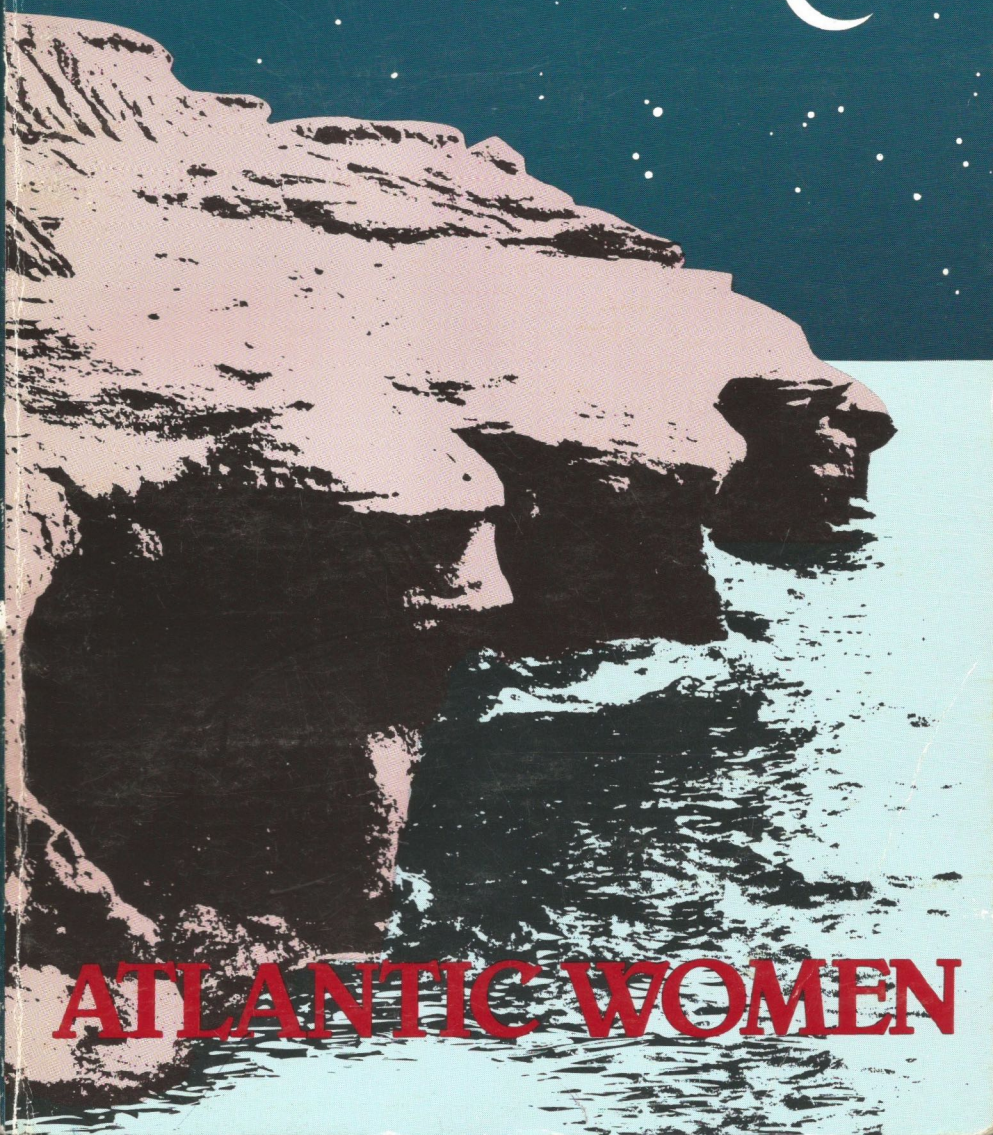


A FEMINIST QUARTERLY
FIREWEED

WINTER/SPRING 1984



ATLANTIC WOMEN

A FEMINIST QUARTERLY
FIREWEED

Atlantic Women

Issue 18

FIREWEED Collective

Sheila Block
Susan Douglas-Drinkwater
Pamela Godfree
Nila Gupta
Makeda Silvera

Associate Members

Christine Higdon
Anne Nixon
Janet Patterson
Rhea Tregobov

Regional Representatives

Claudia Casper
(Vancouver)
Muriel Draaisma
(Vancouver)
Lee Ann Elias (London)
Martha Elliot (Ottawa)
Alex Keir (Scotsburn, N.S.)
Linda Laing (Calgary)
Susan Poteet (Montreal)

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fire-weed *n* : a hardy perennial so called because it is the first growth to reappear in fire-scarred areas; a troublesome weed which spreads like wild-fire invading clearings, bomb-sites, waste land and other disturbed areas.

EDITORIAL

This issue marks a departure for *Fireweed*; until now, we have primarily been a Toronto-based and -focused journal. Recently, we have successfully attempted to decentralise our editorial power by handing over specific issues to a Guest Collective. But we have not yet alleviated our regional and cultural chauvinism. The mainstream and alternative English-language press — including the feminist press — have consistently operated as if the boundaries of Canada extend from Vancouver to Toronto (sometimes including Montreal when the language barrier isn't too 'inconvenient'). And *Fireweed* is by no means immune to this prevailing attitude.

First attempts at addressing an inequitable situation often seem token. For that reason, we have chosen donalee Moulton-Barrett's "Atlantic Women" to lead off the issue. It articulately speaks to the problem that any disenfranchised group has of being seen as 'the other,' or, as she says, "different living/ as we do/ on the edges / (of country, ocean/ economy, respect)/" When we do turn our attention to the region east of Montreal, we often use terms of reference that do not necessarily apply. The Maritime provinces are lumped together as an homogeneous unit somewhere 'out there in the boonies,' rural and isolated.

While many people in the Atlantic live in a rural setting, it does not always follow that they are isolated from one another. Survival in one of the most economically depressed areas of Canada necessitates the creation of strong support networks. As Ruth Schneider's article on Agent Orange illustrates, people across the entire province of Nova Scotia banded together to fight the harmful spraying of their forests. Wilma Needham's "Some Fine Women" provides us with a visual tribute to some of the women whose lives have enriched the diverse cultural history of the Maritimes. Her piece proves that networking began long before modern-day feminists coined the phrase. It can take the form of passing on centuries-old traditions such as Edith Clayton's basketweaving art. It can happen through 'history singing' as in the work of the *a cappella* group *Four the Moment*. It can be the informal sharing of an oral history or storytelling, as well as through the written word.

At the Feminist Print Media Conference held in Ottawa in June, 1980, Gail Walsh of Dalhousie, New Brunswick made a presentation on feminist communications in the Maritimes. She spoke about her efforts to establish a regional feminist newspaper and the many obstacles that stood in the way — funding, a small population with low income levels, and a traditionally conservative political climate, among others. *Atlantis: A Women's Studies Journal* was, at that time, the only alternative feminist publication in existence (although several attempts had been made to start others). Since then, we have seen the emergence of a new feminist magazine. *Common Ground: A Journal for Island Women*, which comes out of Charlottetown, P.E.I., is now celebrating its second year of publishing. Against tremendous odds, these publications continue to survive.

We have endeavoured to present as wide a sampling as possible of the creative work of Atlantic women. Regrettably, there have been some omissions, notably work by Acadian and Native women. Although we did make contact with Acadian women, we realise that our position as an English-language, Toronto-centred publication may have been a barrier. And the fact that we received no submissions from Native women clearly shows that we still have a lot of work to do. This is but a first step to encourage future contributions from Atlantic women.

This issue has resulted in many important new contacts, and we hope that this will pave the way for increased communication. To this end, we have included a comprehensive listing of Atlantic women's groups. It is imperative that feminists in other parts of Canada inform and familiarise ourselves with what Atlantic women are accomplishing, because it is often we who impose cultural isolation.

Pamela Godfree
Fireweed Collective

Two Poems by **donalee Moulton-Barrett**

Atlantic Women

The literary journal
wants poems
on/by Atlantic Canadian women
as if somehow
we are (or might be)
different living
as we do
on the edges
(of country, ocean
economy, respect)

The literary journal
wants us to know
it cares about the edges
as it does
the hinterland
of women's issues
(whatever they are)
but we are too busy
hanging on to care
about centers and suburbs
we know
there is no difference
living on the edge
or living in the center
It's just a matter
of degree (and country
ocean, economy, respect)

Corned Beef and Cabbage

The women in the fish plant
wear nets over their sanitary hair
and gloves
on their hands
when they fillet the salmon
under the ultra-red lights
(before smoking and canning)
they see the worms
eating into their paycheque
and they rapidly pick away
at the maggots (but they
always miss one or two
or a thousand) and are ashamed
when they go home at night
to corned beef and cabbage





Someone's
Got To
Do It

Ruth Schneider

Port Hawkesbury sits on the southwestern tip of Cape Breton overlooking the Canso Strait and the Causeway which, since 1955, has connected the island to the mainland. If you approach on the Trans-Canada from the island side, you pass through the wide valley of Glendale, past MacIntyre Mountain to the crest which drops down to the Strait. Your first sign of the city-which-would-be is the flashing of lights which at first look like police cars high on a non-existent road on the mainland, but soon take their proper place on the towers above the water. A small sign to your left announces "airport." A much larger, more determined, sign on your right says, "Port Hawkesbury, North America's Super Port."

You turn left at the Rotary and take the wide road into town where you can follow the shore on Granville Street. Here, closed shops and old boarded buildings indicate the town's surrender to modern trends. Some houses remain, as do *The Scotia Sun* and the Royal Bank, but most businesses have given up and taken their places in the rental space of one of Port Hawkesbury's three shopping malls, located on the four lane, higher up.

Looking towards Point Tupper, you can see the towers of the heavy water plant and the outline of the Nova Scotia Forest Industries (N.S.F.I.) pulp mill. Living on Point Tupper, once one of the most scenic spots on Cape Breton, became a health hazard because of the danger of poisonous gases emitted by the pulp mill. Houses were moved off and the Department of the Environment monitoring station moved on to check emissions.

Port Hawkesbury had bigger plans for itself than attractive living. It was to be the industrial centre of the northeast.

The industries have come and gone. Gulf Western closed its Port Hawkesbury operation a few years ago, but an occasional ship marked "Gulf" can still be seen off the shore. The real estate market has been a victim to industrial vagaries, with large numbers of houses standing empty when families are transferred elsewhere. Even so, the town is now sniffing hopefully towards off-shore development. An oil rig nestles in the Strait, an outward sign of the next step.

N.S.F.I. has been located in Port Hawkesbury for twenty years. A branch of the Swedish company, Stora Kopparbergs, it operates in the counties of eastern Nova Scotia and Cape Breton. N.S.F.I. was the major defendant in the herbicide court case which took place last year, pitting a group of landowners fearful of the known effects of phenoxy herbicides against the industry.

The herbicide case began in June, 1982, when the Nova Scotia Department of Environment issued permits to three pulp companies, including N.S.F.I., for ground or air spraying of the herbicides 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T, a combination known as the infamous Agent Orange, over fifteen thousand acres. The herbicides defoliate undesirable hardwoods in order to encourage the growth of softwoods for the pulp and paper industry. There was widespread opposition, culminating with the uprooting of one thousand N.S.F.I. seedlings. This protest was undertaken by the Whycocomagh Micmac Indian Band under the leadership of Chief Ryan Googoo. The spraying was to occur only four hundred metres from the Band's water supply.

Nevertheless, Minister of the Environment Greg Kerr changed aerial spraying permits to automatically permit ground spraying, which began on the mainland of Nova Scotia July 22, 1982. The Minister of Lands and Forests, George Henley, claimed that the herbicides were "as safe as water." A telephone poll of one thousand people, however, indicated that ninety per cent were opposed to the spraying.

In the light of government indifference to their concerns, eighteen landowners went to court as a last resort to seek an interlocutory injunction. They signed affidavits which promised to undertake payment of any costs and damages which the court might order.

... [A]lthough I am not an affluent person," some of the affidavits read, "I have reasonable grounds to believe that I have sufficient community support to meet this undertaking."

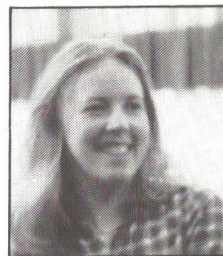
The interlocutory injunction (the longest chambers proceedings in Nova Scotia history) led to a month-long trial in May, 1983. By this time, fifteen landowners stood as plaintiffs against N.S.F.I. and two others had financial undertakings before the court. Of the fifteen, two were Micmac Indians and three were women, including Victoria Palmer, the chief plaintiff. Behind the plaintiffs stretched a network of support groups throughout Nova Scotia, Canada, the United States and Sweden.

The plaintiffs sought no personal gain in this court action. They wished to protect their homes and communities from being sprayed with substances which numerous studies had shown to cause cancer and birth defects. To do this, they were compelled to risk losing the very homes they hoped to protect.

Numerous women were involved with the herbicide case, almost all of them on the side of the plaintiffs. Elizabeth Walsh was the first of several lawyers. Dr. Susan Daum, toxicologist, and Dr. Jan Newton, economist, both testified for the plaintiffs as expert witnesses. Jane Grose, Lynda Calvert and Victoria Palmer stood as plaintiffs; Ms. Palmer had been the first to step forward against the industry. Elizabeth May was an outstanding spokeswoman whose face appeared across the country in innumerable press conferences and interviews. She finished her law degree during the trial, and was able to make her first court presentation at that time. Connie Schell took on the overwhelming job of treasurer for the Herbicide Fund Society, and women were active in support groups across the province from Cape Breton to Lunenburg County: Liz Calder at the Ecology Action Centre in Halifax, Hester Lessard and Susan Howard at the South Shore Environmental Protection Agency, and many, many others.

The results of the case are well known. In September, 1983, Justice Merlin Nunn ruled against the plaintiffs and awarded costs and damages to Nova Scotia Forest Industries.

In the months following the decision, Ryan Googoo, Elizabeth May and Liz Calder went to Sweden, where they were lauded by the Swedish environmental groups. Elizabeth May went to Vancouver to speak to the



Elizabeth May was an outstanding spokeswoman whose face appeared across the country in innumerable press conferences and interviews. She finished her law degree during the trial, and was able to make her first court presentation at that time.

British Columbia Bar Association, and Victoria Palmer went to Ottawa. Others went to Saskatchewan, New Brunswick and Washington. The plaintiffs met and discussed whether or not they would appeal. They hired further legal counsel, and, finally, they accepted a negotiated settlement with the industry: they would not appeal; the industry would not impose costs and damages. Although most of the plaintiffs sighed with relief, they knew that this was only Act I.

Women's intense involvement in the opposition against herbicides is typical of their involvement in grass roots organisations throughout the province. Women have been active in the uranium controversy (with Donna Smyth still suffering under a libel charge after two years), in all kinds of development work, in the anti-nuclear movement. "After all," said one New Glasgow woman, speaking of her work against the increasing buildup of nuclear weapons, "it's women who will have to do it."

"It" is demanding that the rights of the individual come before corporate interests, that human and health interests come first. In the language of "costs" and "benefits," heard so often during the herbicide case, "it" means insuring that the benefits go to those who pay the costs. Traditionally, women have been aware that the benefit of their work often goes to others. Having fought this battle in the area of women's rights, it is logical that women are now asking the same questions in a larger arena. Who gets the benefits of herbicide spraying? Who gets the benefits of uranium mining? Who gets the benefits of nuclear arms proliferation? We all know who pays the costs.

Women, who traditionally are responsible for others (beginning with their own children), are intensely aware of the need for elected representatives to be responsible to their constituents, of the necessity for those in power to act in the interests of those over whom they hold power. They have little tolerance for the "get ahead at any cost," "someone always loses," "that's life" approach of those involved in the corporate game. So perhaps we can say that both men and women in grass roots groups, in their concern for the individual over the corporation, for human health over economics, are taking a traditional "female" stand.

What the herbicide plaintiffs have learned is that those government

officials who are supposed to protect the environment, including the human life which is so integral a part of it, are not doing their jobs. The government stood with the corporation throughout. The plaintiffs were called "subversives" out to undermine the "system." Although the majority of Nova Scotians opposed spraying, spray permits were issued steadily throughout the court case. As Alexa McDonough, the Leader of the Nova Scotia New Democratic Party, said in a letter to Victoria Palmer at the time of the settlement, "As you know only too well, the government in Nova Scotia is not likely to take any actions on behalf of the environment unless they are shamed into it."

"But how much should citizens be expected to do?" asks Peter Cumming, the Public Relations Officer for the Herbicide Fund Society and the Secretary and Public Relations Officer of the newly formed Coalition Against Pesticides. "We've done the government officials' jobs for them, and look what we've had to pay."

The expenses were tremendous. Support groups for the herbicide case raised and spent over \$200,000 during the trial. Beyond this were the physical and emotional costs. The plaintiffs were fifteen ordinary people who had not been involved in environmental or political action before. They were owners of small businesses, housewives, and farmers who were opposed to the poisoning of their lands and families. Most of the plaintiffs had never met before the case began, and many of them had so little in common that it's doubtful if they would have had dinner together. Yet this diverse group from all over Cape Breton and eastern Nova Scotia struggled through all kinds of weather to meetings held in rural community halls for a year and a half. Telephone bills soared into the hundreds of dollars, family relations became strained, jobs suffered. All normal life seemed suspended. Communication was difficult. Plaintiffs' telephones were said to be tapped. Raw nerves led to paranoia.

The plaintiffs learned that the courts are not for them. The cost itself is prohibitive, and the danger of being in contempt of court is an effective way to silence discussion. Even so, the herbicide case has done more than any other action to date towards awakening the general public about environmental concerns. Ryan Googoo has said, "We put together the best educational program the government has ever seen. They ought to pay us for it!"

Act II has opened with the herbicide plaintiffs and support groups dissolving the Herbicide Fund Society and reorganising as the Coalition Against Pesticides. The purpose of the Coalition is to establish a fund to deal with personal debts resulting from the court case and to prevent the spraying of chemical pesticides. Although it may seem as if they are back to the starting point, plaintiffs are aware that, according to a Gallup Poll taken last September, sixty-one per cent of the population in Nova Scotia oppose spraying, while only sixteen per cent support it. Since the court decision, the Environmental Protection Agency in the United States has permanently banned 2,4,5-T, and Dow Chemical has stopped producing it. "In spite of



Victoria Palmer

Women of Framboise, N.S., working on the third quilt.

Justice Merlin Nunn's judgement," Alexa McDonough said on December 9th, "the plaintiffs have won in this case."

But the test is yet to come. A corporate campaign to soften public opinion on herbicide spraying has been launched. The Canadian Pulp and Paper Association and the University of Toronto Department of Education have begun a national cooperative venture in curriculum development called "People of the Forest," actively pushing the use of chemicals, which has been approved by the Department of Education and the Social Studies Association in Nova Scotia. Pilot programs are in schools throughout Canada, including two in eastern Nova Scotia and Cape Breton. And in Port Hawkesbury, quarter page advertisements from N.S.F.I. are seen each week in *The Scotia Sun*. They show Bambi and his friends in a healthy forest and are signed "The Working Environmentalists." They assure the public that it is less dangerous to clear brush by herbicides than by hand, unless, they smile, "someone drops a barrel on his foot." National radio has had programs on the state of Canada's forests and the need for proper management, particularly the need for using herbicides.

N.S.F.I. has applied for this season's spray permits. The government has changed the rules for public notification of spray activity. The company no longer has to announce its intentions to spray a week in advance in the newspaper; they only have to post notices on the woods' roads two days in advance.

The public is being told that massive spraying of poison on the forests of Nova Scotia is necessary and harmless. But those who sat through the court case last May remember Dr. Susan Daum discussing the latency period for

cancer and saying that "persistent chemicals that are carcinogens should not be introduced into the environment at any dose."

Environmental groups are gathering. Attempts are being made to counter the pro-herbicide pressure of the industries. Letters are being written to government officials asking for action against the use of poisonous chemicals on the forests. Once again, local people are demanding a safe environment, hoping that in this election year, the Nova Scotia government will do its job.

How You Can Help

The plaintiffs need money to carry on the fight against the spraying of these herbicides. Your contribution will help! Please give generously to:

Coalition Against Pesticides

John Shaw, Treasurer

R.R. #1

West Bay Road, Nova Scotia

B0E 3L0

You can also write letters to your MLA and MP and to the editors of your local newspapers and magazines urging that the government of Canada de-register 2,4,5-T and supporting Environment Canada Minister Charles Caccia's recommendation that a National Pesticides Advisory Board be created. This board would be an arm's-length agency with representation from the public, workers and environmental groups.

Please help the Coalition keep these herbicides from being sprayed on Nova Scotia forests.

Pat Alpert

Full Moon Dream

Cossacks in red tunics
knifed the town guards
opening them at the neck
like tin cans.

I ran to wake my grandmothers
taking them, one on each hand,
to the town square.

Order is restored
but blood reeks.

The ground is slick with it.
My grandmothers, in their flannel nightgowns,
can't keep their feet clean.

Tonight I wake from sleep
with blood emptying
onto my legs
writing war on the sheets.

A Glimpse of Edith Clayton



Ron Merrick

Sylvia Hamilton

Some years ago while scanning documents and old photographs at the Public Archives of Nova Scotia, I was struck by photographs of Black women selling baskets at the Halifax City Market at the turn of the century. While the photographs recorded the act of selling, other documents spoke of the importance of the city market to the Black settlers who had arrived in Nova Scotia following the War of 1812. Whether it was vegetables, berries, flowers or other goods, the market provided one of the few outlets where

the former slaves could sell their wares with the hope of carving out a living for themselves and their families.¹

Edith Clayton is a connector to what was for many years a history ignored, even by those who should have laid claim to it. She weaves baskets in an array of shapes and sizes: traditional market baskets, large lampshades, hampers, cradles, fishing baskets and cornucopias. While basket-making has been a predominant craft in many of Nova Scotia's Native communities, it has not been at all prevalent in Afro-Nova Scotian² communities. Cherry Brook, a community in Halifax County, is fortunately an exception. Edith Clayton was born in this small rural setting in 1920. Her basketmaking began at the age of eight. Her yearly production averages four hundred items, although over the years she has been known to exceed this number.³ Edith Clayton learned this skill from her mother, who in turn learned it from her mother, who in turn learned it from her mother. Without breaking this historic maternal cycle Edith Clayton taught her daughters to weave baskets. Althea (Clayton) Tolliver tells of being at a development conference in Portland, Maine, where she immediately recognised one of her mother's distinctive baskets. It was among other crafts on a display table set up by a group from New Brunswick. The style, the small nails, the maple, all confirmed for Althea that this was her mother's craft, a fact which surprised the person staffing the table. She told Althea the basket had been made by a man in New Brunswick.⁴ (Perhaps the basket was one of a number Edith Clayton had shipped to New Brunswick for sale.)



Ron Merrick

Photos courtesy of Nova Scotia Museum, Dept. of Education

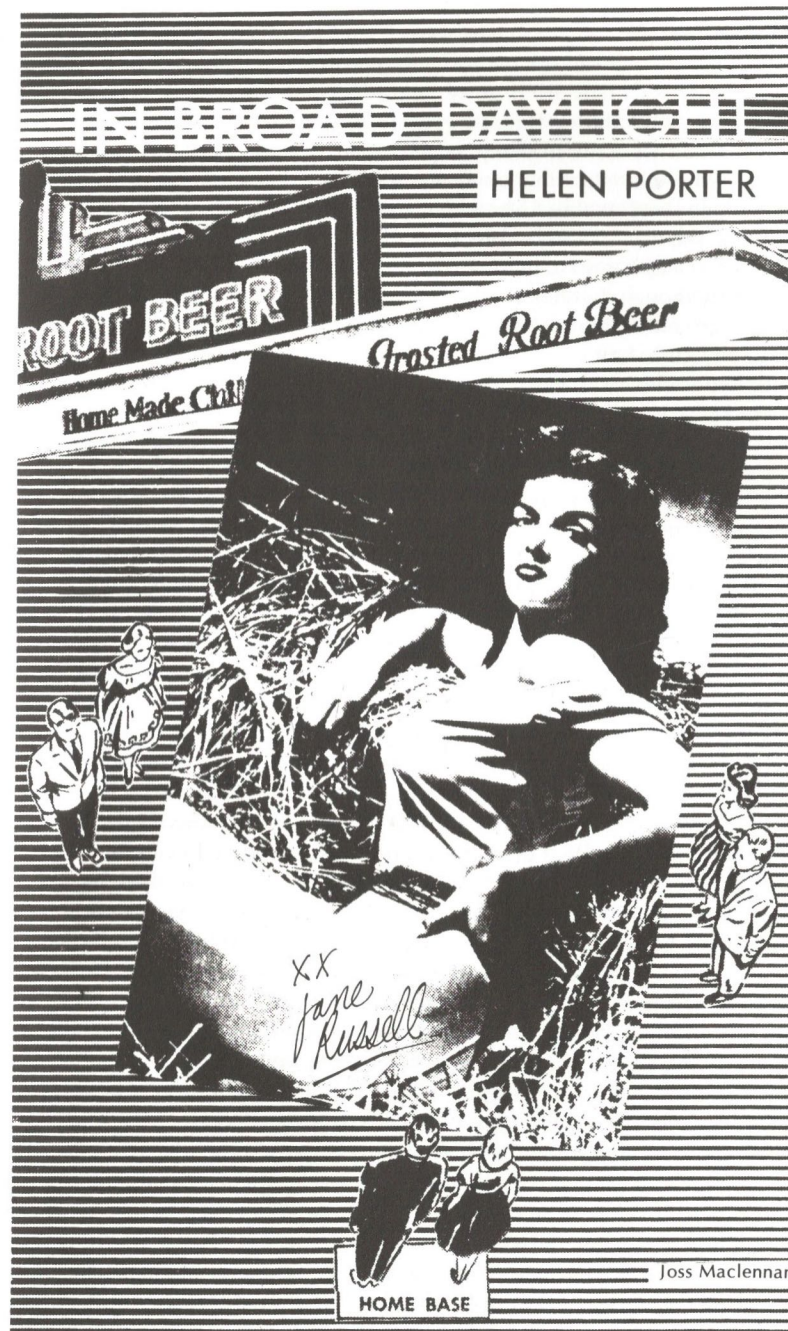
Warm of spirit and of voice, Edith Clayton smiles modestly when asked about her work and her accomplishments. For the past two years she has opened her home and studio during the Christmas season to teach a group of women from Halifax's North End Library how to weave evergreen wreaths. Patiently and with delightful humour, Edith encourages and helps everyone to finish at least one wreath of her own. On another occasion she demonstrated her basket weaving techniques to a group of senior Black women who travelled from Guysborough County to her studio in East Preston. After serving the group what she called a "little lunch" (which was by no means little), she showed slides of her work. She then began to make a basket, every member of the group being given the opportunity to weave a split or two. Her modesty and gentle manner won over even the most hesitant.

She has also taught classes for senior women in Kentville where she has been invited back several times. In December 1983, Edith taught Saturday classes in basketmaking to ten- and eleven-year-olds at the newly-opened Black Cultural Centre. Summers find her in the foyer of the Historic Properties complex on Halifax's waterfront, surrounded by samples of her fine craft. Her table offers other handmade goods which tempt the taste buds as well as the eyes: homemade brown and raisin bread.

Anyone who frequents antique stores or auctions is likely familiar with the old, darkened, broken-weave baskets (which are usually tossed aside) filled with an assortment of small bottles, post cards, coins and anything else the owner has not found a home for. While physically these baskets are not capable of holding very much — their handles are often missing and the weave is patchy — on another, less material, more spiritual level they are laden with memories, history and meaning. Perhaps in another hundred years someone will find one of Edith Clayton's market baskets, appreciate its texture, style and feeling, and take it home to comfort a purple African violet in full bloom.

Notes:

1. Joleen Gordon, *Edith Clayton's Market Basket, A heritage of Splintwood Basketry in Nova Scotia*, Photographs by Ronald Merrick and diagrams by George Halverson, published by the Nova Scotia Museum, Halifax, 1977, p. 1. (This is an excellent study of Edith Clayton's technique. Photographs illustrate all the stages in the construction of her baskets; the accompanying diagrams provide additional detail of the weaving process.)
2. Afro-Nova Scotian is used to identify and emphasise the historic presence of people of African descent in Nova Scotia.
3. Conversation with the author, February 1984.
4. Ibid.



Joss MacLennan

Helen Porter

I thought I saw Shirley Butler the other day. I was hurrying along Water Street when I passed a heavy, middle-aged woman in a black coat and slacks. She was standing by Bowring's window, looking in. There was something familiar about her; when, after I passed, I glanced back, I could see that she was looking at me. It was Shirley, I'm almost sure. Her hair is not as black as it used to be. There's more grey in it than there is in mine. It's still curly though, but not at all fashionable. It wasn't fashionable all those years ago, either, not the way she wore it, but I envied anyone who had naturally curly hair.

She turned back toward the window and stared in again. I wondered if I should go and speak to her. I'm always meeting people that I used to know and wondering if I should speak to them or not. They're probably wondering the same thing about me.

Even if Shirley did recognize me I'm sure she wouldn't expect me to recognize her. It was only that one day, really. We probably wouldn't have met at all if Chuck and Bob hadn't been friends. Even though I hadn't met her before she looked familiar to me. I probably used to meet her on my way to and from school.

Shirley wasn't around the day I met Chuck. Or at least as far as I know she wasn't. There were a lot of people in the park that day, though. We had a holiday from school, in celebration of the King's birthday, which was really at quite a different time of the year but for some reason, always celebrated in June. The weather was gorgeous, sunny and clear and warm, but not too hot. It was unusual for us to get such good weather in June.

It was our first time in the park for the year, and there was always something special about that. The swimming pool didn't open until the first of July, no matter how hot the weather was, so we just walked from the Bungalow to the Rosary Garden to the playground. At fifteen we were too old for the playground, of course, but we still liked to fool around on the swings and the monkey climber, just so we could shout at each other about how childish we were. I had on my white shorts, and I kept looking down at my legs. They were kind of pale, the way legs always are the first time they're displayed bare after the winter. Maybe I should have worn leg-paint. But I probably would have got it all patchy, and that would have looked worse. Secretly, I was vain of my legs. They were long and well-shaped. They're still long, but the thighs are lumpy now, and there are ugly purple vein marks all over the place. I had hardly any breasts to speak of, and I've never been pretty, so I supposed it was only fair that I should have something worth looking at.

Ruth and Audrey were with me. Ruth, who is my cousin and therefore someone I've known all my life, had changed overnight from a sturdy, rosy-cheeked child with stringy dark hair into a startlingly attractive girl with a shining page-boy and a thirty-six inch bust. She was short, and all the rest of

her was small. This made her breast size really dramatic. She was aware of it, too, and wore an uplift brassiere that pushed the lovely cleavage to the top of her round-necked peasant blouse. Some of the boys called her "Coke bottle legs" but that was probably only because there was nothing else wrong with her. I envied her more than I've ever envied anyone else in my life.

Audrey's bust was big, too, but she was heavy all over and this tended to cancel out the effect. She had, however, already had one steady boyfriend with whom she used to lie on the kitchen day-bed nights when her parents were out and she was minding her two little brothers. I envied her, too, but I didn't want to be fat. And I hadn't liked her boyfriend very much. He was only about a year older than herself, and not much to look at. I never really knew what she saw in him.

"Lots of soldiers around today," said Ruth as we walked back toward the Bungalow from the playground. We had just about enough money for a Coke each besides our bus-fare home. Or our truck-fare. At that time, open trucks with benches along the sides and a rope across the back were still being used for passengers. Of course if we spent all our money we could always hitchhike home, or thumb a ride, as we called it. But this was strictly forbidden, and we tried not to disobey our parents any more than was absolutely necessary. We told each other it was all right to accept rides from women drivers, or in cars that had a woman in the front seat with the driver. But most of the time we rode in the truck.

The Bungalow verandah was crowded. In order to get to the counter we had to pass a table where three young soldiers were sitting. We took special pains not to look at them. They were Americans, we knew that by their well-fitting uniforms. The Canadian soldiers always looked as if their uniforms had been made for somebody else.

"Oh, boy, look at Jane Russell!" we heard one of them say. Audrey and I hoped he was talking about Ruth. Even though we were jealous of her, we were proud of her figure. It was the next best thing to looking that way ourselves.

The three of them were still there when we came back with our drinks. We stood still for a moment, looking for a place to sit down.

"Hey, Blondie," said one of the soldiers, a stocky fellow with a reddish-brown crew cut. "Hey, Blondie, there's three seats here."

We didn't turn around, but we didn't move on, either. Blondie. He must have been talking about me. My hair was light brown, but I liked to describe it as ash-blonde. My sister Alice called me a dirty blonde but I didn't like the sound of that. Ruth and Audrey were both dark, so he couldn't have meant them. Blondie. It was the first time anyone had ever called me that.

"Come on girls, we don't bite," said one of the others. We turned around then, after nudging each other. What harm could it do to sit with them? It was the middle of the afternoon. Our parents never worried about us doing anything wrong in broad daylight.

We sat down, careful not to spill our drinks. The soldiers had finished theirs, and were smoking cigarettes. One of them, the tall, light-haired one

who had made the Jane Russell remark, passed around the package. Lucky Strikes. Most of the boys we knew could only afford Royal Blends, and even then they bought them loose, a few at a time.

None of us accepted a cigarette. We smoked a little, in secret, but we hadn't mastered the casual way of holding a cigarette that we admired in older girls, and we didn't want the soldiers to know what novices we were.

They weren't very old themselves, nineteen we found out later. Chuck, the quiet, dark-haired fellow who hadn't called out at all, was almost twenty. He looked a little like Robert Walker, whose autographed photograph I'd just sent away to *Photoplay* for.

Most of our conversation was made up of wisecracks, but the boys did manage to tell us where they were from and how long they'd been in Newfoundland. None of them had seen any action yet (they laughed when they said that) but they were anxious to. Or so they said.

Although Bob, the red-haired fellow, had been the one who called out Blondie, it was Audrey he talked to. He had probably been disappointed when he got a good look at my front. Gary, the fair-haired soldier who was the handsomest of the three, was giving all his attention to Ruth. They made a game of snatching or trying to snatch, paper cups from each other. He only touched her hands but you could see his mind was on another part of her.

Chuck told me he came from Nebraska. I had read a novel set in Nebraska. It was called *A Lantern in Her Hand*; I had cried so much over it that Mom had threatened not to let me go to the library any more. I told Chuck about the book, but he had never heard of it. He didn't read much, he said.

They insisted on buying us ice cream cones and then the six of us walked around the park together. I prayed that I wouldn't meet anyone I knew, or at least anyone who was likely to tell Mom. At that time of her life her greatest fear for her two daughters was of pregnancy before marriage. Alice was engaged to a boy she'd gone to school with who was in the Royal Navy. Mom was almost ready to breathe easily about her, although she wouldn't be completely relaxed until the wedding day.

"I know you're too sensible a girl to get involved with any of those servicemen," she said to me from time to time. "Of course you're only fifteen, but the stories I've heard..." She always left the sentence unfinished. One night I overheard her telling my father that she thanked God I looked so young. Still, she never let me leave the house without a warning.

"Look after yourself, now," she'd say. She was never very specific. Or, "Don't be too late coming home." Or, worst of all, "I'm so thankful to have daughters I can trust."

On the way home in the truck Gary's arm was right around Ruth's shoulder, and Bob was playing with Audrey's hand. Some of the other girls aboard were necking quite shamelessly with soldiers they had met that day. Chuck sat very close to me, but he didn't try to touch me.

"When are you going to the park again?" he asked me as we were driving

out Waterford Bridge Road. I had told him I'd soon be getting off.

My heart was beating so fast I could hardly find breath to reply. "Sunday," I said, swallowing hard. "I'll probably be going in Sunday afternoon." I hardly ever went to the park on Sundays except occasionally in July and August when Sunday School was closed for the summer. Ever since I'd stopped going to Sunday School myself I'd been teaching a class of six-year-old boys. But "Sunday," I repeated, half to myself. (I'd heard Chuck tell Bob he was off Sunday.) Then it was time for me to get off the truck.

"Good-bye," said Chuck. "See you." All the way up the sweet-smelling, tree-shaded lane that led to my street, past the greenhouses of the florist who lived there, I kept asking myself if he'd said "See you Sunday" or just "See you." Audrey and Ruth were still on the truck. They lived further downtown.

On Sunday I started early, preparing the ground. "I don't think I'll go to Sunday School today," I said before I left for church in the morning. I didn't always go to church Sunday mornings but I thought I'd better go that day to give myself some extra points.

"Why not?" Mom wasn't listening very hard. She had got up later than she'd intended and had a big dinner to cook.

"I hardly ever miss a Sunday. And there's not much going on right now. They're just practising for the closing program and I've got nothing to do with that."

"Where are you going, then?" She opened the oven door to poke at the roast.

"Audrey and Ruth want me to go to the park with them." I tried to sound as though I only wanted to do my friends a favour. In fact, I had spent hours trying to persuade them to come with me. Bob and Gary had not asked them when they'd be going to the park again.

All week I'd been wondering what I should wear. I knew I'd never get out of the house on a Sunday wearing shorts. I could wear a skirt with my shorts on underneath, and then take the skirt off later, but I was convinced Mom would find out somehow, and I felt I was pushing my luck enough already. I put on my red and white cotton peasant skirt, which was short and full. The new organdy blouse my grandmother had sent me for my birthday was frilly and loose, except under the arms where it scratched my skin raw. It looked nice, though.

The three of them were there again, Chuck, Gary and Bob, sitting at the same table on the Bungalow verandah. The park was even more crowded than it had been the first day. You could hardly walk anywhere without tripping over couples curled up together on the grass. The six of us walked up the river where the vegetation was wilder, less controlled than it was in the more formal part of the park. The other four dropped out of sight behind Chuck and me but we just kept on walking. He was singing softly to himself:

You belong to my heart
Now and forever,

And our love had its start
Not long ago.

It was on the Hit Parade all that summer.

Chuck asked me to meet him again the following Thursday. It wasn't a holiday but I planned to go to the park right after school. Perhaps I'd even skip school, something I'd never done in my life. This time I didn't even tell Ruth and Audrey that I was going to meet Chuck.

Thursday was chilly, with a stiff breeze. There weren't any trucks going to the park on weekdays so I thumbed my way in. I couldn't believe it was me, acting so bold. A green Pontiac stopped for me. It was driven by a thin, tired-looking woman who told me she was a nurse at the hospital near the park.

That day, without talking much, Chuck and I went straight from the Bungalow to the grassy bank that sloped steeply down to the railway track. When I was younger I used to run there with all the other children whenever the train whistle blew, but now the park was almost deserted. Most people were working, or in school, and the weather wasn't warm enough to attract mothers with small children. Still without saying much to each other, Chuck and I sat, and later lay, on the grass. He held out his arms and I moved into them. We didn't talk about what we were doing. We must have looked like all the other couples that Ruth and Audrey and I used to trip over. We kissed a few times, but mostly we just lay there.

After that afternoon, everything else in my life became a dream. The only thing that mattered was meeting Chuck, which I did every time he asked me to. We usually went to the park, back to the grassy bank above the train track. I was surprised, and relieved, that he didn't try to do anything but hug and kiss me. I had been so sternly warned about soldiers that I hadn't really expected him to stop there. I don't know what I would have done if he hadn't. One day he put his hand on my left breast, outside the white cotton gym blouse I was wearing. He left it there for a few minutes and then he said, "Do you mind my hand where I've got it?" I didn't know what to say. I knew I shouldn't let him touch me like that but I didn't want him to take his hand away. So I finally said, "I don't even know where it is." He left it there for the rest of the afternoon. I could feel the slight, warm pressure for days afterwards.

One afternoon, when we had been lying on the bank for about an hour, he sat up suddenly and lit a cigarette. When I sat up too I could see that he was frowning.

"What's the matter?" I asked. I had never seen him frown like that before.

"Nothing," he said. He just kept smoking and looking at the train tracks.

"There is something." I wanted us to be still lying there.

He looked at me, and smiled a little. "Sometimes," he said, "Sometimes I wish you were a little older."

The rest of the day was spoiled. We stayed there for a while longer, but it wasn't the same. On the way home in the truck we hardly looked at each other.

As far as I knew, we had never been seen by anyone who was likely to tell Mom. One day some boys from my street hooted up at us, but they weren't the kind who'd tell anyone's mother anything. I went hot with guilt every time Mom looked at me, and especially when she asked me where I'd been.

"Oh, just out for a walk with Ruth and Audrey," I'd say. Or, "I was downtown for a while." Or even, "I went to the park with a couple of girls from school." I was confident that Audrey and Ruth would never let Mom know the difference. Although we fell out at times we protected each other always against older people.

Ruth and Audrey weren't seeing Gary and Bob anymore. Ruth, who never stayed interested in one boy for long, had been asked out one Friday night by Clark Marshall, one of the boys from school. He was allowed to use his father's big blue Plymouth on weekends. Audrey was still interested in Bob but he seemed to have other things on his mind.

"You're the lucky one, Linda," she said to me more than once. Then, sounding surprised, "Bob told me Chuck really likes you. He must enjoy robbing the cradle."

That made me mad. Audrey and I were the same age, even if she did look older because of all that weight. But I agreed with her on one thing. I couldn't imagine what Chuck saw in me. He told me one day that my legs were just as good as Betty Grable's, and that I was nice to talk to. Since I could hardly ever think of anything to say to him I didn't really know what he meant by the last remark. But the other one, the one about the legs, I kept hearing that again and again in my head, as if I were listening to a gramophone record. I'd thought they were pretty good myself, but Betty Grable? I wasn't used to hearing comparisons like that. "It must be nice to have a brain," and "I wish I could write compositions like yours" were the kind of things boys usually said to me. Or sometimes they used me to get to know Ruth. My father, who was quiet and hard-working and a great reader, used to say sometimes: "Never mind, Linda, there's something about your face that's better than all their showy good looks. You've got intelligence, and character. Anyone can see there's something to you." I tried to smile when he said things like that, but they didn't cheer me up at all.

One day when I met Chuck in the park Bob was there too. That was the day he had Shirley Butler with him. Her breasts were as big as Ruth's but the rest of her figure was nothing to rave over. She had curly black hair and narrow dark eyes that looked kind of sly. She was wearing brown and white checked slacks and a tight yellow blouse. She couldn't have been any more than sixteen, but she looked older.

"I think I've seen you around before," she said when Bob introduced us. He didn't ask about Audrey. It was as if he had never known her. "What school do you go to?"

"Prince of Wales," I said, half-apologetically.

"Oh, that snobby place." She was nice enough, though. We all had a Coke together and she told me she was leaving school soon, and going to work in one of the big clothing factories. "I don't like learning," she said.

"What's the good of it to a girl, anyway?" She looked sideways at Bob when she said that, and he whispered something in her ear that made her laugh out loud. He had never talked like that to Audrey.

When we finished our Cokes we went down to the Rosary Garden. We figured there'd be too many people on the bank near the train track, and besides it really wasn't very comfortable there. The grassy part of the Rosary Garden was flat; there was shade from the big trees.

It was a very hot day, humid and sticky, and after we had been there for a while, lying in our usual position, I began to feel uncomfortable. Perhaps it was partly because Shirley and Bob were lying not far away from us and we could hear them whispering and giggling. Except for the first couple of times when Audrey and Ruth and Gary and Bob were with us, when we spent most of our time walking around anyhow, Chuck and I had always been alone before.

I sat up and said, "Chuck, let's go and get some ice cream. My throat is parched."

Chuck seemed to be almost asleep. "I'm too lazy to move," he said into the grass. "Can't you wait a little while?"

By this time, Bob and Shirley were sitting up too. "I'd like some ice cream myself," Bob said, stretching his arms above his head. "Tell you what, Linda, why don't you and me go get some and bring it back to these lazybones here?"

I didn't really want to go to the Bungalow with Bob but I didn't know how to get out of it. We walked away; as soon as we were out of the Rosary Garden, Bob tried to grab my hand. I snatched it away.

I wanted to run back to Chuck but I was just stubborn enough to walk on toward the Bungalow. After a few moments Bob's manner changed. He started to talk about the school he had gone to, P.S. something or other, back in Pittsburgh.

The ice cream was already half-melted by the time we got back to the Rosary Garden but Chuck and Shirley didn't look as though they wanted any. They were lying in the exact same spot that I had left a few minutes before. Chuck's arms were around her, just as they'd been around me. The two of them looked a little embarrassed when they sat up, but they tried to talk as if nothing was any different. Without a word we handed them their ice cream cones.

"Let's go for a walk," Chuck said, holding out his free hand to me. I wouldn't take it. We walked along the path, together but not touching each other. Bob sat down beside Shirley and she calmly began to eat her dripping ice cream cone.

"What's wrong?" Chuck asked after a few minutes. "Gee, that ice cream's soft." Just as if nothing had happened.

"How could you?" I said, not looking at him.

"Oh, that." He laughed, not sounding like Chuck at all. "That didn't mean a thing."

"What about if you'd found Bob and me like that?"

"That's different," he said, and tried to take my hand again.

After that day, everything changed. I went to a movie with Chuck the next Saturday afternoon. (We never went out together at night; I had no idea what he did then.) He fell asleep in the middle of the picture and slept right through to the end. The movie was *Since You Went Away*; under other circumstances I would have loved it. I was so mad I left the theatre while Chuck was still asleep in the gallery. "That's a sin," said one of the girls from school who had seen us together. "He'll probably be locked in." I pretended I hadn't heard her. Chuck had smelled of beer that day, the first time I'd ever noticed that smell on him.

We made up after that, but it wasn't the same. We went to the park a few more times but when we lay down together I could see Shirley's face in my mind. I had never actually seen her since I got off the truck that day. I don't think she ever went out with Bob again.

A couple of weeks later Ruth and I left on the train to spend a holiday around the bay with our grandmother. We did that every summer. There were a lot of soldiers on the train but we didn't talk to any of them. The weather was beautiful and we spent most of our time standing outside on the brakes, singing, "There's a new moon over my shoulder/And an old love still in my heart."

"Whatever happened to you and Chuck?" Ruth asked. I hadn't told her anything about Shirley.

"Oh, I don't know," I said, looking back toward the town we had just left. "I suppose he was a bit too old for me."

I wrote Chuck one letter from Birchy Harbour, a casual, carefully-friendly letter, but he didn't answer. I never saw him again.

By the time we got back to town after our holiday the weather was already turning cooler. Audrey, Ruth and I went to the park once or twice but saw no familiar faces on the Bungalow verandah.

"I'm glad you don't go out so much anymore," Mom said to me one Saturday afternoon when I was sitting in the dining-room, reading. "I was saying to Mrs. Noseworthy the other day, 'It's wonderful not to have to worry about your daughters.' Poor Mrs. Armstrong, down to the church, her daughter is in the family way, you know. Some soldier." Mom was busy getting ready for Alice's wedding, which was to take place in November when Harry came home on leave.

Sometimes, when I walked down Water Street, I'd see the familiar uniform and be almost afraid to look up. But when I did, it was never the right face. After a while I hardly even expected it to be Chuck. I didn't even cry much at night any more.

I haven't thought about Chuck for years but the other day, the day I saw Shirley, it all came rushing back. She's put on weight, the same as I have, and she looked awfully tired. I probably should have spoken to her.

S·O·M·E F·I·N·E WOMEN

Wilma Needham

ALICE HAGEN HELEN CREIGHTON MARY SPARLING
WILLI WILLIAMSON EVELYN GARBARY RITA JOE
ANNA MAE AQUASH DR. CARRIE BEST MARGARET FULTON
MAUD LEWIS MARIA MORRIS ALEXA McDONOUGH
PORTIA WHITE ELLEN GOOGOO MAISIE MORRISON
BLANCHE MARGARET MEAGHER PHYLLIS BLAKELEY
ANNA LEONOWENS DR. ELIZA RITCHIE NINA FRIED COHEN
JUDGE ALLIE AHERN SISTER CATHERINE WALLACE
IRENE DRUMMOND MURIEL DUCKWORTH BETTY PETERSON
MARGARET MARSHALL SAUNDERS DR. AGNES DENNIS
CLARA DENNIS CATHIE KNEEN LISMORE WOMEN'S GROUP
RUTH GOLDBLOOM MALI CHRISTIANNE PAUL MOLLISE
BRIDGET ANN SACK MARIE MacDONALD COLINE CAMPBELL
LOUISE COMEAU FLORA MacDONALD ROSE FORTUNE
VIOLA ROBINSON DAURENE LEWIS GRANNY ROSS
JANE SOLEY HAMILTON MARTHA JULIAN SYLVIA
RITA MacNEIL EDITH CLAYTON PEARLEEN OLIVER

For three weeks, slides were projected on an outside wall of Zeller's department store in downtown Halifax. The slides presented images and information on Nova Scotia women. Projection included two images per woman, horizontally arranged, of forty women. Each cycle took twenty minutes to a total presentation time of one hour (three complete cycles), starting at 8:30 p.m. A postcard was available at a mailbox on the street describing the project with a complete list of names.

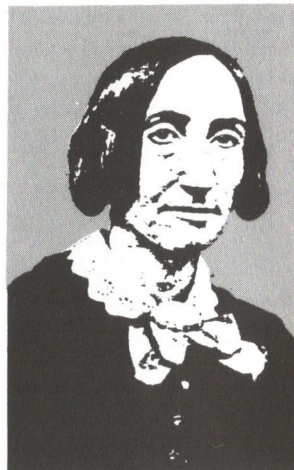
Background

The work *Some Fine Women* was done as a part of a site specific show *Locations/National*, in September 1983. It was organized through the Association of National Non-Profit Artists' Centres. The site I chose was one I had wanted to focus on in my art practice for some time: the view from my apartment window, which includes Zeller's store, the street, the pedestrians, and the city.

I had to consider questions of a social/political nature that arose from the material elements of the site:

1. Zeller's stores are largely directed to women customers and mostly staffed by women. Most Zeller's stores display windows show women in traditional homemaker roles.
2. The street is a location of discomfort to women, especially when alone and at night. In the evenings most downtown pedestrians are on their way to theatres, bars or home; they do not want to spend time gazing at complex critiques or following through a narrative structure.
3. Halifax is an old city with a strange mix of history and tradition, with ambitions for cosmopolitan development. Monuments and old buildings have few representations of women's, native, Black or Acadian history. Whose history? Whose future?
4. Nova Scotia often appears focused on Halifax. The women from outside the city are poorly documented. Our history, and therefore our present, has left out entire segments of our activities in the construction of our cultural identity in Nova Scotia.
5. This site is not a gallery and the audience is not an art audience that has made some decision to view a work. There are many elements to distract, unlike the gallery where the focus is generally expected to be on the work displayed.

Maria Frances Ann (Miller) Morris was born in 1813. By 25 she was teaching drawing and painting in Halifax. She is most well known for her watercolour paintings of local flowers in a naturalistic style. She supported herself through teaching and trying to sell her prints of flowers.



Wilhelmina "Willi" Williamson was born in 1916 and lived in Sheffield Mills, Kentville. There she taught school for 37 years. She was active in theatre and church community groups. She was also an activist for Black rights in the area.

Viola Robinson has been involved with Native politics since 1975 as President of the Native Council of Nova Scotia. Under her leadership many problems have been tackled from housing and education, to the recent Patriation of the Canadian Constitution.



After Words

This project was begun in the anticipation of a quickly constituted survey of women who have played significant roles in their communities. It soon became obvious that the "great leap forward" is but a foothold on history for the women's movement. Like a lot of us, I spend a great deal of time in theoretical considerations, assuming one of the first steps—that of inserting ourselves into history—has been done. It has not. And that is the first thing I learned.

The second thing I learned was that of the easy trap of taking only the dominant material available. I quickly saw that most documentation was of white bourgeois women—hardly surprising, but then, hard to circumvent. I did not leave them out, but I did seek out those whose history has been erased or eroded by biased writing: the Acadians, Native women and Black women. The numbers are far from satisfactory to me, but also, far from the dominant evidence available.

This suggests to me, the importance of maintaining our footings, rather than resting on assumptions of changed perceptions about history and who makes it. It also underlines the necessity to make sure that in the course of considering a feminist view, we meet face to face with the classism and racism which is a constant threat.



Alexandra Keir

Nose clogged, itch, scratch, itch. Gloved finger stubborn, probing, useless. Tikatikatikatika. Bales tossed from sunbaked wagon to hay conveyor are shunted into the shadows of the mow.

Legs apart, precarious on stacked bales, a faulty step means balance lost, pitched forward, scramble up ready to heave yet another bale to the woman who will wedge it in tight to the one beside. No laughing now, a long day leaves little energy for talking.

The woman on the tractor looks cool, just sitting, a light breeze lifts black hair from her face, loose wisps wrap tangled around her ear protectors. Hayseed flies as she passes. We wave.

Later, on the tractor, I watch the cutter bar slice through stalks of timothy and clover, swath after swath falling behind. The breeze that seemed so cool from the ground is heated and heavy with diesel fuel and though "just sitting," eyes dart: ahead to set the tractor on a straight course; scan deep grass for rocks that hit the cutting blade with an angry PING; glance at the three point hitch and power take off — connections good. Behind the eyes, sun's dull ache, checking, rechecking . . . mowing hay.

Afternoon. Sarah yanked, wrenched and twisted controls on the other tractor. The conditioner, hauled behind, squeezes hay removing moisture to speed drying.

Jane follows with the baler clunk clunk ker chunk ing clunk clunk ker chunk ing, loose hay forked up, augered tight, tied with twine and spat out behind — a bale.

. . . Clunk clunk ker chunk ing clunk clunk ker chunk ing, pray for that steady sound. Much downtime spent loosening, aligning, tightening, adjusting. Please make it through this field. And the next.

Susan Sturman

Near forty bales on the ground when the tractor and wagon arrive on the field with the rest of the crew: long pants, barebreasted, some with gloves. Seven women laughing, relaxed, strong.

Into first gear, ease out the clutch, slip into motion. Flexing biceps propel bales from the ground. Carmen on the wagon, jean cuffs tucked into socks to prevent chaff from clawing her bare legs, carefully stacks the bales for the trip to the barn. Layer upon layer until our taut, aching fingers loosen at her call from the top of the load, "ONE MORE BALE."

Shoulders tense, twitch with the weight of numb arms, toughened palms (this morning, changing a diaper, padded palms insensitive to softness meant caresses with the back of my hand). Slivers find a way under your skin, puss up a little and work their way out. Hayseed, itching, scratching, itching. Sweat beads gather on forearms, rivulets through dust leave pale skin, pus up a little and work their way out. Hayseed, itching, scratching, itching. Sweat beads gather on forearms, rivulets through dust leave pale plastered to neck.

Seven women, quiet. Walk down the hill behind the barn, kick off runners. Socks roll off past dirty heels. Slip into the river. ♣

Two Poems by **Liliane Welch**

Pindar's Maritime Odes

I heard Pindar in my dream
And his odes, a prism of myths,
Spelled out this land's stunned ground,
A backroad syntax unreeled

And fabulous marshes with red mud
Sprawled into sea, the dense ring
Of primeval woods, Fundy Bay
Smiling under ageless stars.

And New Brunswick, was for me,
Thigh-deep goldenrods, flickering spruce,
A fragrant forest hung with tales
Conjured by this absent bearer of song.

This dawn his hymns scan over
My page, still free of love's lift,
To rouse, obeisant to his chant,
A province cushioned on misty bogs.

And the farmers my pen quickens
And the hunters, all dreamy woods,
The tidal bore opening into the sun,
A chorus ferretted from the dark.

Rope labours: the first rappel

Your hands gleam as crosses
on the ribbed knot,
nerveless, rock-worn
when over the thin

whip of the rope
you drop trailless
hanging face-to-wall
to tread the cliff's beat:

fear, void, silence,
abyss-music,
sun-glare, dark morse
till your feet unseal

a secret pass that opens
glittering within
fissures and fractures,
and stillness blears your eyes.

Libby Oughton

And We Bleed . . .

When I was thirteen I started to bleed.
Mother gave me a piece of white cotton
strung between elastic to catch the flow
but said nothing about the wound, the cause.

From thirteen on I bled regularly.
The curse we whispered. At nineteen
I stopped bleeding. A small worm crept up
and infiltrated my red moon wound.

You told me you felt proud. Sparked a life.
Stopped the bleeding. Married me. Smoked cigars
with the boys. Strutted about. (You, who put out
a million soldiers to find one egg. Some conquest!)

I awoke in a new blood pool with a daughter
detached and a fear of you. I hated your pride
your violence to me, your wars, your soldiers.

Is it because you don't bleed like me
that you think you can get away with all
your violent acts clean and unwounded?
A bloodless coup? You hurl bombs, toss
stones, murder villages, flaunt your soldiers
as if you never bleed. While I bled without
choice to the cycles of the moon.

Listen. I know blood like my own heart
beating. Can you imagine us taking up arms
to shoot red holes in the living?
That first drop of thirteen year old
blood is enough violence for us
forever.
It's too bad you don't know blood
like me . . .

Portfolio



Two Photographers

Sara av Maat is thirty-one years old. Perpetually drawn by the call of the sea, she lives in Halifax. She studies photography, works in physiotherapy and makes her home in a women's co-op.

Barbara James is thirty years old. She focuses on a political and feminist content that celebrates the day-to-day lives of women and girls. Much of her twenty-three year-long career has been spent in Halifax amassing a prodigious collection (almost 6,000) of her photos of people and events. "My passion is my friends."



Georgette Roy: After Halifax Natal Day Race



Visit Home



Family Resemblances



Henna Party



Darlene Wood

The following is an excerpt from a novel in progress. It follows a young woman through basic training and her career in the Canadian Armed Forces until she is discharged for being a lesbian. The protagonist, Carri Copse, has to adjust to civilian life after the debilitating effects of the resocialisation process she experienced while in the military.

The idea of talking to anyone scared Carri. She resisted the idea for a long time. But now that she was back from Vancouver she was determined to get involved in feminism. Just being slightly involved in the Reclaim the Night march convinced her that she would find some answers. Sandy told her about a friend who was released from the Armed Forces for the same reason Carri had been and who would be willing to talk about it.

Carri stood at the bus stop trying to get up enough courage to keep their appointment. "So this is Sandy's 'Woman's Space'."

She half-ran across the street, dodging the traffic and trying to study the architecture of the house. She scaled a set of stairs beyond the lobby. Looking directly up she could see the bannister spiraling three flights. Laughter drifted down from an open door on the first landing. She liked the sound of the female voices, husky and airy — alive and breaking into fits of laughter every few seconds. Carri hesitated in front of a doorway of what looked like a kitchen. On one side of the long room was a stove and refrigerator, on the other a sink full of cups; the rest was office space — shelves packed with magazines, books and files lining the end wall, and a huge table-desk with a telephone on it. She felt an immediate sense of warmth.

Women sitting around the cleared end of the table turned one by one as they became aware of her. One stood up and smiled at her, extending her hand.

"Hi, can I help you? My name is Susan, I'm the co-ordinator here." The woman looked average — average height, average weight. Her long black hair slipped from behind an ear as she shook Carri's reluctant hand. She's nice, Carri thought, as she responded with a shy grin.

"Hello, I'm Carri Copse. I was supposed to meet Karen Murray here." It came out sounding like a half-question.

One woman sat back casually sipping her coffee. "Karen asked me to let you know that she'll be here 'L.S.T.' and not to let you run away before she can get here." The look on Carri's face brought a chorus of laughs from around the table. "Lesbian Standard Time," she explained. "That's approximately half an hour after a meeting is supposed to start. I'm Patty." Still smiling, she pointed to a young blond who had a cleft in her chin that Carri felt she could very easily get lost in. "This is Sally, a house volunteer." Sally nodded and smiled before turning back to her telephone conversation. "And this," Patty touched a young woman sitting beside her, her face softening, "is Kim." "Something going on there," Carri deduced, acknowledging her with her eyes.

Susan pulled a chair forward for her and offered her coffee. Carri sat back and listened to the conversation. These people talked differently — freely. They said what they felt.

As the time passed, Carri became absorbed in their stories. It appeared that none of them were employed but she could tell by their conversation they were well-educated. They seemed to have forgotten she was there, yet she wasn't offended and got caught up in their talk. Serious discussions would break out into fits of laughter over things she didn't find particularly funny. Like a man at some club mistaking the woman named Patty for a man and trying to pick her up.

A woman came running noisily up the stairs and into the room. Carri could feel her breath give way to a gasp, and prayed no one had noticed. The woman had short curly hair. Not so much curly as wavy, with unruly pieces sneaking into an occasional curl. She was five-foot seven or eight and every inch embodied confidence. Her eyes were green, maybe blue, it was hard to tell from where Carri sat. Her brown tweed suit jacket hung open and was pushed back at the hips by her hands stuffed in the pockets of her Annie Hall slacks.

The woman glanced around the room, greeted everyone with genuine affection. She strode over to where the blond sat. Carri couldn't remember her name. She was on the phone again, taking notes. The woman hugged her first and then embraced the others in turn, everyone but Susan. "She must be straight," Carri thought. The woman's mouth then curved upward in devilment as she swung her arms around Susan in a bear hug. The co-ordinator turned pink and tried to look unaffected. The others in the room watched, amused.

Patty, the one with a brown belt in assertiveness training, spoke up. "Karen, this is Sandy's friend Carri Copse."

"Hi, Sandy's told me a lot about you. It's great to finally get to meet you." Her voice was throaty, strong, with a smooth articulate delivery. Karen's eyes were clear and glistening, the kind that changed with the colour of her clothing, she decided, as she reached her hand out to receive the even grip of the one offered.

Karen led her into a room that must have served as the parlour when the house was still a private home. She picked an armchair and sat slightly forward. Carri liked the woman immediately and absurdly trusted her: her manner was calm and comfortable. Carri felt she could be blunt.

"Sandy tells me you were released from the Forces too for being a lesbian." She stared into the woman's face, watching for a reaction. It came, a very slight widening of her eyes.

"Yes, about three years ago. Someone who I thought was my best friend implicated me while she was being interrogated. I don't think she meant to, she was just too scared not to." An old pain was being drawn up from where it had been carefully stored over the years. It showed on her face, the suffering was still there.

Carri swallowed. "Happens a lot."

"Ya, a lot."

"What did you do?" Carri asked, her voice shaky. It never seemed to get any easier to talk about it.

Karen looked at her steadily. "What can you do?" Carri looked back at the older woman only now noticing the smoothness of her skin, slightly relaxed under her chin, but otherwise tight and ageless. A patch of gray ran through her hair above her right ear. She figured Karen was around forty.

They shared a sense of anger. "Why did it happen?" She sat still, the cords in her neck sticking out, the veins in her hands visible as she tightened her grip on the arms of the chair.

Karen sighed, her brows separating, her forehead smoothing out. "What happened to us isn't just a personal attack, it's political." Carri folded her arms defensively across her breasts and sat back into the softness of the oddly-shaped seat. She hadn't expected this. "Political?"

"Just being a lesbian is political. That's the way the world is. By men and for men, and being a lesbian sure as hell is in conflict with that." A small grin replaced the tightness around her mouth. Carri leaned forward again. Karen smiled wider and nodded, seeing that Carri was trying to grasp what she was getting at. "It's a misogynistic society."

"Huh?"

"Woman-hating."

"Oh."

"The same thinking that lets rape happen runs the military."

"Am I being dense when I say that I don't see the connection?"

"No, it's just that it's hard to say in less than fifteen volumes of feminist analysis on the patriarchy as a sexist, classist and racist structure." Her grin

expanded to include Carri.

"Try me."

"Were you at the Reclaim the Night march? Good. Well, remember when Ann spoke about violence against us just because we are women, and that it happened every day in a thousand different ways affecting every part of our lives? Well, it kind of operates on a continuum. From the time we're born female, it ranges from making us into passive little girls to justifying rape and murder."

Carri shook her head. "I guess I can fit it together in terms of rape, but how about the military and being gay?"

"I'm sorry, I guess I've been into feminism for so long it's easy to forget how I got here from there. The process takes a long time and the concepts aren't always easy."

"Maybe it's enough right now to say that anything — especially lesbianism — that challenges maleness and male authority can be a threat to the whole of society. And because the military is an exaggeration of it all, well . . . So, of course they want to get rid of us, but not for the reasons they give us." Karen leaned back and ran her hand over the wavy crop of hair. Her dimples deepened and her eyes sparkled.

"I just felt ignorant, that's all. It's a lot to take in all at once. I'll think about it, okay?"

"Fair enough."

Carri leaned back too, and played with the lace of her runner. She asked softly, without looking up, "Were you angry?"

The older woman laughed. "Angry . . . I was fucking furious." She hesitated and the room got extremely quiet. "I was so confused when it happened I turned all of their hatred and fear inside myself. I started to become exactly what they said I was, emotionally unstable. How are you supposed to figure it out? You name it, we were it: oversexed, undersexed, bi-sexual, multi-sexual, asexual." She had Carri with her now and they laughed together. "When I joined the Forces I don't remember anyone asking, 'By the way what is your sexual preference?'"

"Seriously, we were resocialized. I call it brainwashed. It took months of intensive indoctrination to train me to their way of thinking and reacting. When I was released, I was thrown back into an alien society without being prepared at all." Karen took a deep breath and slowly expelled it, closing her eyes. "I'm sorry, I guess it still affects me more than I care to admit. Maybe the anger never goes away, but maybe that's alright too. I'm beginning to learn to direct it against those assholes out there and not at myself and other women I love."

"That's almost the same thing Sandy told me." She felt a pang of longing, and looked at the woman's mouth and then at her eyes, trying to erase her image of Sandy's sheaf of golden hair tied back in the usual black and white triangle scarf. She felt like taking a risk. "Would you like to have lunch with me?"

Karen inspected her for a second and then nodded. "I think I'd like that."

Two Poems by **Maxine Tynes**

Crazy Luce

For Lucy Mitchell, who died a one-hundred-year old Black woman in 1910; known most of her adult life as "Crazy Luce", because of eccentric dress and behaviour in the streets. But she surely was somebody's sweet child once; and probably wanted to be somebody's lover, friend, wife, and mama.

Crazy Luce.

Crazy Luce. Who are you?

Who are you?

Who are you, Black woman called crazy?

Crazy Luce

frozen on a page dated 1880

frozen in the Nova Scotia Archives

looking, sounding

written for all the world to see as crazy

yet; looking, sounding

written up as any woman. person, man, person of

stage, screen, play, dance

entertainment!

your carnival game/life/world

of living

crazy in your music-loving dress

crazy in your crazy hat

crazy in your crazy ways

did you laugh with no teeth?

did you rollflash white eye?

did you shimmy-shuffle

body/bum wave

wiggle shuckjive dance

broken man-boot footed

clanging tambourine jangle?

did you paint the air fore and aft
with your wild rosehip
burdock bush, tansy tea
months of same clothes
same dress over dress over dress
warm mossy woman smell?

no luxury of hot bath waiting
no luxury of time for
no luxury of wanting to
no luxury of needing to
be crazy luce crazy luce crazy luce crazy luce crazy

generations earlier,
in white, white, whiter skin, and man-body
you would have been an artful
and cherished player on some bard's boards . . .
in my time
if you had descended time's ladder
in my time
you would be Diana Ross, Moms Mabley, Pearl Bailey,
sequins, Broadway, Johnny Carson, Ebony Magazine fine

but in your poor, poor Black self and lifetime
frozen on a page dated 1880
from the Nova Scotia Archives of stark remnants of Blackpast
you are crazy, Luce.
Black and crazy, Luce.
Crazy Luce.

Womanskin

women
we keepers and sharers of ancient secrets
of loving
and making homes of houses
of loving
and making love
of loving
and making life
of loving
and making our men whole
of loving
and being women, wives, mothers, sisters, daughters, lovers,
strong, aunts, free, grandmothers, constant, nieces,
women, and Black
we women of colour
distant daughters of
the Nile, the Sahara, Kenya, Zaire, Sudan
the Serengeti
we dance the body-music of light and shadow
we share the palette spectrum
the obsidian sunshade
burnished blue-black brown tantan sepia
coffeecoffee cream ebony
delight of womanskin
strong in
alive in
free in
loving in
working in
laughing in
sharing in
mothering in
growing in
aging in
this skin
this night shade of many shades
this womanskin
we women
keepers and sharers of ancient secrets.

FOUR THE MOMENT



Interviewed by **Pamela Godfree**

The following is an interview with Delvina Bernard, one member of Four The Moment, the Nova Scotian women's a cappella quartet. The other group members are Kim Bernard, Debby Jones and Beth Levinson. Jackie Barkley is a former group member who is now its manager.

P.G. First, how did you get together and decide to form the group?

D.B. There's four of us. There's my sister, Kim Bernard, there's Debby Jones and, presently, Beth Levinson. Before Beth, Jackie Barkley was the other person. And that's not even the original four either. It was more complicated than that. What happened was — there was a rally against the Ku Klux Klan. They were threatening to set up in Halifax. The justice minister almost gave them the red carpet. He was asked to make a comment on their coming here. He made a wishy-washy statement — something to the effect that the government can't set the precedent of outlawing an organisation. He could have at least said, 'We can't do anything about it within the judicial system, however, you're not welcome in this city.' So, a group of interested citizens got together and put a rally on. They wanted an entertainment component. At the time, Jackie Barkley and I were working at Children's Aid. She knew that I played guitar. She said, 'Let's get together and sing a song.' We sang Bob Marley's "Get Up Stand Up" and another couple of songs that I can't remember. They really liked it. Then there was a benefit for the Abortion Referral Line. They got in touch with Jackie and asked if she could get the same people to sing something for that. Jackie went to the store and picked up this really neat record by a group from the States — Sweet Honey in the Rock. You know them, right?

P.G. Yes, I do.

D.B. The cut that she wanted us to sing was "Joanne Little." She said, 'I heard this really neat song, and I want us to sing it.' When I heard it I said, 'Jackie, that's got four and five part harmony in it. You and I can't sing that!' I loved the song, it just blew me away, even on my scratchy record player.

So I called one of my sisters — Kim and my cousin Deanna. The four of us practised the song, and got it down by heart. One song to go up and sing at this benefit! So, we went and sang it. We're up there looking at everyone — we had no encore so we sang it twice. That's how we got started. That was the original four. From there, whenever something was going on in the city, like a concert or a benefit — mainly the benefit circle — we sang.

We've done an El Salvador benefit with a singing group called Yolocamba Ita that the Latin American Information Group brought to Halifax. We've done benefits for a Black youth organisation in a Nova Scotian home for coloured children. It's an orphanage that's been going for fifty-odd years. My father was brought up there, incidentally. Now it's a group home.

P.G. Can you tell me who does which voice?

D.B. Jackie was singing bass, or as low as she could get. It's really hard for a woman to sing deep, deep bass. I don't know too many women who can. I'm an alto (I also do some leads), and Kim is a soprano.

P.G. Is there a tenor in there somewhere?

D.B. I don't know, how can I put it? Kim and Debbie are both sopranos. They trade off. Jackie and I have a similar range. Beth (who has just started singing with us), and I both have the same range, but she will be singing bass.

P.G. I'm wondering what communities you have come out of. What do all of you bring into the group?

D.B. There's about 30,000 Blacks in Nova Scotia. Most are concentrated in the Halifax area, which is where Kim and I are from. Debby is from Truro, Nova Scotia. It's quite a small town. Her background, vocally, is mainly just learning to sing on her own, like going to church, etc. No formal musical training or voice training. Same situation for Kim and I, in our family, just sitting around singing, we learned on our own. The two of us would get together and I'd play guitar. We'd sing in harmony. We'd sing in concert in the community from time to time.

P.G.: Did you have trouble taking yourselves seriously as performers? I think that's something as women, too, that you might have some hesitation.

D.B. It was really strange. It was all quite by accident, the formation of the group. It's not like we sat down and said, 'O.K., we all sing, and we all have similar interests in terms of the issues that we want to sing about, like women's issues, Black issues or social issues. Therefore, the accidental nature of our coming together as musicians made it somewhat difficult for

us to take ourselves seriously. It just happened that we all come from similar backgrounds. Debby once commented that political consciousness in her family was about the essentials like bread and butter. The same is true of my family and Jackie's experiences have been similar. We were all conscious of the same types of issues. We said, 'Let's express the feelings of Black Nova Scotia or of women in Nova Scotia, *our* feelings.'

I didn't tell you how Debby got in the group. She wasn't one of the original members. I think Debby came in after we had performed three times. My cousin Deanna could no longer sing with us because of other commitments. Debby and I worked together at Canada Manpower. She was always humming and singing around the office. I said, 'Do you sing?' She said, 'Yes, I sing a little.' It was good timing because when my cousin said she couldn't sing with us anymore, it was only ten days before we were supposed to record for C.B.C. So Debby had to learn all these songs in ten days. She made it under the wire. I just said to her, 'Come over tonight, we're going to practise. You can jam with us.' She started singing and boom! that's how she came into the group.

P.G.: Do you do any other artists' material?

D.B. We do a song by Johnny Nash — "I Can See Clearly Now" and a song from the Fame album — "Starmaker." We've done a tiny bit of gospel, "Glory, Glory Hallelujah."

P.G. As far as your original material goes, do you collectively write songs or does someone bring in lyrics that you put to music?

D.B. That's what happens, the latter. We don't write collectively. So far, I've written and arranged some of the original material. A man from Nova Scotia named George Clarke has written some material for us.

P.G. He's a poet.

D.B. Yes, he has a book of poems published. He wrote a poem called "Lydia Jackson," as well as "West Hants County" which we put to music. I did the vocal arrangement and music for those two. There's a reggae song that we do called "Rock and A Hard Place." I did the words to that and Harvey Millar — he's my partner in crime — did the music.

Even though the other women haven't done any writing, they still contribute largely to the working out of the material in that everybody has a really good music sense. And if I were to come up with some shit, they'd say, 'Heh, this ain't going.' That's the good thing. I'll say, 'O.K., this is what I dreamed up,' and I'll put it down on paper. I'll play a few notes on guitar and we'll just get a tape recorder. Then I'll run it by them and they'll say, 'Yah, that's fine,' or, 'No, let's try something else.'

P.G. How would you characterise your music? What would you call your style?

D.B. If I could do it? (*laughs*) That's hard. It's a fusion. You can't slot it into a category. It's a fusion between folk and gospel. I think the group would agree with me. It's got a spiritual kind of meaning, especially when you see it performed, because it's very intimate. And there aren't any instruments, so it's very personal and emotional music. We tell stories with our songs.

P.G. Would you say that your music could be an instrument of social change? Do you see it in political terms at all?

D.B. Some people would say, 'No, it's not. It's just history singing.' Other people would say, 'Yes, it is an instrument of social change, there's definitely political content.' I agree with the latter. How much it will do I don't know. But nothing is achieved by doing nothing. (*laughs*) It's as simple as that. We feel good about the fact that we're able to sing about something with deeper meaning. That's one of the binding factors in terms of the group members. I think it would be very difficult if any one of us was to leave the group and we brought in somebody that wasn't committed to our music, our issues. Now the group has taken a serious turn — having a manager. Jackie's going to be our manager. She is a former member and therefore committed to the message in the music... a manager that puts musical content ahead of musical contacts! We don't want to commercialise ourselves. Glory and fame is not what we're into. We're committed to what the words are saying.

P.G. Who do you see as your audience?

D.B. I think we get a good cross section. People are listening — surprisingly. Halifax is a very conservative little town. Small, conservative, white. We are a group of three Black women and one white woman. We walk into a bar and you have your Saturday afternoon beer-drinkers. We were going to sing at this place one Saturday night and we went there in the afternoon to do our sound check when the regular crowd was there. We went up and sang "Dream Variations" — a poem by Langston Hughes (Sweet Honey put it to music). It's got some pretty moving words. You could have heard a pin drop. They stopped; they listened. They applauded and asked us to sing some more. And we said, 'We're not here to perform, we just came to do a sound check!'

We sang in a Black church — one of the Black communities that has held onto its religious roots more so than some of the others — in North Preston. We sang "Dream Variations," "Oughta Be A Woman" and "On Children."

Then there was the matter of choosing Beth. People came to us and suggested that we keep the same racial dimensions. They said that the

audience might respond differently if there were four Black women. With Beth, we draw the white audience. They can feel a part of what we're singing. With a Black woman, they would feel differently. If it were four Black women, the response might be, 'There's four racist Blacks up there telling us whites that we're prejudiced!' That's the way Halifax is — it's ultra, ultra conservative and covertly racist.

P.G. In a way, the white woman legitimises you to the point where you can reach another audience. That must have its benefits and its disadvantages.

D.B. Uh-huh. At one point, Debby was in France and we were going to get someone to sing in her place. We had a hard time finding a Black woman however, and a lot of white women were interested. When we sat down and talked about it with different people — Black and white both — we were told not to have fifty/fifty because Black people would say, 'Who are you, singing about all these Black issues, when you're not even a Black group?' We couldn't have legitimately represented Blacks. So three-quarters is fine. It's like having the home court advantage. The majority rules! And even the white audience would feel the same way. That was a very important thing that we had to realise.

P.G. Did you hold auditions to find a new member and Beth happened in on it?

D.B. Beth called me because somebody had told her about our group. It was funny... she was on her way to Connecticut to the New England Women's Music Retreat to hear Sweet Honey (who didn't show up). She was telling a friend and her friend said, 'I know some women in Halifax who sing some of their songs.' So Beth called me and, at the time, we were looking for someone. I didn't know that she sang or anything. So, we talked and we had the same kind of ideas in terms of issues. She came over and we just jammed for a bit. And then I said, 'Let's get the rest of the group over here.' They came over and heard her and they thought she was good. So we took her in. She's like us too — no formal musical training. Her sister plays guitar — just like Kim and I.

P.G. Are you all students or do some of you work?

D.B. At one point — and that was a difficult time to schedule practices — everyone was going to university. Jackie is working now, she has a Masters in Social Work. I did my Bachelor of Commerce in Finance. I work now too — but not in what I trained for. I work in a transition house for battered women. Kim is a student at St. Mary's doing her B.A. in Psychology. Debby graduates this year from Dalhousie with a B.A. in French. Beth is a student at the Nova Scotia School of Art and Design. She's from Montreal. She's

planning to stay on in Halifax if all is well with the group.

P.G. What's it like in Halifax as far as support among musicians?

D.B. We haven't gone into the mainstream of music. We've done the university route and benefit circles and some recording with C.B.C. We played a local bar named Ginger's. It's a musicians' bar. It's nice to play a club where you can get feedback from other musicians. You can feel confident that the comments are coming from some degree of expertise. We haven't done the club circuit because we're not unionised, and we weren't singing often enough to make it pay for us. The C.B.C. gave us a lot of mileage. We were on several national airings and a lot of local airings. In Halifax, the local radio stations aren't going to give you a boost. C.B.C. gave us contacts with people who run folk festivals. We got to play with people like Rita MacNeil and Nancy White. They gave us pointers like, 'Go to Toronto.' *(laughs)*

P.G. What about living in the Atlantic? Does that inhibit you in getting your music out to the rest of Canada?

D.B. It does and it doesn't matter what kind of music you're singing. Talking to other musicians, everybody keeps saying you've got to go to Toronto — you can't do it in Halifax. The national contacts are not in Halifax, especially in the way of record contracts. It's becoming clearer and clearer. The reason that we haven't pursued a lot of this is because it's been a sidekick. Our main interest was school and music was a personal love as opposed to a possible profession. But we've done over thirty performances, for crowds of forty to seven thousand.

P.G. What are your plans for the future?

D.B. I think we're ready to move. We had to build up a little confidence at home first. We've done the major things that there are to do in Halifax. When you've sung at the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium, you've sung at the best place in the Atlantic. We've stood the test of Halifax and the thing to do now is get out of the city. That's Jackie's immediate plan. We want to line up some solid performances in places of recognition — some folk festivals.

P.G. Have you heard that there's going to be the first women's music festival in Winnipeg this September?

D.B. That would be ideal. It would be highlighted because it will be the first. People will pay attention to see how it goes. Winnipeg, that sounds good. . . .

Four The Moment will be in Toronto April 28th and 29th, 1984 at A Space, 204 Spadina Avenue. For more information please call 364-3227.

Rock and A Hard Place

The time has come again
when no more should we stand
for all these passive negotiations

With placards in our hands
stand like we used to stand
shake Babylon with a mass demonstration

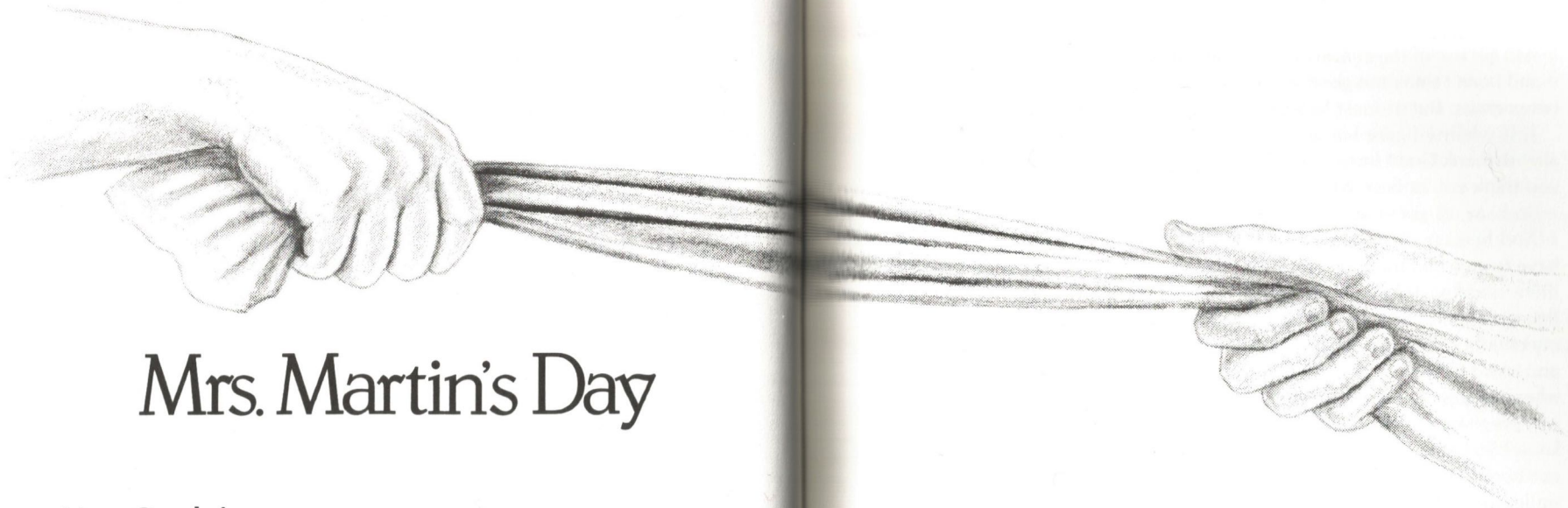
Discrimination
and oppression
No woman rests
in this society
and you and me
we're caught between
a rock and a hard place

Marcus, Martin and Malcolm
be shocked to see where we've come
not far enough for all of time's passing

We have put off for too long
the major notes in our song
come join in the chorus to bring back the power

Discrimination
and oppression
no Black man rests
in a white society
and you and me
we're caught between
a rock and a hard place

Lyrics by Delvina Bernard
Music by Harvey Millar, 1983



Mrs. Martin's Day

Mary Goodwin

Sometimes I just don't think life's worth living. I was up on Gottingen Street yesterday at the Sally Ann and I spent about an hour lookin for a blouse to wear to the party with my dark blue skirt and then I saw it. It was in the children's bin by mistake but I could see it was just perfect. A really pretty pale blue exactly the same blue as my skirt only about six shades lighter and long sleeves like I prefer cause my arms are skinny and as soon as I saw it I knew it was gonna fit me like a glove — sometimes at the Sally Ann that happens to me — I see something and I get a warm glow in my stomach and I know it's mine. I don't even hafta try it on I know it's gonna fit — I never been wrong yet. Anyway I reached out for that pretty baby blue and this bitch kinda crept up and her hand shot out like a lizard's tongue and she took the god damn blouse. I was so mad I coulda shit. And I hung around waitin to see if she'd put it back but she never did. Of course I knew there was no point lookin for anything else. You only strike gold once in that place.

Then I get out of the Sally Ann — it's pourin rain. And I, of course, don't have a coat. And this is only noon eh! So then I gotta go home and get a coat before I go to this one o'clock appointment I got. And I was planning to go straight from the Sally Ann. So I figure I'm probably gonna be late and I practically break my neck gettin home and then downtown in time and the busdriver, naturally, was this bastard who pulls away from the bus stop like he's in a god damn road rally and I go flying half way down the bus.

When I get to the doctor's office I'm not in a great mood. The social worker made the appointment for me. They figure I need a psychiatrist. I think they're scared I'm gonna beat up the kids. I don't know. Maybe they're

right. I'm sure as hell mad a lot of the time. Anyway this shrink — he puts me off the minute I lay eyes on him eh! You know what I mean? He's got this ritzy office and I'm sitting in the waiting room pretending to read this stupid magazine and ignoring this stupid receptionist who has these bright red nails about six inches long and this real cute frigging afro and the door opens and out comes the shrink. And he's got this real class act, you know, like calls my name out in this mellow voice and watches me as I walk across the room and then makes a sign like I should go in first and my skin starts to crawl cause I can practically feel his breath on my neck and I got no idea which god damn chair I'm supposed to sit in — so I turn around and look at him and he just gives me this mysterious smile like it's a god damn test — so I pick the uncomfortable lookin chair cause I figure I need my wits about me with this guy and also the one furthest away from what I figure is his chair. But then the stupid bastard, instead of sittin behind his desk, like I expect him to, sits in this big armchair to the side of me. So now I look like a fool sittin there facing the desk. So I have to turn around sideways to see the asshole.

After lookin at me with a dumb smile for about a week he finally says, "I understand Miss Crombie, your social worker, sent you here."

I say, "yes" and he sits there nodding his head and gets this serious look on his face like he's just had a real sad conversation about me with Miss Crombie. By now I want to get up and run out of the room or throw an ashtray at the guy. So I ask him if I can have a cigarette and he says, "certainly," and then says maybe I would be more comfortable in the other chair and points to the ashtray on the table beside the other big chair. So at

least I get out of the centre of the room but the big chair is so soft I sink into it and I can't think too good and now we're side by side with the little table between us. But at least he wasn't staring straight at me anymore.

Just when I figure we're gonna sit there all afternoon staring straight ahead (thank God I smoke — it gave me something to do), he says, "Why do you think you're here, Mrs. Martin?"

So I say, "I guess because I got a pretty bad temper."

And he says, "You have?" like he doesn't know anything about it, so I have to give him this long rundown on all the times I've been violent. He sat there nodding like he understood — fat chance — I bet nobody's ever thrown a can of beer at that pretty head. Then he wanted to know all about my childhood — what the hell — I told him all about my dad beatin' us up and how I hate my mom and all. I don't mind. It's no big secret. So then just when I'm gettin' to the good part about how I ran away from home when I was pregnant — the guy looks at his watch. He figured I didn't notice, you know? So I stop and I give him this look — like what the hell kinda act you got buddy — and he gives me another one of his "bless you my child" smiles and tells me to go on. So I finished the story but I was feeling kinda shitty then so I hurried it up. I didn't want to make the bastard miss his god damn coffee break or whatever. So then when I'm done there's this long silence while he pretends to think deeply — right? — about what I just said and nods and pushes his button so he gets that serious look back on his face. Then he says, "Mrs. Martin, I think you ought to consider coming to see me regularly."

I try to look at him intelligently only he's lookin' at the wall.

"You seem to me to be in need of therapy."

I nod like I figure he's just said something I didn't know. I wanted to say, "Well I'm sure in need of something buddy, but I doubt if it's you."

However I just nod. So then he swivels his head towards me and pushes his button for the "Jesus loves you" smile. I mumble something bright like, "O.K. Doctor," and he looks at his watch again and I can take a hint so I get up. I must have done the right thing cause he got up and opened the door and said to the receptionist to give me an appointment for the next week.

We worked it out and she flicked me a little white card from those claws of hers and out I went feeling shitty and mad. Like why did I tell a creep like that the story of my life?

It was still raining, and I had to wait for ages for the bus and when I got home the kids were back and the house was a mess and I forgot to take out the meat so supper was frozen and I yelled at everyone. Then Bill came home and I yelled at him.

Something I didn't tell the shrink is how the one time I feel good and safe and O.K. is when I'm painting. I took art in high school and I liked it so I just kept at it. So I went into the back room and took a look at the picture I was workin' on. It's a picture of these guys sittin' around the Seahorse Tavern gettin' tanked up and talking the usual bullshit politics.

That made me feel so much better I decided to go to the party even

without the blue blouse. The people who were gonna be at the party I didn't really know. This lady — Sonia — who came to look at my stuff invited me. I figured what the hell — maybe one of her friends would buy a painting. So Bill was speaking to me by then and said he would look after the kids.

When I got to the party, this Sonia brought me in and introduced me to a few people. It was what I expected. The kind of people who dress like hippies but really aren't — if you know what I mean. Like they go to bars instead of beer parlours and you can tell that their clothes cost plenty. Also they talk like somebody on C.B.C.

Well I was standin' in the corner, eyeing the action, and tryin' to drink my vodka slow so I could keep a grip on things. They were all laughing and being cool and tryin' to sound intelligent. And I could see the way that a few of them were tryin' to size me up and decide whether I was worth bothering with or not — like is that lady in the corner a mysterious stranger or is she just standing there because she's an idiot? I'll never tell.

It got later and some real hippies from the Seahorse Tavern arrived and came over to talk and that drew over some of the others who, when they found out I was a painter, were thrilled, of course, and I went through the usual bullshit with them but it looked like I might get a nibble or two.

However, I was still feeling sort of shitty thinkin' these are probably the kind of people that shrink hangs around with — real style setters. And I had talked so much to him I was still a little raw and I didn't really feel like spillin' my guts about painting.

Then, who do I see but Miss Crombie, my fuckin' social worker. Unbelievable! She was standing in the doorway between the kitchen and the living room, and she had a drink and she was talking to this guy. I was too far away to hear her but it seemed like she was mad. He's smiling at her and she's talkin' at him — really pissed off. He's pretty drunk. Then, it seems like she said the wrong thing because he lifts up his head and really laughs at her, and she looks like she's gonna kill him and then throws her drink in his face. I couldn't believe my eyes. Then he sputters and looks startled for a minute, and the people around them kind of stop talking and watch and then he reaches out and pours his drink over her head. Fantastic. I could have jumped up and down. She looks shocked, then mad, then turns around and heads for the bathroom.

I left right after that. Went outside and stood on the sidewalk and laughed and laughed. So fuckin' Miss Crombie's a fuckin' human being.

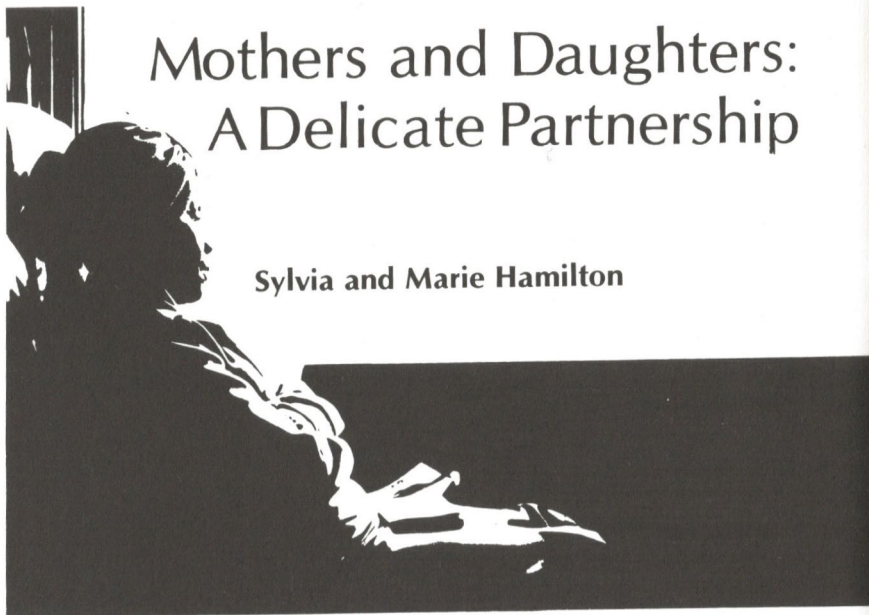
I felt so good I just walked home. And I thought maybe I can put up with the bullshit for a while longer. Maybe I can even put up with the shrink. Every time he gets me down I'll just picture that booze running down Miss Crombie's face.

Yeah — mostly I don't think life's worth livin' — but once in a while things work out.

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Mothers and Daughters: A Delicate Partnership

Sylvia and Marie Hamilton



The following is a transcript of a presentation made at the Fifth Annual Conference of the Canadian Research Institute For The Advancement of Women, held in Halifax, Nova Scotia in the fall of 1981. The theme of the conference was "Women and Culture." Sylvia Hamilton and her mother, Marie Hamilton, were one pair at a workshop entitled "Socialisation: Mothers and Daughters."

Marie: I was born in Halifax. My mother had six children. A sister and myself were the only two who lived. My mother was very sick and suffered a great deal with asthma. My aunt cared for us.

Sylvia: Some of my earliest memories are of being taken by my mother to the school where she taught. I was not old enough to go to school and I'm not sure what Mom did with my younger brother, though on thinking back, he likely stayed with my grandmother or my aunt. My other four brothers and sisters were all in school. I remember feeling rather grown-up being able to go to school with my mother. I must have been only three or four at the time. Nonetheless, I worked along with the rest of the students, not knowing that Mom had given me work quite different from them.

Marie: I finished high school, and by that time most of my friends had already left school. There were very few Blacks who stayed in school then. I enjoyed school and my mother encouraged me to continue. As I watched my aunt and many other Black women — parents of my friends — working so hard, I felt there must be another way. I watched my aunt leave home

very early in the morning and work so late into the night. Cleaning a whole house, washing dishes, and ironing. I would go after school some days to help her. I decided to become a nurse but I found out I could not enrol; I was told there were no Blacks accepted. So I decided to enrol at Teacher's College in Truro (Nova Scotia).

Sylvia: When it was finally time for me to go to school, for real, I guess I took the whole matter rather seriously. I'm told by my family that not only did I ask lots of questions, but I also took it upon myself to correct my brothers and sisters if they mispronounced words. And I quizzed them on how to spell words I considered hard. While it was obviously bothersome to them, I have memories of my mother patiently answering questions and helping me with my homework. Even today, that patience seems just as strong; she sits with my three year old nephew, reading him stories, teaching him words and responding to his many demands.

M: My first practice teaching assignment was at North Preston.* While there, I received word that my mother had died. She only lived to see me in my teaching position for one month. I married and had a family of six children — three daughters and three sons. I continued my teaching in various Black communities. I made my home in Beechville, a Black community that was established in 1816.

S: When I was young a favourite passtime was pitching rocks to see who could throw the rock the farthest. Since we had a lake in the centre of the community, the game was most often played there. It was easy to see who won: the ripples were the visible evidence. But the diehards among us would play anywhere. En route to school one day, my rock seemed to take on a mind of its own. Rather than landing in the trees by the roadside, it smashed through the window of a neighbour's house. Everyone began to run, fearing what would happen when Mr. X made his way to the front of the house. Before he could threaten me with, "I'll tell your mother on you," I owned up, and apologised for breaking his window. I informed him that I would tell my mother myself, and we would pay for his window. In our household, you admitted error and accepted responsibility for your actions.

M: I always told my children to tell me the truth, and that if they did something wrong, to come to me first. They always had a chance to tell their side of the situation. We dealt with problems openly, as mother and daughter. I felt that my children would know that they had my love and understanding. And they knew what was expected of them. Girls are

* North Preston is one of several Black communities located in Halifax County. The history of people of African descent in Nova Scotia is traced to the early 1600's. Slavery existed in Nova Scotia during this and later periods. Major migrations of Blacks into Nova Scotia occurred following the American Revolution and the War of 1812.

generally raised to be mothers and wives, but boys are not raised to be husbands and fathers. In my home I tried to raise my children to feel equal to each other. I can recall when my first child, a son, was born. Grandparents and relatives told me, "Don't let him cry too long, pick him up." I guess boys were not supposed to cry. What about girls? What was supposed to be the difference?

I played many roles in the Beechville community: I was a teacher, a wife, a mother, a church and community worker. Yet, I always made time to spend with my children. Even when I had to leave them to go to teach, they knew my heart was still there, in the home with them. There were times when my daughters could have complained about not having all the luxuries of other children. But they didn't, they were understanding, they learned to make the most of what they had. Some children had bikes and new clothes, and other things my children did not have. But I taught my children to share with each other what they did have. And I know that sharing still goes on today.

S: I suppose it was my own sense of responsibility that made it difficult for me to understand the turmoil that some of my high school classmates would go through when they failed a test, or stayed out too late, and the inevitable happened — they were grounded. I remember one female student being grounded for two weeks; she had to stay in the house as soon as she arrived home from school. She was not allowed visitors and she couldn't talk on the phone. It all seemed silly to me. I had no curfew, yet I had to be in at a "reasonable hour," and it was my responsibility to determine that. There were no strict rules or threats if I failed a test or exam. And I chose my own friends, male and female.

M: We mothers treat our daughters differently; we help them to be more capable of caring for themselves, and to feel a sense of equality. I allowed Sylvia to travel alone when she was young even though I was timid. But I allowed her to go because it was a chance to see if she would use the training she had been given at home. I also wanted her to learn to look after herself in new situations. I always discussed my experiences with all my children in order to help them deal with white society. I taught them to never, ever feel inferior. A few years ago, at my place of work, a lady came in to see the supervisor. While waiting she said to me, "My, your floors are beautiful." She assumed I had to be the scrub woman. I kindly pointed out the housekeeper to her. I shared such stories with my daughters; they would have to know how to deal with such situations.

S: When I entered grade nine, which at that time was the first year of high school, I was strongly told by my homeroom teacher that I should enrol in the general course for grade ten. In her words: "It would be the best for you." Very strange I thought — my marks were good, and besides, she didn't know me or what I was capable of doing. She gave me a form and



Left to right: Ada, Marie Hamilton, Janet & Sylvia Hamilton

told me to take it home and have my mother sign it — not read it, just sign it. I remember her saying that eventually I would be able to get a "little" job for myself. The form did not go home with me, but I told Mom about the incident, and ignored all further comments from her about taking the general course. When I graduated from high school and entered university, I wondered just what "little job" that teacher had in mind for me. Mom said there were few Blacks in her school, and I can say that in the late 1960's the same situation existed when I graduated from high school.

M: All my daughters had their own minds and ideas. My goal was to help them become responsible and to stand up for their rights and themselves. I wanted them to be able to come to me at all times. Now, when they visit, you will find us all in the kitchen having fun and talking while other families would spend their time watching television. I tried to set an example for my daughters, and then left the rest up to them. I did not judge them, I could not live their lives. They had to make their own choices.

S: It was during my years at university that I consciously realised I had had a somewhat privileged upbringing. I had learned life skills which many of my fellow students were just becoming aware of: independence, responsibility, decision-making, a sense of identity and humour, and how to make do with very, very, scarce resources. Above all, I had learned never to be ashamed of my race, and in fact to be proud of it. I learned this at a time when so many things around me were working overtime to deny and invalidate our existence as a race. And in the face of this, I had learned not to hate. If you asked me when and how I learned these life lessons from my mother, I couldn't fully tell you. Some I've learned from her direct teaching, but a lot more from her presence and her strong example. I remember once Mom had to go to the school to talk to the principal about my oldest sister....

M: I came home from school and my oldest daughter was very upset. I asked her what had happened. She said the teacher smacked her across the face. I asked her why; so she told me. I wanted to know her side of the story. I said, 'Is this the truth?' She said yes. I told her not to worry, we would go to school together the next morning.

When I arrived at the school with my daughter, I told her to go into her classroom. I knocked at the principal's door. She addressed me in this manner, "What are you doing here? You're supposed to be teaching." I said I have a reason. I asked her what was she supposed to be doing when she smacked her. So we discussed the matter and we found out who was wrong and who was right. On that particular day the principal was watching two classrooms. She walked into the grade seven classroom, and my daughter, with a smile on her countenance as always, was blamed for making a lot of noise and laughing. It was not my daughter's fault, she told the truth; it was the fault of the principal.

S: I've always appreciated the willingness of my mother to experiment and to try new things, and she encouraged me to do the same. For example, we'd go to movies together. I remember when we went to see *Woodstock*. It was really quite remarkable watching the reaction of the people in the audience when we walked in. We knew they were thinking, 'What's this grey-haired lady doing here watching this movie?'

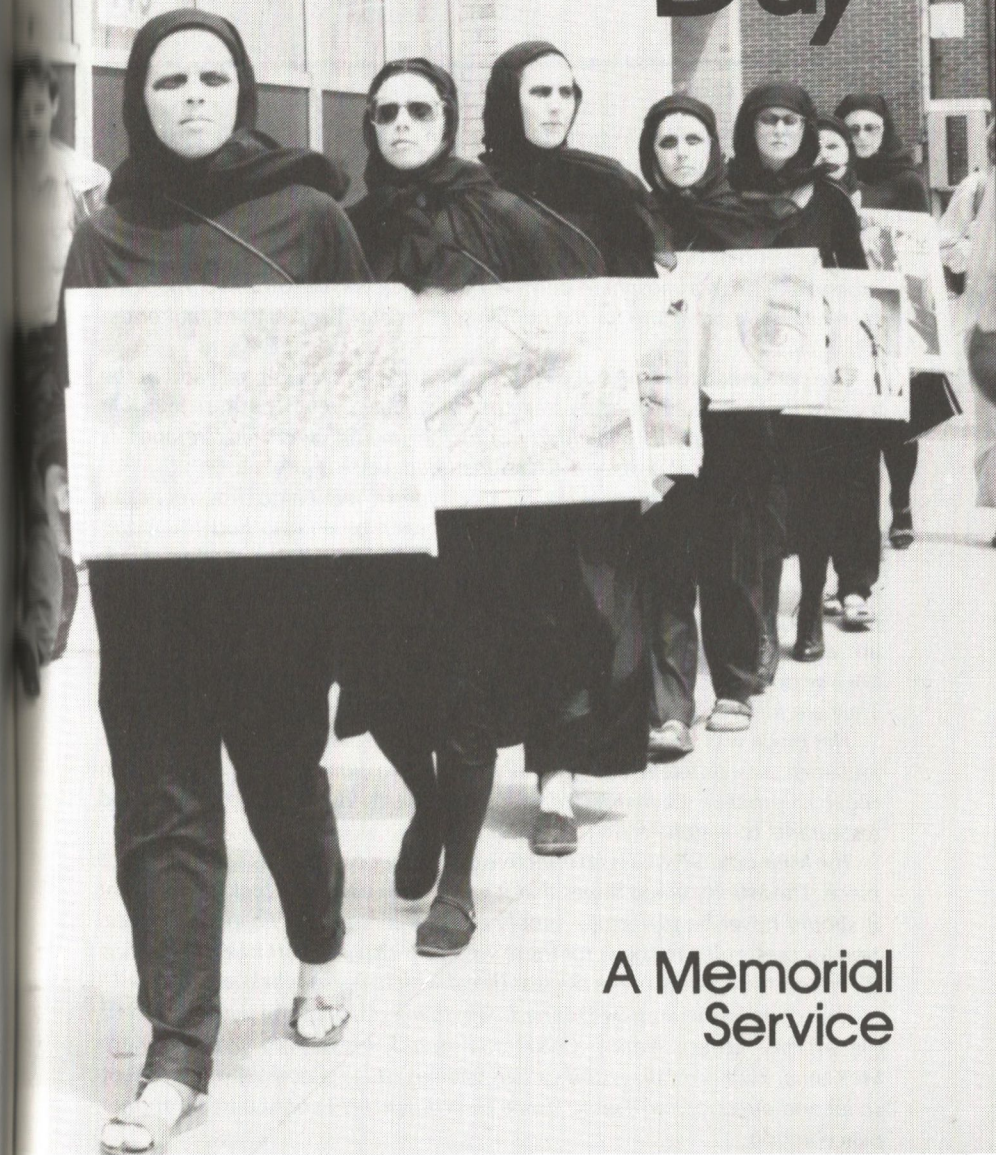
There is also that sense between us that when you make a decision, it is *your* decision. I've left a full-time job when jobs were scarce, and I've never had censure from my mother. Another time, I decided to travel by boat to Labrador and stay there over a winter. Nobody could ever figure out why anyone Black would ever want to go to Labrador because it is so cold — if you're Black, you're supposed to be from a hot climate. I never had questions from my mother. Her comment was, 'You can always come back home if you want to. You've made a decision, you will have to live with it.' And as a grandmother, she still plays a very key role with her grandchildren....

M: I have my granddaughter — who is twenty — living with me at the moment. We all share and she is able to come to me to discuss any problems. I have my small grandchildren visiting and often staying with me. I always tell my family: You go and find your own way, but the door is always open. You can come back any time to share your experiences, your hardships. We'll share them together.

Postscript

On November 1, 1983, Marie Hamilton was one of five women awarded the 1983 Persons Award by the Governor General at a ceremony at Rideau Hall in Ottawa.

Hiroshima Day



A Memorial Service

Bonnie Bobryk

Hiroshima Day

The Memorial Service was first performed on August 6, 1983 in Halifax, Nova Scotia, by an affinity group, all of whom belonged to Voice of Women. It is an expression, public and collective, of grief and rage over the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. The hibakusha — the scarred survivors of that devastation — haunt us. They remind us of the birth of the atomic age in an atmosphere of military secrecy and destruction. The arms race holds the same fate for the human species and all species as that of the hibakusha.

The performance came out of discussions of nuclear weapons, and of the victims that are found at every stage of the nuclear cycle. There are invisible victims like the poor, the elderly, and the unemployed when money is diverted from social programs to defence budgets.

Seven players, each speaking for one type of nuclear victim, recite. In some passages, two speakers counterpoint each other; in others the group speaks chorally. Choral passages are printed in upper case letters. Each player, dressed in black, carries the script, bound in black, and a large photograph from the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The performers are accompanied by seven interpreters, dressed in white, to leaflet and answer questions, so that the players never have to step out of their role. They are all preceded by a Nuclear Fool on a unicycle.

The piece was performed at five different street locations. Each time the audience was different but generally, people responded to it as a solemn ritual in process. Cars stopped, people came to the doors of stores and restaurants to watch.

The Memorial Service is an effective direct action as well as a performance piece. The affinity group hopes that it will widely used, but feel strongly that it should never be performed simply as entertainment. "Our only justification for presuming to speak for these victims is that it is part of a larger struggle to end the tyranny of the nuclear threat which makes hibakusha of us all."

The script was written by Donna E. Smyth in collaboration with the rest of the affinity group: Nancy Colpitts, Karen Fairless, Pat Kipping, Kate McKenna, Yvonne Manzer and Gillian Thomas. All proceeds from the sale of script and directions will go to Voice of Women, Nova Scotia to aid further peace action.

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Memorial Service, this day of our Lord, 1983:

In the name of nuclear victims

DEAD AND DYING

Hiroshima, Nagasaki: uranium, plutonium —

In the name of Hibakusha

THOSE WHO SURVIVED

Hiroshima, Nagasaki: uranium, plutonium —

When they dropped the bombs

UNTHINKABLE, UNSPEAKABLE

August 6th, HIROSHIMA, August 9th, NAGASAKI

This day of our Lord, 1945

Let us begin:

I speak for uranium miners, dead and dying, in:

Czechoslovakia

Australia

New Mexico

Elliot Lake.

Why didn't they tell us?

radon daughters

alpha particles

lung cancer

Why didn't they warn us?

genetic damage

our wives

our children

We spit blood to mine uranium to make the bombs

WE SPIT BLOOD TO MINE URANIUM TO MAKE THE BOMBS

I speak for those who live next to nuclear reactors;
who sleep with potassium iodine under their pillows;
who wonder where the next accident is:

Chalk River

Point Lepreau

Three Mile Island

Point Lepreau

Pickering

Point Lepreau

Why didn't they tell us?

radiation leaks

spills

gas



Why didn't they warn us?

cancer
 contaminated crops
 animals dead and dying
 water used to be for drinking
 where are the fish?

We live next to reactors which make plutonium to make more bombs
 WE LIVE NEXT TO REACTORS WHICH MAKE PLUTONIUM TO MAKE
 MORE BOMBS



I speak for workers who clean up nuclear garbage:
 radiation
 contamination

We soak it up like sponges; they pay us time and a half
 No compensation for:

skin cancer
 lung cancer
 genetic damage

We keep reactors going to make plutonium to make more bombs

Bonnie Bobryk

WE KEEP REACTORS GOING TO MAKE PLUTONIUM TO MAKE
MORE BOMBS

I speak for Karen Silkwood who tried to tell the truth
about plutonium
who was contaminated
plutonium in the fridge
who was murdered
driven off the road

I speak for her co-workers who reprocess fuel rods in:

Russia
France
Britain
America

Why didn't they warn us?

radiation
contamination
cancer
premature aging
slow dying

Why didn't they tell us?

Reprocessed fuel yields more plutonium to make more bombs
REPROCESSED FUEL YIELDS MORE PLUTONIUM TO MAKE MORE
BOMBS

I speak for the children who starve because we spend
our money making bombs

600 billion dollars to the military

I speak for mothers, fathers, who watch their children grow up:

crippled
crooked
blind
illiterate

because we spend our money making bombs

600 billion dollars to the military

I speak for those without a job

UIC
Welfare
despair
poverty

Because we spend our money making bombs
600 billion dollars to the military

For old people, babies, single parents, the sick and
the infirm who need:

food
shelter
medicine
love
600 billion dollars to the military
600 BILLION DOLLARS TO THE MILITARY

I speak for the victims of nuclear weapons testing
for the people of Bikini Atoll, Eniwetok, Marshall Islands

evacuated
contaminated
homes and lands vaporised

For American and Canadian soldiers

exposed
contaminated
living and dying with bone disease
leukemia
cancer

neglected by their government

For civilians downwind from the test sites

Nevada
New Mexico
north, south, east, west
wherever the winds blew

contaminated

strontium 90 in milk, bones, teeth
sick children, mental retardation, bone disease, cancer
painful life, slow death

We gave our homes, our bodies, our lives so they could
test more bombs to destroy more homes, bodies, lives.

MORE BOMBS TO DESTROY MORE HOMES, BODIES, LIVES.

I speak for the victims of Hiroshima/Nagasaki:

Unthinkable
one A-bomb
unspeakable
another A-bomb
world gone

For those who died immediately:

vaporised
burned
sizzled like bacon

For those who survived:
blind
seared
sick with radiation
vomiting
hair falling out
skin hanging in strips like rags

For those who died later:
cancer
leukemia
wasting away

For the hibakusha: who survived
who rose from the dead
to warn us
to tell us:

*I saw a man by the river in the Black Rain. He was
holding his eyeballs in his hand.
I saw the petrified body of a woman with one leg lifted
as though running, her headless baby tightly clutched
in her arms.
I saw a child who vomited blood like a crimson string.
I saw a child leaning against a gate, crying. When I
touched him, I found he was dead. My heart ached
to think he might have been my child.*

The Hibakusha:
who survived
who rose from the dead
to tell us
to warn us.

Not only the people
cows and deer
chipmunks and brightly-coloured birds
the corn in the fields
the fruit on the trees
the earth herself, black and charred as any body.

The Hibakusha:
who survived
who rose from the dead
to tell us
to warn us:

We need your grief and your rage
The next time is the last time
We could be you

Or you

Or you

Or you

Or you

Or you

In the name of nuclear victims
In the name of Hibakusha
We are all Hibakusha
WE ARE ALL HIBAKUSHA
Halifax, HIROSHIMA
Nagasaki, NEVER AGAIN.

Postscript

Since last Hiroshima Day we've performed the piece twice more. We turned down several requests to perform the piece because we see ourselves as an action group rather than a performance group. We felt, however, that the piece ought to be in a permanent form so that other groups in other places could perform it in their own way. Consequently, we recently spent a seven-teen hour day getting the piece on film with a fine group of women technicians.

In October, 1983 we did a satirical street theatre piece: "Debert Debunkers," which debunked the government's nuclear war plan to shelter 329 government and military officials in a fallout bunker at Camp Debert near Truro, Nova Scotia. We distributed "Providential Lottery" tickets offering as first prize a ringside seat at ground zero (guaranteed vaporisation), second prize a "lifetime supply" of cyanide pills, and third prize a one way ticket to the fallout shelter at Debert. We've continued to "Debunk Debert" in a variety of ways since then, and on February 29th when the government and military ran their dress rehearsal for taking shelter in the bunker in the event of nuclear war, our group joined with other women at Debert in a "Woman's Day of Peace and Resistance."

As a group we are conscious of our actions taking place against a backdrop consisting of the increasing threat of nuclear war itself, increasing militarisation of the society in which we live and of the continued pressure from industry to re-open uranium exploration in Nova Scotia. Working as a group is immensely time-consuming and often exhausting, but it raises our spirits far more than they can ever be raised in working alone.

Cassie

Veronica Ross

I

The pain awoke her in the night. Cassie had been dreaming. John was stroking her arms, legs, back, softly, in love.

The light went on over her bed. Cassie cried out wildly.
The needle in her thigh.
Cool wetness bathing her sweat.
The blankets tucked around her.
Cassie lost herself to the darkness.

II

Bright sunlight. The Church woman, Mrs. Smith, was there. She had brought daffodils.

"I wish you could see my garden, Cassie. The daffodils just came up three days ago. Do you like tulips?"

"Yes, I do." Cassie was always polite to official people.

"I'll bring you some, then. Last year I had lovely red ones. When you get better you can come and see my garden."

"Yes." Cassie wondered about the clothes she had left in her rented room — the blue dress with feathers, the yellow suit, the flowered skirt. She hoped the landlady had not thrown them out. No one had told her what had happened to the red outfit she was wearing when she was admitted. Her purse was in the night table, but the mascara was missing and the lipstick was almost gone. Where would she get money for new make-up?

"Do you want me to pray for you?"

Cassie looked at her. Grey hair, pearls.

Isn't there someone I could contact?

I don't know about that.

Friends or family? Children?

No.

"You can if you want." The gripping pain was coming. Cassie needed the bedpan.

Mrs. Smith prayed to the Lord.

Please oh please hurry up.

III

What happened:

Cassie had come to Toronto to find her son William. He had sent a post card of the C.N. Tower a while back.

William had left home when he was fifteen. He called his mother a whore. When she slapped him, he threw her across the room and kicked her stomach. Cassie walked to town to get the police. It was raining and her shoes leaked. She told herself that Overman used to hit her in front of William, so what could you expect? She decided to give him one more chance. William was gone when she returned. He had moved in with Overman. Later she heard he had gone out west.

She was mad with grief and anger, throwing things around, when she found the post card again. That was after they had taken John's children away and the house was cold and snow came in the broken windows. William wrote he made \$8.35 an hour and had a nice place. She thought she would go to Toronto to find him. Maybe he could help her to get the children back.

But no one she met knew him. Toronto was so big. She pictured her little house which sat in a field without trees and how in summer John used to sit on the back step and drink beer. It seemed so far away. Was it possible she had not always been in Toronto? She was working as a dishwasher. With her first pay she bought a new dress and make-up. At night, there were people in bars. Men sometimes gave her money. She kept saying to herself, I must find out about the children. I will send them money. She bought children's clothing on sale which she kept in the closet.

What she needed was to find William. She recalled him as a tall, yellow-haired boy. He would be thirty years old now. She was sixteen when he was born. She married Overman at fifteen. After William, Jody was born. When Overman left, Cassie had pneumonia and went to the hospital. Neighbours took the children. They wanted to keep Jody. Cassie said no, and brought the girl home. Jody cried all the time. Also, she needed glasses. Cassie had no money. So Jody went back to the other family "for the time being." Cassie knew it was wrong. She felt sad when she saw Jody riding by on her new red bicycle. It just ... happened ... that Jody never came home.

Cassie became ill in Toronto. She lost her job. She slept every day until eleven and then went to the bars. Drinking made the pain better. One afternoon she was coming up out of the subway when she fainted. An ambulance took her to the hospital. That was three months ago.

IV

Waking up, she would think, What am I doing here? How could I have lost John's children?

Already on the train, the past seemed remote. The train glided through snowy country, cities and small villages, backyards and expressways. There was this man, Carleton, who bought her food and drinks. Carleton talked about his wife in Cape Breton who'd had a child by another man and about his girlfriend in Windsor, Ontario. Cassie kept reminding herself that she was going to Toronto to find William but at the same time there were all these overwhelming new things.

And then, Toronto. People, noise, bright lights, stores. No William. Time passed.

V

There were three other women in the room: Beulah, fat and yellow-haired; Mrs. Haggarty, ancient and comatose; Marilyn, a freckle-faced young mother. Cassie kept to herself. She did not, now, want anyone to think of her life as funny or bizarre. Beulah still talked about a patient who had no vagina. Cassie could imagine Beulah saying, "I knew this woman who had children and lost them."

Before she became ill, Cassie liked telling other women her troubles. How Overman beat her. How William kicked her. How John deserted her. "He didn't!" "Yes he did." "I'd have knifed him, the bastard!" Selected vignettes. The other women had things to tell too. But look, they implied, we have survived. Have another drink. Cassie showed photos. My babies.

The problem was — how to explain the way it really was? Cassie's life was a mystery to her. She knew her life wasn't exactly like her stories, even though the tales were true. The bright light and cold air after dark bars brought a flat terror like someone punching you in the stomach without it hurting. She felt guilty: there were good parts too. Even Overman used to be nice. Once he had bought her a new kitchen set, and black stretchy pants, with his overtime pay. Was it her fault everything came out badly? She tried not to look at women carrying grocery bags. They were going home to cook for their families. They would never understand her story.

In her room, before sleep, there was something else. Panic came just as she was dozing off. Overman! John! William! She turned on the light and looked in the mirror. She washed her make-up off and put on fresh lipstick, for hope. The pink linoleum and green curtains were reassuring. She forced herself to think of good things — John, or maybe a man she might meet — to get to sleep.

Beulah was consoling Marilyn about her hysterectomy. Marilyn had two sons but wanted a daughter. Cassie listened, her eyes closed.

"You could always adopt."

"I don't know if Jim would agree to that."

"This neighbour of mine, she took this little girl. Cutest thing you ever laid your eyes on. Winnie they called her. For Winnifred, after his mother."

Cassie opened her eyes. Beulah was putting curlers in her hair. Beulah reminded her of her grandmother.

"Your Jim must be the way my Henry was. Some men are like that. They can't take to another man's child. When they had all those Vietnamese kids that time, I wanted to send for one. Men are funny."

"You can say that again."

"Of course I miss him. Don't get me wrong. Never a day goes by but what I don't think of him. You know that fellow I was telling you about? The milk salesman? I could have married him. He was after me all the time. But I guess no one could take Henry's place. Still and all I get lonely sometimes. Henry and I had our bad times too, don't think we didn't. It's not all roses. Men, you can't live with them and you can't live without them. What do you think Cassie?"

Cassie smiled. She used to help Beulah to the toilet if the nurses were busy. And never talked about it either. She had seen her oozing infection. Beulah suffered too.

"See, Cassie knows. You wait until you get to be our age, girl..."

A dream:

Cassie and her grandmother, Dotty, are walking to town. A lovely road. Trees, a river. Cassie needs shoes. They enter Miller's Footwear but it turns into a large Toronto hotel and there are tunnels, little cubicles. Scary. The ship is leaving soon. John is on it. A man is taking tickets. Dotty is impatient and keeps pulling her hand. The walls are green. People are pushing. A soldier asks for money. She has lost her purse. They are serving food. Where is John?

She awoke to music. Someone had a radio on down the hall. Marilyn was passing chocolates.

"I shouldn't," Beulah said.

"Cassie?"

Marilyn's face was pale, red-eyed from crying. Cassie took a candy, because she felt sorry for her.

If John had stayed, she thought, I would have been a good woman too.

"You don't need to marry him. You can bring your baby home. You're not the first girl and you sure as hell won't be the last."

Dotty was making wine. Her arms jiggled as she strained berries.

"Overman wants to marry me."

"He said he'd marry you?"

"That's what he said."

Dotty wept at the wedding.

At least I was married, Cassie told herself. No one else in the family ever got married before.

The pain was coming. Cassie pressed the buzzer and concentrated on remembering her grandmother's house. Lilac bushes. The wool blanket which smelled of smoke and which was so scratchy but so comforting when the men were in the house drinking wine. Plants on the window sills. Alex the dog chewed a hole in the green couch.

Go back, go back.

A cry. Her own?

Yes.

The nurse bustled in.

There there what's that in your hand?

Cassie unclenched her fist. Marilyn's chocolate had melted and Cassie had never noticed.

VI

The church lady's son was getting married. Mrs. Smith was excited. There were pictures. Two boys, two girls, a dog.

Cassie was depressed. Mrs. Smith had forgotten the tulips. Marilyn had gone home and had left a pot of geraniums. Her husband hadn't been happy about it. The plant came from his company. Cassie had heard him muttering.

"Susan's the youngest. She wants to be a dentist. That's Kathy. She was married last year. Dell's in Vancouver. Their little girl, Kimberly. They adopted her last year."

Cassie looked. John's daughter was called Kimberly. But this little girl was younger. Kimberly would be ... five now. Kimberly and Kenny Hill. They had to use Overman's last name.

Mrs. Smith put the photos away. "It's not easy bringing up children today but I'm thankful for my family."

What does she know? Cassie thought angrily. She could have remembered the tulips. No one ever thinks of me.

She was remembering the day John left.

She knew she would never see him again. She watched him lacing up his boots. His shirt was hitched up, showing a roll of fat. He had gained weight in the three years he was with her.

Some guys he'd met at the tavern were waiting in the yard. They kept tooting the horn and John kept going to the window. She knew he did not want them to come into the house to see her. She had grown thin over the winter and now she was pregnant again. He never asked her to go to town with him. Sometimes he came home drunk. Twice he had stayed away overnight. Once he and Overman went on a toot together. Overman told John she had a fishy smell.

He was tucking his shirt in, inspecting his face in the mirror. She watched him wet his comb and slick his hair down. He was smiling, pleased with himself.

Her heart was pounding. She would never, never see him again on the face of the earth. The enormity of this fact paralysed her.

"Well." He was anxious to be off. She gave him the sandwiches she had packed.

"I'll write and send for you soon as I get settled in." He zipped up his jacket. She had bought it for him. It was blue, like his eyes.

He went.

His old clothes were thrown all over the bedroom. She held a shirt to her face.

It was so quiet. Kimberly was looking out the window.

"Daddy?"

Cassie wept and wept and wept.

You'll never see him again.

But he's here with me all the time.

"It's nice to see you smiling, Cassie."

VII

Mrs. Haggarty died.

The nurses moved in like hushed ghosts in the night. They rolled the body out on a stretcher. The sheet formed a peaked tent over Mrs. Haggarty's nose.

Cassie kept waking up and falling asleep again. There were new sheets on the empty bed.

Cassie did not believe that Mrs. Haggarty was dead. How could anyone be dead? Mrs. Haggarty had breathed, made noises, created smells. The nurses brushed her hair. How could she not exist any more?

Cassie touched her stomach. It was taut and swollen, larger on one side than the other.

I'm pregnant, she decided. They'll be surprised to find out there's nothing else wrong. It'll be something for Beulah to talk about.

It was John's baby. It must have been growing slowly. He would be surprised. The first night she was with him she knew a baby had been conceived. She did not tell him for a long time. She was afraid he would leave and she felt so happy with him.

She met him in a tavern. He was drunk and threw up all over his clothes. She cleaned him and put him to bed. In the morning they made love. She cooked oatmeal for breakfast. He had a hangover and needed fresh air. She thought that was an excuse for him to leave, but he asked her to accompany him.

It was a new world walking with him. She felt like a young girl. The wind blew her long greying hair. She shivered and he gave her his jacket. He talked about the places he had been, the boats he sailed on, the lumber camps he worked. They went into a store and he paid for the groceries. On the way back he caressed her neck and smiled into her eyes.

That was her springtime. Once she saw Overman on the street with his new woman and she remembered all the mean, ugly things he had done to her and she felt so happy, so happy.

In the dark, Beulah said:

"I had a baby once and gave it up. I was sixteen years old. I named him Rupert. He had blonde hair, an angel. I never found out what happened to him. My folks wouldn't let me keep him. The father was a friend of my father's. I never told who it was. No one knows. Henry didn't even know. It's like it never happened. Do you dream, Cassie?"

"I dream."

"Sometimes I think I am going to die."

"No."

"You'll get better."

"I don't want to die."

"You won't die."

"Sometimes I think my baby's dead. I dream that all the time. That he's in heaven. Do you believe in heaven?"

"I don't know. Yes, maybe I do."

"I don't know."

"No one knows."

"You mind me telling you?"

"I don't mind."

Almost dawn. Beulah snored. Cassie watched the sky and thought how eerie the empty streets always looked at that hour. They gave her a strange feeling, like her life was a series of boxes, one inside the other.

My hair is almost gone, she thought. My arms are so thin. That William. He had no reason to kick me like that or call me a whore. I never meant anyone harm. I'm not a bad person, I'm not, I'm not.

VIII

Summer came with green leaves against the windows and street noises from outside. Cassie felt very hot in her bed.

There was nowhere to hide. She threw the pillows on the floor in frustration. Everything was so loud. Car horns, squeal of tires, voices, footsteps, a bedpan dropping on the floor, the elevator doors closing. Noises just as jar-

ring as the sounds of Kenny crying and crying that winter and her head pounding. Kimberly saying *Mummy I'm hungry*. The pump froze and the stink of diapers was everywhere. She had to use rags when the Pampers ran out. No money, damp smoking wood, the house cold and dirty. The baby screeched and screeched and her side hurt and she felt like throwing him against the wall. She couldn't sleep. The television was broken. Her face was pinched and wrinkled, mottled. She was an old woman whose man had left her. She threw a chair across the room. No cigarettes, coffee gone. When she escaped one evening to the tavern she heard the baby crying from the road.

Mrs. Smith brought a new nightie. Yellow. Her daughter's but never worn. Let me help you, Mrs. Smith said. Or did not say. Flapjack breasts, stick arms. Had Mrs. Smith wanted to see? But her fingers were light and soft against the skin.

My hair is all gone now.

"It's like an oven in here," Beulah said. "They ought to do something about it. I'm going to write to the government."

Cassie shut her eyes, moved away. They were giving her more needles now and sometimes she seemed to be floating above the bed. Her body was no longer hers and yet she pitied and loved the collection of dry skin and brittle bones. The privacy of her body, like a flower, had gone deep inside of her. She curled around it. Her mother, Alice, came. Cassie was making mud cakes. Hugging. Love. She undressed Cassie, four years old. Pink pyjamas, talcum powder. Lamplight. My baby. Singing. Mummy a memory. Cassie purring, baby fat.

X-ray. Tiny hairless figure in wheelchair. Let them look. People stared. Time to go back, the nurse sang cheerfully. Cassie loved her. Gliding in the hall over velvet path, drifting up the elevator. Pity, pity.

"Is there anything you want, Cassie?"

She dreamt: John came back. She ran to meet him on the road. And awoke, before the pain, to darkness, and imagined that John had returned to find her gone. The house was desolate, a wooden shell with the door swinging in the wind. He slept in the house for two days. He touched her clothes. His footsteps were loud on the floor. He did not shut the door when he left.

He was searching for her. At night he lay sleepless in strange rooms. His cigarette glowed in the dark.

Pain. Screams.

"Go away. Leave me alone."

She said anything now.

"I know it's hot. You must be very uncomfortable Cassie."

"Go away."

There there, another voice.

In another room now. Where was Beulah?

The whiteness of the room made a running river of her pain. She wanted sleep, forgetting. She hardly noticed when the nurses bathed or turned her. Inside her head was a grassy plain. *Nothing but bones. It won't be long now.*

The children were singing. The grass brushed against her legs. John picked a flower and gave it to her. Look, the river.

Come home, John said.

A bird came and sat on her shoulders.

I knew everything would turn out all right, she told him.

You've been dreaming, John said. You had a bad dream.

But who was that screaming? Staccato of rage.

Listen, listen.

Blood and Nerves: An Ethnographic Focus on Menopause by Dona Lee Davis

Memorial University of Newfoundland: St. John's, 1983.

Anne Rochon Ford

It is widely accepted in the medical literature on menopause that the only distinct physical symptom that *all* women experience in menopause is the cessation of their menstrual periods. Hot flushes, hot flashes, depression and a change in libido are just a few of the many symptoms of menopause which can vary considerably from one woman to the next; some women will experience none of these symptoms.

It is perhaps because women's experiences of menopause are so highly variant that it has recently become an area of interest for study by sociologists, anthropologists and a host of specialists in the medical field. Researchers are asking what factors contribute to the type of menopause each of us will experience, whether socio-cultural factors are more relevant than nutritional ones, whether women in societies where female status increases with age are more likely to have an easier time at menopause.

Blood and Nerves is a look at the menopausal and middle-aged experiences of a group of women in an outport fishing village in Newfoundland, fictitiously named Grey Rock Harbour. It is clear from the acknowledgements at the beginning of the book that this is a re-working of Dona Lee Davis' doctoral thesis. This fact may dissuade from reading it those with no background in sociology or anthropology: the book is heavily laden with "sociologese" and "anthropologese," as in the line "... placing an undue emphasis on menopause as an explicit, discrete phenomenon obfuscates the broader ethnographic context where menopausal phenomena

are explained in terms of the wider concepts of nerves and blood" (p. 149). It's unfortunate that the book will likely be read by a very limited audience, because Davis' conclusions are fascinating.

Davis spent close to a year living in Grey Rock Harbour, participating in local activities and passing many hours with the thirty-eight women who became the sample for her study. (Thirty-eight would normally be considered a fairly small sample size for a study of any consequence, but in this case, it represents two-thirds of the village's middle-aged female population.) She wanted to test a particular hypothesis about menopause that stems from a number of cross-cultural studies of menopause which were carried out by different social scientists in the 1960's and 1970's. Simply put, the hypothesis states that a woman's experience of menopause may be affected more by culture than by physiology. More specifically, Davis wanted to test the hypothesis that in a society where women have a high, unchanging social status (as indicated by specific, pre-determined factors set out in previous studies), they will have less negative attitudes towards menopause and will experience less troublesome symptoms or complaints.

A similar study was done in 1975 of Rajput women in India who enjoy a particularly high status in their older years. It was found that these women experienced hardly any physiological problems with menopause (hot flashes were virtually unheard of) and, in fact, many pre-menopausal women were looking forward to menopause.

Sadly (for those of us who would like to think the same might be true in some North American communities) Davis does not find such a problem-free experience of menopause amongst the women of a Newfoundland outport. She must begin, however, by convincing us that the women of Grey Rock Harbour enjoy a high status in their middle years. She makes a convincing argument that the status of middle-aged women in this small village must be defined by how the people there would evaluate it, not how middle class North American social scientists would evaluate it. She says, "[W]e can't use the culture-bound biases reflected in middle class North America's preoccupation with education, wealth and power as status indicators" when evaluating the status of women in Grey Rock Harbour. What is more relevant, she argues, is to judge their status according to their role in the family and their influence on the community. On both counts, Grey Rock Harbour women score high. Because most of the women in the village marry very young (at fifteen or sixteen), they are often grandmothers by the time they reach their forties or even late thirties. The "empty nest syndrome" is virtually unheard of. They enter their menopausal years as women who are still very much needed by their families. An older woman is also respected in the community for the role she has played as mother and grandmother. This contrasts sharply with the diminished status of most elderly women in urban North America.

But, given this self-defined high status, do they have an easier time of menopause than do the middle American women on whom most socio-

cultural studies of menopause are based? Davis' conclusion is that they have just as difficult an experience of menopause, and by some measures, an even worse time of it. Compared with a sample of women from a Chicago study, the women of Grey Rock Harbour found menopause more troublesome, unpleasant and more likely to depress them.

Davis also found that the level of understanding about menopause was quite limited among the women of Grey Rock Harbour. This should come as no surprise, since knowledge about menopause has always been considered the privilege of doctors and consequently, most women are not encouraged to better understand their menopausal years. Davis sees the liberal use of the terms "blood" and "nerves" as a reflection of that limited understanding. "Blood" is used very loosely to mean anything to do with the bodily functions associated with menstruation and menopause. A variety of misconceptions about blood, based primarily in folklore, still pervade in this fishing village. The term "nerves" is used frequently amongst Grey Rock Harbour women to explain behaviour which is believed to be associated with reproductive processes. A woman who has cramps or is irritable prior to her period might say, "My nerves is some bad today." "Nerve pills" is a term used broadly by the women interviewed to mean anything from Valium to Estrogen Replacement Therapy. And both of these drugs, according to Davis, are prescribed quite liberally to the middle aged women by the village doctor.

What saved this book for me from being a dry, academic anthropological tract is that Davis lets the personalities of the women slip through on occasion in her analysis. She usually does this by quoting the women directly, using their words to describe things. *Blood and Nerves* is for those with a keen interest in how women deal with their menopause. Others may find it rather slow-going.

Recording Angels: The Private Chronicles of Women from the Maritime Provinces of Canada, 1750-1950, by Margaret Conrad

The CRIAW Papers, No. 4

Gail Picco

My 87-year-old grandmother living in Newfoundland wouldn't recognise much in *Recording Angels*. My mother wouldn't feel at home reading it either.

The diaries of Maritime women presented to us by Margaret Conrad are so thin a slice of life of a Maritime woman, they cannot stand on their own. But searching for a Maritime herstory in written journals, the findings will be inevitably barren. The women who wrote such journals were primarily well-educated, well-travelled and/or often had a religious background. And their diaries were written with such restraint that the strong emotions and heart of the times are rarely captured.

Mary Bradley of New Brunswick writes:

In 1805, my husband purchased a house and four lots of land, in German Street, S[ain]t John; and in the first few years, we kept a grocery, rented a part of the house, and had little prospect of paying for the property. At length times changed for the better and my husband was enabled to lift the mortgages and the property became our own. We then felt ourselves greatly blessed by the kind hand of Providence, which had so prospered our labors and we had accumulated a comfortable home; which we esteemed a great blessing....

While any research of Maritime lives is valuable, if you are reaching for an understanding of Maritime women in general and their struggles to cope,

you will have to supplement this reading.

The rich and rewarding oral herstories of Atlantic women are passed up in *Recording Angels*. Yet, these yarns and tales spun by mothers and grandmothers weave a pattern of life where, most of the year, only women and children lived in some communities — all the men having gone out to sea, gone fishing or to work in the timber woods. The strong network of women who kept these communities together included midwives and nurses. Women traded spinning chores for berry-picking, preserves for spun wool.

Other communities were run by an economy that made fish a woman's responsibility once it was landed on shore. They cleaned, salted it and laid it on the flakes to dry. These women knew the fishery and often told their husbands who caught how much fish, where they caught it and if the weather permitted you to fish the next day.

There are thousands of women in the Maritimes today who can piece together this way of life. Scores of songs tell the tale of life connected to the land and sea. Songs of a woman's conflict with the raging elements around her, of waves so strong they could break your back and of land so rocky and barren it could break your back too.

But, unfortunately, it isn't written down. It probably never will be. The women who can tell us their stories are getting old now and when they die their past and ours will go with them. The inspiring, gut-wrenching and exciting herstory of Maritime women doesn't lie in the recorded journals of a sea-captain's daughter or a minister's wife in Halifax. They are stored in the minds of women who haven't yet been asked to tell their tales. Conrad's time would have been much better spent approaching her important research by asking those women, 'What was it like?' Over tea, she would hear stories like this recitation by St. John's resident, Janice Spence:

Well, I can't complain, 'cause I haven't had it as bad as some, God knows and for the bit of time he was around in those years, he was a good man. I remember the year we were married. It was a good year. He was working for my father and it seemed to me, I had him to myself every minute of the day and all the sweet hours of the night. I think that was the happiest year of my life. But by the Spring of the following year, just after my birthday, it was, well...he got to be itchin' after something. In no time at all he'd gone down and signed up on the *Mary Ellen*. And it was then I knew I was married to a sailor. I couldn't even bring myself to go down and say good-bye to him. Now, I'm not complaining. We always had a roof over our heads and we never wanted for very much. I always said I never had it as hard as May. Her husband Jack, well he'd only be home one or two days out of every year. That's when he was working on the coastal boats. My dear, when he came home on the *Crossburrow*, she'd have to go down and get him because he was too blind drunk to make his way home by himself. And I'll never forget the night I was at Nan's. The night Poppy Rogers came home. Poppy Rogers...gone for eleven years. We

hadn't heard a word from him. We didn't know what happened to him. Sure, we'd given him up for dead. Well, that night Nan just looked out the window and she saw him comin' up the path and all she said was, "Put the kettle on, Frank's home." But I do wish my husband had been with me when Gary died. My God, that was a hard winter...the flu...epidemic proportions, they said. I remember the night Mom and I laid him out. Oh, my husband's mother was there too. I think Gary was her favourite really. Anyway, that night, I sat up, sat up in that big chair his brother made, and I must have dozed off because around four or five o'clock I woke up and just for an instant my husband was there, bent over kissing his cheek. Well, he was back in port six months later and gave me Kevin. And Kevin had the croup. He coughed and he bawled for a solid year straight. He had me raftered. He had me clear drove off me head. And the following year, well, he was only home for a week. I got Rose out of that visit. But he always sent me lovely presents. A lovely shawl arrived for me in the mail one day. Three yards of beautiful silk. I wondered where it was from...Spain, Morocco, some place I'd never been to. Oh, it was gorgeous and the smell of it. It put me in the mind of warm winds and people speaking in foreign tongues. But sure, where was I supposed to wear it? I suppose now I was going to put it on when I went out in the garden digging a few turnips or when I'm making a bit of soap out of lye.

Janice Spence's recitation is available on tape or record — *Jim Payne and Kelly Russell*, distributed by Pigeon Inlet Productions Ltd., 1 Stoneyhouse Street, St. John's, Newfoundland, A1B 2T5.

Atlantic Women's Groups



Compiled by **Hinda Goldberg & Janet Patterson**

The following list has been compiled from a number of sources available to us in Toronto. We have tried to make the information as accurate as possible (many thanks to the long-distance operators of New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island); however, if there are errors, or (more likely) omissions, we apologize.

Also, in the course of tracking this information, we have found that the women's networks have the most up-to-date references. If you are looking for a particular group and it does not appear on this list, perhaps another group in the same city, or a sister group in another city can help you make contact.

We would like to extend our thanks to those organisations and women who have helped compile this information: the Cross-Cultural Communication Centre (Toronto), Anne Nixon at Pink Ink, the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education Women's Resource Centre, Mary Rowles (President of the NDP Ontario Women's Caucus), and staff at the Women's Program, Secretary of State (Ottawa).

Finally, we would like to alert readers to a most helpful source of information. There is a Listing of Women's Groups: Canada 1982 available free from: Women's Programme, Secretary of State, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0M5. There will be a 1984 version published this summer.

**New Brunswick/
Nouveau Brunswick**

**Association des
enseignantes francophones du
Nouveau-Brunswick**

C.P. 712,
Fredericton, N. B. E3B 5B4
(506)454-2654

**Business & Professional Women's
Club**

c/o Mary MacLaren Myles
121 Main Street
Fredericton, N. B. E3A 1C6
(506)472-4362

**Business & Professional
Women's Club**

c/o Kay Whalen
15 Clark Street
Moncton, N. B. E1C 2V6
(506)382-4120

**Business & Professional
Women's Club**

435 Elmore Crescent
Saint John, N. B. E3N 3C2

**Canadian Abortion Rights
Action League**

Box 474
Moncton, N. B. E1C 8L9

**Canadian Federation of
University Women**

c/o Bernadette Bérubé
Provincial Director
100 Ellerdale Street
Moncton, N. B.
(506)855-1467

Charlotte County Women's Council

P.O. Box 344
St. George, N. B. E0G 2Y0

Comité des femmes de Bathurst

C.P. 124
Bathurst, N.B.
(506)548-3717

**Comité pour la promotion
de la femme**

c/o Anne-Marie Arsenault
Ecole Sc. Infirmières
Université de Moncton
Moncton, N. B. E1C 2Z3
(506)858-4003

**Canadian Union of Public Employees/
Women's Committee**

c/o Darlene Brown
P.O. Box 5001
Saint John, N.B. E2L 4Y9
(506)658-2536

Fédération des dames d'Acadie

C.P. 488
Campbellton, N.B. E3N 3G9
(506)753-3722

Femmes Affairées du Madawaska

a/s Joanne Volpé
980, rue Victoria
Edmunston, N.B. E3V ET6
(506)735-8013

Femmes en Focus Inc.

C.P. 865
Petit-Rocher, N. B. E0B 2E0
(506)783-8434

Femmes Fermières

a/s Odule Bourgeois
R.R. #1
Grand Digue, N.B. E0A 2E0
(506)576-6744

Fredericton Lesbians and Gays

Box 1556, Station A
Fredericton, N.B. E3B 5G2
(506)457-2156

Fredericton Women's Council

P.O. Box 693, Station A
Fredericton, N.B. E3B 5B4

Gais et lesbiennes de Moncton

CP 7102
Riverview, N.B.

Garde jour N. — B.

a/s 135, rue Henry
Newcastle, N.B. E1V 2N5
(506)622-8901

**Institut d'études et d'apprentissages
féminins**

681, rue Amirault
Dieppe, N.B. E1A 1E8
(506)855-4780

Les femmes au travail

216, rue Main, 3e étage
Bathurst, N.B. E2A 1A8
(506)546-9245

Les femmes au travail

15, 34^e avenue
Edmunston, N.B. E3V 2T1
(506)739-7833

Les femmes au travail

110, rue Gordon
Moncton, N.B. E1C 1M5
(506)388-9666

Lesbian and Gay Organization

Box 6494, Station A
St. John, N.B. E2L 4R9

**NDP Women's Caucus
Provincial/Federal Liaison**

c/o Allayne Armstrong
266 Winslow St.
Fredericton, N.B.

**New Brunswick Advisory Council
on the Status of Women**

880 Main St.
Moncton, N.B. E1C 1X2
(506)388-9660

**New Brunswick Association
of Registered Nurses**

231 Saunders Street
Fredericton, N.B. E3B 1N6

**New Brunswick Native Indian
Women's Council**

Room 201, 65 Brunswick Street
Fredericton, N.B. E3B 1G5
(506)454-1518

New Brunswick Women's Institute

c/o Roberta Steves
R.R. #1
Moncton, N.B. E1C 8J5
(506)389-2188

**Nouveau Départ
a/s Education permanente**

Université de Moncton
Moncton, N.B. 31A 3E9
(506)858-4121

Project Unwed Mothers

18 Botsford Street
Moncton, N.B. E1C 4W7
(506)855-7276

Saint John Council of Women

234 Millidge Avenue
Saint John, N.B. E2K 2M7
(506)693-7365

**Saint John Labour Council
Women's Committee**

c/o Marjorie Boucher
Box 7, Old Black River Road
Saint John, N.B. E2C 3W3
(506)657-4864

**Support for Single Mothers/
Support aux Mères Célibataires Inc.**

18 Botsford St.
Moncton, N.B. E1C 4W7
(506)855-7276

Transition House Support Group

c/o Diane Ménard
8 Dauphin Street
Marysville, N.B.

Voice of Women

c/o Gail Walsh
P.O. Box 1243
Dalhousie, N.B. E0K 1B0

Women of the Miramichi

c/o Shirley Bohan
Chaplin Island Road
P.O. Box 735, R.R. #2
Newcastle, N.B. E1V 3L9
(506) 622-4220

YWCA Status of Women Committee

27 Wellington Row
St. John, N. B. E2L 3H4
(506)657-6366

Newfoundland

**Association of Registered Nurses
of Newfoundland**

P.O. Box 4185
St. John's, Nfld. A1C 6A2
(709)753-6040

**Canadian Abortion Rights
Action League**

P.O. Box 5484
St. John's, Nfld. A1C 5H4

**Central Newfoundland Status
of Women Council**

17 Junction Road
Grand Falls, Nfld.
(709)489-5904

**Corner Brook Status
of Women Council**

P.O. Box 373
Corner Brook, Nfld. A2H 6E3
(709)639-8522

Corner Brook Transition House

Corner Brook, Nfld.
(709)634-4198

Dorothy Inglis — Newfoundland and Labrador Rep. on the Executive of National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC)

9 Maxse Street
St. John's, Nfld. A1C 2S6
(709)753-0494

(also NDP Women's Caucus
Provincial/Federal Liason)

Gander Status of Women Council

40 Carling Crescent
Gander, Nfld. A1V 2C4
(709)651-2926

Gateway Status of Women Council

P.O. Box 58
Port aux Basques, Nfld.
A0M 1C0

Gay Association of Newfoundland

Box 1364, Station C
St. John's, Nfld.
A1L 5N5

Labrador Native Women's Assn.

General Delivery
Nain, Labrador A0P 1L0

Labrador W. Status of Women Council

P.O. Box 171
Labrador City, Nfld. A2V 2K5
(709)944-6562

Mokami Status of Women Council

P.O. Box 329
Happy Valley, Labrador A0P 1E0
(709)896-2613

Nain Women's Group

General Delivery
Nain, Labrador A0P 1L0
(709)922-2869

Newfoundland and Labrador Women's Institutes

P.O. Box 4056
St. John's, Nfld. A1C 5Y2
(709)753-8780

Newfoundland Status of Women Council (N.S.W.C.)

P.O. Box 6072
St. John's, Nfld.

Women's Centre, N.S.W.C.

83 Military Road
St. John's, Nfld
(709)753-0220

Planned Parenthood

203 Merrymeeting Road
St. John's, Nfld.
(709)579-1009

Port Hope Simpson Status of Women Council

General Delivery
Port Hope Simpson, Labrador
AOK 4E0

Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women — Newfoundland and Labrador

131 LeMarchant Road
St. John's, Nfld. A1C 2H3
(709)753-7270

Rigolet Women's Group

c/o Charlotte Michelin
General Delivery
Rigolet, Labrador

Sheshatshu Women's Group

c/o Julianna Best
General Delivery
North West River, Labrador AOP 1M0

Transition House

P.O. Box 4460
St. John's, Nfld. A1C 6C8

Women's Centre Memorial University

St. John's, Nfld.
(709)753-9701

Women's Employment Counselling

31 West Street
P.O. Box 373
Corner Brook, Nfld. A2H 6E3
(709)639-7004

Women's Health Education Project

P.O. Box 4192
St. John's, Nfld. A1C 5Z7
(709)722-6065



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Nova Scotia

Antigonish Women's Association

c/o Grace MacKinnon
General Delivery
Antigonish, N.S. B2G 2L5

Association of Black Social Workers Committee on Women's Issues

45 Stewart Harris Drive
Dartmouth, N.S. B2W 3Z4

Association of Women's Residential Facilities

1546 Barrington Street
Halifax, N.S. B3J 1Z3

Atlantis: A Women's Studies Journal

Mount St. Vincent University
166 Bedford Highway
Halifax, N.S. B3M 2J6

Black Professional Women's Group

c/o Doris Evans
P.O. Box 458
Dartmouth, N.S. B2W 4C3

Bryony House

P.O. Box 3453
Halifax, N.S. B3J 3J1
(902)422-7650

Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women

c/o Joan Brown-Hicks
Halifax City Regional Library
5381 Spring Garden Road
Halifax, N.S. B3J 1E9
(902)426-7673

Canadian Pensioner's Concerned Women's Committee

Tower 1, Suite 200
7001 Mumford Road
Halifax, N.S. B3L 2M9

Canadian Research Institute for The Advancement of Women

c/o Linda Christiansen-Ruffman
St. Mary's University
923 Robie Street
Halifax, N.S. B3H 3C3

Coalition of Immigrant Women of Nova Scotia

26 Robert Allen Drive
Halifax, N.S. B3M 3G8

Cobequid Women Together

c/o Louise Leduc
R.R. #1
Bass River, N.S. B0M 1B0

Elizabeth Fry Society Steering Committee

c/o YWCA
1239 Barrington Street
Halifax, N.S. B3J 1Y3

Fédération Acadienne de Nouvelle-Ecosse

Section de la femme
1106, rue South Park
Halifax, N.S. B3H 2W7

Femmes Acadiennes de Clare

a/s Edith Comeau-Tufts
R.R. #1, C.P. 98A
Saulnierville, N.S. B0W 2Z0
(902)769-2471

Gay Alliance for Equality Inc.
Box 3611
Halifax South Postal Station
Halifax, N.S. B3J 3K6
(902)429-4294/429-6969

Halifax Women's Network
P.O. Box 3604
Halifax South
Halifax, N.S. B3J 3K6

Immigrant Women's Conference Committee
c/o Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association
1546 Barrington Street
Halifax, N.S. B3J 1Z3

Institute for the Study of Women
Mount Saint Vincent University
166 Bedford Highway
Halifax, N.S. B3M 2J6

Lesbian Drop-In
1225 Barrington St.
Halifax, N.S.
(902)429-4063

Lunenburg County Women's Group
P.O. Box 362
Bridgewater, N.S. B4V 2W7

National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC)
Barbara MacDonald, Nova Scotia Rep.
Box 95
Heatherington, N.S.
Kathy Coffin, Vice-President of NAC
71 Shore Drive
Bedford, N.S.

NDP Women's Caucus Provincial/Federal Liaison
c/o Barbara Levy
R.R. #3
King's County, N.S.

Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women
Halifax, N.S.
(902)424-8662

Nova Scotia Association of Business and Professional Women
Box 35, 14 Carters Road
Dartmouth, N.S. B2Y 3Y2

Nova Scotia Association of Women and the Law
Weldon Law School
Dalhousie University
Halifax, N.S.
(902)424-2237

Nova Scotia Native Women's Association
P.O. Box 805
Truro, N.S. B2N 5E8
(902)893-7402

Pictou County Women's Centre
P.O. Box 750
Stellarton, N.S. B0K 1S0
(902)752-8897

Rumours (Gay Community Centre)
1586 Grenville Street
Box 3611
Halifax South Postal Station
Halifax, N.S. B3J 3K6
(902)423-6814

South West Nova Transition House Association
P.O. Box 580
Yarmouth, N.S. B5A 4B4

Sparrow (gay and lesbian Christians)
c/o 6046 William St.
Halifax, N.S. B3K 1E9
(902)425-6967

Staff & Faculty Women's Group
Maritime School of Social Work
6414 Coburg Road
Halifax, N.S. B3H 2A7

Stuffit Coop
P.O. Box 105
Guysborough, N.S. B0H 1N0
(902)533-2489; 533-2764

Unison Society of Cape Breton
106 Townsend Street
Sydney, N.S. B1P 5E1
(902)539-6165

Voice of Women
c/o Muriel Duckworth
6517 Coburg Road
Halifax, N.S. B3H 2A6

Wimmin's Words
Women's Calendar Collective
1225 Barrington Street
Halifax, N.S. B3J 1Y2

WISE — (Women in Search of Edification)
c/o Cpt. 4, Site 2
R.R. #2
Hubbards, N.S. B0J 1T0

Women and the Arts
c/o Charlotte Hammond
R.R. #1, Lake Charlotte
Clam Harbour, N.S.

Women and Education
c/o Monica Maloney
6945 Armview Avenue
Halifax, N.S. B3H 2M5

Women's Caucus of the Atlantic Assn. of Sociologists & Anthropologists
c/o Linda Ruffman
Dept. of Sociology,
St. Mary's University
Robie Street
Halifax, N.S. B3H 3C3

Women's Counselling Collective
c/o Gayle Cromwell
15 Plateau Crescent, Apt. 7
Halifax, N.S. B3M 2V7

Women's Emergency Housing Coalition
1546 Barrington Street
Halifax, N.S. B3J 1Z3

Women's Employment Counselling Service
c/o Women's Place
1225 Barrington Street
Halifax, N.S. B3J 1Y2
(902)422-8023

Women's Health Education Network (WHEN)
P.O. Box 1276
Truro, N.S. B2N 5C2
(902)895-2140

Women's Information Resource and Referral Service
c/o YWCA
1225 Barrington Street
Halifax, N.S. B3J 1Y2

Women's Institute of the African Baptist Association
16 Power Street
Dartmouth, N.S. B2W 1M2

Women's Institutes of Nova Scotia
Cumming Hall
N.S. Agricultural College
Truro, N.S. B2N 5E3
(902)895-1571

YWCA
1239 Barrington Street
Halifax, N.S. B3J 1Y3
(902)423-6162

Prince Edward Island

Business and Professional Women's Club
c/o Diane Doucette
4 Weeks Drive
Summerside, P.E.I. C1N 4C5

Common Ground: A Journal for Island Women
81 Prince St.,
Charlottetown, P.E.I.
(902)892-3790

Federated Women's Institute of P.E.I.
P.O. Box 1058
Charlottetown, P.E.I.
(902)892-4101

Femmes acadiennes de la région Evangéline
R.R. #2
Wellington, P.E.I. C0B 2E0
(902)854-2896

Lennox Island Native Women
c/o Debbit Francis
Lennox Island, P.E.I. C0B 1P0
(902)831-2779

National Association of Women and the Law — P.E.I. Caucus
81 Prince Street
Charlottetown, P.E.I. C1A 4R3
(902)892-3790

Native Women's Association of P.E.I.
Rocky Point Reserve, P.E.I.
(902)675-2093

One Parent Family Association
218 Kent Street
Charlottetown, P.E.I.
(902)894-3050

**P.E.I. Action Committee on
the Status of Women**
81 Prince Street
Charlottetown, P.E.I. C1A 4R3
(902)892-3790

P.E.I. Rape and Sexual Assault Centre
P.O. Box 1522
Charlottetown, P.E.I. C1A 7N3
(902)894-8027

**Provincial Organization of Business
& Professional Women's Club of P.E.I.**
c/o Rosemary Trainer, President
25 Ambrose Street
Charlottetown, P.E.I. C1A 3P8

Teen Health Information Service
McGill Centre
Charlottetown, P.E.I.

Transition House Association
P.O. Box 964
Charlottetown, P.E.I. C1A 7M4
(902)892-0895

Women in Support of Agriculture
c/o Florence Simmons
R.R. #3
Summerside, P.E.I. C1N 4J9
(902)436-9413

**Women's Employment Development
Program**
129 Kent Street, Suite 206A
Charlottetown, P.E.I. C1A 1N4
(902)894-9439

Women's Immigrant Group
c/o Asifa Rahman
3 Glencove Drive
Charlottetown, P.E.I. C1A 7T4

Women's Network Project
81 Prince Street
Charlottetown, P.E.I. C1A 4R3
(902)892-3790

Women's Room
c/o Colleen Cannon
407 Chestnut Avenue
Summerside, P.E.I. C1N 2G1
(902)436-6947

OURSTORY

Fireweed is, and will continue to be, a journal in the process of continual change and growth as collective members leave and new women bring their ideas and energy into the shaping of the journal. This section is intended to keep you in touch with the women working on *Fireweed*.

Leaving the Collective:

Gina Mahalek has left the collective to resume her life as a 23-year-old in Rochester, New York. Her excellent editing and organisational skills will be sorely missed by the Collective.

Fireweed is eager to enlist the help of new volunteers and associate members. Call us at 977-8681 if you are interested in contributing some of your time.

We are still looking for writers to do some commissioned research on lesbians of colour, rural lesbians, and lesbians and the health care system. Interested writers should submit an outline by mail.

Erratum

The editors regret that the journal entries by Mona Fertig on pages 55 and 56 of Issue 17 were incorrectly labelled "poems". Also, the two poems by Barbara Wilson on pages 101 and 102 of the same issue should have been prefaced by a note saying that they are part of a sequence written in the persona of pioneer woman and artist Ann Langton (1803-1894). We are sorry for any confusion these errors may have caused.

We would also like to apologize to Gina Mahalek for a crucial typo in the last line of her editorial in Issue 17. It should have read: "And, hopefully, what you will see in *Fireweed* are women writing thoroughly, but *without* discretion."

Acknowledgements

The collective would like to thank our friends, associate members and regional representatives who have given their time and talent in the ongoing publication of *Fireweed*. We would also like to thank the following individuals: **Cecelia Benoit** for her enthusiasm and useful contacts; **Lesley Choyce** for encouragement and solicitation; **Libby Oughton** for spreading the word in P.E.I.; **Sylvia Hamilton** for acting above and beyond the call of duty; **Hinda Goldberg** and **Janet Patterson** for compiling the resource list and copious proofreading; **Wendy Waring** for advice, editing, and proofreading; **Rhea Tregebov** for editing and proofreading; **Dionne Brand** for editing; **Anne Nixon** for ensuring we had a banner for International Women's Day; **Susan Sturman** for the book and cover designs; **Alison Bailey** and **Mary Louise Adams** for help in production; **Linda Gustafson** for help in design; **April Hubert** and **Tracey Atin** for their help with subscriptions; and, finally, **Christine Higdon** for endless patience with our accounts.

Contributors' Notes

Pat Alpert's poems have been published in *Fiddlehead* and in *The Antigonish Review*. Currently, she is working as a potter and teaching part-time, as well as playing fiddle in a bluegrass band. She lives with her three children in an old schoolhouse above the South River in Antigonish County, Nova Scotia. **Sara av Maat** is thirty-one years old and was born and raised in the Maritimes. She works at the Izaak Walton Killam Hospital for children, studies at Nova Scotia College of Art and Design and lives in the Halifax Women's Housing Co-op. **Delvina Bernard** was born in Halifax and grew up in a rural Black community seven miles from Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. She is the eighth of nine children. She received a Bachelor of Commerce degree from Saint Mary's University in 1982. **Pamela Godfree** is a longstanding *Fireweed* collective member who is interested in the subversive power of words. She is looking forward to resuming her life as an anti-normal human being. **Mary Goodwin** was a writer and feminist who was born in Ontario and later made Nova Scotia her home. She died in 1982. In her memory, the Mary Goodwin Annual Scholarship for Women has been set up by her husband (Douglas Meggison). **Marie Hamilton** has spent most of her life working to improve the status of Black women in Halifax County. She has been involved in numerous community organisations over the years. Presently, she co-ordinates an Early Childhood Education course which trains women to run pre-school programs in their own communities. She is a member of the board of the National Anti-Poverty Organization and is working to establish a local N.A.P.O. in Halifax. **Sylvia Hamilton** was born in Nova Scotia where she attended Acadia University. She has spent a considerable amount of time doing research on the social and cultural history of Blacks in Nova Scotia. In addition, she has done many years of volunteer work in Black community organisations and health groups. Currently, she works for

the federal government as a Social Development Officer. Her work has appeared in Issue 16 of *Fireweed*.

Alexandra Keir is a writer living in Scotsburn, Nova Scotia. She is a regional representative for *Fireweed*. **Joss MacLennan** is a Toronto xerox artist and former *Fireweed* member. She is a member of the Toronto Women's Perspective Collective. **donalee Moulton-Barrett's** work has appeared in *Waves*, *The Antigonish Review*, *Cross-Canada Writers Quarterly*, *The Pottersfield Portfolio*, the *Dalhousie Gazette* and other regional publications. **Wilma Needham** is an artist living in Halifax. **Barbara James** has been taking photographs of her friends in and out of the women's community in Halifax for several years. **The Never Again Affinity Group** are members of the *Voice of Women*, Nova Scotia. They work for peace through non-violent direct action. **Libby Oughton** lives in Charlottetown and Cape Traverse, P.E.I. where she runs her own publishing house (the first business she's owned). Ragweed Press has published books about the Island and in 1984 will publish books by women in poetry, fiction and drama. She looks forward to a time when she can retire from publishing and create more of her own words. **Gail Picco** is a coordinator at Interval House, a shelter for battered women. She has written for several community publications across the country. **Helen Porter** has just finished a novel entitled *January, February, June or July*. Over the years she has had stories, poems, articles and reviews published in magazines and anthologies in Canada and overseas. Several of her plays have been produced on CBC radio and on the stage. Her first book, *Below the Bridge*, a memoir about the south side of St. John's (where she was born and grew up), was published by Breakwater in 1980. **Veronica Ross** was born in West Germany and came to Canada at an early age. She is the author of *Goodbye Summer* (Oberon 1980), *Dark Secrets* (Oberon 1983) and *Fisherwoman*, which will shortly be published by Pottersfield Press. Her short stories have appeared in numerous publications in Canada and the U.S.

Ruth Schneider was one of the initial seventeen plaintiffs in the herbicide case. She works at the Centre for International Studies at the University College of Cape Breton in Sydney. She also works as a freelance writer. **Susan Sturman** is an artist, writer and musician currently surviving in Toronto. **Maxine Tynes** began writing poetry in high school. As well as publishing her poems she does as many public poetry readings as she can. It is a personal project/quest to promote, encourage, and engage in bringing poetry to the people. She works as a freelance journalist for C.B.C. *Information Morning* in Halifax. For the past sixteen years, **Liliane Welch** has taught French literature at Mount Allison University, in Sackville, New Brunswick. Her latest book is *From the Songs of the Artisans* (Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 1983). Her poems have also appeared in various magazines. **Darlene Wood** is involved in the women's community in Halifax and is studying sociology at Saint Mary's University, where she hopes to complete her degree next year and go on to further studies at Carleton University. **Wendy Wortsman** is an illustrator and painter who lives in Toronto.

Submission Requirements

These guidelines will ensure the safety of your work; when submitting written or visual material to *Fireweed*, please:

- Always make sure that each submission is carefully labelled with your name and address.
- Include a stamped, self-addressed envelope for our reply or return of your submission. (If you live outside of Canada, attach an international reply coupon with sufficient postage.)
- Type written material on 8 1/2" x 11" paper (single spaced for poetry, double-spaced for prose). When submitting poetry, we suggest that you send six or seven poems to give the editors an idea of your work. For prose, no book-length manuscripts, please.
- Visual artists are encouraged to send whatever material you feel would reproduce well in our format. Send slides or photographs — no originals through the mail.
- Your covering letter should include a brief biographical note, including previous publication credits, if any.

We reserve the right to reject any material that the editors find racist, anti-Semitic, classist or homophobic.

Announcements

A Woman's Place, the centre for Halifax's women's community, is moving. In the early summer of last year, the tenants of **A Woman's Place** were notified that they would be required to vacate the building by the end of Sept. In May, a Search and Fund Committee was struck which will research and develop a long-term plan for a new home. The committee would like to encourage women who are interested in helping plan a new women's centre to become involved. For more information, please contact Yvonne Manzer, 2477 Agricola Street, Halifax, N.S., B3K 4C3. (902)425-8349.

The **FEMINIST ARCHIVE** is now back in full-time operation and would like to announce their new address: The **FEMINIST ARCHIVE**, c/o University of Bath, Claverton Down, Bath, BA2 7AY, Avon, UK.

A new book by **Anne Innis Dagg** documenting biologists' prejudices against women as shown in their work is now available. Copies of *Harems and other Horrors: Sexual Bias in Behavioural Biology* can be obtained from Otter Press, Waterloo, Ontario, N2J 4C2 for \$5.00 plus 50¢ postage. The **First International Feminist Book Fair** will be held in London (England) June 7-9, 1984. The fair will be accompanied by related events such as readings, debates and workshops. As well, visitors from abroad may be able to recoup some of their expenses by giving talks at Universities, Polytechnics and at women's centres throughout the U.K. For further infor-

mation, contact The Organising Group, **First International Feminist Book Fair**, 7 Loddon House, Church Street, London NW8, U.K. (01)402-8159. Announcing **Ahene's 1984 Poetry Contest**. A S.A.S.E. gets you entry form and rules for the third annual contest with over \$750 in prizes! Write to Poetry Dept. 169, Box 456, Maxville, Ontario, K0C 1T0.

The **Alberta N.D.P. Women's Section** has written expressing their support of those doctors and health professionals who demonstrate through their actions that they support a woman's right to choice. They are commended for their endeavours and integrity.

The **Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press** will hold its Sixth Annual Conference on Planning and Implementing a National and International Communications System for Women in Washington, D.C., June 1-3, 1984. For further information, contact: Paula Kussell, Conference Co-ordinator, P.O. Box 27, Dover, N.J. 07801 (201)366-6036.

The **1984 Index/Directory of Women's Media** has been released to aid increased networking through the use of all forms of communications media. It lists a number of media groups and services, as well as 400 individuals, indexed geographically and cross-indexed alphabetically. To order a copy, send \$8 U.S. to the **Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press**, 3306 Ross Place, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008 (202)966-7783.

The magazine **AMAZONES D'HIER, LESBIENNES D'AUJOURD'HUI** is inviting all lesbians to participate in a dossier on oppressions. Please send articles, (or cassettes), drawings, photos, etc. to: Ariane Brunet c/o Louise Turcotte, CP 1721, Succ. La Cite Montreal, Quebec H2W 2R7.

The **Radical Feminist Organizing Committee**, composed of women from the U.S. and Canada has recently been formed. Proposing to confront the institutions of male supremacy through direct action of various kinds, they also hope to do political organizing through C.R., a speaker's bureau, pamphlets, and the work of local **R.F.O.C.** groups. To receive the principles and dues information, write to: **R.F.O.C.**, 109 Ellerbee St., Durham, N.C. 27704.

The **Social/Political Action Committee of Every Woman's Place**, Edmonton's women's centre, has available copies of their pamphlet "Pornography — Entertainment or Abuse?" at 5 copies/\$1.00. Other media aids are also available. The pamphlet was part of their recent public awareness project on pornography. As well, the Committee is interested to learn about local actions against pornography and to receive any local publications or support for their efforts. Contact them at 9926-112 Street, Edmonton, Alta., T5K 1L7.

The **International Women's Writing Guild** will hold its 13th annual conference at Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, N.Y., July 27-Aug. 3, 1984. This year's conference theme is: "Aspects of Transformation II". Close to 50 workshops in every genre of writing will be offered as well as other creatively stimulating workshops. For further information contact: Hannelore Hahn, Executive Director, **I.W.W.G.**, P.O. Box 810, Gracie Station, New York, N.Y. 10028. (212)737-7536.

FREEHAND, INC., a learning community of women writers and photographers is accepting applications from students for its third year beginning Oct. 1984. The new program is a seven month intensive residency from October to May during which resident artists Olga Broumas, Marian Roth, Rita Speicher, Mona Vold, Jane Miller (on leave) are joined by visiting artists in Provincetown, Ma. Several work/study scholarships are offered, two of which are designated for women of colour. For information or application forms, write or phone: **FREEHAND, Inc.**, P.O. Box 806A, Provincetown, MA 02657 USA. (617)487-3579.

The Canadian Women's Movement Archives is an organised archival collection maintained through consultation with other archivists, and is accessible to all unless donations have specific conditions to be closed to the public. Send them your material and use the resources. P.O. Box 928, Station Q, Toronto, Ontario M4T 1P1. (416)597-8865.

Upcoming Issues

Issue 19: Priorities
(Feminist Theory and Practice)

Issue 20: Humour
(Deadline: July 1, 1984)

Issue 21: Young Women

Issue 22: Native Women



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40 St. Clair Avenue East, Toronto, Ontario, M4T 1M9

IN THIS ISSUE:

- **Atlantic Women's Groups** resource list
- A Cape Breton community's battle against Agent Orange
- Interview with **Four the Moment**
- **Hiroshima Day** performance
- Fiction by Helen Porter

