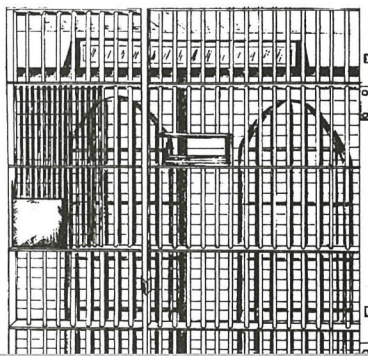
Most of the women sent from Saskatchewan to P4W are young Native women, some still teenagers. Sandy was the third serving a provincial sentence. About 15% of the population at P4W are Native women. They suffer both

the separation from family and community and the deprivation of fresh air exercise. Native women at P4W were consistently the majority of participants in any sporting activities. To be in the fresh air was of supreme importance to their well-being. But the yard at P4W had no night lights, so from October until May, there was no yard time except for 1 hour at noon weekdays. You had to decide whether you would eat lunch or go out in the yard. On weekends, depending on staff, the yard would be open for about 1 hour in the morning and two hours in the afternoon.

On May 1, 1988, after the women were called in from the yard, two young Native women were discovered missing. They told me their story a few days later when I visited them in segregation. 'F' was serving a provincial sentence. She was nineteen years old. 'Johny' was twenty-one.

"When we realized we were the only ones in the yard, it dawned on us that everyone must have been called in. We were thinking that we would see how long it took them to find us, so we climbed a tree and just sat there. Then we saw a pile of boxes near the fire escape close to the wall, so we went over and got onto the fire escape."

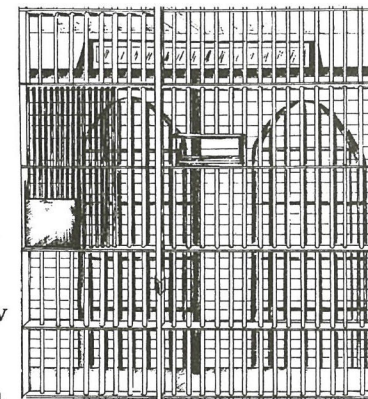
"Things happened real fast after that and it was dark out. Guards were all over with dogs from KP (Kingston Penitentiary for Men) telling us to come down from the fire escape. We said, no problem, if you call off the dogs. When we came down, first Johny was grabbed by the hair and her hands forced behind her and she was cuffed. When I came down, they pushed me around too, and 'C' (one of the male guards) hit me in the head, yanking me by the hair as others



*Illustration by
Gayle K. Horii*

THE REALITY

PART 3



put the cuffs on. Neither one of us was resisting."

"In the hole they ordered me to give up my clothes and I said, "Not until the male guards take off." They just stood there and laughed. I saw that both guards, 'B' and young 'D' had cans of mace and two other male pigs and a

couple more females were coming at me. I held up the pillow to try to protect my face, but they all came in at once, spraying like mad. I woke up on the floor, totally naked except for my underpants. I felt so ashamed. My eyes and face were burning and the next thing I knew they were dragging me into the bathroom and forcing my head under the tap."

"Johny was really screaming but they didn't use mace on her because of her asthma and so she slashed real bad. When they took me back to the Segregation cage, I was hurting all over and thought Johny had killed herself. I waited until the guards left, and strung up with my pyjamas. That's the last I remember for a few days."

When I learned that 'Johny' & 'F' were both in the hole refusing to give up their clothes, I went to the barrier and pleaded with the Deputy Warden, 'JP', to permit me to go in and talk with them. She refused and chose instead to use force. We were all locked down. We could smell the mace seeping from under the door separating us. The entire range of 50 women were screaming in a panic hearing the bashing taking place on the other side of our cell walls. We gathered information through the pipes of certain cells. Mine was one where I could climb onto my sink and be able to see the outline of the woman talking to me on the

other side of the vent in segregation. It was a scene of terror and no one slept much that night.

On May 2, 1988 I asked Warden Mary Cassidy why they continue to accept women serving provincial sentences and challenged her response that, "We have to take them." We both knew that federal-provincial

exchange agreements for prisoners state clearly that both governments have veto power. I received no reply nor could she see why I or any other woman from the Prisoners' Committee should be permitted to intervene in events, even though she agreed that it was possible that the mace may not have been needed if we had been successful.

This wasn't my first attempt to intervene in violence against women prisoners. A year prior, when my first attempts failed, I began to document the reasons why prisoners were in segregation, hoping to use this information to stop the unnecessary use of this barbaric practice. The following is a copy of my reports:

(Information was obtained from documents and interviews with women in segregation. However it may differ from the 'official' reports.)

For the 100 days beginning February 21, 1987 to May 31, 1987 there were 107 admissions to segregation. The reasons for admission were:

- 10 - suspicion of and/or assault
- 17 - suspicion of and/or being under the influence
- 21 - returnees from suspension from parole
- 9 - newly transferred in from the provinces
- 37 - for the good order of the institution (no charges)
- 13 - for slashing

*“The intentional mental torture
inflicted in the segregation
unit at P4W has been
rationalized to me by staff saying,
‘The guards are just bored
and need something to do.’ ”*

When women are in despair, are angry and have no place to vent their frustrations and their emotions, they slash their bodies. Some slash their arms, and then begin on their stomachs, legs, and necks. The immediate response is segregation where the nurse is taken to administer first aid, request for prison hospitalization, or to call an ambulance. Following the grievance of March 10, 1988, the administration agreed that women who slash could go to the prison hospital first, before they were put in the hole, yet, the agreement was never acknowledged by security.

On May 5, 1988, 'C', anticipating that she would be taken to the hole, slashed badly. I was promised by security that she would be taken to hospital first, not directly to segregation, but the following morning, the blood spatters on the concrete steps led nowhere near the hospital, but in the other direction: to the hole.

The intentional mental torture inflicted in the segregation unit at P4W has been rationalized to me by staff saying, "The guards are just bored and need something to do." Things like refusing to give 'C' any more Tampax because she had already had her ration of one, or not giving her cleaning supplies to clean the cage because they were "all out," or not permitting her a shower because she was said to be a security risk and would not go with male guards. They terrified 'C': One sentence of ten days in the hole turned into 120 days because of more charges. All of the time she was in a camera cell under a 24 hour light.

Further on Johny: On November 16, 1990 Johny hung herself. She remains in a coma on life support systems at this date.

'Johny' (Janice) Neudorf visited my cell following the November 24-25, 1988 attempted

suicides of four women in segregation. She told me of her desire to end her own life. This is Johny's story:

Johny was taken, along with her baby brother, from their natural mother when she was a small child, and placed in a foster home where she was severely abused, both physically and sexually. She took her brother with her and ran away at the age of 9. The authorities went after her and broke her arm, capturing her and locking them both in a youth detention centre. There, at the age of six, her little brother hung himself.

Her other arm was broken as grief-stricken, the authorities dragged her to the hole. I wish I could say this was the end of the tragedy for Johny, but right before she hung herself, she wrote out her instructions to her friends, named two women her next of kin, and stated she didn't want her foster family to have her remains. The family who abused her applied to the National Parole Board for parole by exception, and Johny was taken back to Saskatchewan. The family has forbidden any of her prison sisters to see her. In May 1991, I received a message that three of her close friends who had visited her while she was in a coma at Kingston General Hospital, swear that there were tears coming from her eyes, and that during one visit, she smiled. **M**

Gayle K. Horii is a prisoner at Matsqui Institution, B.C. She also served time at the Kingston Prison For Women.

*Gayle K. Horii
Matsqui Penitentiary for Men
P.O. Box 4000
Abbotsford, B.C. V2S 4P3*

FOCUS ON
WARC
UPDATE

It has been an exciting time at WARC and much has happened since our last Update. Many thanks to summer employee Laura Teneyake, and volunteers Cheryl Huber, Catherine Heard, Sarah Dennison and Karmen Steigenga, who generously contributed their time and energy to paint and reorganize the resource centre. They have created a more user friendly and comfortable environment in which to document our histories. We thank Laura, as well, for her valued contribution during her summer employment and we look forward to her continued involvement at WARC.

Our sincere gratitude, also, to Steering Committee members, Linda Abrahams, Irene Packer and Penelope Stewart for their commitment to maintaining WARC's programs and services during staff shortages. WARC is pleased to announce that Carolyn Bell has recently assumed the position of Acting Director of WARC on a contract basis for a period of one year. Carolyn is a highly skilled and experienced administrator who has worked within the public and parallel gallery systems for the past ten years. We welcome Carolyn to WARC and look forward to benefiting from her rich and varied experience in the arts.

This fall, we introduce many new and interesting projects. Beginning September 24, 1992 and continuing the fourth Thursday of each month at 2:00 PM, CKLN "Arts on Air" and WARC will present a program on women's art production in Ontario. Co-produced by Penelope Stewart and Jenny Keith, this program presents a great opportunity to profile artists in our slide registry as well as provide discussion and information on Arts events.

October is Women's History Month. We congratulate Penguin Books of Canada for their valuable contribution to women's art history: "By a Lady, Celebrating Three Centuries of Art By Canadian Women" by Maria

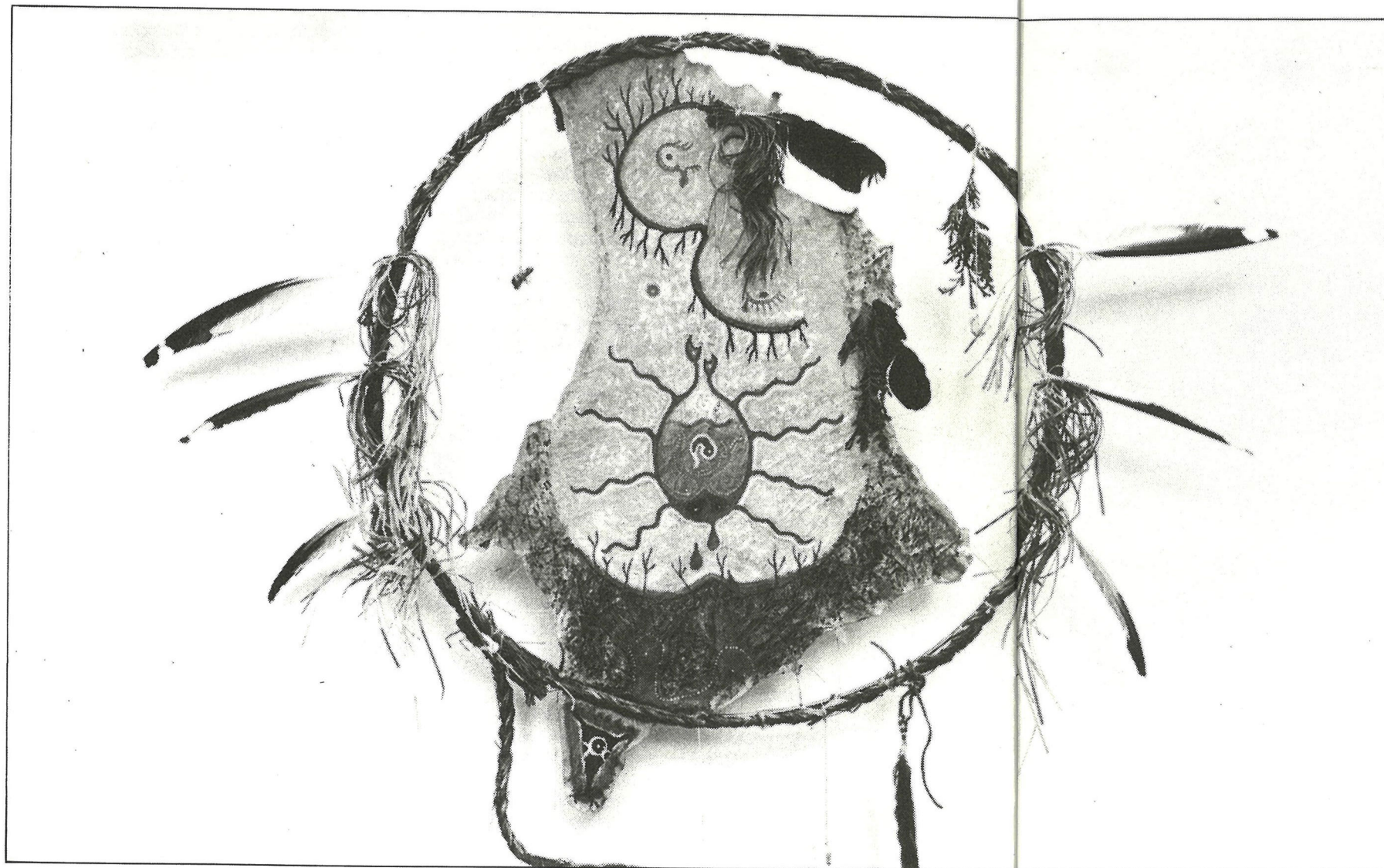
Tippett. WARC joins Penguin Books in celebrating the launch of this publication by presenting the exhibition "By a Lady." The exhibition will feature ten contemporary Canadian women artists, including Alison Bindner-Ouelette, Millie Chen, Jeannie Thibb, Yvonne Singer and Michelle Gay. This project was curated from WARC's slide registry by Penelope Stewart.

Opening celebrations will include a keynote address by prominent Canadian artist, Doris McCarthy. Author, Maria Tippett, will also be in attendance, along with many of the artists featured in the publication. Please join us for this exciting opening, at 80 Spadina Road, 5th floor, October 14, from 7 pm to 9 pm. The exhibition will run from October 14 until November 7.

Introducing the "Walls of WARC"! Each month, the work of an artist from WARC's slide registry will be exhibited in our resource centre and featured in the new "Walls of WARC" section of Matriart. In September we were pleased to exhibit "Mother Burn Mother Bleed Mother Blossom..." an installation by Anita Mitra. Anita is an installation and performance artist living in Dungannon, Ontario. In October we present the work of Eshrat Erfanian, an Iranian emigre currently living in Toronto. Eshrat incorporates elements of traditional Persian painting and fabric as a means of deconstructing accepted notions of feminine beauty. November will feature sculptures by Gayle K. Horii, an artist presently imprisoned in Matsqui Penitentiary, Abbotsford, B.C. Gayle's sculpture documents her spiritual healing and politicization as a prisoner and artist activist.

We look forward to this dynamic fall schedule at WARC and invite everyone to join us in celebrating Canadian women's cultural production.

Sandy Smirle



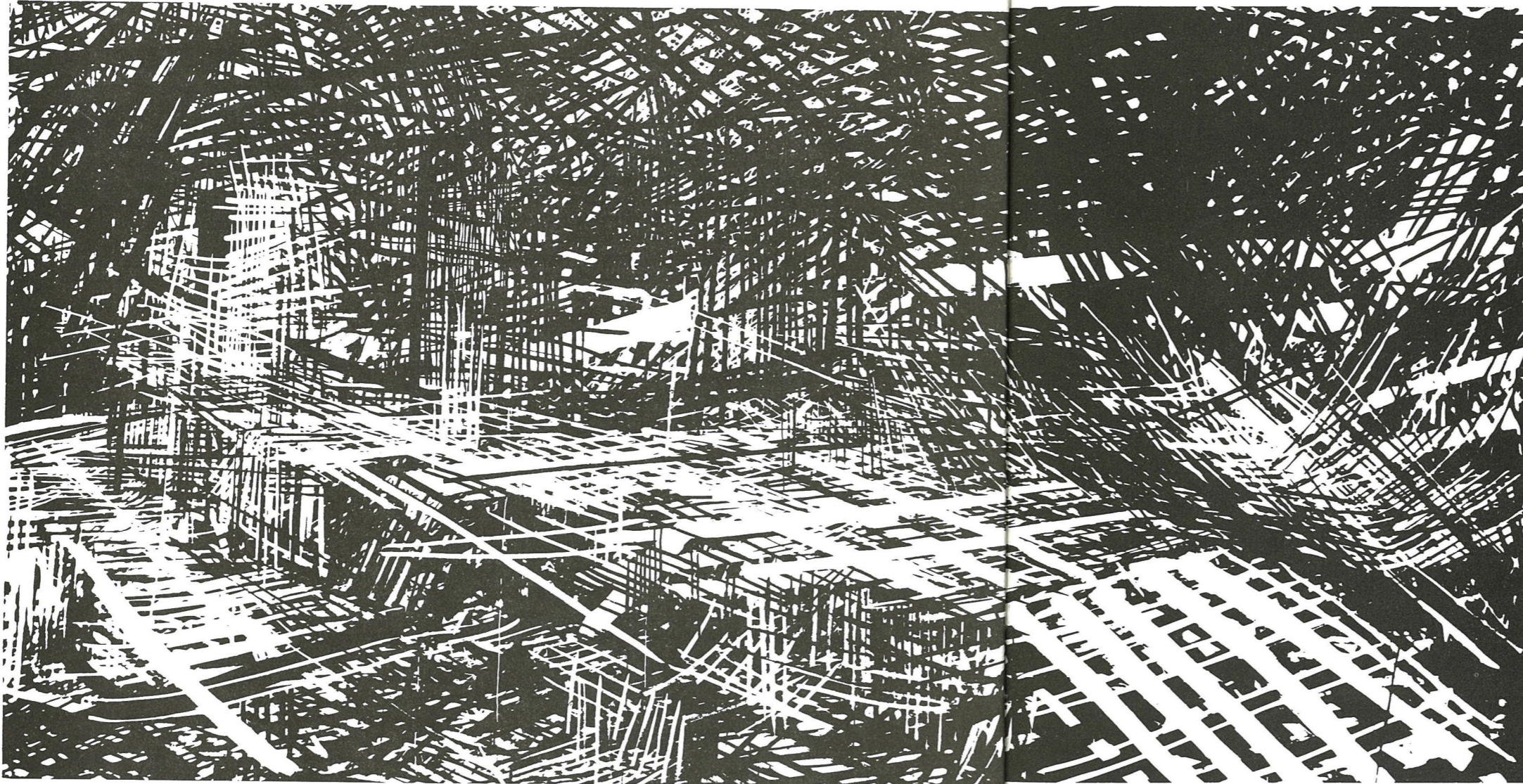
Anita Mitra, detail, "Mother Burn Mother Bleed Mother Blossom", mixed media installation, 1992.
Photo by Penelope Stewart.

Anita Mitra

*Mother Burn Mother Bleed Mother Blossom
...blessed are the Ones that own their own pain,
for they shall be released*

I understand creativity as originating from divine life energies. This work expresses my spiritual practice which includes meditation and ritual, and documents this psycho-spiritual journey. I create objects and Sacred environmental spaces and do performances. These express an inner process or journey into self discovery and transformation. My work is inspired by various socio-political issues, as well as by my awareness of archetypal human experience, such as birth, life's suffering, death and rebirth.

I am interested in the process of art making and de-emphasize the final product. For instance, I use objects over and over again, arranging them in different configurations, and apply new found symbols onto their surfaces. Many of my clay forms will spend periods of time outdoors to undergo their own process. In my performance installations, I use natural elements such as fire, water, air and earth, which naturally continue their own transformations: The candle continues to burn, the flowers dry, the water evaporates into the air. **M**

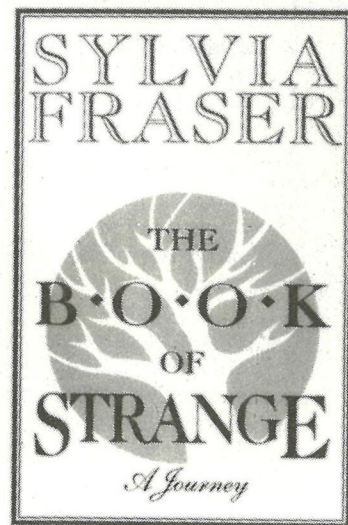


Thomasos, *Untitled, mixed media, 17' x 25'*

Thomasos

Thomasos is a Trinidadian-Canadian who has completed her B.A. at the University of Toronto and her M.F.A. at Yale University. She is currently a professor at the Tyler School of Art at Temple University in Philadelphia.

My work has always addressed issues of race. This newest body of work represents the spaces or fictive places where events have happened. These sites embody feelings of confinement, where you are pushed and pulled through the maze or tangle. I think of these spaces as metaphors for 'jails' and those 'jails' in turn, I see as metaphors for a type of contemporary slave ship. The ships compartmentalize and divide areas where spirits are confined or trapped in claustrophobic spaces. They function as abstracted metaphors for my experience as a black woman attempting to live in a racist society. **M**



A Conversation with Sylvia Fraser

by Margot Meijer

Sylvia Fraser is probably best known for her powerful autobiographical novel *My Father's House: A Memoir of Incest and Healing*. *My Father's House* was published in 1987 to critical and popular acclaim, and is hailed by incest survivors and therapists as an honest and readable document of sexual abuse.

The Book of Strange – A Journey is Sylvia Fraser's latest book. It begins where *My Father's House* ends, with an affirmation of the mystery and beauty of life. It is a personal and historical exploration of the paranormal, and includes chapters on telepathy, psychic power, holistic healing, coincidence, ghosts, possession and reincarnation. It is an interesting, spooky read.

I met with Sylvia in late July. She spoke candidly about her life and welcomed my questions about *The Book of Strange* and the craft of writing. Some of our conversation is recorded below.

Margot Meijer: Is writing a liberating experience?

Sylvia Fraser: I've written five novels, all of which were full of sexual violence. A couple of those novels I wrote in chains, I was drawn to themes that were important to me but I was too blocked to get to them, so they were hell to write. They were not satisfying experiences because I was banging my fists against the bars of a cage and doing so at great length, taking a couple of years at it. It was very frustrating.

Well, when my memories of my father's sexual abuse came back, in 1983, I realized that all of my major choices had been compulsively controlled by what I didn't know. It seems rather bizarre to say this, but when I learned that my father had sexually abused me for almost 17 years, I was exhilarated, because suddenly a lot of things made sense. I felt liberated because in a sense I had lived in a prison of guilt and rage, which seemed to have no source. In some ways I date my life in freedom from the time that my memories returned.

Now I find it easy to write because I no longer have that inner block. Now I consider writing a privilege and part of a very liberating journey.

MM: You state in *The Book of Strange* that the return of the memory of your father's sexual abuse was frequently marked by paranormal events, and that these events continued even after your past had been resurrected.

SF: Yes, my experiences of the paranormal – telepathy, coincidence, premonitions and dreams – which had once helped me to see into my dark past, were now taking me forward into an extremely positive bright future. And I had had enough philosophy to understand that these experiences were not irrational if they were put into a broader, non-materialistic framework of reference. I became more and more excited because no matter what I read, whether it was particle physics, church history, biology, medicine, whatever

it was, I found that people who had been trashed and disregarded as mystics or quacks really seemed to have a much larger piece of the truth than the materialist we revered. In every discipline there is a major pile-up of truths which favour the Platonic, psychic point of view and I became very excited about that and I'm still excited about that because I think that it's exceedingly liberating.

MM: So you began to look at the world in a different, more holistic way?

SF: Yes. I think that the inner and outer worlds echo each other, and that is not an eccentric view. What we know about the outer world is only that which we project and understand, so the more we understand inwardly the more information we can get externally. This is one of the most consistent truths in all cultures, that the microcosm is a reflection of the macrocosm. This was a truth that was intuited hundreds of years ago by Western philosophers and thousands of years ago by Eastern mystics. In fact, there is very little today in modern physics that wasn't first intuited by these sages.

I think the world is infinitely more wondrous and fascinating and powerful and relevant than we've ever been allowed to believe in our society. We thought that driving fast cars was about as good as it got, but driving a fast psychic engine, internally flying, is much more interesting.

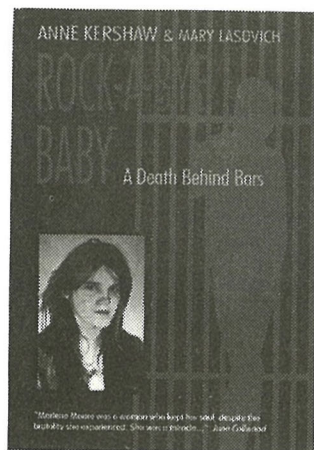
Our society has been on a grand orgy of extroversion, of external searches for external truths, for so long, and the crying need is to go internally.

MM: Are you hopeful for the future?

SF: Yes. We have come to the end of the line. Our Western standards for ourselves and the planet no longer work. In a way the planet is in the kind of crisis that I came to personally when I discovered I'd been sexually abused. Now what do you do about it? Do you just burn yourself up in a fury, and lament for the past, or do you turn the crisis into opportunity? We're at a stage of crisis now because personally, culturally and ecologically things no longer work the way they used to. Either we blow ourselves up in stupidity, or we look inwards and find new strengths and truths. I think that as a society we are on the verge of a really powerful spiritual revolution, and it won't be allied to any of the old religious structures, but will be much more internal, more personal, tied to a recognition that life has meaning. **M**

Margot Meijer is a writer/activist and a contributing editor on the Matriart Collective.

FOCUS ON
WARC
BOOK REVIEW



**Rock-a-Bye Baby:
A Death Behind Bars**

Anne Kershaw and Mary Lasovich
McClelland and Stewart,
Toronto, 1991 (240 pgs)

Rock-a-Bye Baby: *A Death Behind Bars* is the story of Marlene Moore: a woman psychologically and physically incarcerated by a society that, in June Callwood's words, "creates victims and then punishes them for bleeding." This is a book that I am simultaneously unable to put down, compelled by the skilled crafting of the narrative, and, often horrified and sickened by the details, forced to leave, to seek respite beyond its pages. But this does little to calm my rage. The pain of Marlene's life – of all women's lives – is etched into the backs of my eyelids long after I have stopped reading. The abuse – 82% of the women incarcerated at the Prison for Women (P4W) report having been physically and/or sexually abused in their lives – doesn't go away. The pain – of women's frequent and continuous self-mutilation in the prisons, of Marlene's suicide at age 31, of the suicide of 5 more women at P4W since 1988 – doesn't go away. And the memories do not, indeed cannot, go away: far from simply a "personal" story, Marlene's life / death speaks of the

trauma associated with socially orchestrated powerlessness. Although the book includes references to friends, lovers and specific people inside the legal, prison and mental health institutions who sought justice and caring for her, the trauma of Marlene's life and her eventual suicide stand as a reminder of how gendered oppression and system(at)ic discrimination are lived.

Originally published in November 1989 as a forty-six page analysis by reporters Anne Kershaw and Mary Lasovich for *The Whig-Standard* daily newspaper in Kingston, the substantially lengthier book locates Marlene's story within the broader context of the condition of women's incarceration in this country, specifically the federal institution Prison for Women, and provides a more detailed discussion of the inquest into her death. Opening with a four page account of the last hours of Marlene's life, the authors then turn back to compile, and gaze through, the history of its making. Organized chronologically, the book takes its chapter headings from a sentence-completion test that Marlene wrote during a psychological assessment in 1985. In this way, and consistently throughout the narrative, Marlene's "voice" has a presence that is both encouraging – we see traces of a spirited and caring woman – and deeply troubling, as page after page the reader comes face to face with the bars, both literal and figurative, that limited, prevented and denied her right to a safe existence in this world.

In the opening three chapters, Kershaw and Lasovich map the contours of an existence that led the 19 year old Marlene to be sent to P4W. The tenth child in a family of thirteen, Marlene grew up in a working class household. They lived in a struggling rural community in Ontario where "poverty was a common bond," confrontations between police and youth were frequent, and, most problematically for Marlene and other girls who grew up in the 1960's, when "the family unit was considered inviolate – a private domain beyond the purview of the state." As an effect of this well entrenched private / public split, the "signals" that Marlene was experiencing abuse at home were (mis)interpreted as indicators of her "belligerence" that needed to be brought under control. As the authors state, "the response of the school attendance counsellor and other education officials set a pattern that would be repeated throughout her life: authority figures

around her seemed more concerned about controlling her disruptive, rebellious behaviour than exploring the reasons for her anger."

Although, as an adult, Marlene was largely silent about her childhood years, she did gradually reveal being severely and frequently beaten by her father and sexually abused by at least one of her four older brothers. The shame and the feelings of betrayal that she carried, when there was no one to help her understand that the abuse was not "her fault," exploded in Marlene's anger at those in authority and imploded in a hatred and destructiveness against her self. Raped by a stranger at knife point at age 17, she faced the stark realization that "home" was not the only place where she would experience violence from men. Seeing the man who had raped her convicted and then, a month later, acquitted on "the fact" that her judgement could not be trusted because she had used "speed" earlier that night, compounded her sense of betrayal and her feelings of isolation.

Following numerous encounters with local police and school authorities, in late 1970 at age 13, she was charged under the old Juvenile Delinquents Act as "a child in need of care and protection." The very care and protection she needed, however, were not to be found in the Grandview School for Girls, nor at the other institutions that would come to represent "home" for her over the years to follow. A "training" school, the description of Grandview resounds with the echoes of surveillance, rigid routinization and punishment that become all too familiar as the narrative of Marlene's life unrolls. Grandview was where Marlene first experienced solitary confinement and adopted the self-mutilation practice of "carving" or "slashing," which would become "her own ritual response to frustration and powerlessness." It is estimated that Marlene slashed "as many as a thousand times" and disfigured every reachable part of her body.

In one of the most compelling chapters in the book, Kershaw and Lasovich cite the research of Ottawa therapist Jan Heney, who has worked successfully with women who self-mutilate. She has found that the common bond among women who self-injure is a history of incest: a history that is triggered in situations of involuntary confinement that accentuate or repeat feelings of powerlessness. In Marlene's words: "When I'm hurt or I feel

someone is going to hurt me ... I have some control over the pain and control of what I do, rather than letting someone else have control over me." Thus, contrary to the long-standing belief that self-mutilation is a suicidal gesture, Heney documents that women "slash" to survive: "a controlled and well-intentioned response." Importantly, Heney also points out that official statistics misrepresent the scope of slashing: knowledge of the practice of self-mutilation is limited to "public" situations, like prisons and psychiatric hospitals, where women are monitored. Heney's research is blunt: longstanding prison practices and policies escalate the need to self-mutilate.

One afternoon Marlene printed on the walls of a stripped seclusion cell: "THERE IS NO PLACE FOR ME IN THIS WORLD." "In and out of trouble" after being released from Grandview, at age eighteen she was incarcerated at the Vanier Centre for Women and a year later, after taking one of the guards hostage with a friend, was sent to P4W. She would end up there three times before her death. As the judge noted in the 1984 hearing to decide whether or not she could be classified a "dangerous offender" – itself a vivid instance of gender discrimination – Marlene had been almost totally excluded from "the outside world." In eight years, it is estimated that she was out of custody for approximately four months. Anne Kershaw and Mary Lasovich make it clear that we need a thorough overhaul of the incarceration system in this country, and, more broadly, of all the institutions, practices, and ways of thinking that permit, condone and perpetuate the continued abuses of women and girls. As readers, one of the most compelling questions we are left with is: when? **M**

Sharon Rosenberg

Sharon Rosenberg is doing doctoral work on feminist cultural responses to the "Montreal Massacre" and is an editor on the Matriart Collective.



Forbidden Love

By Aerlyn Weissman and Lynne Fernie
Canada, 1992, 85 minutes

They were named "odd girls and twilight lovers." On luridly enticing paperback covers they were called "inverts" or "members of the third sex." On the thin pages within they were characterized as man-haters, predators and exploiters of the innocent. This was the overt message conveyed by the lesbian pulp novel which had its heyday during the nineteen fifties and early sixties. That was the era before Stonewall, before gay liberation, before the second wave of feminism. It was a time when the Cold War, McCarthyism and the feminine mystique conspired to push women out of the workforce and both sexes into dreary social and political conformity.

For male readers and writers the rise of the genre probably signified a prurient fascination with the other. But many of these books were written and read by women, most of them likely "odd girls" and potential "twilight lovers" themselves. On these women the effects of those novels was unintentionally subversive; those books told them that although they might now languish in isolation in their small towns or suburban backyards, they were not alone. Thousands of women around the nation felt just as they did, there were districts such

as Greenwich Village where such soulmates gathered; clubs and bars where they might find one another. By learning to read between the lines and by choosing to ignore those doleful endings, lesbians of the 50's and 60's garnered the affirmation they needed, even if it was on enemy terms.

Forbidden Love, a new National Film Board documentary premiered at the 1992 Festival of Festivals, looks at lesbian life during that golden age of lesbian pulp fiction. It features interviews with nine women aged 40 to 70. The women are of black, white and native origin. They have all survived with their spirits, their intellect and their dignity intact. Their stories tell of the creativity, flexibility, and subterfuge needed to survive at a time when civil rights for gays and lesbians were non-existent, when gay sex was still illegal and punishable by a jail term, when Masquerade Laws were still in effect (women could be charged if they were not wearing at least three pieces of "female" clothing), when same sex parties were illegal and gays and lesbians frequently rode the Cherry Beach Express (ie. were taken by cops to Toronto's isolated Cherry Beach and beaten up).

Having no other model of social-sexual relations than heterosexuality, they developed a butch/femme culture to whose strict codes of behaviour they adhered. Those who fit neither mould had a hard go of it. One woman describes her role in an early relationship as that

of a dutiful wife who didn't open her mouth because "if you did you probably got a fist in it. You were obedient and didn't talk to other butches - it wasn't allowed." Today she wryly remarks "It was disgusting. I didn't know any better."

Directors Aerlyn Weissman and Lynne Fernie intersperse these interviews with dramatized segments from a pulp novel. In less skilful hands it might have seemed an intrusion but these interludes give us glimpses of how powerful those formulaic stories must have seemed to their lesbian readers. Real life wasn't as idyllic as suggested in the fictional portrayal. Native women and other women of colour were often made to feel unwelcome. Macho butches frequently fought one another. Police would extort money and sexual favours in return for not raiding. Women also speak of the role of religion in enforcing their oppression, of the many forms of gay-bashing, and of the many sex trade workers who were lesbian.

For some of these women lesbian life had the allure of the forbidden. For them it was an exciting rebellious existence. Others would agree with the handsome grey-haired rancher who says, "Not being able to move freely in society is not exciting."

Forbidden Love is a pioneering work. Works like this one are part of the reclaiming of the past that all marginalized groups must engage in if their roles in the shaping of history are not to be forgotten and their ability to shape their future is to be retained.

Open Letter: Grasp the Bird's Tail

by Brenda Joy Lem
Canada, 1992, 15 minutes

"Sometimes I feel like a walking target," says the narrator of *Open Letter: Grasp the Bird's Tail*, a short film by Brenda Joy Lem that also premiered at the 1992 Festival of Festivals. In it a woman, in a long epistle to her boyfriend in Amsterdam, is trying to come to grips with the racial and sexual violence she sees all around her.

The media, her academic life and her developing political consciousness all conspire to make her hyper-aware of danger. Rather than become a quivering housebound victim unable to get on with her life she retreats into a shell of illusion believing that it can't/won't touch her. "I am selfish," she says at one point, "and

will not let it enter my world."

That strategy collapses when a flasher mocks and threatens her on a bus. She deals with this intrusion by imagining administering a politically pointed multiple choice quiz to him. She tries to temper her awareness by focusing on incidents far from home such as the killings of black men in Howard Beach and Bensonhurst in New York City. But visions of the Montreal Massacre intrude. By the time she considers the death of American auto-worker Vincent Chin she can only wonder "how much hatred it takes to beat someone's brains out" and soon realizes she saw glimpses of this same male anger in the boyfriend she has only briefly known.

Images of the letter writer and her now distant boyfriend are intercut with those of acrobatic and magic acts. Both of these are ripe with metaphors. They represent the delicacy and the danger, the formality and the trickiness of heterosexual relations.

The extraordinary movements of the female contortionist symbolize the emotional and physical flexibility women need when trying to conform to male desires. In the magic show the woman's safety is dependent on the skill and care of the sword-wielding male. Even though we know it has all been carefully staged it is still chilling to watch the weapons plunge ever so close to the confined woman's breast.

In her previous film, *The Compact*, Lem dealt with a young oriental woman whose white boyfriend refused to let her meet his family. He felt that by compartmentalizing his life he could avoid dealing with his own or his family's racism.

Open Letter suggests that for women there is no sectioning off one part of life from another. In *The Compact* the narrator seeks solace in her roots, her mother, her garden. In *Open Letter* comforts are harder to find: no matter where a woman retreats to trouble is likely to find her.

Lem is one of several prominent Canadian women of Chinese origin involved in experimental filmmaking (others include Helen Lee and Ann Marie Flemming) who deal with issues of racial and sexual violence in their work. In *Open Letter* Lem says to all that despite the dangers we all face we must nonetheless grasp the bird's tail and reach for the sky. **M**

By Randi Spires

Grandview – The Lost Years

By Randi Spires

Tina Petrova
Canada, 1992, 8 minutes

Grandview – *The Lost Years*, an eight minute film by director Tina Petrova, is a dramatization depicting one woman's struggle to cope with newly emerging recollections of the abuse she suffered during her adolescent incarceration at Grandview Reform School (a juvenile detention centre for girls based in Southern Ontario) during the 60's & 70's.

By going back to the site of the abuse the survivor hopes to gain the insight necessary for recovery. As this woman wanders through the now empty halls we hear of a past full of emotional terror and physical pain, beatings that resulted in broken bones and sexual assaults that left her with a fear of men and a life devoid of intimacy. She had to fear not only her captors but also many of her fellow inmates, as girls who were incarcerated for "sexual promiscuity" (not a *crime* for males) or for running away were placed among tougher, more aggressive young women.

Intercut with this narration are images of the woman's younger self repeatedly taking one of the only actions she could under the circumstances – running away.

Although the focus of the film is on the personal, some attempt, through a presentation of statistics, is made to give these events a social, if not exactly, a political context. However, it is frustrating that the film ends without discussing where the "recovery of memory" leads the survivor.

Petrova would like to do a longer version of the film and is currently raising money with that in mind. It is essential that films be made about what has happened and is probably continuing to happen in places like Grandview. Perhaps if she goes ahead with that project, she could look more analytically at how and why therapy works and how it fits into the political process in general. **M**

ART EXHIBITION '92

P R I S O N F O R W O M E N

The Art Exhibition '92 at the Prison for Women, September 4, 1992, marked the graduation of students who had participated in a two month "Drawing, Painting and Printing" course taught by artist/teacher Gunhild Hotte. Gunhild recently completed a Masters of Fine Art at the University of Windsor. She came to P4W for a special summer project to teach women art. Self-expression, the focus of the program, was apparent in the many personal and diverse works that lined the school walls.

To celebrate the occasion Warden Mary Cassidy allowed for the interruption of the institution's regular routine, ensuring the artists a chance to discuss their work with visitors and dignitaries.

Birte H. Boock



Kim N. Singh, Self Portrait, shows her hiding in the bushes waiting like a tiger to scare people away.



Pearl Vajda, Self Portrait, acrylic and collage, depicts the light and dark sides of prison life.

PARTICIPATING ARTISTS

Theresa Ann Glaremin
Pauline Debassige
Mireille Jean-Louis
Kimlay N. Singh
Ayla Tuncer
Joyanne Beeson
Pearl Vajda
Sharon Morrill
Doris Ruth Zapata
Brenda Groen

Listings

Call for Submissions

Creative Spirit Art Centre (CSAC) is a new, non-profit art centre, funded by the Ontario Office of Disability Issues. We have a public gallery, a sales gallery, workshop studios and an information and resource centre.

CSAC is calling for submissions from visual artists and poets who are physically, mentally or emotionally disabled. Women who are interested are requested to send their biography or resume, with slides (if available) or poetry to: The Creative Director, Creative Spirit Art Centre, 1071 Bathurst Street, Toronto, Ontario, M5R 3G8. For more information call 416-588-8801.

Call For Submissions for 2 anthologies on lesbian and bisexual women's experiences of and resistance to heterosexism and homophobia/lesbophobia.

Fiction and Poetry Anthology - looking for stories and poems written with humour, anger, outrage, wit and defiance. We welcome material about how we challenge/resist/experience heterosexism, acts of lesbo/homophobia and our own internalization of these oppressions: in our communities, our families, our relationships...in our lovemaking.

Non-Fiction Anthology - We are looking for essays, articles, interviews and memoirs which theorize heterosexism and homophobia/lesbophobia from a lesbian point of view. Materials should include an integrated race, class and cultural analysis. We are interested in addressing homophobia and heterosexism within the feminist movement.

Editors: We are an editorial collective of lesbian and bisexual feminists. We are one Japanese Canadian woman, two Caribbean women of African descent and one Euro-Canadian woman of Irish and Jewish descent.

Deadline for Submissions is January 1, 1993. Send double-spaced typed material to RESIST, Women's Press, #233-517 College Street, Toronto, Ontario, M6G 4A2. Include a self-addressed stamped envelope with your submission if you want your material returned.

Calls for Submissions for La chambre blanche - centre de production et de diffusion en art actuel.

Celebrating its fifteenth anniversary in 1993, La chambre blanche has chosen the Artist's Residency as the means to investigate the production and reflection around the Artist's identity, its expression, its experimentation. The Residency will be a ten day work period at the gallery using regional resources within the context of exchange with Quebec City's artists and the public. Deadline is October 15, 1992. Please send C.V., 10-20 slides of recent work, 1 page artist statement, 1 page project proposal, press releases, SASE. For more information contact: Sylvie Fortin 418-529-2715, Fax 418-529-0048. 185 Christophe-Colomb est, C.P. 3039, succ. St-Roch, Quebec, G1K 6X9.

Calls for Proposals for IN MY OWN VOICE

Video project for ED, Video Media Arts Centre. ED Video will commission three new video works from regional producers, focusing on the expression, in the first person, of their personal experience of history, heritage and/or culture in Ontario. Each successful artist will receive a year's membership at ED Video, a production budget of \$2,000 and \$300 value of equipment rental donated by ED Video. Send written proposal including a 1 page description of the proposal and a C.V. Support material on video and proposed budgets are welcomed but not required. Deadline is November 2, 1992. ED Video Media Arts Centre, 16A Wyndham St. N., 2nd floor, P.O. Box 1629, Guelph, Ontario, N1H 6R7, 519-836-9811.

Call for Proposals for IMAGES 93.

The IMAGES 93 Festival is committed to the equal exhibition of video and film. We screen primarily Canadian works, with a 20-30% international component. All forms of video and film are considered, including: experimental, documentary, animation, fiction and hybrids thereof. The Festival seeks work which operates outside the confines of dominant media programming and is committed to the exhibition of expressions which reflect a broad range of races, regions and communities. Deadline is December 15, 1992 and submissions must be accompanied by an entry form. Films and videos produced before January 1, 1991 will not be accepted. One submission per artist. For more information contact Karen Tisch, Programming Coordinator, 416-971-8405.

Concordia Pro-Choice Collective is looking for allophone, francophone, anglophone women to share their stories about experiences with abortion for a pro-choice video. Also seeking technical financial support. For information call 514-270-8067.

We want your videos - Trinity Square Video is now accepting submissions for its 11th Annual Video Tape Collection purchase. The call is open to Toronto-based producers only. Deadline is October 20, 1992. 172 John St., 4th floor, Toronto, Ontario, M5T 1X5, 416-593-1332.

La Centrale (Galerie Powerhouse) invites women artists and curators of all disciplines to submit their dossiers, exhibition ideas or multidisciplinary projects for 1993-94. Please include 20 slides, numbered and identified, slide description list, C.V., an artist's statement and SASE. Send proposals to Un Centre Pour Les Femmes-Artistes, 279, rue Sherbrooke O., Suite 311-D, Montreal, Quebec, H2X 1Y2, 514-844-3489.

Rust Phoenix: Post-Industrial Revolutions - a research project for a festival of art concerning communities dealing with post-industrial decline. The coordinators are looking for work concerning issues for post-industrial communities. Post-industrial decline not only effects the economy, but also family life, gender roles, race identities, a sense of history and culture. Artists should send visual material and C.V. to Beryl Graham, 16 Prospect Court, Prospect Place, Newcastle on Tyne, NE4 6NS, England, (091) 273 4150 (telephone and fax)

Employment

Curatorial Internship for 1993-1994 - The Art Gallery, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's Nfld. Closing date for applications October 14, 1992. For more information contact Patricia Grattan, Director, Art Gallery, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, Nfld, A1C 5S7, 709-737-8209, Fax 709-737-2007.

Northern Visions Independent Film and Video Association is seeking applications for Executive Director. Apply in writing to Hiring Committee, Images Festival, 401 Richmond St. W., Suite 228, Toronto, Ontario, M5V 1X3 by September 30, 1992. Call 416-971-8405.

Information

Toronto Women's Video Network is an informal 'network' open to women interested in discussing and sharing their experiences in video production. For more information contact Fiona or Evelyn at Trinity Square Video 416-593-1332.

Conferences

Beyond The Boundaries - 1993 Women's Caucus for Art - National Conference February 2-4, Seattle, Washington.

Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAOW) - 16th Annual Conference - Making the Links/Insister sur les liens: Anti-racism and Feminism/Anti-racisme et feminisme, November 13-15, 1992, Holiday Inn, Downtown, Toronto.

Courses

Women in Production - Perfecting Our Skills - October 17, 18 - Trinity Square Video, 172 John Street, 4th floor, Toronto, M5T 1X5, call 416-593-1332 for registration information.

Shows

Ellen Flanders - Looking Beyond Identity: Coalition Initiatives from the Left - photographs at the Tangle Gallery, 128 Harbord Street, Toronto, September 20-Oct 16.

Carol Laing - Regulating Experience: the smothering rooms, November 21- December 19, Forest City Gallery, 795 Dundas St. E., London, Ontario.

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Matriart Premiere Edition Vol. 1, No.1

Women writers and artists on a variety of subjects including tradition as a celebration of cultural identity; Satanic Verses: censorship within a cultural context, and physical and psychic distance: relations between the "Third World" and the West.

Lesbian Artists Vol. 1, No. 2

Matriart's second edition addresses lesbian visibility and (self)representation. Among the topics discussed are: lesbian sexuality and censorship; lesbians, the black community and AIDS; and sexuality and spirituality.

Empowerment and Marginalization Vol.1, No. 3

Number three examines the creation of marginalization and breaking the barriers of race and religion. Matriart's discussion includes contemporary suppression of Jewish Art history, cultural appropriation of First Nations, and Ritual Abuse.

Art, Motherhood and Reproductive Technologies Vol. 1, No. 4

The medicalization of childbirth; fragmentation of the body; women's birthing experience; the artist/mother as subject and teacher; and the future of reproductive technology are some of the subjects addressed by artists and writers.

Women Artists of the First Nations Vol. 2, No. 1

Poetry and short stories to plays and political exposes by Native women artists. Featuring pieces by Shirley Bear, Joane Cardinal-Schubert and Jane Ash Poitras.

Women Against Violence Vol.2, No.2

This issue focuses upon a continuum of violence that stretches from the authority of family to the force of the military. Our contributors share their personal examinations of crimes committed against themselves and others.

Spirituality Vol.2, No. 3

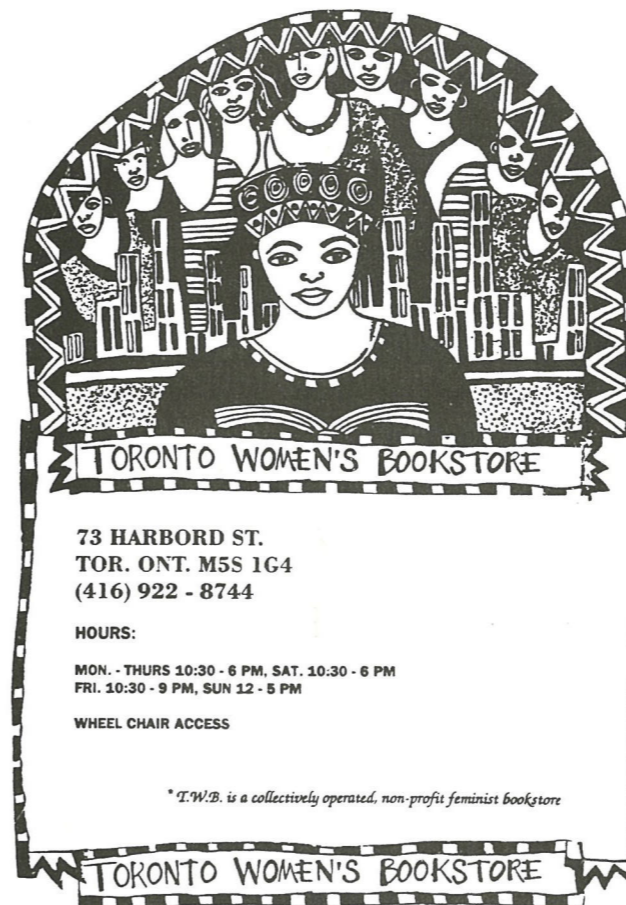
Women writers and artists explore spirituality in relation to their work, lives, and communities. This issue contains a teacher of Buddhism on *action; connection* from an Ojibwa perspective; and a variety of topics such as body image, dissolving the mind/body split, Goddess imagery and myth, and envisioning the spiritual as space.

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A CANADIAN FEMINIST ART JOURNAL

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

BODY/SELF IMAGE
 Deadline: January 1, 1993

UPCOMING THEMES

Doctoring the Mind: Women in Therapy
 Submission deadline: April 1, 1993
Woman Space
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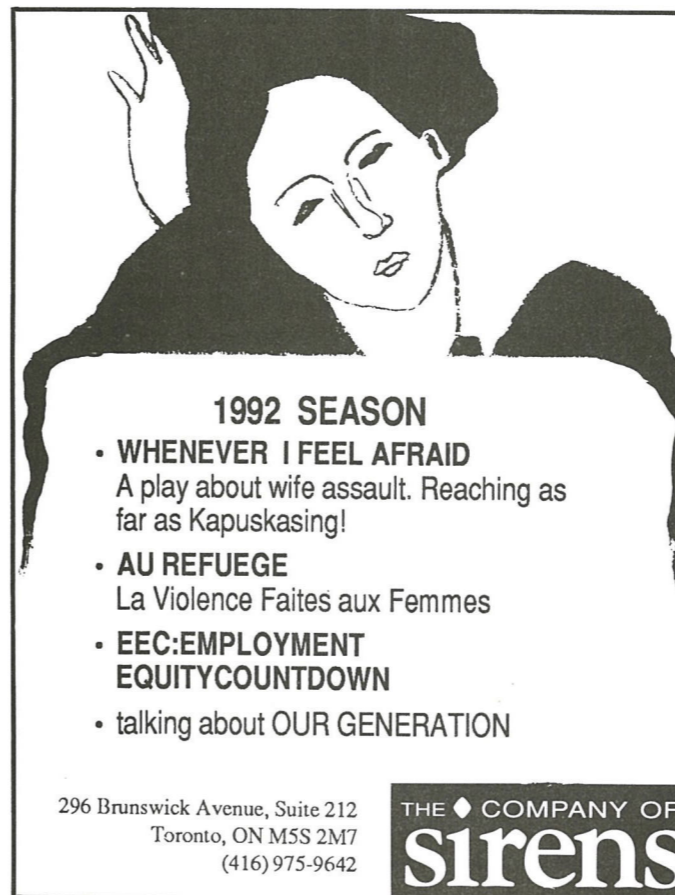
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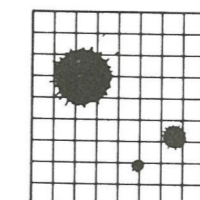
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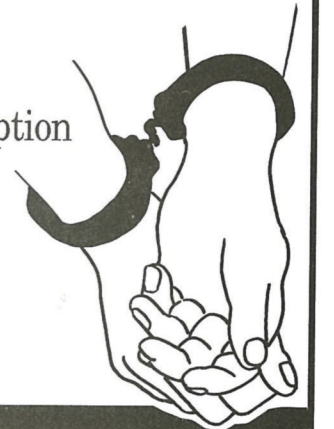
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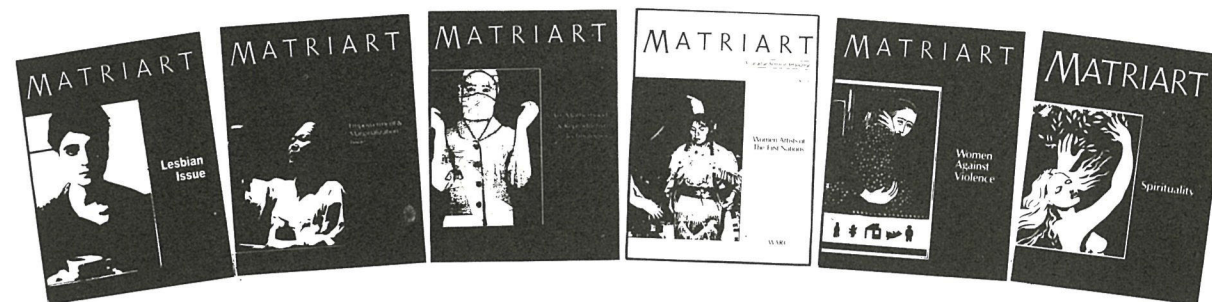
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