

# Branching Out

CANADIAN MAGAZINE FOR WOMEN

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1975 \$1.00



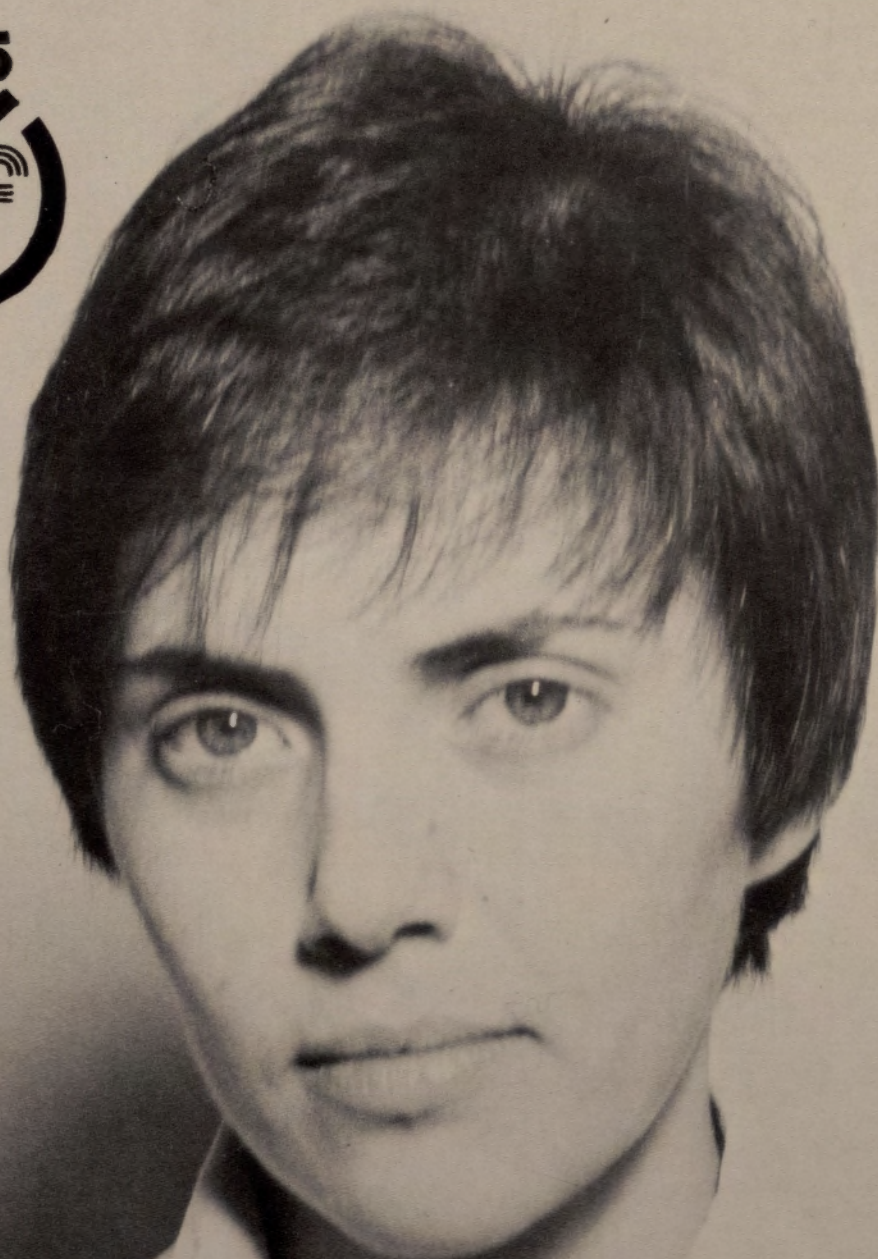
SOVIET WOMEN

NURSING: 7000 YEARS

CARNIVAL IN TENERIFE

MARGARET ATWOOD, page 24





Write for the Women's Year Newsletter and for information about projects, conferences and funding

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**Alberta**

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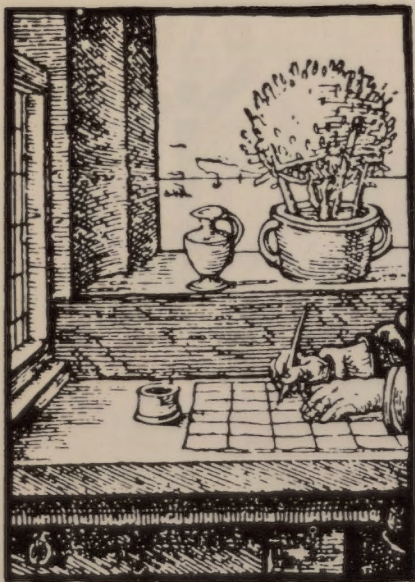
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January/February 1975



# letters



I guess it was luck that I saw the first three copies of *Branching Out*. A Canadian woman dropped them off at the Women's Liberation House in Sydney as a donation to the library. Since I look after our feminist library, I pounced on them as soon as I saw them.

I am very interested in what is happening in Canada as far as women are concerned. I'm from North Bay, Ontario but have been in this part of the world since July, 1972. Your articles made me homesick and made me wish I were back there fighting on the "home front"!

I spent ten months in Auckland, New Zealand where I first got into the Women's Movement. (Actually it was the preview issue of *Ms.* magazine that started me thinking.) The Women's Movement is going strong in New Zealand when you consider that there is only a population of two million in the entire country. At the moment they are in the midst of the abortion issue. Unfortunately, the other side (called SPUC - Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child) has the church and a lot of money behind it. A test case is coming up soon regarding the abortion clinic in Auckland, which started several months ago. The Auckland Women's Liberation has been publishing a monthly magazine, *Broadsheet*, for over two years now. It has national circulation and has a small market in Australia.

When I came over to Sydney in May 1973, I found the Movement to be quite different from the one in Auckland.

Sydney has a population of over two million and the feminists were spread thinly around the huge city. For this reason it is difficult to get to know a great many of the women. Monthly general meetings at the Women's House do not really help because we spend most of our time discussing business. Consciousness raising groups around Sydney bring women together as do the various action groups.

A lot of things have happened over the last year and a half. Control, the abortion referral service, has been running successfully for more than twelve months, and it has since shown that there is really a need for it in the community. A women's health centre has been set up with a federal grant and they are hoping to set up more in the near future. Women took over an empty house last April and opened Sydney's first women's refuge. They are seeking financial support from the government and also official recognition that there is a problem. The Sydney women's film group has been making films at a great pace. Another group of women are trying to bring out a monthly magazine, *Womenspeak*, for women outside the Movement. Money is their big stumbling block (so what's new?). Last week the rape crisis centre started.

I'm involved in the Women in Education group. Recently we held a weekend conference on women in education. It was well attended by teachers, students (not as many as we would have liked) and other interested women. There are just so many things to look into that it is quite overwhelming at times (actually, most of the time!). Some of us are presently going through the textbooks used in schools today and tabulating the male/female ratio in pictures and content. Later we plan to write our own textbooks.

The government has set aside \$2 million for International Women's Year and women across the country have been madly sending in submissions. The Schools Commission (federal) also has quite a bit of money to give to individuals who have projects that could be loosely called "innovations". Most of us are finally deciding that it's about time we got paid for all the mental and physical energy we have been putting into helping women. We have been selling ourselves short for too long.

All the best with your magazine.

Esther Caldwell, Sydney, Australia

I enjoyed reading of your trials and tribulations in the article entitled "Our First Ring" in the most recent issue. Keep those first editions in which "pages were double printed or blank, put in upside down or left out, over inked into black smears, or under inked into gray blurs." May your success be such that they will become collector's items.

Gay Vanderkley, Fort McMurray

Surely Harry Rensby doesn't need your pages; that kind of stuff appears in commercial publications -- or did you print it to get some controversy going? I hope. His attitude to women is exploitive and sexist, in spite of his sweetly reasonable tone. The fact that he compares women to poems is one indicator that he thinks of women as *for him*, not *for themselves*, to be experienced, not experiencing. Further, the word choice in that passage reveals with perfect clarity that his interest is in women as sex objects: "I start reading each poem prepared to delight in it, and I feel similarly about women, and I'm disappointed too often. Small moments that should be lubricated and sweet are arid instead."

Rensby's remarks on war, at the end of his article, demonstrate how totally subjective he is; the world exists for him only as a feeling he has about it, not as an objective reality distinguishable from himself. Of Vietnam he says: "... the Americans found it couldn't exist, and it's still going on a little maybe but it doesn't exist." People are being killed and tortured in Vietnam -- and a dozen other places in the world at least -- but Rensby's mind isn't on these things so they don't exist. Women are underpaid and struggle to bring up children, are denied opportunities to develop and are killed in illegal abortions, but the mind of a Rensby just wipes them out, so they don't exist. The sweet smiling face of egotism that says, I want things the way I want them, don't worry me with your problems, is one of the masks of repression. It's one of the commonest to use to try to deceive women, but in 1974 it looks pretty unconvincing; too many women are saying clearly that women have real problems, to waste our time on cute little meaningless pleas to "ignore borders."

Alison L. Hopwood, Vancouver

cont. on p. 46



# editorial

International Women's Year 1975 is being hailed by governments around the world as the panacea for centuries of female oppression. Officially proclaimed by the United Nations, International Women's Year is designed to improve the status of women - politically, economically, legally, culturally - a grandiose aim and one not without enormous contradictions and problems.

Predictably, most governments are participating in the activities of International Women's Year. To not do so would label any nation as hopelessly reactionary and out of step with the realities of the twentieth century. And yet, just what is planned for this marathon effort at justice and emancipation? Up to now - not much, beyond the usual conferences and recommendations. What, for example, has our government done? It hosted an opening conference last fall (covered in the last issue of *Branching Out*), has issued statements of our priorities and objectives for International Women's Year, and has set aside \$5 million in federal funds for worthwhile women's projects. It has also set up a mammoth bureaucracy in Ottawa which is sending out a newsletter in an attempt to keep various national groups communicating.

But very little in concrete terms has been decided. Instead of busying itself with conferences, why doesn't our government ask different women's groups what they want or how they can contribute? Has it approached Native women? Rural women? Women on welfare? Older women? Has it explored the possibility of exchanges with women from other countries? With women from different parts of our own country? What about a major effort to translate the works of international women writers and make their material available throughout Canada? Some would argue that it is not up to the government to approach groups; that people with ideas should pursue them on their own. However, many of the people International Women's Year is designed to serve are simply not aware of existing opportunities and facilities. Shouldn't the government at least make an attempt to inform them?

Is our government really committed to women's issues? If so, then why hasn't it implemented the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women - a natural and obvious means of showing good faith and serious intent. Four years ago, the Commission made 167 recommendations to the federal government to end discrimination against women. To date, less than one third of these have

been implemented, and two of the most vital points have been completely ignored: the right of women to safe, legal abortion *on demand*; and the right to have good day care facilities available, which would free women to pursue interests outside the home. Surely International Women's Year affords the government an excellent opportunity to make good its promises of equality, although it is a sad commentary that it should require such an occasion at all.

It is always easy to criticize when one is on the outside and unaware of the multitude of problems that a huge project like International Women's Year must present. Nevertheless, I would like to offer some concrete suggestions for directions I would like to see International Women's Year take. To the government, I would say, "Assess projects on merit rather than political expedience, and fund them accordingly." It might be more valuable, for example to give \$500 to organize a drop-in house in a remote northern or rural area than to allocate \$50,000 for a resource centre in a large city which may already have many of those same services available in various locations. I realize suggestions like this can lead to administrative nightmares, but surely handling these is the purpose of government bureaucracies! Concentrate on spending money to bring about visible, concrete results, rather than finance more conferences. *Talking* about ending discrimination against women is not going to end it. According to Dr. Margaret Fulton, Dean of Women at the University of British Columbia, \$2.5 million of the \$5 million budget administered by the Secretary of State department has "been creamed off for conferences - designed for I don't know who."

So much for government. What can we as individual women do to make International Women's Year meaningful? Make an effort to get to know more about women. Different women. Travel to other parts of the country, if possible and find out what's happening there. Get involved in something in your community. If you live near a university, drop in to the foreign student centre.

*Branching Out* will be covering International Women's Year in different ways. We hope to have a regular major feature on women from other cultures. This issue, for example, takes a look at women in Russia. We also intend to cover IWY activities across the country so that you will be informed about the kinds of projects other women are working on. Help us keep our coverage complete by letting us know what you are doing. International Women's Year *can* make a difference if we want it to.

by Naomi Loeb



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| Medicine Hat | CHAT-TV | 8:30- 9:30 am |

Come Alive is a production of

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# here and there

The Vancouver Women's Bookstore has published an annotated catalogue of its holdings. These include periodicals, booklets, and nonfiction, fiction and children's books. Useful if your local bookseller does not have a good stock of feminist material. Price lists and mail order instructions are included, and they invite title suggestions. Write to 804 Richards Street, Vancouver.

The Women's Programming Committee of Vancouver Cooperative Radio (VCR - 102.7FM) invites women's groups in the Lower Mainland to publicize their workshops, and special events as well as to submit suggestions for programmes, interviews and readings on a feminist theme.

The Women's Programming Committee especially encourages women with knowledge of the status of women in the labour force and the creative arts to make use of this new broadcasting service.

VCR is a newly licensed Vancouver FM radio station, which will be a special community and educational service for citizens. It is a non-profit cooperative society funded voluntarily through donations and will not carry commercials.

Women interested in learning to use radio equipment are encouraged to contact VCR for information on their beginners' workshops held each Wednesday at 7:30.

For further information regarding the areas mentioned contact Suzanne Fournier, Vancouver Cooperative Radio, 333 Carrall St., Vancouver, B.C. or phone (604) 684-8494. (WCWN)

Herstory 1975: a datebook and calendar for International Women's Year, Herstory was prepared by the Saskatoon Women's Calendar Collective, producers of the highly successful Herstory 1974. The book/calendar has 128 pages, including 55 graphics. It's available for \$4.00 at bookstores, or order from The Women's Press, No. 305, 280 Bloor St. W., Toronto, Ontario.

Since early this year, women's groups have been forming in the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) across Canada. The CBC status of women task force, composed of four women and two men, is headed by Kay McIver, Director of English radio services in Montreal. The task force was appointed by CBC Ottawa head office last spring to study working conditions of female employees (promotion, hiring, training, compensation) as well as the presentation of women in such areas as program content, advertising and on-air personalities. Its report was made to CBC President Laurent Picard last October in Ottawa. Cathy Little of Vancouver is optimistic that the CBC is taking the report seriously.

"In the meantime, CBC women's groups across Canada are proposing a national federation and already have a national newsletter called *Open Circuit*. We maintain liaison with other CBC women via Jeanne Larin of CBUF-FM here in Vancouver," says Ms. Little.

Copies of *Open Circuit* may be obtained without cost from Marie Howes, Public Relations Representative, CBL-FM, Box 500, Terminal A, Toronto, Ontario. (WCWN)

Vancouver Women's Calendar, 1975: a multi-coloured wall calendar, 11" by 17" full of graphics representing twelve women's groups working in the Vancouver area. Send \$2.00 to Press Gang Publishers, 821 E. Hastings, Vancouver 4, B.C. For orders over five copies the calendars cost \$1.50 each.

Men and Women Unlimited is preparing educational materials which do away with masculine/feminine stereotypes. A broad spectrum of subject areas at both primary and secondary school levels will be covered. Write to 712-33 Street, N.W. Calgary, Alberta.

A Women's Information Centre opened in September at the YWCA in Saint John, N.B. January openings are planned for a Fredericton centre, and a Moncton centre for French-speaking women. Activities at the Saint John Y have included a festival of films by women, and video and health workshops.

The International Women's Year Newsletter produced by the Privy Council Office, is available at no cost. To have your name placed on their mailing list, write to Mary Gusella, Director, International Women's Year Secretariat, Privy Council Office, Ottawa, Ontario.

cont. on p. 37





# both sides now

by Geri Berner

drawing by Linda Donnelly

The sad thing about Canada's prisons is that rehabilitation does not exist in them. This is my conclusion after five years of community treatment work. There are a few programs that try to rehabilitate male prisoners but these are carried out by private individuals and private agencies with very little assistance or encouragement from the corrections branches of the provincial or federal governments.

Female inmates are completely ignored except possibly by the Elizabeth Fry Society, who do a good job, but an insignificant one compared to the size of the problem. Female prisoners do not have the glamorous roles of rebels or outlaws as males do. They are the lowest of the low in today's society. Multiple abortions and adoptions of children born out of wedlock, histories of prostitution and criminality make them ridden with guilt and bent on self-destruction. They are hidden and ignored by our correction departments.

Just try to get into a prison for the sole purpose of aiding prisoners. You will be met with ridicule, suspicion and hostility on behalf of most officials whether they are paper pushers or gate guards. The government doesn't want private individuals going into prisons because they have a lot to hide. Filth, brutality, corruption and mental cruelty exist in Canada's prisons. Any official who denies this fact is either a liar or a naive individual who has never been inside Oakalla, Kingston, Stony Mountain, etc.

Most prisons keep their inmates subdued with dope. Massive doses of tranquilizers are prescribed and dispensed to inmates who have trouble "adjusting" to prison life. It is not rehabilitation that keeps Canada's prisons riotless, it is tranquilizers and illegal drugs such as heroin, acid and cocaine. It is not unusual for inmates to be introduced to and hooked on drugs while serving their sentences.

Illicit drugs are smuggled in by

guards to supplement their poor salaries. Some guards give inmates illegal drugs out of pity. Prison officials are easily manipulated because they have little knowledge of the manipulative techniques used by drug users. For example, I visited a female inmate to give her news of her children who had been committed to a foster home after her conviction of possession of heroin. She thanked me profusely and left the interview feeling good that her children were being well cared for. However, in order to get drugs from the prison psychiatrist she tore her cell apart and of course was subdued by sedation. Upon release, she confessed guiltily and said she was sorry for all the trouble she had caused. The result of this fiasco was that a complaint from the prison staff was delivered to me suspending my visiting privileges because I allegedly "upset" the prisoner and was responsible for her outburst. It was a private interview and it never occurred to the staff that they were being manipulated by a habitual drug user. I was the culprit for interfering with their controlled environment, they thought. I believe that if the inmate had known there were no drugs available in prison, she would not have thrown that particular tantrum.

I have had corrections officials criticize me for constantly using the word "prison". They like to refer to them as maximum or minimum security centres. Those are nice polite terms. Prison isn't nice and it isn't polite. It is an accurate description, with all its medieval connotations, of the places where Canada incarcerates her prisoners.

There are a variety of methods of incarceration. Take "the hole" for example. Solitary isolation, in a small room with no windows, not even bars to look through. Bread and water is the diet for anyone unfortunate enough to end up in the hole, sometimes for weeks on end. One inmate who was a "bad" prisoner told me how a particular guard who hated him, apparently with good

reason, used to slip razor blades under the door of the hole. The inmate's arms and chest were covered with scars and slash marks, one upon the other. Self-torture is the only form of entertainment for an inmate in the hole. Uncivilized? Inhuman? You bet it is. Oh, Canada.

Let's get one thing straight. I am not a bleeding heart. I don't want sex maniacs molesting my children. If we have to lock up an individual who is a danger to society that's fine with me. I have met people who will have to be imprisoned for the rest of their lives, for your safety and mine. But be humane about it. And let's do everything in our power to re-educate, train and civilize petty criminals who have broken the law. Inmates are not lepers, they are emotionally and financially bankrupt individuals who have to be re-educated and recycled. We can't keep locking people up for two, four and seven years, allow them to stagnate and grow even more bitter against the society they lashed out against, and expect them to be fine upstanding citizens upon release.

One matron, while giving me a tour of a women's prison, pointed to the colored doors that had been affixed to cells and told me what a wonderful example of modern rehabilitation she thought it was. Several of the inmates looked as if they were going to lose what little was left of their minds.

There are no easy solutions to Canada's prison blues. Better pay for guards, emotional assessments of prison staff at regular intervals would help.

I believe, however, that community involvement is a big part of the answer. I'm not talking about mickey-mouse programs carried out by well-meaning individuals who visit prisons and have tea with a group of prostitutes once a week.

Prisoners must have access to all levels of educational services. They must attend schools in the community and live in houses in middle, lower and





upper class neighbourhoods. They must be part of the real world. They require long-term involvement with people who are dedicated to helping ex-inmates take on a positive and productive role in society. They must be trusted and given the opportunity to change. If they mess up, then by all means return them to prison, but we must give petty criminals a chance to become responsible citizens.

The majority of prisoners in Canada are illiterate and poverty-stricken. They are not middle or upper class people who are "bad" or "went wrong somewhere". They broke the law because they wanted something better than they had and they tried to get it by force.

I have worked with many of these people. Some of them failed, a lot of them died. Mostly, the women died. Very few women who are convicted criminals live past age 35.

On a happier note, many more are now responsible, taxpaying citizens because they wanted to change and they were shown how to acquire education, job training and to cope with society.

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"Both Sides Now" is intended to serve as a forum in which women can discuss their opinions on different topics. Submissions are invited. Please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope with your copy and send to "Both Sides Now" *Branching Out*, Box 4098, Edmonton, Alberta T6E 4T1.



# Women in the Soviet Union

by Gwen Matheson

Soviet women were to me as recently as six months ago vague mythical creatures. Their image, based on random reading and the media, ranged from the romantic heroines of Dostoevsky's and Tolstoy's novels at the one extreme to the equally fictional creatures that we read about in newspapers of the fifties or earlier, who were supposed to be heavily built, drab, and good at wielding shovels and driving trucks. Both of these images have been combined and brought up to date in the still almost unbelievable young women, bright-eyed and capable, whose smiling faces under construction helmets, doctors' caps, etc. look out each month from the front page of the magazine *Soviet Woman*.

Then I was given the unique opportunity to spend three weeks in July of 1974 as part of a delegation touring five major cities in the world's largest country and meeting, mostly through an interpreter, women from all "walks of life" (rather than "classes"). And soon there I was in the internationally flavoured Ukraine Hotel in Moscow with its Russian-style high ceilings and chandeliers - a third generation female WASP Canadian, a product of the capitalist and Western world, more or less apolitical but fresh from five years of participation in the American-influenced Canadian women's movement - ready to pounce on the first unsuspecting Soviet woman and begin to unload a mind full of burning questions.

The chief queries to which I hoped to find some answers were these: Is socialism - in this case the Soviet brand - the answer to all the problems of women's emancipation? Are Soviet women as fantastically liberated as some impressions in the West would seem to indicate? Or are the dark rumours of continuing bondage in various forms really true?

Three weeks later when I finally collapsed exhausted into the seat of the Soviet Aeroflot plane to begin my journey home, I felt that partly through the remarkable cooperation of the Soviet International Friendship Societies and partly because of my own special capacity for "bugging" people I had managed to find at least the beginnings of answers to most of my questions. Strangely enough, my original stereotyped and second-hand notions about the women of the Soviet Union proved to have some ele-

ments of truth, but the reality as it unfolded throughout dozens of interviews in Moscow, Leningrad, Tallin (Estonia), Kiev, and Yerevan (Armenia) was infinitely more complex. The image of Soviet woman now has for me many faces, voices, and forms, in most cases of women that I will always remember - with affection, with admiration, and often with a little bit of exasperation. If I were asked to sum up my impressions of the roles and attitudes of Soviet women today in one word I would choose "paradox."

This paradoxical quality was symbolized for me by the very first Soviet woman (next to airline stewardesses) I caught sight of as the Aeroflot jet touched down at Moscow airport. She was driving the landing stairway out to the plane, a job that seems reserved for men in North America. But, unlike most women engaged in that type of unorthodox occupation here, she was wearing a dress!

But the most important Soviet woman as far as we delegates were concerned was Ludmila, our tour guide and interpreter, a charming young woman who taught English in the Faculty of Mathematics and Mechanics at Moscow University, where she was also a member of the "Komsomol". With her reddish-brown hair, blue eyes and classic Russian features, Ludmila was a "Muscovite" born of Muscovites, her father a science professor and her mother a doctor, although her paternal grandparents had died in the siege of Leningrad.

Like *Toronto Star* columnist Gary Lautens' Soviet guide, Ludmila, ours seemed also to have been subject to considerable indoctrination, since she felt it her patriotic duty to give us the impression that if all things were not perfect in the Soviet Union they were well on the way to becoming so. This fact helped to make her another symbol of the paradoxical quality of the Soviet woman's role, for while she was an enthusiastic product of the post-revolutionary liberation of women (she played with a tractor as a child,) at the same time some of her attitudes would seem to most Canadian liberationists extremely traditional.

"Well, you see, Gwen, the matter is...." she would begin in her delightful Russian-Oxford accent when I

made feminist protests about some of these traditional aspects of Soviet life. Then she would go on patiently to explain how their women had complete legal and professional equality, ending with some such statement as the one I was to hear later repeated by other Soviet women that "We don't need any women's liberation here." But then in the next breath she might make some remark such as another one that I was to hear frequently echoed - "Women do certain things, and men do certain things." And, although she enjoyed her teaching job and her students (with the exception of one who had refused to cut his hair), there was no doubt in her mind that the chief object of her life would be the making of a happy home for Sascha, her handsome young engineer fiance, and their future children.

Two other Soviet women, whom I like to remember as the Laughing Girls of Leningrad, were Tanya and Svetlana, a couple of young students happy to be free for the summer from their arduous university courses in language studies, who acted as our temporary guides. Outside the Czars' summer palace among the "Fountains of Petrodeverts" (now a public park) they ran about picking wild flowers to present to the other female delegates and myself; and they derived immense glee from my volunteering to be doused by a hidden trick fountain that would gush up unexpectedly. Just before we left Leningrad, as we sat over a farewell bottle of champagne in my hotel room, they admitted with much gaiety and giggling that they didn't want to get married for several years to avoid becoming "oppressed" too soon by a man. Of course, they knew that Soviet men are supposed to share the housework, and many do, but usually when the husband comes home from work he'll say that he's had a busy day, he has to read the paper, etc., etc.

Two very different types of Leningrad women were Galina and Vasileva, workers for over two decades in the Red Banner ("Krasnoye Znamya") Hosiery Factory, which was decorated with the Order of Lenin in 1966 and which dates back to 1855. Above the noise of the weaving machines, nearly made intolerable by a loud-speaker periodically announcing factory news, I managed to snatch a few words with these two round-faced, healthy



looking middle-aged women, the mothers of grown-up children. Both appeared to be happy in their work and proud of their production records, for which they received special recognition. Vasileiva's whole life, in fact, was centered in the factory since her husband and two children worked there as well. Like most other Soviet people, she had relatives, both of her parents, who had died in the war. Despite the fact that she performed a type of labour which, to me at least, appeared very boring, she kept her life interesting by attending meetings of the City Soviet Party of which she was a member, reading books, going to the theatre, listening to music (classical), watching T.V. and going to the country. (I was assured later that these two women factory workers had been picked at random to be interviewed.)

In a later interview, with the woman editor of the factory newspaper, I learned of the many ways in which the system in the factory was especially geared to the needs of women, who formed 80% of its workers. Summing up the position of women in the Red Banner factory, the editor and her companions assured me that the sexes were in a state of "peaceful co-existence."

Another Soviet woman who stands out in my memory is the Deputy Chief Justice of Leningrad - half of the judges in that city are women. The Deputy Chief Justice, whom I met along with another woman judge at the Leningrad Friendship House, was a large woman with a lined face, impressive and at the same time rather formidable. She informed me through an interpreter that 40% of Soviet lawyers are women, adding that "women have more grey cells." Then she asked me very directly if I could explain why there are not more women in law in Canada. Feeling almost as if I were on trial for the sexual discrimination of my country, I could only make some lame comment about our having to still struggle against traditional attitudes. Embarrassing moments like this were not infrequent, such as the times when I had to admit that out of 264 of our Members of Parliament only nine (and that just recently) were women; whereas 40% of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, I have been informed, is composed of women. Comparisons like this are hard for a nationalist to bear.

Equally interesting and significant interviews with many other women remain in my mind. There was the blonde and attractively dressed Moscow poet, Julia Drunina, with whom

I had lunch along with her filmmaker husband and who gave me two of her books (one of "love") with permission to have them translated into English. There were the two women of the internationally active Soviet Women's Committee each of whom gave me a hearty hug and kiss, Russian-style, before I left and conveyed warm greetings to well-known activist women in Canada with whose names

ing able to understand a foreign language is an advantage). There were the women wielding shovels to be seen in almost every city, and there were the women running streetcars; and I couldn't help wondering why, if they had the freedom to do these more menial tasks, they were not yet equally represented among diplomats and heads of Collective Farms.

Finally there were the women I



Red Banner Factory, Leningrad.  
From left, Gwen Matheson, Galina Vasilevna (worker), and Svetlana (guide and interpreter).

they were familiar. There was the editor of the Publishing House of Artistic Literature, Leningrad Branch, who told me, among other interesting facts on publishing, that they reject pornography because "mental food must be as good as physical food." And there was the dark and dynamic little Armenian woman in Yerevan who is head of what is probably the only Children's Art Gallery in the world.

Then there were all the others, less eminent but no less interesting, the kind of women I would like to have met more of. Apart from the factory workers, almost the only one of these with whom I had what might be called real communication was the hotel maid in Moscow who told me off soundly for leaving dishes and cigarette butts in the hotel lounge where I had retired to do some writing (There are times when not be-

found perhaps the most fascinating of all - the street sweepers with their witches' brooms who appeared everywhere and upon whom, I concluded, the remarkable cleanliness of most Soviet cities depends. These were mostly old women - "bobushkas" (grandmothers) - with kerchiefs tied tightly around their heads, dark dresses, and scuffed looking shoes... the kind of women who still frequented the few churches that are not preserved merely as beautiful museums. I saw crowds of these old women at a traditional wedding which we happened to witness at Nevsky Cathedral in Leningrad, looking nostalgic and enraptured as old women everywhere do at such events. I wondered what they might have in common with that other Soviet woman I would dearly have loved to meet - Valentina Terechkova, Hero of the Soviet Union, de-





Women's work force in construction - students.



A street sweeper in Moscow.

puty to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, and the first woman on earth to become a cosmonaut.

From my observations of Soviet women, however, I have come to the general conclusion that the amazing accounts of their liberation are indeed true. Economically, professionally, and politically they are so far ahead of women in North America that it becomes a fact painful as well as inspiring to contemplate. Direct observation aside, the statistics alone are overwhelming. I was already familiar, for instance, with the one much publicized in the West that about 70% of Soviet medical doctors are women, but I was hardly prepared to learn that every third Soviet engineer is a woman! A female engineer in Canada is still something to be regarded with curiosity and wonder by most people.

Other random statistics and facts that I picked up during my brief visit are as follows: 90% of all Soviet women are engaged in either work or studies or both: 90% of those in the field of education are women; the newspaper *Moscow News* and the magazine *Ukraine* whose offices we visited have a predominance of women on their editorial staffs - in the case of *Moscow News* 70%; the President of the Artists' Association of the USSR is a woman, and the President of the Writers' Union in Moscow, a charming person I met twice, is also a woman; the chief Soviet Ministers of Culture, Education, and Health are

women; even in Armenia, which is still one of the most traditional Republics in general attitude, 52% of the scientists and doctors are women, and so is the best-known contemporary Armenian poet.

This remarkable phenomenon of the advancement of women dates, like almost every other form of progress in the Soviet Union, from 1917 and the October Socialist Revolution - a fact which the Soviet people are never tired of pointing out. And when the present situation of the female half of the population is compared with their pre-Revolutionary state, where 80% of employed women were domestic servants and 83.4% between the ages of 9 and 49 were illiterate, even the most adamant enemies of socialism would have to admit that, in the USSR at any rate, it is a system which has transformed the lives of women. The female president of the Armenian Friendship Society, whose grandmother couldn't read but whose mother held a degree in science, is one of the many living examples of this progress.

Equality for the Soviets, however, does not imply sameness, and they never lose sight of the biological differences between men and women. Although there was a trend in the Thirties to allow women to aspire to any occupation, they are now barred from certain jobs such as those in the mining and steel industries, and from certain aspects of chemical manufac-

turing which are regarded as being too heavy, dangerous, or, most important, possibly injurious to the health of unborn children.

Motherhood is in no danger of becoming the rather outdated or awkward state that it almost appears to be now in more radical feminist circles in the West. And when the vodka and cognac are flowing and the favorite Soviet custom of toasting is in full swing, you can be sure that some chivalrous male will start off by emptying his glass "to the ladies" and making a speech about "our wives and mothers" or "the continuation of the race" or voicing some other sentimentality that would be enough to make a North American feminist choke on her caviar. (I managed to get used to it and even retaliated by toasting the men as "husbands and fathers", learning later to my frustration that they loved it.) Soviet women are never allowed to forget their biology. And the teen-age girl often seen in the khaki uniform of the volunteer labour force can expect within a very short time to exchange this outfit for the long white dress and traditional veil of the blushing bride. If by some rare chance she chose not to get married or not to have children the impression is given that she would be considered rather strange.

In comparison with our own permissive and "free" society, the general level of sexual morality in the USSR appears to be high. But if there are



fewer excesses, deviations, and social problems there is also less religious influence and less of what some might call "puritanism". In my talk with Ludmila about these matters she informed me that it is common for couples to have a period of intimacy before marriage, and there is no stigma attached to children born outside of marriage. The rights of these children are as protected as are those of "legal" offspring. Birth control is practised extensively, resulting in an average of about two children per family (although the "Order of Motherhood" is still presented to mothers of large families). The fact that the birth control pill is "not advised" because of its possible side effects is probably linked with the fact that the majority of doctors are women.

"Women's Liberation" as it is known in the West is something about which the Soviets have definitely made up their minds: first, they are convinced they don't need it; and second, they regard it as rather amusing. I can still remember the reactions of certain women, like the editors of *Soviet Woman* and the women judges when I tried to explain certain things that are now orthodoxy to Canadian feminists, such as the need for women to segregate to a certain extent and work out the problems of their liberation independently. These big motherly looking women would sit there and smile tolerantly at me as if to say, "Poor thing - it's not her fault - a victim of capitalism - etc." Then chuckling, they would make a remark such as "The only time we segregate is to have coffee and discuss our husbands." Or they would explain patiently that "We've been through all that - in the Twenties and Thirties." I heard the comment more than once from both men and women that "What we need now is men's liberation."

I had to admit, of course, that some of the activities and concerns of our Movement are irrelevant to Soviet society. For instance, law reforms that we are still struggling for, such as those affecting married women's property rights, divorce, alimony, and abortion have already been a part of their legislation since 1968, and they are working yet for even more equitable conditions for women. When I had a discussion once with Ludmila about some of our social problems that are either directly or indirectly connected with the status of women in our society it seemed to leave her slightly stunned. Such concepts as "Rape Crisis Centre" or "Body-Rub Parlour" (prostitution) would be incomprehensible to her as were more

benign ideas such as "Unisex", and "Gay Liberation". Venereal disease and drug addiction also are not problems in Soviet society. In fact, I must confess to feeling a certain relief at the sight of a few Soviet people who were obviously alcoholics, since it proved that they aren't *that* much purer than we. And, I seldom missed a chance to comment on the fact that their drivers must be the most high-speed and dare-devil in the world. (One of the women I saw in the Soviet Union was lying dead beside an overturned car.)

But, in spite of my recognition that Soviet women have achieved the economic basis of liberation, I also came increasingly to the conclusion that in the subtler psychological aspects they are still very far from true equality. Perhaps the very fact that women in Canada are still struggling with problems from which their Soviet sisters are now free keeps them more conscious of the truth of the old saying that "no group in power ever gave up that power willingly."

Indications of this appeared in various forms. They came out in little side comments, such as those of the Leningrad girls, and in the remark of another young tour guide who quoted her husband as saying with some irritation, "Other women put family first and work second, but it's the other way round with you." Then there were the interesting talks I had with the *Soviet Woman* editors and especially with the women of the Soviet Women's Committee who honestly admitted that women still had problems which the "State" was attempting to deal with in the areas of day-care, housing, and housework. They had hopes that the next "Five-Year Plan" might bring some solutions.

The woman who seemed best to sum up the true situation of women in the Soviet Union was Galina Alexandra, a wonderfully down-to-earth person in the Department of Culture of the Moscow Friendship House. Admitting that the sharing of household duties between husbands and wives needs a more secure basis than the present one of "love", she made the very astute observation that "real life is more complicated than ideas."

Commenting on the differences between "women's liberation" in her country and in mine, Julia the poet said, "We have the practice before the theory and you have the theory before the practice." If this is the case, then it is important that Soviet and Canadian women should meet more frequently in order to bring about a mutual raising of consciousness.

An obvious answer to the ques-

tion of why Soviet socialism has not yet been able to achieve the complete liberation of women would be that it has not had enough time. "Don't forget, we started from zero," one woman observed; and another remarked that "fifty years is a short time in which to change people's psychology." But I believe that the problem goes deeper than that, and I think I gained an insight into its true nature from watching a people's Musical in the Palace of Culture in Kiev. This production, whose title roughly translates as "Youth on Guard," was presented in honour of the fiftieth anniversary of the Young Communist League and was partly centered around Soviet history of the last fifty-seven years. The whole program was dominated by uniforms, marchings, and military songs; and women were presented in a generally passive light, the main female role being that of a bride coyly mincing about the stage in a white dress and veil. This little performance seemed to illustrate very clearly that in a society which has suffered so much from war and conflicts as the Soviet Union has, women can never be anything more than the second sex no matter how advanced their official and legal position might be. The reasons for this are complex



A wedding couple in Moscow.



and various, but chief among them is the fact that Soviet feminists of the more militant variety seemed to lose their fire after the disaster of the second World War and the fight against the fascists.

After losing literally millions of their men in this conflict, Soviet women were in no mood to establish a front against male domination, even though, tragically and ironically, war itself is a symptom of what Nellie McClung once diagnosed as "too much masculinity" in the world. The reduction of the male population in the war resulted in a greater proportion of women even as late as 1973 (10% more women in 1959 and 7% in 1973). This fact, coupled with the greater liberation of women brought about by socialism, has produced a situation where the USSR might be seen as potentially female-dominated, or in the popular term a "matriarchy."

One of the most impressive things about Soviet society is that already it has many of the traits of a matriarchy in the true sense. This is seen, for instance, in the low incidence of crime and violence, particularly violence against women, as opposed to the situation in the West where the incidence of rape is rapidly rising. There is also the strong sense of community characteristic of socialism in any form and the protective or "motherly" concern of the State for the people's welfare as expressed in a highly organized and planned social system.

However, built-in safeguards against women becoming dominant, or even completely equal, unfortunately, are prominent in the Soviet psyche. Aside from the fact that the greater proportion of women makes them to some extent the superfluous and therefore slightly less valued sex (another undesirable accompaniment of war), there is also the fear of the Soviet male that his women might be getting the upper hand.

The most direct expression of this fear that I encountered over there was in a conversation "not for the record" with one of the male editors of a well-known Soviet magazine. His opinion that women were "taking over too much" had a personal basis in that he had just been through divorce proceedings in which he experienced the hand of the law being very much on the side of the woman. Interestingly, one of the two Canadian men in our delegation also expressed the direct opinion that women seemed to be running things in the USSR.

For the most part, however, the fears of female dominance that I was

able to observe during my brief visit expressed themselves on a more unconscious level, taking two main forms which were at the same time techniques for keeping women in their place - namely, "chivalry" and the joking attitude.

Above all, there is a tendency, either innate or conditioned, in the women themselves to keep limitations on their power. The best example of this was Ludmila. I once mentioned to her that women might have to run the world for awhile to get things straightened out and that perhaps the Soviet Union is where they would start. Our young guide, who in spite of her strong elements of traditionalism had once confided to me that "women have more wisdom," agreed. "Don't worry, we will," she assured me. Then about a minute later she added as a very serious after-thought, "But we must do it in such a way that the men don't suspect."

One of the highlights of my trip was a long discussion with two members of the Soviet Women's Committee, the Chief and the Secretary of the Information Department. This organization, now headed by cosmonaut Valentina Tereshkova, began in 1941 as the Anti-Fascist Committee of Soviet Women. After the war it continued to exist as a co-ordinating body for the activities of Soviet women and as a member of the Women's International Democratic Federation

(WIDF). The purpose of the Soviet Women's Committee is "to actively participate in the women's international democratic movement to ensure peace, national sovereignty and equal rights for women and the well-being of their children, and to promote friendly ties between the women of the Soviet Union and other countries." It maintains contact with national women's organizations and movements of over 100 countries, and with various international and regional women's organisations, such as the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

The international emphasis of the Soviet Women's Committee is expressed in one of their chief projects, the magazine *Soviet Woman* (established in 1945) which is published in twelve different languages and which now reaches nearly all countries of the world. An example of the assistance provided by the Soviet Women's Committee to women in foreign countries is their work in Africa. There the Committee has organized social centres where women can learn child care and other skills and where they can overcome their illiteracy as well. A programme has been set up also to enable African women students to study in the Soviet Union. The aid the Committee sends to women of other countries is often associated with what the Soviets regard as anti-imperialist struggles, although they



Clerk at a Perfume and cosmetics counter, using an abacus.



claim that they don't export politics."

One of the chief aims of the Soviet Women's Committee is to promote the equality of women. Soviet women advocate women's rights as members of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, the International Labour Organization, and UNESCO and as delegates to world forums on this issue.

As well as promoting the interests of women on an international scale, the Soviet Women's Committee is concerned with helping women in the USSR itself. Conferences enlisting the aid of experts are often held on the problems of Soviet women. Representing the interests of Soviet women in the Supreme Soviet, they actively participated in the drawing up of that major piece of Soviet legislation, the Fundamental Legislation on Marriage and the Family. This close working relationship between the Committee and the Supreme Soviet (of which one of my hostesses was a member) illustrates the avoidance of any segregation policies on the part of the Soviet women even when they are working specifically for women's rights.

Before I said good-bye to my two hostesses at the Soviet Women's Committee headquarters they expressed an interest in establishing friendly relations and correspondence with women's groups in Canada. Soviet women and Vietnamese women had met Canadian women at an International Conference in Canada several years ago. And this year, they informed me, members of the Soviet Women's Committee were invited to Canada by the League of Women in Quebec. We also talked about the plans of both Soviet and Canadian women for International Women's Year in 1975. One of the most important events will be the International Women's Congress in Berlin to which women from countries all over the world, including Canada, will be going. The theme of this Conference will be "The New Role of Women in Modern Society."

I found it especially significant that Soviet women, through the Soviet Women's Committee, are playing a leading role in the current highly organized efforts throughout the country for peace. The Committee is one of the sponsors of the Soviet Peace Fund and it cooperates closely with organisations such as the Soviet Peace Committee and the Union of Soviet Societies for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries. They participated in the World Assembly of Women for Disarmament (Vienna, 1962) and contributed to the World Congress of Women (Mos-

cow, June 1963), which is generally considered an important stage in the women's international democratic movement. The Soviet women appear to be trying to fulfill the prophecy of the great Canadian feminist Nellie McClung, who wrote that, when women are allowed to say what they think of war, it will cease to exist.

The tragic paradox is this: There can be no complete liberation of women (or of men either) without world peace, and it appears highly unlikely that there can be any peace without the liberation of women. Neither socialism nor any other system has yet succeeded in the attainment of these two aims. Yet Soviet women seem convinced that their brand of socialism will succeed, and this is the reason why they emphatically state that "women alone won't save the world." Radical feminists of the West, on the other hand, disagree with them, but so far their efforts to "save the world" have not succeeded either. Perhaps some solution to this dilemma is hidden in the future.

Visions and hints of the future come to people in many different places. Mine came in the Gallery of Modern Art in Leningrad. Two paintings at the far end of the gallery presented a fascinating contrast. The first of these was one of the many thousands of representations of Lenin

that appear throughout the Soviet Union, this one depicting him as a huge, mythical figure, with beard thrust out, striding over a dwarfed landscape. The other was a smaller painting, by a woman artist, M. Bogin. It was a portrait of another woman in white - not the familiar white of the bride's array, but the white cap and smock of a medical assistant or nurse. She was standing with her hands in the pockets of her smock, looking out with an expression that was a mixture of confidence and compassion, and with what seemed like just a touch of irony.

I looked again at the towering portrait of Lenin. His way of doing things had indeed accomplished much. I had seen its results throughout my visit. But the tragedy of history is that blood shed even in a just cause can only lead ultimately to more bloodshed. Maybe soon the last wide-scale shedding of blood will be over. Then the old women in their kerchiefs will interrupt their prayers to come and sweep up the debris, weeping but perhaps smiling a little too with a secret knowledge. And the women in white smocks in all countries will continue their familiar task of binding up the wounds - and the men will help them. This time perhaps they will really succeed in building a new world. \*\*\*



Part of relief statuary at a memorial



## SINCE DEMOLISHED

217 Donald Street  
Lee Court  
Lee? Nobody knows, cares, nobody  
Remembers, No,  
Not even the Dad, gentle one-time wrestler  
Moved in after the flood of '50, now  
With urinary overflow dyked and bottled  
Strapped to a skinny leg  
Veritable cataracts about the eyes: still  
The Dad makes himself useful with lock and key and  
A turning out of lights, Mary  
Mackenzie companion

And it was so, over  
The labyrinthian cellars, skittering mice  
Stone corridors, catacombs for washing machines  
Clanking call-to-arms of water rads and tanks  
Vacuums for dank dead buckets, benches  
Dry-racks, blank cartridges  
Steaming sheets of old ivory, rusted beds  
Time, here, time, beneath, in  
The slumber rooms with cubes of silence

Call them out!  
To be demolished, lot and stock of us  
Condemned!  
For what! Sh-sh-sh-I though  
Last to weep the single elm beyond my window  
Roots ferreting concrete heavy with noon traffic  
Not to worry! Cycled day after then to  
Summer green in west wind's  
Pantomime

Here comes Little Ray, they're  
Bringin' her in, never shoulda'  
Moved her away, forgets  
Her name: Hey -- take her to Smith Street  
Never shoulda' let her out  
Last week got lost in Eatons  
There goes Little Ray

Lucien, what's done to you  
Now we're all gone away?  
Commissionaire at the little insurance co.  
Nights -- you play harmonica, pace  
The empty parking lot, our frail ghosts  
Fringing tenement steps  
Watch you below, listen  
Our fingers tangling, our clap-clap silent  
Your footsteps shuffle the beat of Frenchman's Canada  
To and fro and across the parking lot  
Lucien, watchman, what's done to you



"Are there cockroaches here?"  
 In the yeasty mould of crochet and cranny  
 Up the back stairs, into larders of the old?  
 Don't ask me, young ballerina  
 Live awhile with our numbers  
 Count rays of sun  
 Filtering through greasy panes and  
 Shuttered green eyes, these  
 Down-drawn window blinds  
 Our shield against this day  
 Our protest that tomorrow does not claim us

Astrid, char, this is not your way  
 To covet dying or its sludge at end  
 Your brittle fingers shepherding the broom by night  
 By day attendant to grime and grind  
 Of elevator wheel:  
 It is your way to labour "just one year more"  
 Retirement at sixty-four too soon, too early  
 Astrid, your way is late, the countdown past your hearing

Never too soon, never too late for migrants  
 Lee, last of old city courts  
 For huddlers, transients  
 Brother-sister copulations round the midnight lawn  
 Tiny Tapper, No-name-gal -- now Cheryl-Dawn  
 Kelly, young arsonist, Theresa, shoplifter  
 Elsie and Oliver, parenting a nation's progeny:  
 Selkirk town when the lights go out --  
 And your half-ton pulls away  
 With burp and groan

Alright Alright then  
 And it is so though  
 Here is the tree's last stand in concrete  
 Here is the tree, I say, my hand on bark  
 Wondering which pulse is warm  
 Which pulse is dead

Thecla Bradshaw



# Through New Eyes

## 7000 YEARS OF NURSING

by Carole TenBrink  
drawing by Linda Donnelly

Reviewing the nursing profession, its history and present state of practice, is like looking at an oversized portrait of all women. The struggles and weaknesses attributed to us have been the same as those attributed to women in general. Our struggles toward independence, like the first women's movement, met official success while actual dependence and devaluation continued.

It is important that nurses begin to see their history and problems with present practice in a feminist perspective. It is equally important that all women, in their struggles toward liberation, don't put nurses down or aside. Nurses are all women. They are the actualization of society's symbol for women. We are self-sacrificing saints, the female dumb servants of wise masters, and we are sex objects. No wonder women with liberating energy don't want to look at us. No wonder we nurses ourselves don't want to face this unhappy, dreary image. We try so hard to tell ourselves that we are educated, which we are; that we are performing a valuable, complicated human service, which we are; and that surely, if these two things are true, we ought to have been able to see our way to an independent, influential and valued place in society, which, of course, we have not.

But nurses and all women must now realize how this happened. Within the paradox of our actually submissive role and our desire for important influence lies much of the tradition of all women.

The art and science of nursing have their roots in, and have evolved from, a concerned and practical response to human need. Herein lies the strength of nursing traditions from primitive human history till today.

Our weakness lies in the fact that our concern is defined as a female one and therefore a devalued one. It has not been so "interesting" to study what happens to a person who, as the result of a cardio-vascular accident, suddenly finds himself unable to speak. It is much more "interesting" to study and prove

empirically what happens to the blood vessels in the brain, what causes the cardio-vascular accident and what interventions can arrest or alter the physiological process.

The following is intended to be a historical sketch, not a comprehensive history. My aim is to emphasize and interpret certain historical facts which point out what has happened to nursing as a primarily female profession. I invite other nurses and historians who have a more comprehensive historical view to try to interpret the facts in other ways.

One other point needs to be made. This discussion of nursing and women's history is limited to the western world. Women and nursing were certainly devalued in Oriental and African cultures but their cultures and value patterns are different enough that this devaluation must have occurred in significantly different ways.

In western history there has been a devaluation of things related to the body, and an overvaluation of things related to the mind. Most historians speak of this duality as growing out of the Christian era. But I think we can see roots of it much earlier than that if we look at what is known about what happened to the sick in ancient times. The intellectual and spiritual work of finding causal relationships between sickness and treatment, the quest for discovery of the anatomy and composition of the body were taken up by male priests, witch doctors, emperors. At this level the same thing seems to have happened in the East and West. The Chinese emperor Senlung, in 2600 B.C., wrote a book on human anatomy. Moses wrote laws concerning the relationship of cleanliness to health; the ancient Indian book *Vedas* records sicknesses and what medical therapeutics were considered helpful.

But the actual physical care of the sick was left to slaves, attendants and women. It probably didn't appear to be very intellectually stimulating to be at

the bedside, though this is not necessarily so. What is most apparent at the bedside of a sick person is extreme physical reaction; the physical and emotional response to pain. During illness the body produces substances which are often smelly; excreta, pus, sweat, vomit. Even today these substances and reactions are distasteful to most people. Perhaps it seemed natural to assign women to the secondary physical realm. Women do bleed regularly, and do that very physical thing called giving birth. In many primitive and not so primitive societies women, like the sick, were shunned when they were doing these terribly physical things.

At any rate, it is a fact that before the Christian era the division of labour and the division of the sexes was clear as regards the sick. Men, priest-doctors, did the valued work of intellectual and spiritual investigation of sickness; women, slave-nurses, did the menial work of looking after sick people in their sick bodies. It is astounding and painful to realize that the arbitrary division of labour solely by sex is still essentially true today, after 2000 years of civilization. And this is so in spite of the fact that nurses are now well educated, that doctors have become so scientifically and intellectually specialized that they cannot relate easily to the sick person, and in spite of the fact that there is a great public need for humanized health care. There are so many forces which could rectify this erroneous situation, but which have so far, had no basic effect at all.

An amazing thing happened to nursing after Christ appeared on the scene. Here we have a male godhuman who taught that all people should actually praise and seek to do the activities which were formerly unimportant female ones, because these lowly physical activities were spiritually rewarding and led to salvation. All people should care for the sick, for little children, for the poor, the shunned, the







lepers; those suffering in the world.

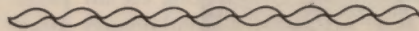
Now women (nurses) had a male (god) to validate their activities, and a few ventured to leave home and practice in public. Most were wealthy Roman matrons who contributed their time and money to the care of the sick. There are many examples. Phoebe (60 A.D.) assisted St. Paul in caring for the poor; two other women were Marcell (a widow) and Fabiola (a divorcee) who opened their homes to other matrons so they could study, observe and learn to care for the sick. Paula was the first to teach nurses systematically. She worried about her salvation, saying that she feared she couldn't get to heaven through her nursing work because she liked it too much. The implication is, of course, that woman's and religious work should be a duty and a self-sacrifice, and that pleasure, intellectual and personal satisfaction were not to be considered.

During the middle ages a paradoxical thing happened to women and nurses. The religious orders and sisterhoods offered woman her first freedom of choice. Now she didn't have to marry and raise children and be treated as a servant, an irresponsible non-adult appendage of her husband and a family. She could choose another life which was more socially valued and more personally rewarding to women of intelligence and ambition. She could be active in the world in a larger sense. Most women who made this choice were either ambitious, heart-broken in love, widowed, not interested in marriage, too shy or had some personal difficulty that made it hard to get a man. Goodnow even claims that these early convent nurses found more freedom and scope to practice and be influential than most female college graduates today. The irony and paradox of her life was that at the same time that she had more freedom and social influence, she lived under a cloistered umbrella which limited her pleasures, especially sexual ones, and inculcated only submissive soft character values. These character values were imbedded through rules, obedience for its own sake, dressing in habits, et cetera. This paradox of freedom-importance and slavery routine exists in nursing today in complicated ways which will be described later.

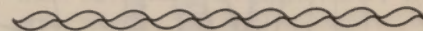
The sister-nurse-woman of mediaeval times shows us that the body-mind dichotomy was growing stronger and was operating against women in subtle ways. They were looking after the sick bodies, not because it was a

useful challenging and human thing to do in itself, but they looked after despicable, loathed sick bodies because through such martyrdom they could reach spiritual salvation. There is some implication that women were in special need of spiritual salvation, for, just as the sick bodies are denied, so is a woman's body denied. The habit becomes the symbol of the denial. It covers the fact that these women still bleed, still have hair, breasts, and all of the perceptual sensual awareness that goes with her body, curves, genitals, muscles, sweat. Sisters and nurses were the actualization of the entity "angel".

Nurses' uniforms and hats today are descended from the habits worn by our sister-nurses in the middle ages. If you do not believe that the same symbolic value is placed on them today, consider all the furor that occurs when some



...consider all the furor that occurs when some nurses decide they want to go without their hats, wear street clothes or simply wear pant suit uniforms...



nurses decide they want to go without their hats, wear street clothes or simply wear pant suit uniforms or coloured uniforms instead of the traditional white plain dress. (Of course the curvy super-mini uniformed nurse of the modern cartoon represents another variation of the nurse-woman role in society, and has not yet entered the historical scene.)

I am not ignoring the fact that men who become priests and brothers are also denying physical aspects of their existence. The significant difference is that it has not been the only outlet for ambitious intelligent men. It was a major one for them through the middle ages, and the restraint involved finally led to the intellectual, scientific, artistic and exploratory outbreak of the Renaissance.

The age of enlightenment was a tremendous stimulus for western men. It marked the birth of world travel and exploration and well-developed scientific investigation. It was a time of exciting discoveries and technological

inventions. It was a time when the world of art and the spontaneous use of the senses blossomed. A great deal of the body was involved. Energy and the senses, body, were involved but were put to work for higher intellectual goals, mind. The body-mind dichotomy changed for men, but left women more trapped than before. The women were thought to be too much body and too little mind for such intellectual challenge. And to make matters worse, the coming of the Reformation meant that the convents and sisterhoods were destroyed, so woman's only outlet was gone. She could no longer spiritualize her body in order to be acceptable for useful, valued social work. She was reduced again to her basically depraved body. If poor and lucky, i.e. pretty, she was taken by a man for production of children and his sexual use. If poor and unlucky, i.e. ugly, she had to live her life through prostitution, drunkenness or nursing other wretched bodies. If rich, she could become 'de-bodied' in a new way. She could be laced and satined and set as a symbol of her husband's advancement and enlightenment. She might even be educated to read and paint and be cultured, not in order to pursue any of these activities, but to fill her idle days. In her uselessness and idleness even she was much less free than her cloistered sisters of the mediaeval period. This idleness and human waste was one factor motivating Nightingale to action.

The nurse of this period was a despicable figure. We have Dickens' picture of Sairey Gamp to tell us what she was like. She was ignorant, of low morals, drank habitually, was indifferent to her patients, and had an evil attraction to death scenes. There were many reasons for the poor state of nursing in this era. With the Reformation, many hospitals formerly run by the religious were closed. Those remaining were run by politicians who, without the sense of spiritual duty, could not keep high standards, gather necessary material resources, or motivate nurses. Nurses were so overworked and ill-fed that no one would do it who could possibly do anything else. Training of nurses, again without religious back-up, deteriorated seriously. Most nurses were completely unskilled and uneducated. Old records of nurses' duties at the time tells us that they should stoop before doctors, attend to vomit and feces, make beds and clean the wards, and bring patients food. But



in the end patients were very poorly treated.

Around 1836 Pastor Fliedner in Germany re-established the Deaconess Order and hospital to train nurses. This was another effort to upgrade nursing and the care of the sick. Florence Nightingale entered this school for four months in 1851 when she made her momentous and unheard-of decision, as a wealthy, cultured English woman, to enter the lowly profession of nursing. Her family was understandably outraged. It is comparable to the reaction a wealthy girl might get today if she announced that she wanted to pursue a career as a prostitute. Though much grieved at their objection, she acted anyway out of selfless spiritual aims because "the service of man is the service of God."

Fliedner's self-exam of nurses (used in 1840-50) shows us that the only way seen to upgrade women and nursing was to inculcate the same soft character values religious nurses had learned. Their education certainly didn't reflect the kind of stimulus, creativity, assertiveness and sense of exploration that was happening in male, enlightened society. Here are some of the questions on the self-exam.

*Did I air the ward and arrange it?*

*Did I listen attentively to the Doctor and follow his orders punctually?*

*Did I use only remedies prescribed by him?*

*Did I inform him of patient's state?*

*Was I obliging, cheerful, patient, watchful?*

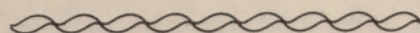
Nightingale had to weave her way through the same basic paradox that faced nurse-sisters. She had to be selfless, religious, spiritual. There was just no way she could have conceived of being influential in an outright secular way. Having accepted this, she was in fact dynamite. She had to do her assertive, creative work in a spiritual, obedient, feminine manner.

Nurses of my generation have not understood the paradox she acted out. Many of us saw only the self-sacrificing woman endlessly working without thought to herself, soothing brows and carrying a small candle in the darkness. If anyone associated nursing or me with Nightingale I used to become furious and would say that nurses were not handmaidens anymore. Never, before reading nursing history for this article, did I know that she revolutionized health care, that doctors actively opposed her school, that she succeeded in

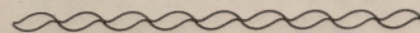
educating nurses who were known throughout Europe, the U.S. and Canada, that she had many revolutionary health care ideas and actively criticized those traditionally held by doctors when they contradicted what she herself could observe and think. I really wonder now why I never knew that she was an original thinker, a dynamic pioneer, an early feminist caught in the self-sacrificing female trap. Was I never encouraged to consider her accomplishments or did something in me refuse to consider them seriously?

For the sake of women's and nurses' history I must share some of her ideas which are stimulating and timely, because I think they are ideas which nurses would find true today, but which we are still powerless to incorporate into health practice.

She thought that much of the suffering considered to be the inevitable



...what she saw was that persons who are sick and in pain are so mentally affected that only with great self-control can they behave decently.



result of disease was not the necessary result of the disease process at all, but came from want of fresh air, light, warmth, cleanliness, quiet, care and proper diet. Put in a more modern way, I think we would say that much suffering and complication in illness comes not from unavoidable symptoms of the disease, but from lack of human concern for what is physically and emotionally restoring. Further, this process is as complicated and as important for recovery as is finding the right diagnosis and the right treatment of symptoms.

She also said that many learned men of her time wrote on the influence the mind has over the body. (Would she have been thinking of ideas of the forerunners of Freud?) But she thought another important area was the influence of the body on the mind. From her work with sick patients, she could base her theories directly on experience, and what she saw was that persons who are sick and in pain are so mentally affected

that only with great self-control can they behave decently. She thought the whole area should be studied. Still today such work is undone, and nurses still don't make any real impact on it, though it is a natural for us. Still the body-mind focus emphasizes the importance of the mind, i.e. medicine studies how certain personality characteristics seem causative or related to certain physical disease, like ulcers, high blood pressure, et cetera.

She thought that the art of nursing was complicated and little understood. This statement is still true today. She also felt that nature's restorative processes were not well enough understood, and that nurses should study and use these as essential for well and sick persons alike, the only distinction being that ignorance or misuse of these processes would have more consequence to the sick. What she was actually talking about are the same poorly understood concepts that ecology, natural foods and health remedies incorporate, and which preventative medicine is trying to pursue today. And where are the nurses? This is another central area for us. Florence Nightingale had many more revolutionary ideas, and worked throughout her lifetime. Only a few are mentioned as examples. We have continued to upgrade education, to spread ourselves to more and broader areas of work. But importantly we still have not been able to break out of the paradox and pursue many of the ideas she raised and directions she pointed towards.

One fact stands out in our history. The nursing profession has pre-historic beginnings in human society, just as the primary professions of law, medicine and scholarship do. So we should be one of the great professions of humankind. Instead, still today, we are not generally classed as a profession at all. At best we are a semi-profession, technical assistants. That has just got to have something to do with the fact that we are women.

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Editors' Note: Ms. TenBrink's second article on the present-day practice of nursing will appear in the March/April 1975 issue of *Branching Out*.



# Island of Tenerife

photoessay by Sandra Semchuk

Photographer Sandra Semchuk spent the winter of 1972 in the Canary Islands. These photographs were taken on the island of Tenerife during carnival time. In her words, "everyone dresses up and goes wild. Men dress as women and women as men, and scream and yell in high-pitched voices. There are children all over the place, some in very elaborate costumes, laughing and enjoying the festivities. Others are bewildered and lost, impinged upon by all the confusion. Our landlord, a civil servant, fled to the opposite end of the island on that day."









# Island of Tenerife

photostory by Sam

Photographer Sam  
Islands. These ph  
carnival time. In  
dressed as women  
by voices. There we  
costumes, laughin  
last improved fun  
find by the opac









# Margaret Atwood

## A Personal View

### Story and photographs by Vivian Frankel

The first thought that entered my mind when I came face to face with Margaret Atwood was that she reminded me of a delicate Murano glass figurine. Her features studied separately would probably not impress much, but together they make up a Renaissance face which always seems relaxed. Her eyes are the most striking thing about her; they seem to see through anything. Her slow restrained movements suggest the quiet strength and grace which underlie most of her writings. When she speaks, it is in a soothing, low, musical lilt which can easily hypnotize the listener.

I spent five days in Montreal recently following Margaret Atwood to most of her official functions and to some relaxed informal ones as well. She was on a speaking tour, giving poetry readings, interviews, and making personal appearances at various places.

At McGill University, the audience was unsettled. I could feel the tension when I walked into the packed Leacock Auditorium. Television cameras were set up, and the stage was flooded with lights. The auditorium lights were also left on, and the fact that the audience was not separated from the stage seemed to have a detrimental impact. Atwood was introduced and read some of her least controversial poems. When it was over, the questioning began. Tension mounted rapidly as each question appeared to have an extra phrase left unspoken, tagged on at the end: come on, let's see what you can do! Atwood looked unperturbed and answered with quiet wit. She was asked why her poetry doesn't rhyme.

"It does."

Confused silence.

"But it doesn't have any metre to it."

"Are you asking me why I don't write Victorian Poetry?"

Someone else: "You seem to be against suicide."

Atwood: "Are you for it? You seem to be still with us."

At Sir George Williams, the mood was different. There was a respectful hush filled with expectancy as Atwood slowly made her way to the podium, stepping around the bodies seated on the floor. The temperature in the Art Gallery had risen to about ninety degrees because of the over-crowded condition. The floodlights were turned off,

a P.A. system was installed outside in the hall to accommodate the overflow. Atwood read; no one minded the heat. This time the questions were relaxed and genuine. Atwood answered on the same level. She was asked if she would relate her use of greyness and blackness to that of Blake. She literally shrank at the analogy, saying that she was flattered by the comparison, but that a descent into darkness before "surfacing" is a common ploy used by many writers.

When questioned as to the reason for the use of madness in her writings, she answers simply that it is a "poetic device". In fact, all her answers regarding the deeper, symbolic meaning of her poetry are straightforward and uncomplicated. At times like these she seems not to realize the impact she has on her readers, 60,000 of whom have purchased *Surfacing* in Canada alone so far.

By the time her fifth poetry book, *Power Politics*, appeared in 1971, Margaret Atwood had established her reputation as one of the most controversial young Canadian poets. When her second novel was released the following year, she became a writer of international caliber.

Many misconceptions have risen around the legend of Atwood. She has been accused of having a hostile attitude towards men.

you enter

bringing love in the form of  
a cardboard box (empty)  
a pocket (empty)  
some hands (also empty)

. . .

Now you have one enemy  
instead of many.

. . .

Which of us will survive  
which of us will survive the other

(*Power Politics*)

The person speaking, however, is not necessarily the poet; nor is it necessarily a woman. The "you" again could be a man, woman, or even God.

It has been implied that, because in some of the love-making scenes of her

novels, (especially in *Surfacing*) the heroine finds the sexual act repugnant, Atwood herself finds men threatening. Atwood explains that she is using a simple psychological device; when a woman (or man as the case may be) is alienated from herself, making love is an alienating experience. She refers her questioners to the third section of the same book, and to the last section of *You Are Happy*, which show a more positive aspect.

The truth is that Margaret Atwood has no hostility towards men. She has always thought of men as individuals, just as she has thought of women individually.

She has been called an ardent nationalist, and it is true that she is an economic and cultural nationalist. She feels that being a Canadian is difficult, that it places one in a grave economic and cultural dilemma because the ownership of resources is slowly slipping from Canadians to others. This could eventually lead to "taxation without representation". She thinks that we should not cut off foreign investment, but diversify it so that no one country owns Canadian resources totally.

She has been labeled a menacing, tough pessimist, a charge based on poems like:

you fit into me  
like a hook into an eye

a fish hook  
an open eye

(*Power Politics*)

But she has also written love poems which, as in the fourth section of her latest book, *You Are Happy*, reflect a gentle, tender, even vulnerable side:

Unable to say how much I want you  
unable even to say  
I am unable

Margaret Atwood is not in any way a threatening figure. She has a great sense of humour and kept me laughing uproariously over lunch one day with her stories about her animals at the farm on which she lives. She has something of the imp in her which is ready to surface at any moment, and did, especially during our photographic sessions.







She is a private, modest person, the kind who can be equally at ease discussing the weather with a taxi driver or the symbolism in Dante's *Inferno* with a philosopher.

She describes herself as a "pessimistic pantheist, in the sense that I'm on the side of Nature, but I feel that it's losing out."

When asked if the "Women's Liberation Movement" has had any influence on her, she explains that she had been writing for ten years before her first book, *The Circle Game*, came out. Her attitude towards women as individuals had already been formed before the Movement was founded.

At Loyola, before her poetry reading, she found out that a group of people had come because they had heard that she is a witch. When she explained that she had nothing to do with witchcraft, they left, and Atwood went on with the poetry reading. Perhaps there is a bit of the "witch" in her. One of her New England ancestors was hanged for witchcraft in the 1680's but managed to walk away from the hanging and live another eleven years. Probably a person labelled a witch in the 1680's today is said to be "psychic" if she happens to be unusually perceptive which is the case with Margaret Atwood. As a friend of hers told me, Atwood is uncanny in the sense that she can strip off other people's masks to see what is lying underneath.

She has often been confused with the characters in her writings. In *You Are Happy* a section is devoted to Circe, the Greek sorceress who changed human beings into the forms of animals. One critic attributed the sorceress' characteristics to Atwood by describing her as a Medusa with evil intentions.

Another friend told me that Atwood knows what is important to her and what is not. I think that is a basic truth about her. This is a question with which each of us has to deal throughout life. We must be able to separate the meaningful from the trivial in order to live without guilt or recriminations; in order to survive. Margaret Atwood has made that choice -- is still making it all the time and has the ability to do it well. Having chosen what is important to her, she has had the integrity to stand by her choices through the years. Her books are proof of this. She has consistently worked up to a standard of perfection she has set for herself, regardless of

outside pressures, fads, or points of view. She is a truly original individual in the pure sense of the word. I have never seen the word "creative" better defined than by what Atwood does.

Again the glass image comes back to me, with its implications of fragility and

brittle hardness. Margaret Atwood can be gracious under trying conditions, cool or resilient when necessary. But the overall impression she left with me, the one that makes me smile whenever I think of her, is that of complete serenity.

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#### FOUR EVASIONS

Sitting in this car, houses & wind outside,  
three in the morning, windows  
obliterated by snow

coats & arms around each other, hands  
cold, no place we can go

unable to say how much I want you  
unable even to say  
I am unable

\*

Not that there is nothing to be  
said but that there is  
too much: this cripples me.

I watch with envy & desire,  
you speak so freely.

\*

Tell me something,  
you ask at last, Anything.

To love is to let go  
of those excuses, habits  
we used once for our own safety

but the old words reappear  
in the shut throat, decree

themselves: exile,  
betrayal, failure

\*

Airplane makes it off  
the runway, cars & houses deflate,

diesel air & stale upholstery,  
smell of you still on my skin;

thinking of my reluctance, way I withdrew  
when you came towards me, why did I.

Easier to invent, remember you  
than to confront you, fact

of you, admit  
you, let you in.

from *You Are Happy*  
Oxford University Press, 1974  
used by permission of the author.



# Sally Go 'Round the Roses

by Candas Jane Dorsey  
photo by Eunice Willar

Her mouth. Her hair is wild. She lies with her eyes closed. This is the moment. My mouth covers hers, explores. I watch her eyes open. Draw away and smile. 'Well.'

These dreams. Christ. I don't know if I can ever get to sleep. The bed's too big. I wish someone were here. Lie on my back, hands between my legs. Then curl up on my side, a position of warmth. I want David to be here. He always keeps me happy. Lying under him, my arms thrown out, gasping for air, relentless passion pushing me over the edge into limbo, the sudden shudder and his face above me, transfixed. God. My body aches. I wonder if it would be different with her. Would she be awake if I telephoned? Would she know what I wanted?

Maybe it's the humidity. My hands are stiff and dry. Leah says when her house gets dry her joints get stiff. Maybe that's it. Or the Pill. Sometimes my knees and ankles ache unbearably. I can hardly walk. Once David had to hold me up at a bus stop. That doesn't happen often.

I feel as old as the hills. My mother used to say that. She'd scrub the kitchen floor, the black cushion under her knees. When she came into the living room she'd be exhausted. She always hated housework, and exhaustion was her revenge. 'I feel as old as the hills,' she'd say, then sit down at the piano and play a hymn. Sing in her reedy soprano. Same voice that turned Strauss waltzes into lullabies for me as a child.

Now, later in life, sleep seems to despise me. Call back the lullabies. O sleep it is a gentle thing, beloved from Pole to Pole. To Mary Queen the praise be given, she sent the gentle sleep from heaven ... I feel like an entry in a science fair. Treatise on the Effects of Passion on Insomnia.

Morning is easier, mechanical. Cereal, koolaid. I dreamed Mary and I made love. Her mouth was as warm as I expected it to be. Her hair stood out like the sun's corona, her face was dark and light by turns. Jesus, she's beautiful. Those incredible eyes. The mirror is too hard on me. David says I should claim Indian blood - the cheekbones and long jaw; he looks at my face when I'm not looking. I can feel his gaze. I'd like to know if Mary thinks I'm beautiful.

The dream lingers.

Loud music to wake me up. Honky-Tonk Women right between the eyes. In my lunch, a banana, some instant soup.

Platform shoes. I have to put band-aids on my heels, but I like being taller. In a family of tall people 5'6" never seemed like much. Mary is tall, skinny, striking.

I can't take the music, can't hear about the blues so early in the morning. I'll miss my bus. Lunch, purse, portfolio. Mary's second-floor windows are plant-filled, enigmatic. Maybe I'll invite her for supper tonight. She hates to cook for herself.



I never had much trouble being in love with two men at once, but trying to hold David and Mary in my head together is harder. But then, with men I was never this insecure. So much easier to ask, Do you want to come home with me? or Do you want to stay? and he says: yes and we go in to the big bed.

What could I say to her? I can't tell how she feels, even if she likes me, much less know how I could say to her, look, I like men and I love some of them and yes, you are a woman, and I love you and I want you. Just like that, I guess I could say it.

After that, in my fantasies, Mary gives one of her small nervous catch-breath laughs and says, well. That'll take

getting used to. I'm in no hurry, I say.

Of course she doesn't talk like that. Everybody in my fantasies talks like I would talk if I were who I want to be. On the bus I have to be careful, I act out my fantasies and speak aloud when I'm alone. A fear of starting to make a speech to Mary and waking up to find myself talking to some fish-eyed accountant.

Bisexual. A cold word. The end point of equality being equality of loving, what does it mean? When I see David, wide shoulders and narrow hips, tawny blondness, sleepy eyes, when he looks at me and smiles, my body leans to his without question. Mary's eyes wipe me out. Sometimes I have to turn away.

Bus stop. Man woman and child mount the steps, all terrifyingly obese. Visions that their grotesque skins are stuffed with paste and hamburger. The trolley squeals away from a standstill. A noise of pigs.

I ring the bell, push my way through the spring coats, the treadle clatters, my feet on the sidewalk, I feel ill. Morning is always like this.

I wonder what Mary is like in the morning. If her face has that defenseless look on waking. If I leaned over and kissed her awake. If I put my hand on the long curve of her back and held her against me. Sleepy, warm. If she smiled at me, pulling her eyes open with an effort. If the alarm clock rang and I felt her tense in my arms, then relax.

My fingers are too stiff for typing. I hate this job, I have to find another. An opening where Mary works. I haven't told her I won't take it but I don't think I can. How long could I watch her without it becoming agony? Or, kissing in the stockroom, a pursuit of young executives and their secretaries, some young man who wants one of us sees, anger, disgust, can someone be fired for such

cont. on p. 30







indiscretions? These days they say not; I'm sure they could find excuses. She says all the people are very straight.

Thank god Leah isn't here today, I couldn't bear that continual judgment. On a very fine line as it is. The report becomes enormous, my neck aches from watching the page. What Mary's cool hands could do.

David calls me at work. 'Good morning. Community Service, may I help you?' 'Depends on what you do.' Hello, David. I tell him I'm sick of my job. He tells me the requirements for Unemployment Insurance. I tell him how much the rent is. He asks if I'm seeing Mary today.

'For supper, I think. I can't talk about it here. I think I'm going crazy.'

Reassurance. She really likes you, I know it, she told me, anyhow she can't hate you for asking. Really, I say. I feel sophomoric. Gee, Sally, is Mary gonna take yuh to the prom?

I can't laugh at myself yet.

I see the boss coming. Goodbye, David, gotta go. See you soon. I'll call. Then Tom stands by the desk. Have I finished my weekly report? No, I was talking to a client, I lie. Client is welfare talk for beneficiary. Nobody likes the word welfare, least of all the workers who dispense it. O for a socialist welfare system, where everybody pays their taxes and nobody is ashamed. Reports. 'How are you dealing with Mrs. Auger?' 'I'm giving her full assistance.' 'You know a man visits her, you could probably prove support.' 'I don't care if she's visited by God on an armadillo, she deserves assistance and I'm giving it to her, if you don't like it, Tom, you can fire me and can the crap.' 'Quite the little dyke, he says, laughing, suddenly I'm furious, rack my brains for the words. 'And if I were, what would you do? Try to convert me? You couldn't convert me from white bread to rye, you back-pocket bureaucrat.'

'Calm down, tiger,' he says, walks out. The last word, he thinks. I shouldn't have gotten angry, it never helps. The futile search for the perfect line.

Mary at work. She agrees to supper. Tells me about her day. I had just about convinced myself I was immune. I become helpless listening to her. If I was holding her, not just dreaming, would it be any better?

A hatred of weakness. I always want to be in control. I had just gotten used to being subject to desire for men. Now I have to learn again, about wanting Mary so much.

A fantasy. She is sitting in my kitchen. I look through the bedroom door at the crumpled bed. I pour tea. Does she notice it is a libation? She smiles and cups the bowl in her hands. Warm. I

take her cup to refill it again. Our hands touch.

Tightening in my groin, sudden sensation. The telephone is too far away. I tell her what Tom considers the ultimate put-down. 'Christ, who does he think he is?' she says.



Stumbling through the day. I'm at the peak of some biorhythms, creativity and sexual need. In this dingy office, nothing.

A month ago she saw a lover off to Montreal. For a while after that she thought she was pregnant. Was exuberant the day her bleeding started, gave me a hug. I was suddenly all the cliches, burning, my arms around her strong back and my cheek against her shoulder. Only for a moment. She is usually so reserved. Reliving the moment with David I felt the fire again, made him feel it, he burst into me wildly, I felt hundreds of miles end over end, David and Mary confused in my head. David's face clear each time he thrust and Mary's image the custodian of the searing joy that followed. Afterward I had to pull the sheet and blanket around my shoulders, curl up and shiver against David's warmth. 'Sarah'. He said my name with a strange inflection. I'm not used to hearing my whole name. Most people say Sally. Sarah is out of date, anachronistic.



Going home, I shop for the perfect foods. Once there, the pettiness of cooking takes over enough of my mind that music can fill the rest. The vegetables chopped, ready to cook, rice in a pot steaming, I change into jeans and a blouse I like, blue blouse, she likes blue, I wait for her to arrive. Curled up on the couch, hands flat between my thighs for warmth, I doze. The record clicks off. Long silence. I am almost at peace.



She comes in with a flurry, coat, bags, kicking off sandals. I realize again every time I see her how beautiful she is. Christ. The hollows in her cheeks, almost dimples, almost contours, too strong for either word. Fantasy. I lay my hand along her cheek gently. Once a man did that to me and said, I think it's time we made love, don't you, and I did, and we did. If I tried it would it work? She begins to cut up a melon she has brought. I make excuses to brush against her.

Another flurry, of frying rice, then the tranquility of heaped bowls and chopsticks, sitting on the couch with our legs curled up. My hands shake, but I am almost calm. If she moves her foot it touches my knee.

She drops a chopstick and I catch it in the air. She applauds. I feel like a courting bird. A heroic figure. Yes, heroic, I mock myself, thinking of Amazons and trembling in my corner.

We eat the melon. I make tea. Now we are living one of my fantasies. The cup is hot, I pass it to her, our fingers touch. Suddenly meeting eyes for a moment. I feel like a schoolgirl. The first time I ever learned that looking into someone's eyes freed a gush of feeling, of liquid between my legs, took away my breath, I didn't know what it meant then, when a kiss was the acme of physical joys. I am older now, I know. I cannot meet her eyes for more than a second. We look away in unison. Start to talk of calmer things. David. He and I are well suited sexually, I tell her. She finishes her tea.

I have tried to make this situation, where all my moves are possible, now I am terrified. I am not used to action. She leans her head back on the overstuffed plush. I bend on one knee to pick her teacup from the floor. I am compelled to do something. This one is real. I can't breathe.



Her mouth, her wild hair. *Deja-vu*, have I been here before? The dream last night, before and after sleeping. Yet in all those, I couldn't imagine the delicacy of her face as it is now. She must hear the change in my breathing, yet she doesn't move, her lips are parted, relaxed.

Now. The moment. Can I do it? I lean, kiss her. I have never been able to imagine past this. I thought her eyes would open, she would be surprised. Instead I feel her lips move toward a smile, open for me. I could never imagine she might be in this too. Her face is calm, blurry so close, this is so delicate. Her hand is behind my neck, holding our mouths together. I thought I had done the only dreaming, would make the only moves. Now the fantasies are over.

Already I can imagine how it will look, the streetlight through my bedroom window onto her lean body. Her hand relaxes and I draw back, we look at each other. The speculations are gone, I have to rely on reality. I don't know if I remember how. I don't know what is going to happen now.

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## THE RECOGNITION

one: the upper chambers

here the ice-cold light  
the shocking blue  
like fresh mint  
these waters  
seize the breath  
sharply

hurling myself  
a tight package  
through  
the gauntlet  
of swift water colours  
the blur  
of little teeth  
the silken hair of fern

past throngs  
of conquered kings  
returning  
tarnished silver bodies  
heavy  
and slow  
with loss

here  
in the icy blue of  
the intellect  
the quick slice  
into chilled skin  
i swim,  
a transient.

two: the lower chambers

swimming towards  
a dim phosphor glow —  
the ruined idea  
pleading bleats of whales  
water minstrels  
*largo a capella*

solitary bronze bodies  
hover above  
smooth birdforms  
the grave silence of gods  
medieval fish lurk  
at bottom  
ruined castles  
breathing in the sand  
crusted with turrets

faces stare up from  
the floor  
mouths  
twisted to scream  
iron eyes pierce the gloom.

three: the deeps

blackness grabs the throat  
dim ghosts  
limbs and eyes, dreams  
glint and fade

i sink  
heavily

i come  
to the ultra black  
violet

the light  
the half-sunk monster  
of forbidden cities

eyes sore, almost shut  
tiny  
i watch  
the eater of imperfect spirit  
the eater of crumbling heart  
chewing between two fires  
swallowing  
strange sunken metals  
belching  
bubbles of warm metallic gas

i am recognized  
i have come

# Karen Lawrence





Jo Thomas

Bleak autumn afternoon  
pushes hands deeper into  
denim pockets warming  
a penny and a dime

shuffling down the road  
with nowhere special to go  
thinking of you  
wishing eleven cents  
could buy a cup of tea.



## TANKAS IN BLACK AND WHITE

### PARTY

On black plastic chairs  
around white plastic tables  
we drink lukewarm gin  
from many styrofoam cups.  
I think of the *Rubaiyat*.

### LAKE LOUISE

Under the white sky  
rock is etched in fine black lines  
and trees are ink stroked  
deftly on the snow-white page.  
I am too loud, too human.

### MUSIC LESSON

The piano grins,  
all its white teeth bared, mocking  
Connell's clumsy touch.  
Yesterday he dammed a stream;  
earth still lines his fingernails.

### MEMORY

You went abruptly,  
leaving nothing but pictures  
fixed inside my head.  
My grandmother waited death  
armed with her snapshot album.

### SEPARATION

The sky seems darker  
and night noises more distinct  
now than they used to.  
She still wears the white nightgown,  
arms stretched wide across the bed.

### MYSTERY

In this high house, I'm usually  
a lover of the sky-scape, but  
tonight I'm annoyed that the sun  
should so inevitably set  
and that this wealth of windows  
forces me to watch it  
bleeding down through the round hills.  
Dusk is a grey and empty space  
of loss and mourning  
till one becomes again accustomed  
to the dark.

### VACANCY

I tried to pass the institution but  
the traffic light gave me a grandstand seat  
for the parade of the grotesques.  
They crossed the street in front of me:  
lurching, tripping, stumbling, like  
spiders with some legs torn off.  
A girl stopped suddenly and  
shook her finger sternly, sternly  
at the sky.  
I looked up, but it was as blue and empty  
as her eyes.

Colleen Richards



# perspectives

Whatever happened to the dedicated teacher?

by J.A. Heidi Boland

photo by Alice Baumann-Rondez

Once upon a time there lived a teacher endowed with an unquenchable thirst for knowledge and an insatiable hunger for work. This teacher's capacity for giving and receiving love was infinite; indeed, this rare individual was capable of placing her students and their needs and the demands of her position above all else, and what's more, to do so uncomplainingly!

But alas! She is no more....or so some think. Despite the great number of hard-working, devoted people in the teaching profession today, it would appear that none come near this former paragon of virtue. Indeed, whatever did happen to the dedicated teacher?

Perhaps the reasons a person becomes a teacher have been misunderstood. When I was taking my professional training seven years ago, (which by the way, took a year to teach me what I learned in 30 minutes in a classroom) we were given a survey to complete. One of the questions was: Why are you entering teaching? The choice of answers was (a) you like the pay, vacation, and fringe benefits (b) you enjoy the status (c) you love children (d) you feel it's an outlet for your creativity (e) you're not qualified for anything else. Assuming that for most teachers that last choice doesn't apply, the desired response is obviously (c). But if I (collectively speaking) were to be absolutely honest with myself, then (a) (b) and (d) are just as important. (In these days of inflation, few of us can work without pay.) Does this mean then that I am not dedicated? Hardly! It simply means I am also creative, practical, and have some concept of self-worth, all very necessary attributes for a teacher.

But let's go back to that mythical dedicated teacher. You can probably visualize her now: in the classroom, she is ever-patient, untiring, gentle and sympathetic, but firm; outside of class, she spends her evenings bent over books and papers, correcting, calculating, pre-

paring; perhaps when little Mary is sick, she drops by for a visit, and spends some time with her getting her caught up. And when the time comes for her to retire after 40 years of devoted service, her students can't bear the thought of her going...and neither can she.

Yes, that's dedication. But I would argue that today, it's pretty unrealistic.

Today's schools, have enrolments anywhere from 400-2500 or more. The average teacher meets upwards of 100 students daily. (I'm thinking here of high school.) Just think of our dedicated teacher trying to visit even one-third of her sick students! And what happens to patience, sympathy, and gentleness in classrooms of 35 or more students? Try soliciting an unjumbled answer from a gum-chewing teenager in a classroom overlooking a football field where the guys are working out, and you'll see what happens!

And as for spending your evenings bent over a desk, not much has changed, except that even undedicated teachers quickly learn they will have to sacrifice their evenings for lesson preps and marking. Yes, but don't teachers do that at school in their spares? Sure, if they're not supervising cafeteria or study hall. Well, some might say, it's still not too bad. You only work from nine till three. Ever heard of extra-curricular activities? Being involved in three or four of these often keeps some teachers around till 5 or 6 o'clock.

At this point, I find myself wondering whether the dedicated teacher of the old days was married. When I was single, it was easy to devote morning, noon and night to school work. My time was my own. But getting married not only brought, but necessitated a change. I remember a few months after my marriage my husband and I got into a real ding-dong argument over the amount of time I spent on school work. (He was a teacher too.) When I tried to compensate, ironically enough, my principal accused me of lessening my former dedication, and reminded me my stu-

dents should come before everything else! Needless to say, I was unhappy and confused. (Incidentally, the whole thing cleared up when I learned to budget my time better).

And what about those teachers who have children of their own? It is not only difficult, but virtually impossible for a teacher to place her students above her own offspring! And surely no one would deny that some of that evening time should be given to one's family—although often this can't be done.

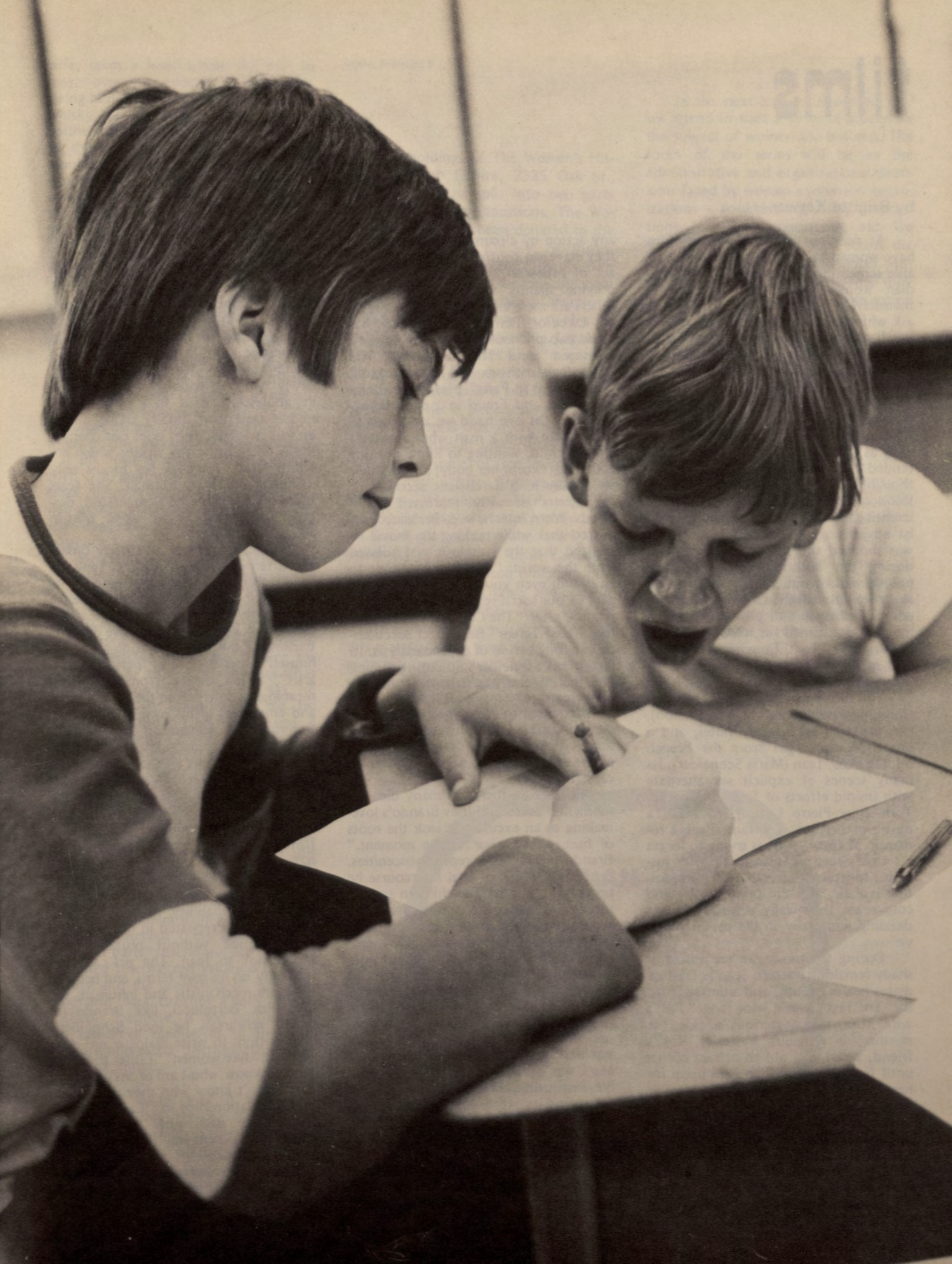
But let's get back to my opening question: whatever happened to the dedicated teacher? Well if one of the aforementioned drawbacks doesn't cool her ardour, others will, like a) last-minute meetings called to discuss the latest "administrivia" when you've got a doctor's appointment, or b) students who tell you to F--- Off, and you are expected to not react emotionally, or c) people who expect you to be part-time counsellor, policeman, janitor, or P R person, or d) irate parents who feel it's your fault their child is failing, or perhaps e) your own nagging suspicions that what you're teaching isn't all that worthwhile after all. All of these, especially the last one, constantly put thoughts of quitting into a teacher's head.

Aha! you say....that's where the difference occurs: the dedicated teacher may not like any of these, but she doesn't complain! All I can say to that is "Says Who?" I work on a staff of over 100 teachers; most of them any principal would be glad to hire: they are hard-working, duty-conscious, student-oriented individuals. But I wish I had a dollar for every complaint I hear daily! I could retire tomorrow....not that I'd want to. And if there are any that don't complain, well, as far as I know, teaching is the only profession that has granted compensation for ulcers.

Everytime April rolls around I see teachers busily scanning the paper to see what new positions are available. Many leave for another school; many go to

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# films

by Brigitte Kerwer

At no time in the history of film have women suffered such an unfavourable screen image as they do now. Canadian women concerned with freeing themselves from stereotyped roles must ask why this is so. What elements in society, supposedly more liberated than that of the Hollywood system cinema of the thirties, produces this kind of celluloid reaction?

"Last Tango in Paris" was hailed as a masterpiece by even eminent film critic Pauline Kael of *The New Yorker* as early as October, 1972. The film had extended difficulties with censors, and, although it played to record audiences in London's West End, I did not go to see it until early this year because of its sexist advertising. My audience, however, was shocked and stunned as I was, and during the notorious sodomy scene people walked out. Had we been taken in by sensationalism? Or had I overlooked the brilliance and profundity which my friends claimed for it? One actually pronounced "Last Tango in Paris" the best movie she had ever seen because it "told it like it was."

The film presents the love-hate relationship between Paul (Marlon Brando), the manager of a sleazy hotel, and a beautiful, banal girl from the French middle class, Jean (Maria Schneider). Its many scenes of explicit sex alternate with insipid efforts of Jean's boyfriend, Tom (Jean-Pierre Leaud), to make a movie of her, *à la* Truffaut. Paul, a romantic of forty-eight, is trying to forget his wife's suicide in an affair with luscious, nineteen year old Jean. The setting is Paris, and the photography and colour are technically superb, at times dazzling, especially in the use of subtle yellows.

During the movie we see a host of shady female characters. Jean at least radiates health, youth, and animal sexuality. The rest cover a wide range: Paul's wife Rosa, the mysterious suicide; her mother, a religious hysteric; Rosa's friend, a tart too old to attract clients until first Rosa and then Paul pimp for her; Jean's widowed mother, female counterpart of her successful soldier husband; Jean's childhood nurse, a fat racist hag called Olympia, another obese hag, the landlady. These entirely unlovable females are shown in ruthless detail in an environment both sordid and futile. All are condemned in advance of

any action by circumstances over which they have no control. Jean ends in one act of rebellion, killing her lover as a preying mantis would a spider; the others are mere victims.

Director Bernardo Bertolucci has made two previous films: "The Spider's Stratagem", and "The Conformist". The latter deals with sex and leftist politics; "Last Tango in Paris" tries also to combine Marx and Freud in a dialectic experience. On one hand we are asked to sympathize with a man who chooses a woman-child, wanting to know nothing about her except her body; on the other we endure long narcissistic accounts of the lovers' sexually repressed childhoods. When interviewed, Bertolucci admitted that while making the movie he realized that the couple is not isolated from the world: "You cannot escape to an island: even your attempt to do so is part of our social reality". Significantly, I think, after "The Conformist" and before "Last Tango" Bertolucci succumbed to a long period of psychoanalysis. In fact, Maria Schneider said during filming that the director had Brando act out his own sex problems and then tried to transfer them to film. Nevertheless, Bertolucci asserted that his was a "liberated" film "without defenses, excuses either of a historical, narrative or political nature."

In the film there are many didactic moments. Bertolucci uses Brando's love-making as an excuse to "seek the roots of human behaviour in the moment." Brando makes Maria repeat obscenities. During the scene of anal intercourse he urges her: "Say it! The children are tortured until they tell their first lie... Where the will is broken by repression, where freedom is assassinated by egoism, family..." Bertolucci's sexual politics here convey feelings of solitude and death of Western bourgeois society, and especially the family. Sexual language is "liberation from the subconscious", and the characters strive to find equilibrium with their subconscious. Marx was against the family as a repressive institution, Freud for the subconscious and its expression through sexuality.

In its explicit sexual content "Last Tango in Paris" is close to being a pornographic movie in the sense of exploiting the voyeurism of the public. When accused, Bertolucci defended himself

against this charge by answering that he too was exploited, that making films is a question of supply and demand, that he is engaged in a two-way relationship between the public and himself. His concern is to show how "a man moves through time, in the historical and in the practical and in the daily sense." So Brando changes from a middle-aged, newly bereaved widower to a sullen virile adolescent, back to a now dapper middle-aged man, finally dying curled up like a foetus. Jean does not change: she is taken in by the virility which her fiancé lacks. Time for her means only rushing from man to man. She fears Brando only while he is superstud, despises him during the last tango, tries in vain to escape him.

Violence and sex are closely linked and often inseparable in "Last Tango in Paris". Bertolucci says the violence he wants to teach is political violence against psychic violence, the teacher-guru of sex against the repressive destructiveness of the family. Brando immerses himself in perversions as "personal catharsis", as an escape from his wife's meaningless suicide and the final despair and emptiness of his own life. His relationships with women can only end badly because the sado-masochism in his character is violent and self-destructive. When Schneider recognizes him at last for what he is, a middle-aged failure, she rejects and kills him only to return to her conventional middle class life and fiancé. Maria until then is Brando's facilitator, willing victim of his desperate sexuality. In her criticism of Bertolucci's female characters, Joan Mellon says that Paul's "inability to save his wife from suicide is repeated in his failure to give himself without brutality and machismo" to Jean. The girl can see him only on his own terms, and because these are mechanistic and inhuman, she fails him. Bertolucci, like Brando (in studio rehearsals he used Schneider's bare bottom to write dialogue on) does not really like women: "Either they pretend to know who I am or they pretend that I don't know who they are". Male-female relationships in "Last Tango in Paris" are implacably deterministic. There is no decent way for men and women to interact.

The least stereotyped female characters in the film are Rosa and Jean. Both reject romantic love. Rosa, the

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wife, takes a lover whom she tries to make over into another Brando, even giving him the same housecoat, the same whisky. She commits suicide because neither allows her to grow and develop; for them she is the sex object that "does numbers". Like most working class women who lead totally repressed and meaningless lives she is unhappy, desperately aware of her predicament: trapped. Although she doesn't realize it, she has found out that "romantic love is a capitalist con." Brando explodes at her corpse: "I don't know why you did it... You cheap, goddamn, fucking, godforsaken whore! I hope you rot in hell! You're worse than the dirtiest street pig that anybody could ever find, anywhere. And you know why? Because you lied. You lied to me, and I trusted you..." However, after this verbal assault Brando delicately peels the false eyelashes off his wife's painted face, and wipes off the makeup she never wore in real life. For a moment we share his grief. The portrayal of Rosa is one of bleak despair; Brando's incomprehension at her suicide shows that until she was dead he never believed in her existence.

By contrast, Jean (Maria Schneider) is equally unconvincing as the swinging chick with big breasts and small hips. She is as objectified living as Rosa is dead. Only shooting Brando makes her face the reality of her future life, possibly as convicted murderess. Waiting for the police to arrive, she rehearses what to say: "I don't know who he was. He followed me, he tried to rape me. He was crazy... I don't know his name, I don't know him, I don't know..." Ironically, the victim must prove her innocence, not Brando's intrusion into her mother's flat. Her position is as desperate as Rosa's, but she must live on.

The sexist projection of women on the screen by trendy male directors reflects, among other things, the fear and hostility of a male-dominated society to increasing efforts women are making to extricate themselves from an ideology that prevents them from gaining a fuller humanity. Recent films such as "Last Tango in Paris", therefore, are useful in reflecting internalized values of a given society and the projection of male fantasies and fears. Creating a body of film criticism, I believe, is one way women can radicalize themselves to the way they are oppressed, discriminated against, and exploited.

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The author invites you to send your reactions to this article. If you are interested in forming a film discussion group in your area, please contact her at our address.

cont. from p. 5

The holdings of The Women's History Research Centre, 2325 Oak St., Berkeley, will be split into two parts and moved to new locations. The Women's Serials have been donated to the Special Collections Library, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois. The 2000 subject files on women and non-serial movement material will be moved to the Archive of Contemporary History at the University of Wyoming, Laramie. This material includes over 1 million clippings, term papers, graphics, leaflets, position papers, poems and songs. Much of the material is already on microfilm, and it is hoped that microfilming will continue. Canadian universities that already have some of the microfilmed material for their libraries include McMaster (Hamilton), Memorial (St. John's), St. Mary's (Halifax), University of British Columbia (Vancouver), and University of Waterloo. Other Canadian libraries that have placed orders include the Windsor Public Library and Société Radio Canada, Montreal.

If a library near you does not have this material, urge them to order it. For more information, write to the Women's History Research Centre, 2325 Oak St., Berkeley, California 94708.

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In the next issue of *Branching Out* we intend to start a series of articles on the subject of women and business. The focus of the series will be on the administrative and organizational problems faced by women's volunteer organizations - bookkeeping, filing, interactions with other businesses, etc. We would like women's groups across the country to share their experiences with us, by outlining what problems they have faced, and how they have solved them.

Articles should be between 1000 and 2000 words, and should be as specific as possible. For example, we would like to know how, exactly, you organize your filing system, including file headings. If you have any photos or illustrations to accompany the piece, we'd be delighted.

Please send all contributions to *Branching Out*, "Business Series", P.O. Box 4098, Edmonton, Alberta T6E 4T1.

In the March/April issue of *Branching Out* we intend to print a series of graphics on a fantasy theme. We invite you to share your visual ideas with us. Please send your black and white drawings and sketches to Art Department, P.O. Box 4098, Edmonton, Alberta T6E 4T1 on or before February 6, 1975.

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## CANADIAN ART

FOR THE DISCRIMINATING COLLECTOR

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# music

by Beverley Ross

Isis: "Isis" Buddah BDS 5605  
Meg Christian/Chris Williamson: "Lady"  
/"If It Weren't For The Music" Olivia  
Records LF 901

Hard rock. Solid, heavy, driving sound. You've gotta have "balls" to play it. Right!..... right? Well, to date, there have been very few successful female rock musicians for numerous reasons, the most obvious being that aggression has always been the crown jewel of the *masculine* mystique. And rock music is above all aggressive. Joplin and Slick made it as vocalists, April as lead guitarist in a "three-man" band. But you couldn't really characterize either of the two foremost female bands, Joy of Cooking and Fanny, as "hard" rock

groups. Describing them as "soft" doesn't suggest that they're lacking in energy; rather, it means that these groups tend to emphasize vocals and lyrics instead of bottom-heavy instrumental sound.

Hard rock is masculine territory. Isis, an eight-piece group from the States, has taken a step across that border with the release of their first album. The result is ambivalent. First of all, not all the tracks on the album could be described as "hard" rock: "Cocaine Elaine" is done up like a ragtime tune, loose-limbed and a little bit crazy (and, incidentally, the best cut on the album). "She Loves Me" moves quietly on its own wave of emotion - simple lyrics backed by well-arranged brass and a mandolin lingering around the edges of the song.

But drive dominates the rest of the album. The rhythm section (bass, drums, congas, and guitar) is as good as most -- "tight" and "together", etc.

Carol MacDonald (lead singer, rhythm guitarist, writer, arranger, leader) is powerful and sometimes exciting. The horn section doesn't quite sizzle but delivers what the arrangements require. The group is blessed in Jeanie Fineburg, their strongest soloist, whose work on tenor sax, flute and piccolo is consistently creative.

Isis possesses the elements of the kind of sound they seek, but unfortunately, not all the combinations succeed. For example, "Servant, Saviour" is marred by unconvincing use of spoken lines and dated, gimmicky studio electronics. Lead guitarist Suzi Ghezzi is aggressive, but she relies too heavily on "fuzz" and needs to expand her vocabulary of licks.

On the plus side, it's exhilarating to hear a group of women with enough instrumental confidence and ability to base their expression on the progression rather than the melody. Nothing in "Do the Football" can be sensitively interpreted -- for a change, the tune exists as an instrumental showcase.

The Isis album is perhaps most intriguing because of the questions it raises. For one thing, the Led Zepplin-like music that Isis has (for the most part) chosen to play, is a dying form. Why did these obviously talented women channel so much energy into an over-worked and fading genre? One wonders as well whether the group's success is related to a lesbian life style described in some of the lyrics. What kind of solidarity is required by groups of women who wish to succeed?

The women who form Olivia Records have apparently pondered this question. Speaking in the August/September '74 issue of *off our backs*, Meg Christian, musician and producer, expressed the company's outlook this way: "We are not going to focus on political or obviously feminist music because we want to reach women who are not yet in the women's movement. We want to bring women into some sort of feminist consciousness... What I hope [the first album] will be is a feminist album that any feminist, no matter where her head is, can really enjoy... I don't think it's going to do Olivia any good to put out a heavily lesbian-feminist first album. We are lesbian-feminist but we want to reach a lot of women."

The impetus of this philosophy as well as the search for "some sort of alternative economic institution which would produce a product that women wanted to buy and also employ women in a non-oppressive situation" lead to the creation of Olivia Records, a women's recording company based in Washington, D.C.

Their first release, a 45 featuring Meg Christian on one side and west



Chris Williamson



coast artist Chris Williamson on the other, is aimed at creating interest rather than profit. All aspects of the recording, technical as well as musical, (except for the actual pressing) were handled by the women at Olivia.

Chris Williamson performs her own song, a direct and joyful statement about music bringing people together in a "natural way". Meg Christian sings a Carole King/Gerry Goffin Tune, "Lady" which asks: "Lady, are you a lady/Do you like the one your beauty's been sold to?" Nothing blatant or radical, both listenable and well-delivered songs.

The tracks themselves are very basic -- voice and guitar, with piano added on one side, autoharp on the other. The production is rough in some places; for instance, a bouncing of tracks (apparently to accommodate the autoharp on "Lady") is jarring. The mix on "If It Weren't For the Music" is muddy, due, I think, to a poorly recorded piano.

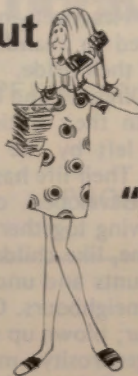
Meg Christian's album should be ready by the new year. If the technical bumps are smoothed out and if the material has enough variety to sustain itself throughout an album, Olivia Records should have no trouble reaching women with their music. I hope they expand their goal to include a wider audience of women as well as men who can appreciate their music for itself and for the message it contains. The record business is costly and fiercely competitive. While the women of Olivia ought to be congratulated for their motives, they are going to need a considerable amount of good solid financial support from as much of the market as they can capture in order to keep producing their kind of music. And speculating on what I've heard so far, the music deserves that wider attention. For more information, you can write to Olivia Records at Box 1784, Washington, D.C., 20020. \*\*\*



Meg Christian

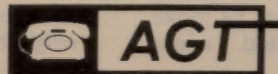
Photographs courtesy of Olivia Records

**Tell someone about  
the good times.  
Dial-a-smile  
LONG  
DISTANCE**



**"HELLO GLORIA?"**

"Wait till you hear this!"





# books

by Maureen Carrington

*The Skating Party*, by Merna Summers, published by Oberon Press, 1974.

"Any time a man thinks he has to remind me of what I owe him, that's the day I stop darkening his door," Rob said. "I don't want anybody doing me any favours."

"The Bachelors"

Merna Summers, in her first collection of six short stories, *The Skating Party* (published by Oberon Press in paperback) focuses her attention on people whose sense of self worth, vital for their day to day living, is precariously balanced in a structure of family and community relationships.

The community is rural Alberta of the forties and on; the family extended to nearby farms is the basic group. Children move easily from one family to the other. There is, as Barbara remarks in "Willow Song", "a family inclination to share each other's children." Brothers and sisters, nieces and uncles, parents and children are the central characters in stories full of detail of songs and quarrels, family memories and conversations.

In "Willow Song" Barbara remembers the time when she was eight to ten years old, and Billy Becker, the young uncle she loved more than anyone else. "He understood that everyone longs to have life present him with some occasions worth remembering."

The story of Barbara and the betrayal of her love, as she remembers it, is one of the best in the book. Exploring the many layers of wallpaper in the abandoned farmhouse, weeping for the lilacs whose beauty would never be seen by the woman who had planted them, shinnying up the tree to rob a nest for her uncle, Barbara is courageous and uninhibited, open to every experience. At the age of ten, she willingly accepts the heavy responsibilities others expect her to handle in looking after Billy's sick bride as readily as she accepts the "mass of contradictions" in her parents' families.

But one cruelly angry outburst from a terrified Billy and Barbara narrows herself down, withdraws in order to protect herself. "But it wasn't what he said that hurt the most. It was that he spoke as if I, Barbara, scarcely existed. I might never have existed at all."

This insult to selfhood is intolerable, not only for Barbara at the age of ten, but also for Roberta, a woman per-

haps in middle age, the central character of "Portulaca."

Roberta and her sister, Norma, are unmarried and Roberta senses that this makes a difference to their place in the community. At the monthly Women's Institute meetings, the women compare their handiwork. "...somehow Roberta never felt as if they were in the competition at all. It was as if, because they were unmarried, their work didn't count."

But their work does count. Norma excels in growing her houseplants: Roberta plants the family graves with flowers carefully arranged in patterns. To Roberta the graves are not melancholy reminders of dead parents, not grotesque sites for morbidity: "they were more like blank canvases, the place where creation itself might take place."

Because she has so few outlets for her energy, for her desire to create new things, this annual planting of the grave sites is very important to Roberta. "This work seemed to express something in her that had no other way of getting out."

Roberta's happiness, at work, is evident. But it is not to last. Just as Barbara is wounded by a rebuke that seems to make her not exist, so too Roberta recoils when she is taunted with a nickname that circumscribes her joy, that confines her within the bounds of its narrow terms. The nickname engraves a cruel stereotype that Roberta does not have the strength to fight. "Hearing, Roberta knew that she didn't belong to herself anymore, and there was nothing she could do about it. For all the years ahead she would belong to anyone who called her by that name. It had begun already."

Two characters, in other stories, go so far as to remove themselves from the community when their pride is under attack. Rob Dingwall, in "The Bachelors" and Ruby Heartwell in "The Blizzard" are prepared to abandon everyone else because of their pride.

Rob Dingwall and his brother, Hav, are both in their sixties, living on the farmstead left by the parents to Hav, the eldest. Their life has settled down to a routine developed over twenty-five years of living together. Sundays in the summertime, like children visiting a network of aunts and uncles, the brothers visit their neighbours. On one occasion, a neighbour, blown up with the sense of his own generosity, makes the remark that rouses Rob to his stubborn insistence that he will be beholden to no man. Like the pistols on the wall in the

first act of the drama and destined to be used in the final act, Rob's statement has its predictable outcome when he chooses to move out after Hav's exasperated and angry outburst about how things will be done in "his house." Rob picks up his belongings, and moves out to his fields to build his own shack.

The effect on Hav of this abandonment is marked. "The habit of 65 years had solidified on him like the spilled egg on the warming oven, and he was afraid." Hav's need for companionship is as great as Rob's need for independence. But theirs is independence carried to a pathetic extreme. "Rob peels his potato and I peel mine.... We even boil them in different pots."

Yet Rob allows Hav to come back into his life to share part of his life. Not so Ruby Heartwell. Once Ruby makes her move out of the community, she lets no one touch her again, not even her own daughters.

"The Blizzard", the first story Merna Summers wrote and one of the most moving in this collection, centres on the two sisters Winona and Algertha Heartwell. Now middle-aged, they are trying to find the right combination of associations and memories that will enable them to come to terms with their mother's abandonment of them.

"We've got the *when* of those years down straight. Now if we could only get the *what* as well, maybe we could work ourselves past the need for these early morning probings, or exorcisms, or whatever they are."

This particular early morning probing over Algertha's alkaline coffee leads to the forties, to "this stranger", their mother, who fascinates them. Like Rob who doesn't want anyone doing him any favours, Ruby Heartwell is known to her daughters by her statement, "I'll not have anyone making allowances for me."

Ruby Heartwell leaves no room in her life for error, for misjudgement; no place for second best. Her sense of self is inextricably linked with what she expects other people in the community will say about her. She has rigid standards and fully expects other people's judgements of her to be as inflexible and uncharitable.

When her life reaches an unbearable point, when she believes she cannot walk with pride in the community, she turns her back on it abruptly and severs all connections with it - even to the point of leaving her daughters to relatives. For Winona and Algertha, "it was as if we



were behind a door she had closed."

This is a good collection of short stories and I recommend it readily. Merna Summers writes well and writes, more importantly, with something I want to call respect or loving kindness for her characters. Ruby Heartwell is not a vicious woman, Roberta is not a silly old woman, Barbara is not a romantic loon. Each character, within his or her own context, is described with enough detail to give a sense of life. Maybe Algertha and Winona find it hard to believe that Ruby ever sang campfire songs with them, that there was ever "the together gladness." But Merna Summers is careful to insist that this side of Ruby did exist.

\*\*\*



detail from the cover drawing by Molly Bobak,  
from the book, *The Skating Party*

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by Anne Wheeler  
and Lorna Rasmussen

*Never Done*, Corrective Collective, published by the Canadian Women's Educational Press, 1974.

Celebrate! A history book has been published bearing no resemblance to the ones from which we have studied and memorized dates and wars, heroes and politicians. It is instead, a fun-to-read album of pictures and stories centering on the work of the European woman since her first coming to Canada three centuries ago.

*Never Done* wastes no space and gets into the material immediately. There is no table of contents, no introduction, simply a dedication "to our mothers" and then - the dirty laundry. The authors explain that the items have been collected from diaries, memories, the all too few existing novels written by Canadian women of the past, and from the women themselves. Where else? Women's history has never been recorded in history books and we, as two women who are involved in the search for our roots, congratulate the Corrective Collective for having brought so much together in *Never Done*.

The book begins with the story of the King's Daughters who were sent from France to marry the men of New France. It tells the saga of Empire Loyalist women who selflessly followed their husbands into the unknown, follows the emigration to the west, and so on, across the entire country, exposing the courage, fortitude and ingenuity of these early residents. "Maintaining a home in early Canada was no push-over." This is one book which makes a sincere effort to tell the whole story, and as we read, we felt good about the representation it gave to all regions of the country. (That is coming from two Westerners who are usually very touchy about being a part of it all.)

Some of the most interesting material is contained in the first person stories and the "new perspective" given to old tales. These latter stories are done in a comic book fashion such as "Dirty Linen on the Plains of Abraham". It is suggested that Wolfe found his way up to the plains where he defeated Montcalm by hiding in the laundry being done by the French women in the employ of Montcalm's army. The moral of the story: "If you don't do your own laundry you'd best guard your dirty linen."

But the material is essentially factual. It provides an overview, a feeling for the lives our foremothers led. In the prairie section, the area with which we are most familiar, we were amazed not only at the duplication of material with that in our own historical film, but the

similarity of attitude reflected in the use of material. It is obvious when you read the diaries and accounts of those women and when you listen to their reminiscences that certain things were important to them. The stories which the authors chose to relate in *Never Done* have captured the essence of that life. They neither sensationalize nor exaggerate. They present an accurate balanced picture of a life that was at times difficult to believe.

The second section of the book, while dealing with the work done by women outside the home, continues the "saga of the soapsuds". It points out that wage work was merely a continuation of domestic work in the home - serving, cleaning, sewing, and catering to the needs of others. As in the home this work was afforded little worth and women laboured long hours for a pittance. In addition to outlining the diversity of work being done by women this section also goes into an analysis of the structure of the society and how women fit into it. The authors admit that it is a "thorny topic" but they deal with it in a manner which makes it understandable, and above all palatable. For example, on the issue of a much needed road they explain:

"So bushed pioneer women agitated for better roads, so they could sell any surplus they did have and see a few more members of the species. Intrepid pioneer men agitated for better roads so they could get down to the local more easily. At the same time, fat cat money makers realized that there was wealth in them thar forests, if trees could be gotten to market. The result was better transportation."

The final chapter is entitled "Organizing". The main thesis of this section of the book is that it was the growing leisure time of the middle class, urban woman, which made possible individual and collective action on social issues. Many of the organizations which grew up at the end of the nineteenth century to deal with the acute problems of urban life were created and staffed by women. While giving these organizations credit for the work that they did, the book points out that they were not above serving the needs of their middle class members. While helping women in Europe immigrate to a better life in Canada they were also securing for themselves much needed and hard to find houseworkers. The authors admit their dilemma in passing judgement on these organizations saying, "...Nor is it surprising that these comfortable, middle class ladies did not attack the root causes of the problems they fought: poverty, inequality, unemployment, bad health facilities, crowded cities, poor immigration policies, terrible working conditions, discriminatory laws and bad

pay (to name only a few!). These ladies were unlikely to single out their own husbands, brothers and rich uncle Edgar as the culprits (and owners) of exploitive enterprises. Yet they were often successful in protecting both working and wealthy women from some of the worst excesses of industrialization."

This book, above and beyond its exciting content, is a pure delight. The style proves false again the myth that women do not have a sense of humour. It is fresh, witty, and tastefully sarcastic. It laughs at the stereotypes and takes jabs at the male establishment, both past and present. It is noted at one point that, "Longer engagements and later marriages meant smaller families; this established the second form of birth control (the first was headaches, you'll remember)." And the drawings are a perfect accompaniment to the writing, being beautiful, illustrative, and not above a little humour themselves. Together they make a very strong statement.

Enough cannot be said about the importance of this book. It is the first to make a real attempt to pull together the scattered, obscure and fascinating material of women's history. The bibliography in the back attests to the incredible research which went into the book. And yet in many ways *Never Done* has to be regarded as essentially only an overview of Canadian women's history. This is not a criticism of the book, but a caution to readers. The authors have included an unbelievable amount of material in the available space but of necessity were forced to underplay and skim over important areas. This is especially true in the presentation of ethnic groups; English and French women receive a much more complete treatment. Farmwomen's organizations also seem to be overlooked in the last section. A discussion of them might have provided a more rounded picture of the work done by women's organizations, for it was here that women's radical nature was vented.

But again, this is not meant to underplay the quality and importance of the book. It is to point out that there are dozens of books yet to be written. The history of women is waiting to be uncovered in old attics and dusty cupboards across the country. Pioneer women are waiting to tell the stories that they think no one cares to hear. The archives and libraries are overflowing with material which they have refused to catalogue and hide instead under obscure headings or in vaults.

The interest in women's history is growing at a tremendous rate. The next few years should see many new books on the subject. We can only hope that they take an approach as refreshing as *Never Done*. \*\*\*



*Bonnie McSmithers You're Driving Me Dithers*, story by Sue Ann Alderson, illustrations by Fiona Garrick, published by Tree Frog, 1974.

Given a choice, small children will generally welcome a little book like a long lost friend. *Bonnie McSmithers* is a little book with an abundance of delightful illustrations. Its subject is a small girl who insists on doing small-girl things like putting a banana peel on her head, getting muddy or cutting the buttons off her coat. She is reprimanded by her mother but has, in the end, the security of her mother's affection. These elements should all add up to the right book for many small children. But I'm not sure who this book is really for.

Realistic stories have, of course, an invaluable part to play in a small child's development as long as they go further than simply underlining her own experience. If they only reinforce her world by showing her things she already knows, as this text does, what dimension do such stories add to her understanding of herself or her surroundings?

Bonnie McSmithers has a beautiful time in the squishy mud but when she comes in her mother says:

Bonnie McSmithers

you're driving me dithers  
and blithery-blathery out of my  
mind!

How do you think of such things to  
do?

What am I going to do with you?

Now clean off that mud  
and behave yourself!

When Bonnie cuts the dog's hair or  
the pictures out of the shiny new maga-  
zine, she receives the same chant from  
her mother with the exhortation to be-  
have. I would suggest that this text,  
then, does little more than fix a child's  
attention on her real experiences, offer-  
ing only a succession of reprimands for  
them.

In all fairness, it is obvious that  
these incidents are in preparation for  
the conclusion which breaks the pat-  
tern. Bonnie asks her mother to tell a  
story, which she does by repeating the  
catalogue of things Bonnie has just  
done. Bonnie stops her at "What am I  
going to do with you?" and says,  
"Could you play with me and be happy  
yourself?" This one line says an im-  
mense amount, very succinctly, about the  
lack of spontaneity between child and  
adult. "'Oh,' said Bonnie's mother.  
'Why, yes, I could indeed.' And they  
both smiled a big smile." I seriously  
wonder whether this conclusion is  
worth the repetition and reinforcement  
of the bothersome relationship between  
Bonnie and her mother. In some ways

this book makes more sense as a moral  
example for parents.

The format of the book is aesthetic-  
ally pleasing in terms of its size, illustra-  
tion, quality of paper, and attention  
paid to end papers; the permabound  
binding, however, will not stand up to  
heavy use. The illustrations need some  
comment, though, for it is here that the  
uncertainty lies as to who this book is  
intended for. The illustrations are primi-  
tive, one dimensional, black-and-white  
ink drawings, delightful in themselves.  
But they are always on the right hand  
side of the page, and, except for one,  
detail the inside of a room. The charac-  
ters, floor and ceiling are in almost the  
same place in each illustration. This can  
only create a kind of monotony for a  
small child.

Familiar things are detailed, and  
children can respond favourably to this  
as they will to the firm frame around  
each illustration which limits the page  
and simplifies the main action. But  
there is a risk in providing this particular  
style of art work for small children. It  
requires too steady an attention to tease  
out the detail. This is simply too con-  
centrated a task for the age group at  
which the text is aimed. It is not a ques-  
tion of whether the text and pictures  
complement one another, for they do; it  
is, instead, a question of whether or not  
the prose and the supporting illustra-  
tions are aimed at the same age group.

\*\*\*

A breeze this morning  
and on the white-crested waves  
a dozen seagulls.

Collecting beauty  
in the shades of the willows  
the lady-slippers.

C.M. Buckaway



# about our readers

In our last two issues we carried a questionnaire designed to tell us something about our readers and their reactions to the magazine. As we prepare this issue, we have heard from about seventy of you.

Who reads *Branching Out*? We were pleased to discover that our readers cover a wide age range. Though we received no responses from anyone under 18, 18% of those who wrote in were over 50 (said one, "it doesn't matter!"); 12% were 40-50; 24%, 30-40; 22%, 25-30; and 24%, 18-24. Seventy-eight percent who wrote in live in cities, the rest were about evenly divided between rural-dwellers and residents of small towns. A number of our rural readers requested that we carry some articles about rural life.

Twenty-six percent of the readers who responded are single; 54% are married; 2% are widowed; 2% are divorced; 9% are separated; and 7% are co-habiting. Forty-two percent have children and 58% don't.

The range of occupations listed was so great that it was impossible to collate the statistics. Some samples are lab technician, craftsperson (batik), secretary, wife/mother, teacher, student, professor, assistant editor, librarian, nurse, writer, economist, director of residence, realtor, bookstore supervisor, speech consultant, research scientist, psychologist and artist.

The part of the questionnaire that was most interesting to us, and most helpful, was the section that invited comments. We received numerous excellent criticisms and ideas for articles and improvements. Readers took the time to answer these questions fully, and we will certainly make use of their suggestions. Most of the responses were very positive, with a few exceptions - one reader said that she read *Branching Out* "in defiance of my own logic - I hate most of your articles by HUNG-UP women", and another told us "You should fold. You are immature, dull, short-sighted, provincial, trendy, petty-bourgeois." These comments were atypical, however, so we haven't become too discouraged. Some excerpts from the other questionnaires follow.

Why do you read *Branching Out*?

- because it has interesting and informative articles and is generally a good women's magazine with a feminist slant.

- 1. feminism 2. Canadian chauvinism.

- I must, I am a Canadian female.

- Interesting. Thought there should be another magazine for women other than recipes and furniture.

-It seems to tell the truth. I am not being intimidated by full-page glossy

commercials depicting all the things I lack, like beauty and efficiency. There are no 'superwomen' in *Branching Out* just people like me.

- because it's about where I'm at.

- it talks to me of other women and what is really important. Keep it coming and direct some material to the woman over 40: we can use the energy that you all exude.

- it deals with women and the humanities. What else of interest is there?

- Because I enjoy it!

- I don't run into recipes on every other page.

- It's not patronizing me . . . It approaches the feminine 'role' sensibly and with pride and it gives me a sense of self-worth.

- I feel you have a sane, balanced approach to women . .

Suggestions and Comments:

- continue poetry, illustrations, reviews on women; continue focus on sexism in society, educational system and indicate alternatives, eg. non-sexist stories for children.

- keep experimenting. Keep up what makes you different from the rest of the magazines available.

- I like interviews with women who are successful in their field - also how women can cope with difficult

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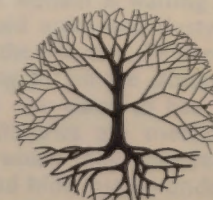
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situations.

- Great publication from *Alberta*
- Please develop your national character, as well as the feminist slant.
- I wouldn't be critical if I did not care, and if I did not believe that what you are doing is very worthwhile.

- A good mix at present.
- Please do keep exploring women in art, music and photography and poetry - very neglected areas. I like your format.

- I believe most of your readers are aware of the sex roles foisted upon them and do not have to have this proven to them over and over again in one tiresome article after the next. Why not just start with the assumption that we are entitled to be free of these type-cast roles and publish good poetry, fiction, interviews, etc. A short story by Alice Munro is far more meaningful than a laborious editorial and well illustrates the condition of being a woman.

- More interviews with successful women - we need role models - women in visible, responsible positions.

- Most Canadian magazines ignore, or treat as a minor issue, those issues which are of most interest to women. I think that *Branching Out* tries to be more than a popular magazine. I would like to see more articles on the philosophical implications of social changes, eg. perhaps relinquishing the idea that men and women are necessarily mutually complementary and that their functions must be so.

- your magazine is very good except for one thing - there isn't enough involvement by rural women, especially the more isolated ones who haven't many outside interests or contacts, with few excursions to town, and perhaps few people nearby to offer stimulating contact...Aside from that, DO keep up the good work. We need you!

- *Branching Out* gives stimulation to a positive view of women and their achievements.

- It is beautifully put together - even the advertisements are artistic! I like *Branching Out's* theme that women are important persons, interested, talented, capable.

- Your magazine thus far speaks to all age groups of women. Keep it that way . . . it will help you avoid the extremely radical approach and will give the magazine maturity and insight . . . Keep your magazine literate.

- It is a clear, fresh production without the 'slickness' of so many (American) publications but chock-full of well-presented, universal thoughts and feelings and ideas.

- I am really glad to see a good Canadian magazine . . . DON'T STOP!

- More radical articles
- A lot of the same kind of articles. Don't ever change your concept of presentation.

- More articles by isolated women . . . you're still too committed to urban (slick) women.

- there are so many areas left dormant which should be aired and fought over!

- the photography and sketches in the magazine are superb!

- Human sexuality
- Variations on a theme
- An article about *me*
- More about working class women 'making good'.

- More on women of the upper and lower echelons.

- I endorse your decision not to include male contributors . . .

- You are a forum and a friend.
- More profiles of women who are

active in politics or who are creative

- Interviews with women who have achieved prominence

- I would like to see the photoessays, poems and art work continue; articles about people that 'make it' and people that don't . . . a study of common problems and possible solutions facing women of various stages of life . . . an article on practical ways of resolving urgent issues facing mankind (should I say peoplekind?) . . .

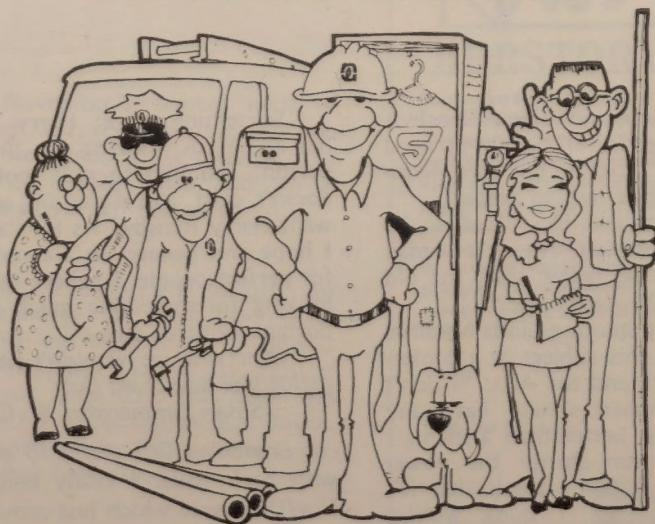
- I understand the reason for this questionnaire is for the purposes of your advertisers. Well don't let them throw too much junk at us . . .

- A pleasantly anticipated addition to my mailbox - and my head!

As you can see, our readers have a wide range of opinions about what we are doing and trying to do. We take these ideas and comments very seriously, and hope you will continue to let us know what you think of *Branching Out*. It is your evident interest and support that encourages us to keep publishing and hopefully to keep improving. Thank you! We need you!

\*\*\*

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cont. from p. 34

different jobs altogether. Those who return in September always have some reservations or fears: for instance, a "bad" class can dampen the enthusiasm of even the most devoted teacher. I know; I've had it happen. So too, the isolation a teacher feels on a large staff can be detrimental to her spirit. Mistakes, such as an ill-chosen word, or a reprimand too hastily given, are costly when dealing with young people. These are the things that eat away at a good many dedicated teachers. Some teachers don't let it get to them. I wish I knew their secret.

So then, what are we to conclude? Perhaps that the dedicated teacher is a thing of the past, or that maybe, she never existed in the first place? No, not at all. What we can conclude though is that she still exists, but in a changed form. She does not lock herself up in a world of books and classrooms; rather, she is very much a part of the present, vital world. If she isn't teaching or participating in extra-curricular activities, she might be relaxing with her own family or friends, because she knows the value and necessity of relaxation. Or she might be taking courses, or dipping into cultural pursuits because she knows the more experience she has, the more she can give to her students.

Every year I tease myself with thoughts of leaving teaching...of traveling, or writing, or some other thing. I become so frustrated and depressed, the word "school" is like arsenic on my tongue. But every year I come back for more. Am I a masochist?

Perhaps.

But a dedicated one.

\*\*\*

cont. from p. 2

Why did you print Harry Rensby's article (Sept/Oct issue)? Surely we need not be called "girls" in our own magazine. But my objections go deeper.

Harry instructs us: "Ladies, be equal - don't get even. The new woman must strive to be better than the old man, or where have we come?"

I answer by quoting Linda Nochlin, who spoke on this subject at a conference on Women and the Arts: "I don't think that women should have any obligation to be better than a man... I hope that we can change the power structure, but I don't think that it's women's obligation. I think women should have power in the interest of justice."

Justice: that's what is served by equality, even if the "new woman" is not one whit better than the "old man".

Something more: Harry says he's like all of us, looking for the perfect person. Tell him to quit looking. She doesn't exist, and if she did, would she want Harry Rensby? As for "all of us", I hope and believe we are not looking for perfect people. I believe we are now looking for something much more important: our true selves.

Otherwise we wouldn't need a magazine like *Branching Out*.

Susan Zimmerman, St. Catharines

*Branching Out* seems to get better with each issue. I really enjoyed the Nov/Dec. issue which just arrived at my door; especially the story (history?) of how you started out; could *feel* the excitement of putting a magazine together from scratch and learning together! *Beautiful* artwork too - keep it

up and don't be discouraged by people who complain you don't have articles on this or that - you seem to get around to everything.

Vibeke Ohm, Vancouver

I just wanted to write and say that I really enjoy the magazine. I didn't take the opportunity to write in suggestions, etc. when you sent out the appeal for them recently nor did I write in my thoughts of the "it's just fine" nature. It takes awhile to get going on things.

But I thought I shouldn't let any more time wander by before saying that I think it is very good and that I hope to God you are getting the support required in the way of money, help, etc.

Marylee Stephenson, Hamilton



First, I want to say how much I enjoy receiving and reading your magazine. Since I am an avid nationalist, it's wonderful to see such a great Canadian magazine (especially just for women) get off the ground. I support you all the way and hope and pray that your success continues.

The only complaint I have is with your articles regarding children. I don't know exactly *why* these articles bother me (as I plan to have my own in a couple of years) but maybe because they are connected with a *women's* magazine is the reason. I'd prefer to read about Canadian women and their talents and the things they are doing. A small book section and reviews might be of interest.

I like the black and white format; (I hope you never change to colour; it would be unnecessary) it's simple, original and, I presume, keeps costs down. The title is perfect - "Branching Out" gives me the impression that you are trying to unify Canadian women. It certainly needs to be done!

Jan McQuade, Montreal

I had intended to write you a love letter. However, in the interim some of the comments from your readers have made me very angry... and thus I write.

In this frantic search for women's liberation and the capital MS. are we not losing sight of the real issue? Equally important is the liberation of men and children. If I choose to be a married liberationist then I can't be free unless we have a "free family" with each person hopefully achieving their own freedom within a caring framework of discipline.

Regarding child beatings - Cam Hubert suggests we should demand professional therapy for everyone concerned with child battering. Better still, let's prepare (those of our youngsters who wish to have families) for the very realistic challenges and satisfactions of having children.

Let's fight for some advertisement control and stop forcing early sex down the gullets of children who, though mature in body, are not yet ready for the full time responsibility of raising children.

Let's de-emphasize materialism and promote a basic respect of human dignity. Women's lib is a great movement but personally I'd prefer it to be "people's liberation".

Pat Squire, Edmonton

The women's lib movement is a great movement for putting forth the rights of women at the expense of children, men, families and other women like myself. But since you so respect the rights of women and I am a woman you are forced to respect my opinion.

Regarding the comments on the talk by Dr. Morgentaler, I would like to point out some information and opinion on abortion.

1) Anti-abortionists are not well-funded; people have had to borrow \$2.00 for a membership to their organization for lack of funds. There is NO one person earning a salary on pro-life activities; it is all done on a volunteer basis.

2) The same rationale - abort a child because he is humiliated and neglected would apply to all those woman who are not satisfied with the "mistreatment" they receive from society. Why not abort everyone who is not happy with his lot (and women would be the first on the list).

3) If a woman is concerned with right to her own life, she would not submit to an abortion by anyone. It has been shown that under the best of conditions the psychological and physiological effects of an abortion are much worse than of childbirth.

Birth is not a matter of life and death for the mother anymore. Abortion is death for an unborn human being.

Mrs. June Peta, Edmonton

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#### ERROR

In the November/December issue of *Branching Out*, two photographs on page 34 were incorrectly credited. The pictures of Eunice Willar and Vivian Frankel are both self-portraits.

#### ERROR

A name which appeared in the interview with Pauline Jewett (September/October, 1974) was misspelled. Dr. Jewett referred to Queen's University registrar Jean Royce (page 22). This name was transcribed and appeared as Jean Boyce. We apologize for the error, and any confusion it may have caused.

\*\*\*

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## HERSTORY 1975

Encouraged by the enthusiastic reception to the Canadian women's 1974 appointment calendar '*Herstory*' the Women's Press has committed itself to publish its sequel. **HERSTORY '75** again documents in a daily record, the much neglected but fascinating story of women's participation in the development of Canada. Through photographs, graphics and quotations the calendar vividly portrays the significant struggles and achievements of women involved in making Canadian history. 128pp .....\$4.00

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# people in this issue

## CANDAS JANE DORSEY

Candas Dorsey lives in Edmonton where she works as a child care therapist. She has published two books of poetry with blowointment press in Vancouver. "Sally Go Round The Roses" is her first published short story.

## THECLA BRADSHAW

Thecla Bradshaw has published a chapbook of poetry with Ryerson Press, worked as a journalist, and was co-founder of *Northian Magazine*, a publication to aid teachers of native peoples. She is presently living in Souris, Manitoba where she is working on a biography of a prominent Canadian.

## BRIGITTE KERWER

A UBC graduate in honours English, Brigitte Kerwer now considers film her main interest. She first became enthusiastic about film criticism through her contact with the British Film Institute and the National Film Theatre in London, England. She now lives in Edmonton.

## SANDRA SEMCHUK

Sandra Semchuk is a freelance film editor and photographer. She is a founding member of The Photographers Gallery Artists Co-op in Saskatoon. As part of a long-term project to document the province of Saskatchewan she is presently photographing the people of Meadow Lake (her birthplace) and the city of Saskatoon.

## ANNE WHEELER LORNA RASMUSSEN

Anne Wheeler and Lorna Rasmussen are Edmonton filmmakers currently completing the historical film *Great Grand Mothers*. They were interviewed for the November/December issue of *Branching Out*.

## MAUREEN CARRINGTON

Maureen Carrington is studying linguistics at the University of Alberta. She has been active in the women's movement for several years, and was an editor of and regular contributor to the newspaper *On Our Way*.

## GERI BERNER

Geri Berner worked in public relations and in the news media for five years in Ontario. She worked in B.C. as a community treatment centre organizer and worker for addictive personalities. She is now employed in television production in Alberta.

## CAROLE L. TENBRINK

Carole TenBrink lives in Montreal with her husband and small son. She has a B.Sc. in Nursing and a M.Sc. in Psychiatric Nursing, both from the University of Michigan. After seven years of Nursing practice and teaching she dropped out of practice to write. She has published an article in *Nursing Forum*, and her poems have appeared in the *McGill Literary Magazine*, *Time Pieces* of the Montreal Writers' Co-op, *Mr. Cogito* and the *Ball State University Forum*.

## GWEN MATHESON

Over the last five years Gwen Matheson has participated in various ways in the Toronto women's movement. A former university English teacher, she has temporarily interrupted work on her Ph.D. dissertation to edit a book by and about Canadian women (*Our Watchword A Fair Deal* to be published by McClelland & Stewart.) She has also been doing freelance writing for Canadian magazines.

## J.A. HEIDI BOLAND

Ms. Boland teaches high school in Toronto. She also writes book reviews for *Alive Magazine*, and has had poetry published in several little magazines. She won first prize in the Alberta Poetry Contest in 1974.

## VIVIAN FRANKEL

Vivian Frankel is an Ottawa-based freelance photographer who has done commission work, child studies, photojournalism and lately, advertising photography. She is currently putting together a portfolio of people and things from across Canada. In October 1974 her work was shown at an exhibition of colour slides in Brussels.

## COLLEEN RICHARDS

Colleen Richards is currently working towards a Ph.D. in English in Calgary. This is her first appearance in *Branching Out*.

## JO THOMAS

Born and educated in Quebec, Jo Thomas has been a "Western transplant since 1963. She lives in Banff where she has odd-jobbed as a secretary. She attended Harry Boyle's creative writing class at Banff Centre in 1971. Current interests

include social change for women, commercialism vs. recreation in Banff National Park, and coaching a girls hockey team.

## JEANNE HENRY

Jeanne Henry is working towards her Ph.D. in English literature. She teaches a course in Children's Literature and writes book reviews for *The Edmonton Journal*. She has three small children.

## C.M. BUCKAWAY

C.M. Buckaway lives in Jansen, Saskatchewan. Her poetry has been published in many little magazines. A book manuscript, entitled "The Silver Cuckoo" has recently been accepted for publication by Borealis Press.

Three people from our last issue:

## PEGGY FLETCHER

Peggy Fletcher, whose short story "Visiting Rights" appeared in the last issue, has had fiction published in *Chatelaine* and some of her stories have been broadcast on CBC radio. Her poetry has been published in a Fiddlehead chapbook and in various little magazines. She writes a monthly column in *Living Message*. A second novel is in progress.

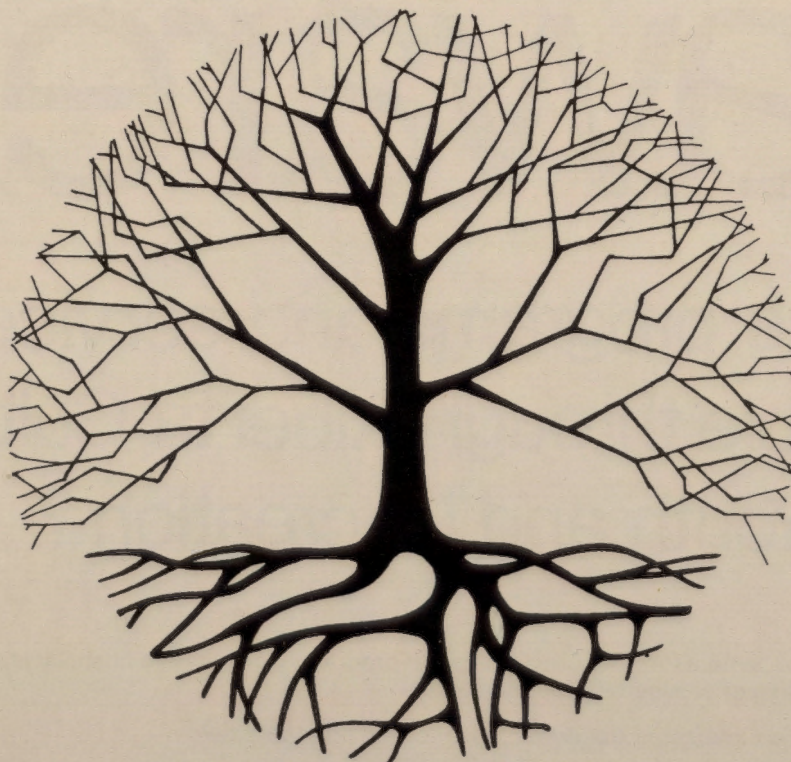
## KATHLEEN MACLENNAN MURCH

K.M. Murch (nicknamed Kem by her family) came to Canada from Kansas four years ago. She started and managed a wholesale dried flower business, but sold it three years later when she decided to devote her time to writing. She now lives in London, Ontario with her son and husband. A current project is a musical review on the subject of men and women's liberation which she is co-writing. Her poem "Twister" appeared in the last issue.

## HEIDI GRECO

Heidi Greco wrote the poems "Rainy Day, Burnaby Mountain" and "For a While a Moonlit Birch". Other poetry by her has been published in little magazines in Canada. She is also interested in children's literature and has published one story for children.





*Branching Out* logo by Linda Donnelly

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Do you have an interest in the development of the cultural arts?

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Do youth activities interest you?

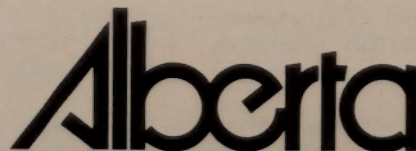
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The logo for the Government of Alberta, featuring the word "Alberta" in a stylized, bold, sans-serif font. The letter 'A' is particularly large and has a unique shape, with the 'l' and 'b' also being stylized.

CULTURE, YOUTH  
AND RECREATION