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THE LADDER

A GAY LESBIAN REVIEW

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A WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROMOTING THE
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1. Education of the Lesbian, enabling her to understand herself and to make her adjustment to society in all its social, civic, and economic implications — by establishing and maintaining a library of both fiction and non-fiction literature on the sex deviant theme; by sponsoring public meetings on pertinent subjects to be conducted by leading members of the legal, psychiatric, religious and other professions; by providing the Lesbian a forum for the interchange of ideas within her own group.
2. Education of the public, developing an understanding and acceptance of the Lesbian as an individual, leading to an eventual breakdown of erroneous taboos and prejudices — by public discussion meetings and by dissemination of educational literature on the Lesbian theme.
3. Encouragement of and participation in responsible research dealing with homosexuality.
4. Investigation of the penal code as it pertains to the homosexual, proposing and promoting changes to provide an equitable handling of cases involving this minority group through due process of law in the state legislatures.

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February/March 1970

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BETTY GEORGE or The Great Delusion

by Gabrielle Vivian Bertrand

"The way I see it," Betty said, "I'd rather go to the zoo and think of God, than go to church and think of the zoo. I bet God Himself would rather like that better."

Mrs. Harvey gasped and looked about as though the walls listened. Mr. Harvey chuckled so that a wet crumb flew from his mouth, landing appropriately on his plate.

"Daddy, it's not all that funny," Mrs. Harvey said, her face a quilt of wrinkles. "Our daughter comes home for the weekend, one of the mighty few she gives to us anymore, and she wants to go to the zoo, 'stead of showing up in church with her poor old folks."

"You're not poor and you're not old, Mama," Betty said.

Mrs. Harvey said, "Even so."

A smile caught onto her face, the uncontrolled smile of one who is flattered.

"Daddy, you reason with Betty George. I can't."

The younger woman poured herself a cup of coffee, keeping her head down to conceal a look of resignation.

"I'm having domestic problems right now," she said, plunging into the nature of the subject, "and I don't feel much like sitting through Doctor Pearson's monotone, or singing hymns. I just don't feel up to it."

"Have another piece of ham," Mrs. Harvey said. "Well, all right if you don't feel you want to go. I should think church'd be just the thing."

Mrs. Harvey hooked a great lavender hunk of ham on her fork and shook it off onto Betty's plate. She had hoped Betty George, their only child, would marry. When she wasn't married by twenty-five, the woman held out hopes for the late wedding of a daughter who had always been in her estimation a slow starter. Now the girl was thirty and her hopes slipped into a renewed acceptance of things being the way they were because they were the way they were.

She regarded the girl thoughtfully. Her wavy blonde hair had always been a source of pride to Mrs. Harvey who wondered for the life of her why Betty George had taken shears to it so long before the advent of short cuts. Her face, very bright in color by the sun coming through the louver win-

dows, was none the less grave by the pout of lip and the shade of eye. (Mrs. Harvey prided herself on always knowing how Betty George felt by the look in her great round blue eyes, and the bend of her lips.)

Now here was the girl, so single and so serious, talking with a deep dark frown about domestic problems. Domestic problems, indeed! The dear child. Yet, what else would a body call them, if they had to do with home things and not her doings at the school?

"I bet it's that Loretta," Mrs. Harvey said. "I know you been together a long time, but I still don't see she's right for you, Betty George. She's too inside herself. You need someone's more like you are. What's she done now?"

"Exactly," Betty said, "she's not willing to do anything I want to anymore. It's paint paint paint all the time paint, and she's not civil with our friends, for heaven's sake."

"I know she got a kind of talent," Mrs. Harvey said. "Some folks can just maneuver up things like that when they take a notion. Like look at the lovely chrysanthemums I got hung up in the front room. Loretta done that for me a year ago Christmas. And I'm proud to show it off. But I don't see what you see in that girl, Betty George. She's always seemed a very cold, hard person."

"Oh, she's not cold or hard, Mama," Betty said. "You don't know her."

"Hard to live with's what I meant," Mrs. Harvey said. "Some folks is just plain hard to live with. Like that woman back home lives across the road with the widower Corey. He married her out someplace west and brought her home."

Mama was always getting the home town mixed up with here, as though it had been packed in boxes like the things that made up her kitchen. These lapses usually amused Betty. She wasn't amused now.

Betty said, "We're out west, Mama."

"Paints her face like a barn, and her hair's a freak too," Mrs. Harvey was saying. "Our town's changed, Betty George. Best to start new, even at our age, than go into step with the likes of the widower Corey and that hussy across the road."

"Don't tell me this's why you sold the

farm!" Betty said.

"Ohio's different anymore," Mrs. Harvey said. "I don't much hold with the likes of these folks out here neither, but . . ."

"What'd he do to make you feel so contemptuous, Mama? Corey." It was a rhetorical question, and she said, "Mama, you're so critical, and . . . and bigoted."

"You're casting dispersions," Mrs. Harvey said. "I'm your mother."

"Aspersions," Betty said.

"And get off away from your lady friend a little bit, for mercy sakes. You got to . . ."

"She's not cold, hard or anything else," Betty said, bristling at the unlikely reference to Ret. "Lady friend" called up Mama's ilk girdled tightly in the catchall censored terms laid down by the old school. Jesus God. Ret was anything but.

"And lady friend she is not. She's . . . Well, she means more to me than that."

"Now, Betty George, that's not right, she got too much hold on you. She's not good for you."

"Just one minute, Mama. What does that mean, got a hold over me? You make her sound so sinister, so . . . It never crosses my mind that you or Dad could have some kind of a hold over each other; such a picture's unsavory." Thinking she might have gone too far, she said, "When I first introduced you to her I remember you criticized her hair because it wasn't long enough or thick enough or something."

"Well, I'm not saying that, Betty George. Her hair's fine. But it's just . . ."

"What then?"

"You're our little girl, and I want your happiness. I just was thinking for your own happiness," Mrs. Harvey said. "I know Loretta's come to mean like kin to you."

"Yes. Kin."

"Pah," Mr. Harvey said, his heavy brows colliding.

He didn't like what Betty George was saying, even that she hadn't really said anything he knew of. This thought had no language, it was a feeling.

"You women. Talk nonsense. Always at each other. Biting. Scratching."

He felt better, using the age-old decisions firm between the sexes. Breaking a doughnut in half, he stuffed it into his mouth and said something else but the doughnut in his mouth made him sound bound and gagged. Neither of the women

understood him.

"Please don't talk with your mouth full, Daddy," Mrs. Harvey said.

He had said the word "bitching," but it came out garbled, having unsuccessfully and mercifully gone through the doughnut. He was glad now for it. Mother would have been quick to make an issue of "swearing" and he and Betty George would have to listen to her views on it for half the morning; besides which, Betty George would sulk half the day if he made any accusable remark toward Loretta. There was something not quite right about Loretta (Ret, as Betty George thought fit to call her). He didn't think his daughter ought to be hobnobbing with the likes of that girl. She was sullen and antagonistic all the time. Mr. Harvey thought friendships were based on things you had in common. Only marriage attracted opposites and thrived, on top of which only married folks scrap — friends don't get along, they go their own ways. These thoughts made him uncomfortable. He put the cold coffee to his lips, and gulped so that the doughnut went down easy.

"Now," Mrs. Harvey said, "what was you fixing to say, Daddy? We couldn't hear you with your mouth full."

"No," he said, "nothing."

"Is she still leaving you with the dishes?" Mrs. Harvey said.

"Ret? She never did, Mama," Betty said, thinking how incensed Mama looked so much of the time, like many of her generation.

"Well, when we come over to dinner you never let me help out in the kitchen affairs. Seemed to me you didn't want I should see how you was the one fixing to do them, like it was you had to do them always."

"We share things, Mama," Betty said, thrusting out her lower lip and blowing toward her nose.

"Counting in the chores?" Mrs. Harvey said. "Seems to me like if you're going in together housebuying, you're better off to share house chores too. The time Loretta took sick with pneumonia, and you got your leave of absence to tend her and nurse her back to health seems it was a long leave-taking and I wonder, I just wonder sometimes, if Loretta ever appreciated it."

Betty hadn't been listening. It irritated her that Mama had been talking while she had not been listening. It was unforgivable

somehow, like being in the presence of a deaf-mute who semaphores and gesticulates and pats his hands while your eyes are closed. She resented it, feeling like an ass. She went back as far as she could and caught the words, "... appreciated it."

"I know you share things, Betty George. And I think it's good and all," Mrs. Harvey was saying. "But maybe it's not shared even-steven."

Her face moved as she talked. Eyebrows converged and the forehead wrinkles swam in and out of view.

"It's a lot of little things," Betty said. "I suppose the whole thing comes from our being together so much of the time."

"She still holding that there job where you're at?" Mr. Harvey said.

He wiped across the kitchen table with the palm of his hand, wiping the crumbs in a line toward Mrs. Harvey.

"But yes. Where else do you think she'd be?" Betty said. "We're teachers, and we've been teaching in the same school since we left college. Where've you been?"

"Well, I don't know. After her pneumonia I thought Mother said..."

"Daddy, I never said nothing of the like," Mrs. Harvey said. "I recollect saying to you I said I thought it'd be a miracle if they take her back again she's took out so long to recover."

Mrs. Harvey wore a flowery cotton dress buttoned up front and nervously slipped four fingers of her hand between the buttons and, twisting, hiked the skirt in front a little.

"She wasn't out so long," Betty said.

"That ain't what I meant," Mr. Harvey said. "I got the hunch somehow that she just didn't go on back to teaching where at our little girl was, is what I meant."

"Well she did."

Betty turned up the coffee pot and got three drops from it.

"You want me to make more?" Mrs. Harvey said.

"It's been over two years since her pneumonia," Betty said. "No. Thanks, Mama. We're together day and night. I think that's our trouble."

"But that's it, Betty George," Mrs. Harvey said. "Nobody can stay on with a person night and day and not go daft afters. Take a look at me and your father. We're together too much of the time since he's taken to retirement. Sometimes I think if I don't blow my top I'll just scream."

"Now, Mother," Mr. Harvey said, "it's

not all like that."

He turned to Betty, rubbing his hands together to whisk the crumbs off them.

"Do you know I think your mother no more than spies me at my desk and she runs to get that infernal sweeper of hers just to muddle me?"

Betty had to smile. Her parents were trying to make light of a possible calamity within their daughter's home by equating with it. They were reaching out to show her how it happens to all couples that are together so much.

"You're both right," she said. "Maybe we ought to separate a while. A vacation or something apart."

"Who?" Mr. Harvey said.

Betty said, "Ret. Me. Who else?"

Mr. Harvey drew back and plucked a toothpick from a jigger on the shelf behind him. He sucked on the pick, rolling it between a big purple calloused thumb and forefinger, thinking: *Maybe's another way of taking words rampant to a marriage like "domestic" and "separate" to cover up the plain fact she ain't betrothed yet.*

"You ought to get married," Mr. Harvey said, thinking to lay his hands on it. "It ain't too late don't you know. What are you now, Betty George? twenty-seven? twenty eight?"

"Thirty, and it is too late, Dad," Betty said. "Something better than ten years too late. You always were able to count the hogs in their pen better than you could how long I'd been around."

"Now, Betty George, you don't need to go be impotent with him," Mrs. Harvey said. "He only's trying to give you fatherly advice for mercy sakes."

"Impudent," Betty said.

Mrs. Harvey eyed her, and Betty said, "Not impotent."

"When you're sixty you'll still be our little girl, don't you be forgetting it," Mrs. Harvey said. "All we want's what's best for you. We been through things. All we want's to help you over some of the rough."

Bringing his hands to his lips, elbows on the table, Mr. Harvey gaped at her over the faulty steeple he made with his arthritic fingers.

Betty thought she knew what he was thinking, and she said, "Wanting me to go to church and sit among all those pious clean-scrubbed half-wits who'd scorn me for not being married like they are. Their thoughts go down narrow alleys between the backs of tall buildings. There's no sun-

light and where ever they go it always smells of garbage."

"I just was thinking how much better't be if you was to..." Mr. Harvey searched for a word that would lend itself to those tried and true marriage words Betty George had been using this morning in reference to her single life. "... if you was to just get your separation from Loretta and maybe you'd find it better sailing don't you know."

(He trusted Betty George would find a man for whom doing dirty dishes would apply.)

"Betty George, you've no call to go criticizing, when you don't even show your face in our church," Mrs. Harvey said. "The folks mayn't be saints, glory be, but their thoughts are not what you say neither. None of us is perfect. You got to take them like they are, Betty George, if you want for them to take you. It's tit for tat."

"Mama, you don't even understand, so how in the world could they?"

"But your father and me've understood you, child. For a long while."

"Oh sure. You understand." These words hung on sarcasm.

"Don't you make out me to be a liar, young lady," Mrs. Harvey said. "Don't you think it was so easy for us at first neither, to come find out our girl wouldn't be fixing to get married like other girls."

Immediately Mrs. Harvey repented. She didn't think she ought to've talked up marriage like this, after all these years. It was like talking up frilly shoes to a woman who's up to the age of sensibles.

Betty thought her heart had stopped.

"How long, Mama?" she said. "How long've you known?"

"Mercy, who pays it any mind anymore. One day's the same as another since you been raised."

Though the girl had never been churchy, it was easy for Mrs. Harvey to see how her daughter would feel about church-going without a man at her arm. Mr. Harvey sucked on his toothpick with a squeak. He had been wondering how a daughter of his could carry around those fool notions about her mama and daddy not understanding their own little girl. What was there to understand anyway?

Boy Jesus! Betty's thoughts whirled. *Mama and Dad knew!* It was something Ret would need to be told.

"Tell you what," Betty said, "for starters let me take you both to the zoo

today. We'll have dinner out. Make a full day of it. Ret'll wonder where I am. It'll do her good to worry a little."

"No. Count me out," Mr. Harvey said, scratching at a small square of tape on his chin where he had knicked himself while shaving. "I want to get to the clippings on my desk. It's the Sabbath and there's no chance your mother'll come at me with that infernal machine to pick up dirt."

He stabbed a gristly piece of ham on his plate with the toothpick before pushing his chair back. It was time Betty George started thinking what she wanted to do with her life. This thought set him on edge.

"How 'bout you, Mama?" Betty said. "Isn't it one reason you come out here to live? to have the best zoo in the whole wide world to stroll in and write home about on rainy days?"

"I dassent go," Mrs. Harvey said, "I haven't been to church. I'd feel wicked traipsing off to the zoo. You go on. Enjoy yourself."

Perhaps, God willing, if Betty George got out on her own a little more, she's like to meet herself a beau, get away from Loretta. The thought made Mrs. Harvey sigh.

"When you get on back to Loretta, things might look different," she said, adding to herself, *pray the Good Lord.*

Betty pushed her chair back, slapped the fingers of each hand on the table and stood up as a speaker might who was about to address an audience.

"You're right. You're right," she said. "You're right you're right you're right!"

Turning to the louver windows, she pulled in a great lungful of morning sea air. It was such a beautiful day, she thought she felt like crying.

(Miss Bertrand writes: "G.V.B. is an uneducated, illiterate, unknown. She has no children and is not working on a novel. She has appeared nowhere frequently, and is an advocate of the "stand up and be counted school.")

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Gay Liberation

A RIDE
ON THE BACK
OF A PANTHER?

GAY IS GOOD (button slogan) and gay-is-good-and-angry in heat and reality, and three, four, five hot white TV lighting lamps and the camera is on us, the too-visible invisible men-and-women. Will we unite with the other invisible man? Will this meeting be a turning?

Wednesday night, July 16, 8 P.M. St. Johns-in-the-Village Episcopal Parish House.

Dick Leitsch, head of the Mattachine Society of New York is up front, but it is Martin Robinson who is talking now. He stands half-way up a flight of stairs near the front, his forehead high and shining like the young Russian and somehow, as the cameras and lights focus on him it's sounding cinematic-Russian:

"What is happening is beautiful," says Martin Robinson. "And it's going to be beautiful because we're together and we've never been together before. We know we exist and we never knew that before. And we're going to go out and just *undermine* the police with a big man-trap hole of acceptance and they're going to fall in because they'll see there isn't any monster to kill. We're not going to call them pigs. And we're not going to use guns because we can't. We're going to use our heads because we've got them. And it's going to be beautiful."

I look at the blue stencil that has been placed around:

NO ONE IS FREE
UNTIL EVERYONE
IS FREE.

GAY POWER TO GAY PEOPLE

On Saturday July 19, 1969 at 1:00 P.M. there will be a demonstration at the Women's House of Detention, Greenwich Street at Sixth Avenue.

The newly-formed Gay Liberation Front urges all homosexuals to join in this demonstration with Yippies and Panthers to show our common concern for unharassed life styles.

BE THERE
GAY LIBERATION FRONT.

by Leo Skir

The blue mimeographed sheet this came on did not supply the names of the homophile organizations in this newly-formed popular-gay-front. But Dick Leitsch is head of Mattachine, it is New York's largest homophile organization (about 500 members) and we headed the meeting.

"We're here tonight for two things," he said. "To decide when to have our protest meeting. The Village is *our* ghetto. And then to decide how we can organize to help the gay kids who just come to the city, can't make out, get a job, a place to sleep. They are discriminated against by the City, its servicing departments, Welfare, and places like the Salvation Army. They don't know where to go, what to do."

"I think we'd better stop the sweetness and light bit," said Jim Fouratt (one of the original Yippies). "It won't work. We've been sweet all these years and it's not working. We have to join with the Panthers and Yippies. And, like, *MOVE THE PIGS*."

Applause.

"No!" (This from a Lesbian who had covered Women's Liberation.) "We do not have to associate with these groups. Neither of them have shown any such concern for personal freedom or a humanistic view of homosexuality. Cleaver, who is Minister of Information of the Panthers, has an entire chapter of his book on homosexuals and it's negative and inhuman; and Abbie Hoffman, head of the Yippies, has made numerous anti-homosexual remarks..."

"I know," said Jim Fouratt, "I'm not a Yippie or a Panther..."

"I don't think we homosexuals should make this alliance. The black people haven't chosen the Panthers to represent them. I don't think the homosexuals in their alliance, their sympathy with the blacks need to, should, choose the Panthers!"

Silence from the kids. The Black Panthers have an odd respectability in the Village as they are non-respectable outside.

Then from Jim Fouratt, "Have you ever met a Panther?"

"No," from the lady.

It then seemed that we had been called this night by a Liberation Front whose leadership was unknown (except for Dick Leitsch) for an alliance with two groups nei-

ther of whom had sent a representative. There was then, it seemed, to be no dialogue, no statement from the Black Panthers or the Yippies supporting homosexual rights.

Dick Leitsch hurriedly explained that Mattachine was run by a Board of Directors and could not, being prim and proper, support the Panthers.

"My own convictions regarding the Panthers are irrelevant," he said. "I think we should each go there as individuals if we feel their cause is just."

Why, if he had such a conviction (or lack of it) had he offered to chairman a meeting of the newly-formed HOMOSEXUAL Liberation Front to demonstrate with people he wasn't sure about????

If there was a Front, a real Front, with members, couldn't one of them who was NOT head of another organization and who DID believe that HIS feelings about the Panthers WERE concrete, positive, relevant, explain to us why he thought the Panthers were in the Women's House of Detention illegally? And why didn't we see a single Panther and/or Yippie come and tell us what the scene was, why they needed, wanted our support — respected us — rather than — as Eldridge Cleaver did — regarded us as the Castrati of the System (and themselves the Ball-bearers of the Future).

Ah well, as it says in the good book, piss on that and next-on-the-agenda.

We would have a pure Gay Power Vigil. In the Washington Square Park. The 27th. 2 P.M.

It was roasting hot in the packed room. I had asked the English T.V. men to turn off the lights which they did. The beautiful blond boys in the first three rows mused over our non-marriage to the Panther-blacks.

"If they could see how we love them," said a Child of Peace, "they would love us."

"You can go as an individual," said Dick Leitsch, "if you want to."

The blond boy turned to his friends. "Shall we go as individuals?" he said.

They giggled. He sat down, taking a last full-face look into the camera.

Dick explained that a vigil (vs. a demonstration) meant that no P.A. system could be used.

He then went on to detail the need for a place in the Village, like the Mattachine office (which was uptown on West End Avenue near 72nd Street) where homosexuals who had just come to the city and couldn't strike roots could be helped. He emphasized the needs of the minors.

Jim Fouratt said, "You're very naive. The moment one parent complained you would be open for charges of corrupting a minor."

"The only way we would get away from the image of corruptors, especially if we tried to set up sleeping space," said Dick,



"would be to ask help and support from the authorities before we start and let them know what we're doing."

A young black boy wearing a Dashiki who had enthusiastically suggested getting guns looked restive. It was all so easy, so much easier when Evil was The Pigs and you just had to get rid of the Pigs and the sun would shine.

The talk of the need for money to rent a store front, of having volunteers man a switchboard service brought no response. The mood in the air was for appearance, for action.

Martin Robinson spoke again, a short speech evangelical for the peaceful vigil (and for English TV):

"At the Stonewall when someone threw a rock a beautiful thing happened. Gay power was born. We said, 'I am innocent! I am not alone! I am part of the community! One with the world! I want a place in the sun! That's all! That's the world! Nothing but you and me! I'm saying LOOK! That's what Gay Power is about!'"

Someone suggested we wear lavender armbands to identify ourselves.

Someone suggested on the Gay Sunday (the 27th) we march on the 6th Precinct, "Where all the trouble is."

There was some misgiving about this.

"Last time they took me there," said a beautiful blond, "they took me to a room and beat me up. I had to have five stitches."

"Everyone who was beaten up by the police please come and tell us," said Dick Leitsch. "Mattachine wants full reports of police brutality."

The Beautiful Blond who had been Beaten said, "When I came to the city first I didn't know anyone. I starved and didn't have any clothes and finally I was put in jail and then they helped me get things — with Welfare. But you shouldn't have to be put in jail first."

"Why did you come to the city, if you didn't have any money?" said a young black boy (wearing no Dashiki, obviously no Panther).

"For freedom," said the Blond Boy.

The Black Boy curled his lip in distaste. NO ONE IS FREE

UNTIL EVERYONE IS FREE

Words on a blue sheet of mimeographed paper.

Another sheet has been circulated, free, floating. It's pages 16/17 of the upcoming Mattachine magazine. There is an advertisement for the Mattachine beach party. The

party is on the SAME DAY as the VIGIL! It is symbolized by a reproduced etching by Harry Bush. A blond near-naked youth, eyes vacant, peaceful (no causes! no anger!) faces us, huge huge muscles on arms, legs, stomach, a mini-bikini hardly containing his engine. Behind him on a chart the words: SUN SAND FUN SURF FOOD TRANSPORTATION \$7.50 a person.

He is blond and he is free. The print comes from California. The Pacific must be more peaceful than our Atlantic. He does not have to fight for freedom.

That is a great freedom. Not to have to fight. Sun and sand and fun and surf and food is freedom too.

We have passed the hat. We have collected a hundred dollars for bail for two of our sisters in jail.

NO ONE IS FREE.

(We are not free.)

The blond boy in the picture is a picture.

We will be in the park on the 27th, in three dimensions that day and many days to come.

The vigil . . .

GAY! GAY! BLACK! BLACK!

1 P.M. Saturday July 19th and I am speeding down to 14th Street and the Women's House of Detention — that hi-rise urinal in the middle of the Village. Come to think of it, why didn't they let women (not necessarily criminal women, but women) design it?

At least the demonstrators today gave equal visibility to gay women.

There were groups opposite the House of Detention. There were two great banners, upheld by poles, and both had them linked — similar Mars astrological symbols and Venus.

They were almost all white. If the Panthers had agreed to this demonstration they were not out.

It was all gay and no anger, black or non-black.

And more-or-less white. New York is NOT California where white-is-white, Chicano-is-chicano, yellow-is-yellow. Between our Jews, Italian-Sicilians (vs. California's blond Italians), our Puerto Ricans, we sort of bridge the color line.

The kids are singing, not chanting. Sounds like Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (and almost looks it):

Hey! Hey!
Ho! Ho!
House of D.T.

Got to Go!
Hey! Hey!, etc.
Girlish fairy types dancing in time to the music.

Nice line (only ten or so) of quiet policemen keeping the kids on the curb.

Black-black power
To the Black-Black People!
Red-red power
To the red-red people!
Gay-gay power
To the gay-gay people!

Some of the kids carry big Vietcong flags which look sort of old and tired like the worn money from a Monopoly set. Seems to me the Vietnam War has lasted longer than the U.S. Civil War, WWI and WWII combined, etc. Enough already.

Across the street, right beside the House of Detention are some counterdemonstrators, only a handful (compared to over a hundred gay-demonstrators). They are carrying two U.S. flags, while one of the gay kids has a U.S. flag and is holding it upside down so that — across the street someone shouts:

"YOU'RE IN THE WRONG COUNTRY! WHY DON'T YOU GO BACK WHERE YOU CAME FROM?"

A kid beside that one (they are both teen-age kids) yells, "If you did that" (held the flag upside down) "in Moscow, they would shoot you at once!"

Hey! Hey!
Ho! Ho!
All the pigs
Have got to go!

I am across the street with the idle spectators and the two American flag boys. Beside me a man says, "Fighting fags! Wow!"

I remind myself that only fifty years ago respectable people used words like *nigger* and *kike-man*.

One of the American flag boys has (how?) somehow gotten an extra thing under his flag saying UNDER GOD.

There is a bus with about forty policemen parked across the triangle above the intersection of 6th Avenue and 8th Street. They are sitting inside, a block away but there is no need to get out.

The day is cloud-cast, cool. There is jollity.

No hint in the air of the Panthers. The girls shouting encouragement from the windows of the House of Detention seem very much a part of the gay scene below.

Steadily, steadily the boys and girls cir-

culate a yellow sheet:

GAY POWER VIGIL
NON-VIOLENT

On next Sunday, the 27th, 2 P.M. Washington Square Park . . . "To openly love whom we please . . ."

The demonstration has lasted an hour and goes away quietly . . . Yellow sheets keep distributing: "We refuse to accept the straight person's guilt about sex."

"To openly love"
("Wear a lavender armband to show your support.")

This day has been cool and good. NON-VIOLENT. They are using that word again. Shall we see love, open-and-plain, shall we see sex-without-guilt, lavender-or-no? I am doubtful. We have fallen down the glass mountain so many times. It almost seems now (to the old man who writes this) that we fall down so far, so hard! Where is freedom? The Viet-Cong? I know China and Russia suppress homosexual affection strongly (also heterosexual affection).

But a person who ascends looks up, not down, and there is the goal. Next Sunday. Up the mountain made of the sands of time to the Heavenly Jerusalem.

We will go.

The street bears no evidence now of our actions.

The women in the Women's House of Detention remain.

When was it last they heard singing?
Do Panthers sing?
Where is the song we will sing together?
Will it be nice and good to pigs?

Disney loved them so! Perhaps we should, too!

SOMEDAY IS TODAY

July 27, 1969, Washington Square Park.

There is a hurricane wire fence around most of the park, not to keep out the gays but for construction.

There is an ad in the *Village Voice* for the demonstration:

GAY POWER

Gay Power means that homosexuals want the right to self-determination and an end to abuses of our rights as citizens.

SUPPORT GAY POWER

Demonstrate with us in Washington Square Park at 2:00 P.M. on Sunday July 27. Join our peaceful non-violent vigil to show Gay Power.

Wear a lavender arm band.

Co-sponsored by Mattachine Society of New York, 243 West End Avenue, and

Daughters of Bilitis, 240 W. 38th Street.

I arrived late and the group, a really large group was marching in a long line, or rather two long lines from the Park towards Sheridan Square, where I heard we were to assemble opposite the Stonewall "where it all started."

"Let's move it up!" shouted one of the monitors (he wore a lavender sash across the chest). "Close ranks!"

"GAY PO-WER! GAY PO-WER!" the kids chanted, but New York is such a noisy place that the words and almost the noise was dissipated a half-block away.

It was 2:45 when the crowd arrived at Sheridan Square and many of the kids who had been on the march to the Square had marched off. The slight rally was held not opposite the Stonewall (where the police could act since we would be spilling off the narrow sidewalk, blocking traffic) but in the small triangular "park" which is at the center of Sheridan Square (which is triangular and not square). The "park" is usually a center for drunks, odd dissipated people and gay-boys-looking-for-action. The drunks and "street people" just stayed there, not looking particularly startled or interested.

Now at the North end of the triangle, its point, we held up our banner (two pairs of zodiac signs, each linked, two Mars on one side, two Venus on the other) — and our spokesmen mounted the bench and spoke without benefit of loudspeaker.

First was Martin Robinson: "We've built this society and now we're going to get our place in it! Let's have an L!"

"L!"

"An O!"

"O!"

"A V!"

"V!"

"Put them together!" he shouted.

The crowd shouted, "LOVE!"

"When the police broke that window at the Stonewall," Martin Robinson said, "they told us that the time has come!"

Someone was handing around a pink mimeographed sheet:
HOMOSEXUALS ARE COMING TOGETHER AT LAST

To examine how we are oppressed and how we oppress ourselves.

To fight for gay control of gay businesses.

To publish our own newspaper.

To these and other radical ends, we will meet again, at Alternate U — 69 West 14th

Street (at 6th Avenue)

Thursday, July 31 at 6:30 P.M.
THE STREETS, BARS, PARKS BELONG TO THE PEOPLE!

GAY POWER TO GAY PEOPLE!
ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE!

Martin Robinson, meanwhile, was advising us that we would meet Tuesday (not Thursday) at 7 P.M. at the Mattachine office. Most of the gay kids there didn't know where the Mattachine was! (Its offices had been near 23rd Street and now were near 72nd Street on the West Side, this a major homosexual neighborhood and yet — New York being a city that does not know itself, the Village gays who knew every bar and restaurant — and tearoom — didn't know where Mattachine was!).

"It's in the phone book!" Martin shouted.

(It was also in/on a second mimeographed sheet being handed around, urging the kids to join Mattachine, which had held sip-ins, demonstrations for their rights for years.)

There seems to be some conflict. What group — if not Mattachine and Daughters of Bilitis — is sponsoring the Gay Power meeting at the Alternate U?

And is this Gay Power movement real, even if slight, or, like the Jewish Liberation Movement, a result of gay-left energies diverted by being unable to work through the Black Power or SDS or Yippie movements?

Another speaker, Mark Segal, young and flower-child-looking, got up. "We're not screaming queens any longer!" he shouted. "We're going to win and we're going to win with the Others on our side. Because we have to have them with us and not against us!"

A girl wearing a Taurus emblem (It seems like light-years ago that drugs and astrology were looked upon by leftists as pathetic diversions of the masses from the Struggle.) was talking of the March on Washington (Projecting a gay march? Why not?).

There were few blacks in the crowd, though in the Village and in New York life, blacks form an integral part of the gay mass.

Almost everyone in the crowd was under thirty.

I saw EL reporter and closet-lesbian there with McDarragh of the Voice.

"Are you covering this?" I said.

She flushed under her tan (she never covers homosexual stories). "No," she said, "My husband and I just came out of curios-

ity."

"What do you think of the Gay Power movement?" I said.

"What do you think?" she said.

"I think the kids are wobbly about it," I said. "I think there's going to be pressure and they're going to crack. They have no firm center, no leader, ideology, or even single aim. But it's difficult. The Jews, Negroes have had, still have, such difficulty in maintaining ego, image, and they have the advantage of being surrounded by supporting family — which is Jewish and Negro from an early age. The gay kid comes into the life late and the ones who would give the strongest ideological support — the intellectuals — used to come out into homosexual life so late — I was twenty-eight — that they fail to provide that support. It's the kids from the lower classes who get into the life, their sexual lives, earlier, and they color the gay movement, just as the readership of a paper decides its standards. And they ARE the movement today, young-young kids. You see them. And they faced the police at the Stonewall. Friends

of mine, only ten years younger, can face police clubs. I can't. I was at a rally against the cut in Welfare grants and when the police horses backed on us, I panicked."

EL said, "I do my fighting with my typewriter."

The crowd was singing "WE WILL OVERCOME SOMEDAY:"

WE'LL WALK HAND IN HAND
WE'LL WALK HAND IN HAND
WE'LL WALK HAND IN HAND
SOME-DAY

EL wasn't walking hand-in-hand. Respectable, over-thirty, with her husband, she was going back to their apartment.

I, to my typewriter, because writing is part of the answer, but not all. Someday, some many days, we must be in the streets.

Today was one of those days...

(Leo Skir is a novelist, short story writer, and essayist, whose work has appeared frequently in both the homophile and establishment sources. This is his personal view, poetic view, of some of the events of last summer's gay hot days.)

Hope Deferred

by Isabel Miller

When I was in the Navy, I had a bunk-mate named Patty. What I liked best about her at first was that I didn't like her very much, and I thought I could experience, at last, an ordinary girl-girl friendship without any wear and tear. It was too tiresome, loving, and choking on my heart, and maintaining throughout a pleasant expression, more or less. Patty was a very ordinary girl, only approximately pretty, not amusing, not understanding, cold. Her mind, though possibly good, was given nothing to grow on. She didn't read anything or listen to anything. All told she was exactly what I needed. How it rejoiced me to feel nothing when we walked together. It went on that way for weeks, no hopes, no longings, just peace.

The first warning that peace was too good to last came one morning when we were late for breakfast and she had a catch in her side and couldn't run. I started to hurry ahead without her. Then I looked back and saw her struggling along like an old woman, and I felt the frightening beginning of tenderness for her. I didn't let it

take hold, though. I waited impatiently, like a normal girl, and complained like a normal girl, and I fooled even myself that I was going to be able to get out of loving her.

We went out together every weekend, to drink-dance places and picked up, or let ourselves be picked up by, sailors. She kissed hers, I kissed mine, all very dull and calm.

Then one night the sailors were different — they had a place to go (an almost-abandoned Navy dispensary) and an ambulance, also Navy, to get there in. Protected by youth, stupidity, and complete heterosexual anesthesia, I wasn't afraid to go. Patty's reasons may have been about the same.

These sailors were the final skeleton crew of their little hospital. One was short and dark and the other tall and blond. There was nobody else for miles around. They gave us drinks made of grapefruit juice and medical alcohol. There wasn't enough alcohol for the second round so they had to make-do with elixir-tirpin-hydrate with codeine, a cough medicine. It

was unspeakable so I wouldn't drink mine, but Patty drank hers. Maybe more than one. I didn't know, because I allowed myself to be lured off to an empty ward by the tall blond sailor.

He was a nice boy, not much more interested than I was. His attempt was mild, standard, easily rebuffed, and not renewed. We talked about books and movies, and when we figured we'd stayed away our decent interval we went back to our buddies.

Patty was in the bathroom, vomiting. She had all her clothes on except her jacket. I thought she'd had no more trouble with her sailor than I with mine.

They took us to our barracks in the ambulance. There was a larkly young feeling about going home that way, except that Patty wasn't looking larkly. As she was getting out her sailor said, "Now what was your name again?" and to my surprise, instead of laughing or lying, she told him, first name and last, accurate in every part.

So then I knew.

Going up the stairs she told me. She was so sick and scared. She smelled awful, from the vomit and the other. Puffy and blotchy with tears. So I loved her.

"Okay, I won't tell anybody, and don't you either," I said.

She wanted to go straight to bed but I wouldn't let her. "Looking like this tomorrow is telling everybody about tonight," I said and bossed her to the shower. She bathed herself. I didn't dare help her, and anyway she didn't need help. Afterwards I put her hair up in pin curls, wrapped her net around her head, and boosted her into her upper bunk. Then I lay awake for hours, scared because I loved her.

Next day she was clearer-headed, and therefore on the verge of nervous collapse. There wasn't a hope, she said, that she wasn't pregnant. She didn't know what to do. I didn't know either, but providence came along and showed me.

Patty and I were sitting in the lounge, I trying to hide my love and at the same time spread it over her to protect her, and she just looking grim and starey like somebody wandering away from a bomb blast, when one of the new WAVES came in and said, "Anybody want a blind date for tonight?" Nobody ever did and only a new girl would ask. "They're real cute," she said. "One's tall and blond and the other's short and dark."

"I do," I said.

"Which one?"

"Short and dark."

I was right on the spot when he pulled up in his ambulance.

"You," he said.

"Umm hmm."

"Where's Patty?"

"Upstairs."

"I'd like to see her."

That was gentlemanly, and since he was a well-built young man and seemed intelligent, I saw that one solution was to get him to marry her. I went up to get her. At first she said she wouldn't see him, but then she said she would, so I put a clean shirt on her and combed her hair. "Stand proud, now," I said.

She said she would, but she didn't. She looked like a whipped hound.

He said, "You okay?"

She said, "I guess so," and scurried back upstairs.

Then off to the show we went in the ambulance, which was a Jeep at heart and too noisy for talk, so he had to wait till we got to the theater lobby to ask, "What is this?"

"It's very Biblical. He went in unto her and she conceived and bare a son and they called his name Enoch."

"She told you."

"Sure."

"And she's scared she's knocked."

"Sure. And since you're a medical man and have lots of alcohol and elixir-tirpin-hydrate and codeine, why not something for this, too? What's the word. Abortifacient, I think."

"I haven't got any. Anyway, I'm sterile. I had mumps."

"I'll tell her," I said, with real gratitude.

I enjoyed the movie with a clear mind. If Patty wasn't in trouble she resumed her former role and I didn't have to go through all that loving her would involve.

Afterwards, he and I went back to the scene of the crime. His tall blond buddy wasn't there. I sat on the bed and he in a chair nearby.

I said I didn't think he should give virgins codeine and then ravage them. I said it nicely, like a sister who had mostly his spiritual well-being at heart. I really did like him. He said she wasn't a virgin. He said she was the worst, most uninteresting, tamest girl he'd ever taken to bed. I said he should marry her. He said he might consider marrying me, but not her. I thanked him, but no thanks. He said he wanted to be a fireman someday, because firemen have so much

time to read.

Then, to my astonishment he came over and put his arms around me, saying, "Why are we wasting all this time talking?"

I guess he thought that her beautiful description had moved me to seek the same for myself. I succeeded in convincing him that my reason for coming was exactly as stated, all without hurting his feelings, and he was in fair spirits when he took me to my barracks even though, thanks to me, his score that year was only three hundred and sixty-four.

A few days later when I went to Patty's office to pick her up after work, he was there. "Congratulate us, we're getting married," he said.

"That's nice," I said.

"Don't act so surprised. You're the one that talked me into it."

I think he might have married her, too, except that he was due for discharge and eager to go home and be a fireman.

In any case, he had brought her some ergot.

So I had to love her after all.

She didn't wait at all to see if she really needed the ergot. She just took it, in a panic, in more than the dose he'd typed on the label, and I worried all night but it ended well.

I should have been able to untangle myself then, with everything ended well. But I got worse. In fact, no one before her had been so painful, despite her promising beginning. I noticed that her hair was silky and full of light. That her eyelids were tender and dark. Teeth white. Breasts uneven, one high, one low. Helter-skelter wiry black hairs on her legs, sharp as iron filings and so riotous in their growth that she had to shave them every day. She hated them, but I was touched.

She had no thoughts for the future, no fears, no plans. I saw that she would always be in trouble and that I would have to devote my life to getting her out. I would have to think up a way to make a living and seek training for it, seriously and single-mindedly, like a man, with no recreational elective courses like literature and bird identification.

I saw that her lips, which at first had seemed only small, were beautifully cut. My longing was for that mouth. I was to both sexes virgin and had modest goals.

Modest but overpowering. After many weeks, I decided to try.

I had no idea what to do, but need pro-

moted invention, sort of.

First I tried pretending that I was having slight nightmares, hoping she would fling herself on me to comfort me. Maybe she didn't even hear me — I kept my little whimpers low, just right for her, three feet above me, to hear. She may have actually been asleep for all I know. Sleeping was so inconceivable to me that I always assumed she wasn't. I would lie there under her, looking at the sag her sweet bottom made. There was light from the fire-escape door.

Maybe the reason the armed forces don't want my kind around is essentially benevolent and for our own sakes; living in that kind of intimacy would probably kill you after awhile.

Next I talked of kissing, enthusiastically, until she said I must be a sex fiend. That hurt me and I retreated. Avoided her.

A few days later, she came looking for me. I was ironing in the basement. Alone. "I'm sorry I said that," she said, "but you did talk funny."

"I meant I wanted to kiss you," I said.

She drew back.

"Don't be like that," I said. "A person can't tell you anything."

"It's like — queer."

"Yes, I'm queer about you."

"Well, I like you, but not like that."

"Okay, okay," I growled, all hurt pride, in full gallop back to my shell. But then I realized that Patty needed time. The necessary thing, I realized, was to endure remaining vulnerable while Patty's imagination worked on her feeling for me and made her ready.

So I laughed no phony roar, and told no tale of man and engagement and was left with nothing to say or do. I just ironed away, trying to think up something pleasant.

My silence bothered Patty. "Are you mad at me?" she asked.

"No. Oh, no. I love you," I said, and smiled a perfectly real smile.

From then on I sought in all my contacts with her to show her my tenderness, and my respect for her refusal, and my ungoatish readiness in case she should change her mind.

In a mere week or so, this wise policy bore fruit. Patty suggested that we get a hotel room together for the weekend. She wanted a tub bath, she said. She was tired of showers. And to get drunk without being seen, and to sleep late on Sunday. What she wanted, I knew, was to be mine. I made the

hotel reservation, very happy.

We brought whiskey and brandy and bath things — oil, salts, capsules — and went to the hotel. The desk clerk hesitated to let us have the room, despite my reservation, when he saw we were Waves, but when we assured him we wouldn't have men up he said, reluctantly, "All right."

I felt so confident, patient, loving, tender, gentle, not in the least in a hurry. We drew a bath and put some of everything into it. How it foamed. The tub was big. "Room for two," Patty said. I climbed in behind her and held her gently between my legs without pressing. I kept my hands off her, out of delicacy, not to rush. Looked at her lovely skin, loved her. Spend my life taking care of her, loving her, touching that lovely skin.

We dried ourselves. We went to bed. I rolled over and laid my face against her throat and kissed her there. "I love you," I said.

"I like you, but I don't love you," she said.

"Yes you do. You love me and I love you." Kissing along her throat towards her ear.

"Stop it," she said.

I didn't believe a word of it. I reached her ear and caught the lobe.

"If you don't stop it, I'm going back to the base."

Shocked at last, "Would you really?"

"Yes, I would."

So I got up and broke the seal on the brandy and had a drink. It tasted awful. I was a modest drinker then. I read the label on the bottle for a while, and then the Gideon Bible for a while. There was a good line in it: "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick."

Patty was lying there with her back to me, utterly covered. I went to bed carefully, not to touch her. Very far from her. A double bed can be as wide as the sky, I found out that night.

Then across all that space came her foot seeking mine. I thought she was torturing me again. I had never reached my foot across a double bed and I didn't know that it can mean only, let's make up. I took my foot away. I suppose sooner or later we slept.

We went back to the base the next day. We were out of money, and tried to sell the unopened whiskey to a cab driver but he didn't want it, so I smuggled it into the base in my coat sleeve.

I worked very hard at not loving her. I got engaged to an old boyfriend by mail. I told Patty she wasn't as beautiful as Ingrid Bergman and couldn't possibly be a movie star. I took up with other people, safe from loving them because I loved her. I drank a shot of the whiskey every day. There was no trouble about that, so I guess nobody important smelled me. I wouldn't go out picking up sailors any more, with her or anyone else. I stayed in and read.

Patty got new buddies. One Saturday night she phoned me. She was at a party, she said, and I should come. She and her new buddies had found these terrific sailors and were having this terrific party, too good to miss. She was giggling full tilt. "I'll come," I said.

I dressed. Stood in the rain for the bus. Found the hotel. Bore the knowing looks from the desk, went up. Patty was on the bed, undressed only to her slip, with a small adolescent sailor. Her buddies and their sailors were necking and giggling all around. Stewed, of course, the lot of them. Laughing repeatedly at one repeated joke the adolescent sailor made: "Pretty soon we'll all be pushing up daisies," and the joke part was when he wet his forefinger and pushed upward with it.

I felt very old, sober, dull, serious, stodgy, and forlorn. I had no place there and no intention except to keep Patty from needing more ergot. She consented to get dressed and come with me.

It was late and we were the only women on the bus. I leaned my head against the window and contemplated the fact that I was the only one on the bus Patty would have had any moral hesitation about going to bed with. Fortunately I was young and therefore mostly unborn myself, and I didn't make a sight of myself by weeping. I felt it as a bitterness, not yet unbearable, that adolescent sailors and aspiring firemen and every other lout that came down the pike had a natural right to her while my honorable protecting love was officially a disease.

The adolescent sailor phoned me for weeks, trying for a date. So I must assume that I didn't act as prison-matronly and forbidding as I felt. I told him no, I never swiped my friends' dates.

Patty and I got shipped to a new base. We were just about useless to any base we were assigned to, so we got shipped around whenever there was any shipping. Actually this time a great batch of us went, so many

the train didn't want to spare the room to accommodate us properly, and some of us had to double up.

The officer assigned Patty and me to share a berth, because we were sitting together, and I could hardly wait. Then there we were, side by side in a lower berth with the curtains closed, a snug little world. I was by the window, she on the edge. Carefully we didn't touch each other. She whispered that the Navy was stingy to jam us up like this. She whispered that she had the curse and her belly hurt. "Put your hands on it, like a hot-water bottle," I said.

"How?" she said, and though it was self-evident I was glad to show her.

"Like this," I said, laying my hand on her belly to warm it. "See how warm?"

But she threw my hand off like it was some huge bug. So much for that. I turned my back to her and raised the window shade a crack, and looked out all night, concentrating on not touching her, not letting one cell of my body touch her.

We settled in at our new base. She needed me, until she got acquainted, so I broke down and went drinking with her again. One night we were at an Aloha-type, pseudo-Hawaiian, bamboo-wall place drinking everything on the list, one of each, for the experience, not to be narrow.

I got so wrapped up in the drinking and looking at her and trying to explain to her that she led me on and raised my hopes and then dashed them and how cruel that was, that I forgot that we were there to pick up men. It was completely amazing to me to feel a big hand on my shoulder and hear a man say, "What are you *talking* about?" I came tumbling down out of our privacy, but I lit on my feet. He was a Navy flyer, and he had an identical friend with him.

"About men, what else?" I said, with a big hello smile. Patty was moving over to let the friend sit beside her. My hero slid in by me. I made conversation. He gazed at me with conventional lust. I didn't dare look at Patty for awhile, so I gazed back at him. I had to look someplace. Then out of the corner of my eye I saw that Patty was kissing her Navy flyer.

"She's *kissing* him," I said to mine.

"Of course," he said, and covered my mouth with his. It didn't matter. I wonder if he wanted to, or if he was in love with his friend and trying to hide it.

Fortunately they had no ambulance and no place to take us, so they walked us to our bus stop and that was that. It was very

late. Patty's flyer held her against him and lifted her buttocks with his hands and kissed her. I wouldn't kiss mine anymore. I just hung onto the bus stop sign and said I was drunk and where was the lousy bus?

Next morning, she had a mighty hang-over. For some reason, I didn't. A premonition of what a heroic drinker I had it in me to become? She vomited and vomited. I'd read somewhere that tomato juice was curative, so I got on the station bus and went to Ship's Service and bought her a paper-cupful. She drank it and vomited it up.

Later in the day she felt a little better. I was on my bunk eating crackers and she came out of the shower and lay down beside me and asked for some. I fed them to her. I couldn't believe her mouth could still be so beautiful.

"You're getting crumbs on my face," she said.

"It's in the nature of crackers," I said.

"You got them there, you get them off," she said.

I brushed at her face with my hand.

"Not that way," she whispered. It took a few seconds to work out an alternative, too late, because as I leaned to nibble the crumbs off she rolled away.

She was discharged while I still had time left on my hitch. As the time for her to leave approached, I took to weeping steadily and helplessly whenever I had a moment to myself. I could pull right up when anyone was around, and let down like a conditioned dog when the time was right.

The night before Patty was to leave, she asked for her hair curlers back. "But you don't use them," I said. "You don't even like them."

"They're mine."

"Let me buy them from you."

But she wouldn't. Maybe she was afraid I'd set them in the center of a little shrine. Maybe I would have. To soothe me for the loss of them, she put my hair up with bobbypins. I was too distraught to enjoy the process.

She was to leave while I was at work, at ten in the morning. I worked up a satisfactory lie for my officer, that I had to catch this lot of girls before they left because one of them owed me five dollars. He was so touched that he assigned a car to take me.

Her group left the barracks a few minutes after I got there. She wasn't alone for a second, so I went down to the lounge to wait for her to go by. When she did, I

looked at her, but she didn't look back.

I got discharged. I went home to wait for September, the new academic year. While I was waiting around, I got a letter from Patty. It said, "I think I love you, the same way you love me. I think I did all along."

I could say that the reason I didn't rush to Patty's side on receiving her letter was that she was 3,000 miles away, or that I recalled her tendency to be provocative and then when I responded run from me. But the fact is that I never once considered going to her. It just didn't occur to me. I wrote her a sad letter, very cautious and

noncommittal because I remembered what happened to the letters poor Stephen wrote in *The Well of Loneliness*. Also I honorably burned Patty's letter so it could never fall into malicious hands.

(Isabel Miller, author of *A PLACE FOR US*, is, under her own name, an established novelist. She lives in New York City, is happily married, and she and her friend share their home with cats and astrology and a ouija board. *THE LADDER* is honored to present her story, "Hope Deferred".)

Poetry

4 POEMS

By Margaret Elliott

Registered Republican

You will stack me with the Congressional Record
To look at later
And when I am no longer current and vital
You will read my futile pages
And shrug your shoulders.

Unfamiliar

Sinking finally toward sleep
At two or three o'clock
All those nights
I invited the beautiful ghosts
One at a time
And turning to each with perfect
Words of love
My lips parted
To form beloved names
Cried only to the phantom in my arms
Who are you?

By Default

The bewildered truck driver with hairy arms
Ignored my black pullover shirt and jeans
And bought a round of beer for me because
I was the only female in the place.
Thank you.

Invitation

You younger one
lying on your plaid
bedspread in your
dormitory room
dreaming over your books
of breasts and arms
you have not known
you wonder if you will know

You quiet one
standing in the doorway
your first apartment
tidy behind you
ready for company
you know not to expect

You night walker
passing under the streetlight
in your khaki shirt
flinching at a drift of
laughter at your back
hoping no one but someone
will notice

Come to the bar tonight
I will be there

SIX HAIKU by Kate McColl

in candlelight again
making love my shadow
falls across your face.

coming in from winter
I warm my cold hands
between your full thighs.

one rough plam brushed against
a full nipple firm
hips stirred against the heat.

a light touch of hands
around her yielding waist
she turns with a soft sigh.

our brows have furrowed
worrying and warring
away the years in love.

pleasure in a glance
seeing her across the park
feeding the pigeons.

A Summer Place

Sand and sun cry warmly
Against all my flesh;
The ocean fights the dawn.
There's cry,
"Surf's up!"
But, ah,
What sky
Has breathed so bluely
On my hands
That I could forget
The mountains of my lands?
I watch,
Daily,
The salt forms wash
Upon my feet;
Yet I do not find it necessary
To defeat
A sting-ray or a man-of-war
Nor settle my space-ship
On a star.
I only ask
That jelly-fish
Might fewer abide
In little coves
Where I am wont to hide.

Carol Sale

lovesong

sweet music prowls through the darkness
a soft-furred animal tender and warm
becoming a part of our minds
a tender part of our flesh and moving
in us a hot sweet liquid in the
sensitive dark shouting with life

see the wind in the curtains beloved
in a moment before my whisper
is done there it glides onto your skin
a silken garment of the night
smell the wind and the new rain
in its infinite sweetness

a fingertip traces the fragile sculpture
of cheek and bone and lips trace again
the trembling sacred path
hearts swelling and moving with love
like a growing neverborn child in the
music of the mystic night

a kiss that begins with the sunset
and endures through the dawning
retreating into itself in sleepy morning softness
ecstasy prolonged into pain and pain
so deep it is joy love to love
in the deepest of ways

a song to sing in the fury of youth
to warm an old heart in december days
i throw away my self and become
only response to you
in the smiles of a summer night
along the edge of eternity

Karen Larsen

Aftermath of a Banquet

There was an urgency in our love making that cold night,
Fleeing the subtle horror we had seen and felt,
Seeking refuge in each other's bodies.
Not playful or leisurely, but strong and intense,
Not talking or teasing, but with deep moans and heavy breathing
and legs and arms and bellies sweating on that cold night.

I watched as the moon washed your throat with silver light
And you came to me, head thrown back,
angry laughter echoing in your voice.

Carrie Dawson

Sand Treasure

A pebble, a stone, a shell chosen lovingly
As we talked about sharing before we knew, really,
how much we had to share.
Sand treasure: left behind to rest and wear
after — who knows how many — years of shaping
by the restless, ever-returning sea.

You captured it casually.
Still talking — "Oh, this is a pretty one" —
You fingered its contours gently
and placed it in the palm of my hand.

Now, still warm from the polisher's wheel and the summer sun
It must be given back to wear
nestled among the lovely, sweet curves of your breast
A safe harbor for this curving, shaded sea traveller,
This errant piece of shell,
This holder of our dreams our laughter and our love.

Carrie Dawson

Concurrence

Several years ago
Several hundred years ago
Someone looked levelly at me and said,
"If anyone were to seduce you,
it would have to be with words and music."
I laughed uneasily.

Now, centuries later
You are here,
Writing wondrous lyrics for the antic melody in my heart.
Again I laugh joyfully.

Carrie Dawson

Prodigy

Sharp, tender eyes, bright like mahogany beads,
Your mind is as efficient as a well-serviced computer.
Feed in a topic, out clicks an opinion on the missile crisis,
Broadway nudity, or the latest trend in educating the
psychologically depressed.
How do you stay so polished in your head when litter gathers
around you like lint under a bed?
Filthy, decaying sneakers and frazzled jeans with smudges from
checking the oil in the Pontiac, dog hairs, dog-eared books,
crumpled leather purse, and always the milk shake cup,
half-empty and spotted down the side, leaving a ring
wherever you rest it.
You can look dogmas in the face and shrug off inhibitions
that took me ten years to resolve.
You walked through my life with a graceful authority
and left a milk ring in my bed.

Carla

Busy Day

The day has escaped and fled
Hidden among dallies and distractions,
Untouched by my urgent need to leave an impress.
(We need a pound of coffee, some catsup and soap
The mail's here; so is Jimmy and the rain)
I've kicked the clutter of living from room to room
And hardly had time to think of you.

Carrie Dawson

Gentle Gymnast

Your smile touches my face
And I, warmed, stretch and laze
in that gentle, sensuous sun.

Your hand caresses mine
And I, singing silently, leap and arch
Doing giant swings on the jet trails
in your turquoise skies.

Carrie Dawson

Hm-m-m?

The chastity belt was invented
To protect the wallet.
Victorian butch, what are you
Worried about?

Flicka Moore

Personal File

by Carla

The Lesbian situation is a problem of heterosexuals as much (more, I think) as it is a problem of homosexuals. The losers in this life are those who — for any reason, close themselves off from others.

I don't feel downtrodden as a woman and I think it's a stupid simplification to group all women as "the oppressed sex." Certainly there are limitations— some of them unjust — that society places on women, but men have limitations, too. True, I have lived a limited, sheltered, provincial life. I've never had to compete with men in business and all that sort of thing. You'd be right to say I don't feel oppressed because I conform . . . out of laziness, partially, and also out of self-deception. I tell myself that I am content because by accepted standards of our society I have every reason to be content. (Sounds terribly typical, doesn't it?) Perhaps in a world needing direction and order, contentment is the worst kind of cop-out? I don't know. Self-pity seems equally destructive.

Homosexuals, Blacks, Jews, American Indians, Viet-Nameese . . . all the persecuted peoples of the world . . . represent a common sickness in society. It seems meaningless to isolate one group as the most oppressed, when so many suffer. But these groups form only a symptom of the sickness rather than being the disease itself. The disease is self-interest to the extent that social interest is lost. The disease is unconcern for others and a lack of responsibility. And the disease is complicated by an inflexible attitude toward inevitable change.

In my opinion, the most stupid attitude of all is, "This is the way we've always done it, so it must be right." Patterns and attitudes that remain inflexible in this changing world breed a destructive kind of ignorance. There are far too many vital concerns in this world to get hung-up on details of personal taste. The whole silly bag of sexual oppression — having to wear clothes on the beach, parents getting up-tight about pornography, worrying about the female-male identity projection — is archaic and regrettable. There's no reason, especially with the pill, for not allowing complete sexual freedom. (Except some people don't know how to limit their freedoms with

respect for others).

Sometimes I'd agree with you that a brand on the forehead of Lesbians would be useful, but only so we could get together. (And obvious characteristics don't assure togetherness, as the Black community can attest). With people who are seriously committed to Lesbian interests, one can feel free to claim Lesbian inclinations; but most people I know just wouldn't understand. I think this is mostly their problem, not mine, and I'm not willing to risk my privacy by making declarations about my private interests. On the other hand, public opinion can sometimes be altered by people who dare to be different without being too outrageous. It's a problem to know where personal security should end and social responsibility should begin.

I grew up in a household of women — mother, two aunts, grandmother, maid — and a father. I liked my daddy best of the lot perhaps because he was the most child-like. Daddy and I were guests in the home. The women ran things, made the decisions, and made sure Daddy and I had whatever we needed or wanted, demanding only that we respond with respect and gratitude. We lived in a small town and my father had his own business. He seemed to enjoy his work and he ran it without assistance from the family females, but at home he never challenged the opinions of the women. Their deference toward him, their respect for him as man of the household, seemed entirely a matter of their own choosing. Perhaps my view of the household was a protected one. Perhaps beneath the atmosphere of contentment there brewed a turmoil of male-female conflicts that I was never led to imagine . . . but as far as I can tell, mine was a peaceful home and the members of my family were adjusted to their various roles.

My mother was far more opinionated than my father. She had a more liberal education (he had been to private schools) and she paid more attention to the world. Usually her ideas influenced the rest of the family as far as politics, religion, education and so forth were concerned. The people who visited the house were her friends and always women. My father was pleasant but

never aggressively sociable. He entered the world to make a living. At home he rested, listened to music, kept the accounts for his business.

My mother tells me that I enjoyed dressing pretty when I was a very little girl, but as far back as I can recall, my favorite clothes were blue jeans. Our neighborhood was full of boys. Football, wrestling, bicycling were my favorite activities. I had little patience with the one other girl on my block. She had a small, frivolous dog. I had a boxer. She played the violin. I played cops and robbers. Nevertheless, as we grew older, we became good friends. We both liked to read and we'd go to the library together. Patsy was the only girl I recall liking at all during my childhood, with the exception of cousins. She was popular and I fitted in with the group of girls who liked her, but none of them were my friends.

The spring that I was thirteen, Sylvia moved to town. She was my age and she was immediately disliked by all the girls because she had the body of a 16-year-old. Boys liked her. I wasn't fond of her at first, not until my interest in the socially oppressed was aroused. Unbelievably cruel girls at a school dance got into a fight with her. I wasn't involved, but I was touched. We had several classes together and we became friendly. She frequently went home with me after school. During the following summer we became close friends, intimate friends, and for the first time I began to realize that becoming a woman was something exciting and much better than being "one of the guys." I loved Sylvia dearly. I talked about it with my mother and she was understanding, never discouraging of the relationship. Sylvia often spent the night with me. Mother left us alone.

Sylvia and I didn't go to the same school the next year and we gradually drifted apart. There seemed to be no reason, beyond that of circumstance, that we no longer saw each other. My only other friendship during high school years that approached such intensity was with a boy who had been my friend and neighbor since birth. We sometimes dated others, but we sensed that we belonged together. We knew each other as thoroughly as people can and we were alike in many ways. Neither of us liked to be around a lot of people. When we went to dances or parties, we could be alone in a noisy crowd. Roy had a womanly sensitivity. I sometimes felt that I was the

more masculine of the two of us, though not in appearance. As a teenager, I was no longer the least bit athletic. Roy participated in all sports and was well accepted by the boys. We went to college, became engaged, accepted without question the expectation of marrying. Then we began to express differences. He was strict about his personal behavior — no smoking, no alcohol, no fast girls — and he was rather dictatorial about mine. I couldn't accept all of his puritanical ideas. It was to the credit of our similar backgrounds that I could tolerate his attitudes for so long and convince myself that he was right. He reflected the morals of our upbringing. In sentimental novels, it is the male who is the aggressor. Not so in our case. I was a liberated female. We decided to go our separate ways.

In college I met girls who were Lesbians. I was always attracted to people who were different. I was interested and curious, but never sexually involved with any girls. I was disturbed when a girl whom everyone seemed to respect had some trouble with a chemistry teacher, a woman, and both were dismissed for their homosexual involvement. I read everything I could find about homosexuality. A friend gave me a copy of Frank Caprio's *Female Homosexuality*, which she laughingly called her "bedroom bible." At that time I was terribly infatuated with a man who lived in town and attended evening classes on campus. He was a brilliant student and we had exciting arguments. My interest in him probably inhibited a more active interest in women. My room-mate and I were close friends, sometimes affectionate, but not consciously aware of any physical attraction. We kidded about it: "Kiss me goodbye, Precious," we'd say if there was anybody around to laugh at it; but otherwise we had a completely conventional relationship.

My friendship with Jay, the man from town, was better than conventional. I went to his apartment, checking out of the dorm for the weekends. A couple of times we went on trips together. I was fascinated with him in every way. He repeatedly talked about marriage, but I didn't take him seriously because he was such a recluse. He wanted a warm body, not a person. All our discussions ended in his completely discounting my viewpoint. I didn't mind this so much because I was bullheaded enough to value my own ideas in the face of any

opposition, but he gradually admitted that he didn't even like to argue with me about our ideas, and he refused to do so. He had financial difficulties but he wasted money on me. I would have preferred that he had shared his intellect. This is as close as I have ever come to feeling "oppressed." It frustrated me that he wouldn't share any of his problems with me, and I got tired of being a warm body for him. We never saw each other after the end of that school year.

After graduating from college, I worked for a year, then realized how much I missed family life. Maybe I was wanting to recreate my childhood which had seemed such an untroubled, easy time. I had always felt independent, but I liked someone to wait on me. I didn't enjoy independence from effortless security. I'd been thoroughly indoctrinated with the idea of fulfillment one gets from giving birth to one's own child, and I wanted to have that experience. I felt comfortable with Ward, who wanted to marry me. We married. We have two children.

The only thought I gave to homosexuality during the first year of my marriage was when a neighbor of mine asked me casually if I knew any "queers." I supposed she was kidding and we laughed about it. A few months later she was taken to the hospital with an emotional breakdown after a suicide attempt. Her mother-in-law had found her at home in bed with a woman. The scene had been ugly and cruel. I hadn't known this woman well, but the cruelty of the incident chilled me.

Before marrying I had shared an apartment with another girl who worked with me. This girl, Liz, is still one of my best friends. She married a cousin of Ward's and we four see each other often.

Soon after I started working, I met Alice. She was married with three children at that time. Sometimes she came to the apartment and cooked supper for Liz and me. Liz is extremely conventional and thought Alice was too outrageous. Alice lived by compulsions. She liked extremes in clothes, food and physical exertion. I was sometimes delighted with her and often annoyed. She invited me to dinner at her house at least twice a week, we went shopping together, and she tried to interest me in several volunteer jobs that didn't interest me at all. We were emotional opposites. We liked each other and found each other exhausting. After I married, I seldom saw her until my first baby was

born. I was confined to bed for several weeks and she came to be my self-appointed nurse. She bathed me, prepared meals, even scrubbed floors although I employed a maid at the time. I was fond of her and grateful, but her dominating generosity became oppressive. I was a spoiled child and used to attention, but Alice was overbearing. She turned away visitors. She took over the care of the baby and almost refused to let me touch my child. Finally I was very rude to her and asked her to stop coming. At that time I couldn't have been honest enough with myself to admit that I not only enjoyed her affections but I anticipated them. I later realized that one reason she bothered me was because I was so attracted to her. I don't think I realized it at the time, but I was far more attracted to her than I was to my husband. We visited only occasionally for the next several years.

My feelings for Ward have always been practical and lacking in emotional involvement. At the time I married him, I was disillusioned with emotional involvement, and felt that it had little to do with the sort of stability that marriage requires. I had wanted children and felt that he would be a good father. Sex was less than satisfactory (a fault that I recognize as my own because he is patient and kind and foolishly faithful), but it did produce the children I wanted.

Shortly after my first child was born, I met Leslie, my age, unmarried, who quickly became a close friend. The matter of sex didn't come up during the few months we knew each other. She moved away and we corresponded. When she first confided to me that she was homosexual, I was surprised and frankly unbelieving. It made no difference in my feelings for her, but she had been so different from other girls I'd known who had Lesbian interests. She was modest and quietly intellectual. We became closer through writing to each other, telling each other things about ourselves that we probably wouldn't have said face to face. I began reading things about homosexuality again, renewing curiosity. My interest in women began to overwhelm me. I dreamed about experiences with women. I became obsessed with the hope of seeing Leslie again, but she was already on her way to England. Sometimes I felt as if I wanted to make love to every woman on the street. I had another child and spent a week in the maternity wing surrounded by women,

most of whom I watched intently and visualized in imaginary intimacies.

When my second child was a baby, we acquired neighbors who had a 17-year-old daughter, their only child. Sally visited me often, fascinated by the baby. We enjoyed each other's company. She came to babysit for us and I was sorry to go out with my husband and would have preferred to have stayed home with her. The difference in our ages was nominal. She was a vivacious, active child, more mature in many ways than I was. If I showed irritation at the tedium of housekeeping, she would encourage my outside interests. If I complained about Ward's club night, she would come over and we'd read together, lying across the floor, occasionally being affectionate. Casual affection for her sometimes amounted to torturing desire for me. If I couldn't have written to Leslie about my feelings, I might not have been able to control them. I certainly didn't want to exploit my curiosity at the expense of a charming child. Sally's father was an officer at a local military installation and he was transferred out of the state within the year.

Just before our neighbors moved, I met Alan, who was attending a local college. He was much like my friend Roy and we shared many interests. He began visiting me on the nights that Ward went to his club meetings. He played the piano. We talked. I was glad when he suggested going to bed. Roy was astonished at my agreeability, but I had another surprise for him. I knew Ward would be hurt to know about Roy, but I felt I had to be honest with him, so I told him. I was surprised by his tolerance. He even seemed a little excited about it and seemed to enjoy me more. He carefully avoided Alan, but out of politeness rather than disinterest. When I suggested that he should try to find a girl to enjoy, he wasn't interested. When Alan found out that Ward knew about the affair, Alan was enraged and embarrassed. I thought he'd never come back, but he did. I was convenient, and we sincerely liked each other. We talked a lot, like therapy. He confessed to having had homosexual experiences. I told him about Leslie and how much I want to see her, and his conclusion was that I had turned to fantasy to satisfy unfulfilled desires. He offered to introduce me to some homosexual women he knew at college. I was reluctant. I suppose I was still running away from myself. I was sometimes

obsessed by the desire to be held by a woman. I wanted a mother — not my mother the way she had become, but as she was to me as a child, a warm womb. I wanted to be free from the responsibilities of producing male pleasure. It seemed that I hadn't really enjoyed the men I'd used. I felt ashamed about the affair with Alan. Maybe I had hoped Ward would throw me out. His kindness was unbearable.

Alan had lived in NYC and had contacts there. He gave me the address of *The Ladder* and I began to subscribe. I sent the copies on to Leslie, who had also known nothing about it before, though she had been through several Lesbian affairs. Through *The Ladder*, she read of *Arena Three*, and when she moved to London she became acquainted with some of the women there.

Alice and I still occasionally saw each other, but it had been over a year since I'd seen her when she made a fateful call. I invited her to visit. I placed copies of *The Ladder* where she'd pick them up, knowing she notices everything, hoping that it would initiate a conversation where I could make a tentative confession of interest and ask her if she knew anyone of that inclination. Alice knows everybody and I trusted her discretion. She saw the magazine and was interested, not in the magazine, but in my reason for having it. We talked, we touched, and we fell into each others' arms for a few minutes and then she quickly left in embarrassment. I felt as if I'd split with anticipation, but neither of us contacted the other for almost a week. To avoid going crazy, I told Alan about it. He warned me that the whole thing sounded like bad news. He offered again to introduce me to a college girl he knew, but I was wary of the chance of getting even slightly involved with someone who would have no reason to be discreet. He disagreed with me and felt that a younger person would be more discreet. Alan hadn't met Alice and he had no basis to judge her except for my excited appraisal, so I discounted his opinion. I finally went to see her. She was only slightly ill at ease at first, then, as I appeared interested in continuing the progress toward intimacy, she angrily rejected my interest and gave me a lecture on the evils of promiscuity. I was confused and hurt. Alan again soothed me and again advised me that Alice sounded flaky. I was inclined to agree, but was disappointed. In a few days she came to my house unexpectedly. Her whole

attitude was changed again. She made no reference to the angry lecture. She was tender and irresistibly exciting. We forgot all inhibitions. What an unforgettable thrill! Woman, woman, woman! my bones cried. For the first time in my life, my body felt thoroughly pleased.

The ecstasy didn't last long, but it was worth it. Alice proved to be as dominating in bed as she was everywhere else. She wanted always to be the aggressor, never receptive; but I was as aggressive as she was and we fought. Fighting was what she liked. She didn't want any sentimentality. She feared kindness. I wanted to be gentle, but she wouldn't allow it. I wanted her to be gentle, but she frequently wasn't. It was the beginning of a tumultuous relationship. Alan and I stopped our bedroom activities. Ward was dismayed by my sudden and absolute distaste for him. Alice and I were not really friends anymore, but partners in mutual exploitation. During the summer we went to the beach for several weekends together. The only place we communicated was in bed. We merely tolerated each other between intimacies. Sometimes I felt she was worse than any man I'd known, but the reality remained that she was a woman and I loved it. She enjoyed crowds of people, drinking late at night in dark bars, while I like to sit by the water, alone, or with someone who can be quiet. She was never quiet. She even chattered in bed. She continually annoyed me, disgusted me, offended all my sensibilities, and she completely fascinated me. I was in a constant state of excitement when we were together. I decided to go back to work. Some mornings she would come to my house after Ward had gone to work but an hour or so before I left, and the demands she made, I was powerless to refuse. I would write to Leslie and try to tell her what was happening to me. She would be very understanding and make me feel like I was still a human. I longed to see Leslie again. I felt that she was partially responsible for my involvement with Alice, and I was grateful to her for that, even though the involvement was often frustrating. I liked to imagine how it might have been with Leslie rather than Alice. In such dreaming I found the only resistance I could ever feel to the persistence of Alice's desires.

That fall, Alice announced that she was pregnant. She had, by then, four children and had gone through two rather alarming

miscarriages. She was torn between a sort of animal passion to produce offspring and a terror of the possible consequences of her pregnancy. The doctor told her to stay in bed most of the time, a direction she refused to acknowledge. She was involved in countless responsibilities. She had agreed to head a division of the community welfare drive that fall. She didn't know how to slow down. Whenever I saw her, she was frantic with tensions, which she transferred to me. We relaxed together. Although she insisted that my devotion to her was one of her most unbearable liabilities, she relied on me and I encouraged it. My maternal instincts are as strong as my desires to be mothered. She had been a person who avoided close attachments. She had countless acquaintances but no close friends. I capitalized on that and enjoyed her dependence on me. I was dependent on her too.

Alice was in and out of the hospital all spring. She was afraid of her pregnancy because it presented the risk of complete confinement, but she wanted the baby. I stayed with her much of the time she had to be in the hospital. The baby was born in late May, fat and healthy. She was in her glory as a nursing mother. She felt it was the one thing she could do to perfection.

Alice was such a sensual person, she had little interest in using her mind except to keep her body coordinated. I tried to interest her in reading when she was in the hospital. She like Joyce's Molly Bloom, probably because she shared some of her voluptuousness, but she had no patience for the world of ideas. "Culture is for children," she'd advise me, "Adults have to educate themselves by living. There's no room in my life for relics." Still, she could be a thoughtful person. She could make incisive criticisms of things I'd read to her. She criticized people, too, with devastating accuracy. She was alert to other people's sensitivities, could set other people at ease if she tried. On the other hand, when she closed her mind there was no wedging it open. She was appalled by *The Ladder* and the whole idea of DOB. She craved sex for the desire of bare response, not pleasure. She punished herself with self-condemnation. She had lived with a woman for some time after her first marriage, which had been unsuccessful. She had heterosexual experiences. She used all these experiences to build up a tremendous burden of guilt. She condemned all her

desires. She told me seriously more than once that she would beat her children to keep them from becoming homosexual (as if that would help). She must have realized that she used her sexual promiscuity to beat herself. She had gone to psychiatrists and hated them. I introduced her to my minister who counsels all kinds of troubled people. She liked him and he seemed to help her. He is the sort who listens and doesn't bother with advice or judgements. I had tried to get her to talk with me, but she always protested that it was impossible to talk to me because I loved her and couldn't see her problems honestly. Maybe she was right. I'm too given to advice. She talked to the minister and drew her own conclusions.

She decided she should leave town and start a new life somewhere. She first begged me to go with her, promising that she'd try to be more gentle with me and more tolerant of my non-physical interests. I knew she wasn't serious about leaving her family. She's devoted to her children and in spite of their unbalanced mother, they are miraculously well-adjusted. I couldn't have left my family either, although I admit the idea was tempting.

Her husband had tried to interest her in moving East a year before. His brother wanted him to go into business with him. She wouldn't listen to him at the time, but she began to realize that it might be a good idea. I was disturbed at the idea of her leaving, especially as she insisted that one reason she had to get away was to get away from me. She said she had become an emotional cripple and was too dependent on me. I would have thought it was the other way around, that I was too dependent on her, but perhaps we were both right. Her husband was pleased to be able to make the plans he had hoped for, and they were ready to leave by the middle of summer. 1967 was a year of saturation followed by emptiness for me. I felt sure I'd never see her again.

I missed her terribly. I missed her with relief because she was such a demanding person. I missed her with anguish because she had filled so much of my life and I loved her.

Leslie was still in Europe and had been urging me to meet her and travel with her for a summer. We had known each other so little, but had written for six years. In some ways, I felt that I knew her better than the people I had lived with. I spent the summer of 1968 with her. Meeting again was like

arriving home after a journey through the perils of darkness. We seemed to belong together, more than anyone I've ever known. Our last week together was filled with tears. She wanted me to stay, but I had to return to my family. I urged her to come back to the USA, but she prefers Europe and intends to stay there. She promised to come to the USA this summer, but she has changed her plans. I hope to meet her again next summer. Perhaps someday we can live together permanently, but for now we have separating commitments.

Alice has come back to visit (her husband's family lives here) several times and we see each other. She seems a bit more relaxed, but she is generally the same active person. She tells me that she has "reformed," but I'm not sure how she means that. Her promiscuity was not her problem. Her attitude about herself was what needed reforming. She seems to have made progress. When she comes, we are affectionate but no longer intimate. We are better friends than before. Neither of us feels that sickening dependence on the other.

I don't feel dependent on anyone at present. In one sense I feel more free than I ever have been — free of compelling obsessions. In another sense, I feel committed to Leslie and would like to be with her, but there's no use brooding over the impossible. I can laugh at and dismiss sexual fidelity, but marital fidelity is something more. I love my family and my children need me.

During the winter at a women's club meeting, where I'm program chairman, I showed a few copies of *The Ladder* and told something about the DOB. The girls are tolerant of my controversial interests. They were more polite and interested in the lesbian literature than they were receptive to my suggestion, the month before, to patronize a new book store in a local black ghetto. Perhaps one or two of them will remember that they can come to me if they need information.

Leslie doesn't understand how I can continue living with my family, away from her. I don't see why she can't come to live with me, or at least visit. If she were here, I might have more courage about facing up to what I am, or at least to what I want to be. Without her, I patch up the shreds of my conventional life and try to appear pleased with it.

The Last Leaf

by O'Henry

William Sydney Porter (O'Henry), one of the geniuses of the short story form and master of the surprise ending, wrote "The Last Leaf" in 1906. It was first published that year in *McCLURE MAGAZINE*; and in 1907 it was included in his collection, *THE TRIMMED LAMP*, N.Y., McClure, Phillips and Co. Later it appeared in *COLLECTED STORIES*, N.Y., Doubleday, 1913; and it has been frequently anthologized. It is particularly pleasant to present it here, as it has never been listed in any known bibliography, as a variant story . . . though it is sad to face the fact that no one is ever going to be able to find all of them.)

In a little district west of Washington Square the streets have run crazy and broken themselves into small strips called "places." These "places" make strange angles and curves. One street crosses itself a time or two. An artist once discovered a valuable possibility in this street. Suppose a collector with a bill for paints, paper and canvas should, in traversing this route, suddenly meet himself coming back, without a cent having been paid on account!

So, to quaint old Greenwich Village the art people soon came prowling, hunting for

north windows and eighteenth-century gables and Dutch attics and low rents. Then they imported some pewter mugs and a chafing dish or two from Sixth Avenue and became a "colony."

At the top of a squatty, three-story brick Sue and Johnsy had their studio. "Johnsy" was familiar for Joanna. One was from Maine, the other from California. They had met at the *table d'hôte* of an Eighth Street "Delmonico's" and found their tastes in art, chicory salad and bishop sleeves so congenial that the joint studio resulted.

That was in May. In November a cold unseen stranger, whom the doctors called Pneumonia, stalked about the colony, touching one here and there with his icy fingers. Over on the east side this ravager strode boldly, smiting his victims by scores, but his feet trod slowly through the maze of the narrow and moss-grown "places."

Mr. Pneumonia was not what you would call a chivalric old gentleman. A mite of a little woman with blood thinned by California zephyrs was hardly fair game for the red-fisted, short-breathed old duffer. But Johnsy he smote; and she lay, scarcely moving, on her painted iron bedstead, looking through the small Dutch window-panes at the blank side of the next brick house.

One morning the busy doctor invited Sue into the hallway with a shaggy, gray eyebrow.

"She has one chance in — let us say,

ten," he said, as he shook down the mercury in his clinical thermometer. "And that chance is for her to want to live. This way people have of lining up on the side of the undertaker makes the entire pharmacopeia look silly. Your little lady has made up her mind that she's not going to get well. Has she anything on her mind?"

"She — she wanted to paint the Bay of Naples some day," said Sue.

"Paint? — bosh! Has she anything on her mind worth thinking about twice

— a man for instance?"

"A man?" said Sue, with a jew's-harp twang in her voice. "Is a man worth — but, no, doctor; there is nothing of the kind."

"Well, it is the weakness, then," said the doctor. "I will do all that science, so far as it may filter through my efforts, can accomplish. But whenever my patient begins to count the carriages in her funeral procession, I subtract 50 per cent from the

curative power of medicines. If you will get her to ask one question about the new winter styles in cloak sleeves, I will promise you a one-in-five chance for her instead of one in ten."

After the doctor had gone, Sue went into the workroom and cried a Japanese napkin to a pulp. Then she swaggered into Johnsy's room with her drawing board, whistling ragtime.

Johnsy lay, scarcely making a ripple under the bedclothes, with her face toward the window. Sue stopped whistling, thinking she was asleep.

She arranged her board and began a pen-and-ink drawing to illustrate a magazine story. Young artists must pave their way to Art by drawing pictures for magazine stories that young authors write to pave their way to Literature.

As Sue was sketching a pair of elegant horse-show riding trousers and a monocle on the figure of the hero, an Idaho cowboy, she heard a low sound, several times repeated. She went quickly to the bedside.

Johnsy's eyes were open wide. She was looking out the window and counting — counting backward.

"Twelve," she said, and a little later "eleven"; and then "ten," and "nine"; and then "eight" and "seven" almost together.

Sue looked solicitously out the window. What was there to count? There was only a bare, dreary yard to be seen, and the blank side of the brick house twenty feet away. An old, old ivy vine, gnarled and decayed at the roots, climbed half way up the brick wall. The cold breath of autumn had stricken its leaves from the vine until its skeleton branches hung, almost bare, to the crumbling bricks.

"What is it, dear?" asked Sue.

"Six," said Johnsy, in almost a whisper. "They're falling faster now. Three days ago there were almost a hundred. It made my head ache to count them. But now it's easy. There goes another one. There are only five left now."

"Five what, dear? Tell your Sudie."

"Leaves. On the ivy vine. When the last one falls I must go, too. I've known that for three days. Didn't the doctor tell you?"

"Oh, I never heard of such nonsense," complained Sue, with magnificent scorn. "What have old ivy leaves to do with your getting well? And you used to love that vine so, you naughty girl. Don't be a goosey. Why the doctor told me this morning that your chances for getting well real soon were

— let's see exactly what he said — he said the chances were ten to one! Why, that's almost as good a chance as we have in New York when we ride on the street cars or walk past a new building. Try to take some broth now, and let Sudie go back to her drawing, so she can sell the editor with it, and buy port wine for her sick child and pork chops for her greedy self."

"You needn't get any more wine," said Johnsy, keeping her eyes fixed out the window. "There goes another. No, I don't want any broth. That leaves just four. I want to see the last one fall before it gets dark. Then I'll go, too."

"Johnsy, dear," said Sue, bending over her, "will you promise me to keep your eyes closed and not look out the window until I am done working? I must hand those drawings in by tomorrow. I need the light, or I would draw the shade down."

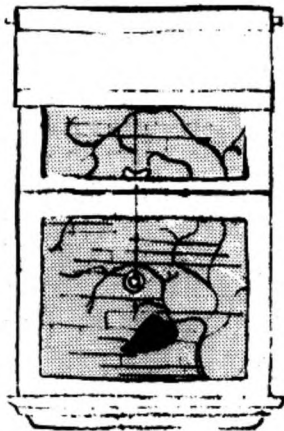
"Couldn't you draw in the other room?" asked Johnsy, coldly.

"I'd rather be here by you," said Sue. "Besides, I don't want you to keep looking at those silly ivy leaves."

"Tell me as soon as you have finished," said Johnsy, closing her eyes and lying white and still as a fallen statue, "because I want to see the last one fall. I'm tired of waiting. I'm tired of thinking. I want to turn loose my hold on everything, and go sailing down, down, just like one of those poor, tired leaves."

"Try to sleep," said Sue. "I must call Behrman up to be my model for the old hermit miner. I'll not be gone a minute. Don't try to move 'til I come back."

Old Behrman was a painter who lived on the ground floor beneath them. He was past sixty and had a Michael Angelo's Moses beard curling down from the head of a satyr along the body of an imp. Behrman was a failure in art. Forty years he had wielded the brush without getting near enough to touch the hem of his Mistress's robe. He had been always about to paint a masterpiece but had never yet begun it. For several years he had painted nothing except now and then a daub in the line of commerce or advertising. He earned a little by serving as a model to those young artists in the colony who could not pay the price of a professional. He drank gin to excess and still talked of his coming masterpiece. For the rest he was a fierce little old man who scoffed terribly at softness in anyone and who regarded himself as especial mastiff-in-waiting to protect the two young



artists in the studio above.

Sue found Behrman smelling strongly of juniper berries in his dimly lighted den below. In one corner was a blank canvas on an easel that had been waiting there for twenty-five years to receive the first line of the masterpiece. She told him of Johnsy's fancy, and how she feared she would, indeed, light and fragile as a leaf herself, float away when her slight hold upon the world grew weaker.

Old Behrman, with his red eyes plainly streaming, shouted his contempt and derision for such idiotic imaginings.

"What!" he cried. "Are there people in the world with the foolishness to die because leaves drop off a confounded vine? I have not heard of such a thing! No, I will not pose as a model for your fool hermit-dunderhead. Why do you allow such silly cowardice to come in the likes of her? Ah, that poor little Miss Johnsy."

"She is very ill and weak," said Sue, "and the fever has left her mind morbid and full of strange fancies. Very well, Mr. Behrman, if you do not care to pose for me, you needn't. But I think you are a horrid old — old flibbertigibbet."

"You are just like a woman!" yelled Behrman. "Who said I will not pose? Go on. I will come with you. For half an hour I have been trying to say that I am ready to pose. God! This is not any place for one as good as Miss Johnsy to lie sick. Some day I will paint a masterpiece and we will all go away. God, yes!"

Johnsy was sleeping when they went upstairs. Sue pulled the shade down to the window sill and motioned Behrman into the other room. In there they peered out the window fearfully at the ivy vine. Then they looked at each other for a moment without speaking. A persistent, cold rain was falling, mingled with snow. Behrman, in his old blue shirt, took his seat as the hermit-miner on an upturned kettle for a rock.

When Sue awoke from an hour's sleep the next morning, she found Johnsy with dull, wide-open eyes staring at the drawn green shade.

"Pull it up. I want to see," she ordered in a whisper.

Wearily Sue obeyed.

But, lo, after the beating rain and fierce gusts of wind that had endured through the livelong night, there yet stood out against the brick wall one ivy leaf. It was the last on the vine. Still dark green near its stem,

but with its serrated edges tinted with the yellow of dissolution and decay, it hung bravely from a branch some twenty feet above the ground.

"It is the last one," said Johnsy. "I thought it would surely fall during the night. I heard the wind. It will fall today, and I shall die at the same time."

"Dear, dear!" said Sue, leaning her worn face down to the pillow, "think of me, if you won't think of yourself. What would I do?"

But Johnsy did not answer. The loneliest thing in all the world is a soul when it is making ready to go on its mysterious, far journey. The fancy seemed to possess her more strongly as one by one the ties that bound her to friendship and to earth were loosed.

The day wore away, and even through the twilight they could see the lone ivy leaf clinging to its stem against the wall. And then, with the coming of the night the north wind was again loosed, while the rain still beat against the windows and pattered down from the low Dutch eaves.

When it was light enough Johnsy, the merciless, commanded that the shade be raised.

The ivy leaf was still there.

Johnsy lay for a long time looking at it. And then she called to Sue, who was stirring her chicken broth over the gas stove.

"I've been a bad girl, Sudie," said Johnsy. "Something has made that last leaf stay there to show me how wicked I was. It is a sin to want to die. You may bring me a little broth now, and some milk with a little port in it, and — no, bring me a hand mirror first, and then pack some pillows about me, and I will sit up and watch you cook."

An hour later she said "Sudie, some day I hope to paint the Bay of Naples."

The doctor came in the afternoon, and Sue had an excuse to go into the hallway as he left.

"Even chances," said the doctor, taking Sue's thin, shaking hand in his. "With good nursing you'll win. And now I must see another case I have downstairs. Behrman, his name is — some kind of an artist, I believe. Pneumonia, too. He is an old, weak man; and the attack is acute. There is no hope for him, but he goes to the hospital today to be made more comfortable."

The next day the doctor said to Sue, "She's out of danger. You've won. Nutrition and care now — that's all."

And that afternoon Sue came to the bed where Johnsy lay, contentedly knitting a very blue and very useless woolen shoulder scarf, and put one arm around her, pillows and all.

"I have something to tell you, white mouse," she said. "Mr. Behrman died of pneumonia today in the hospital. He was ill only two days. The janitor found him on the morning of the first day in his room downstairs helpless with pain. His shoes and clothing were wet through and icy cold.

LESBIANA

by Gene Damon

The world of the small time boxing bum is beautifully drawn in Leonard Gardner's fine first novel, *FAT CITY*, N.Y., Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1969. The inhabitants of Stockton, California, may not care for that titular designation; but the novel is very good in its muscular way. Dual heroes carry the action . . . washed up Billy Tully and the kid, Ernie Munger. The Lesbian episode is quite good . . . Ernie, on his way home to Stockton, is given a ride by a couple. He repays their generosity by attempting a pass at the one sitting next to him . . . whereupon he finds himself back on the road, thumbing. (Humorous note from the department of mild prejudice . . . two major media reviewers of this book speak of the women as "vindictive Lesbians" . . . so I expected to find this the case . . . I was actually surprised to find out the women play no part beyond trying to help the boy . . . and are thanked by his bad manners and bad taste . . . can't win.)

The rights and meanings of love, as viewed through a literary kaleidoscope, confuse rather and amuse in William Bryant's technically brilliant novel, *ALMOST*, N.Y., McGraw-Hill, 1969. This is, in theory, the love affair of Augusta and Byron, aged 60 and 40. Left at that, given the nature and style of the milieu involved, Mr. Bryant might well have written a much more successful novel. He has chosen, however, to play with the words and the effects and to allow the reader to catch him watching himself being very clever (which he is), and it more or less ruins the book. Completeists must have because it is a major Lesbian study . . . impatient readers should skip it.

The September 28, 1969, issue of *THE*

They couldn't imagine where he had been on such a dreadful night. And then they found a lantern, still lighted, and a ladder that had been dragged from its place, and some scattered brushes, and a palette with green and yellow colors mixed on it, and — look out the window, dear, at the last ivy leaf on the wall. Didn't you wonder why it never fluttered or moved when the wind blew? Ah, darling, it's Behrman's masterpiece — he painted it there the night that the last leaf fell."

NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW featured a long article on Natalie Clifford Barney called "In Search of Miss Barney." It is a very good article, though it does not contain anything that has not appeared in print in various books which dealt in part with her. However, the audience reached is what counts in media, and the audience here is enormous. Barney is, by virtue of her longevity, that last remaining living great of the wide circle of literary and artistic genius in Paris from 1890 to World War I. Those of us fortunate to live so long can see the unveiling of the Renee Vivien fantastic saved papers (due to be released from the Bibliotheque Nationale in 2000).

On the reprint beat, Jeanne Rejaunier's idiotic *THE BEAUTY TRAP* is out from Pocket Books, 1970. This was last year's almost unbelievable low point in hardback . . . isn't even good enough for paperback . . . lord knows why they get published.

On the other hand, Shirley Schoonover's provocative and unusual *SAM'S SONG* deserves its paperback incarnation from Pyramid, 1970. This is worth reading, though you will probably also be left wondering just exactly what Sam's problem is . . . poor girl.

Best paperback reprint news is John O'Hara's marvelous collection, *AND OTHER STORIES*, Bantam, 1970. This one has three items . . . the very very major and lovely short novel, *A FEW TRIPS AND SOME POETRY*, the minor but effective "We'll Have Fun," and the overly accurate "A Broken Giraffe." You won't spend money much less foolishly . . . not to be missed.

Incidentally, those of you who keep complaining that we haven't produced the promised supplement to the bibliography,

THE LESBIAN IN LITERATURE, which ended as far as copyright is concerned with the year 1966, will have to keep on complaining. We do not have the money to produce it. Anyone who has a spare \$600 or so is welcome to volunteer the funds.

A kind reader has pointed out the generally pertinent tone of the poetry of May Swenson, a lady I have previously neglected. I have done some checking and find that, indeed, she has done a large number of variant poems . . . and a few specifically Lesbian. They are, however, spread out a good deal through her books and require some looking. Poetry lovers will enjoy the search. Her critically honored collection, *A CAGE OF SPINES*, N.Y., Rinehart, 1958, contains two of special note, "Zambesi and Ranee" and "Two-Part Pear Able." *HALF SUN HALF SLEEP*, N.Y., Scribner's, 1957, contains "Four-Word Lines" and "Untitled." The anthology, *POETS OF TODAY*, N.Y., Scribner's, 1954, contains "Evolution" and "Mornings Innocent." There are also various others in these collections and in *POEMS TO SOLVE*, N.Y., Scribner's, 1966, and *TO MIX WITH TIME*, N.Y., Scribner's, 1963. (If one of you with time to do so checks her out more thoroughly and can add to my information, share it with me that I might share it with all of you.)

Jeannie Sakol's *GUMDROP, GUMDROP, LET DOWN YOUR HAIR*, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, 1969, is simply impossible, and it should be a very good book. Some of the ingredients are wonderful fun. Take one bright and brittle type who has a couple of husbands and 500 lovers in her background . . . put her to work for the nastiest con man on earth as co-keeper of the second Twiggy, a 6' tall moron from the deep south whose penchant for gumdrops supplied her first name . . . and you ought to have at least possible humor . . . Add the complications of a pregnancy that might destroy the image of Gumdrop, some hen party conversation that seems accurate enough, a harrowing abortion scene (maybe not necessary in the future when the laws get changed) and a badly timed and unfunny ending, and the whole thing falls apart. One major Lesbian character is not likely to be chosen as example of the year. This will hit paperback soon, almost guaranteed.

INTERSECTIONS, by Graham Ward, London, London, Hutchinson, 1969, is an-

other of the youthful pretentious studies of a group of homosexuals living in a rooming house in London. There is an odd juxtaposition of some rather poignant and interesting life stories with some oddball humor that doesn't belong. Also, there is an undertone of ill humor on the part of the author, which hurts the tone. One of the characters is named Travis Turnabout, a Lesbian is called Sobriety Hareaway, and the local church is St. Vitus and All Archangels . . . major male, minor female . . . mostly a bore . . . Mr. Ward may have talent . . . hard to tell from this example.

The social and moral history of any given country, city, town, period, place is more likely to be found in the novels than in the text books. Ironically, neither historians, sociologists, nor the general public seem to realize this. *MILE HIGH*, by Richard Condon, N.Y., Dial, 1969, and London, Heinemann, 1969, is an excellent example. Mr. Condon uses that lovely form, the family chronicle, and, in the doing, manages to include how it was to be an Irish immigrant in N.Y.C. in the late 1800's, working the docks, the bars and whorehouses, how it was to be a lawyer, banker, gambling house proprietor (second generation by this time), what prohibition was really like, and the third generation life of an architect with liberal tendencies. It is a blockbuster novel, big and rich and full of the things that lead to deplorable blarney and bad reviews . . . but it will and should be widely read. It will undoubtedly make a movie, and a grand one. Our interest here is in the second generation Edward Courance West, said to be the man who invented prohibition. His life is governed rather firmly by the childhood experience of having a Lesbian for a mother. Only about 3 chapters of this nearly 400 page work are pertinent . . . but if you simply enjoy reading a novel with a plot (for a change . . .) try this.

The literary magazine *TRACE*, published by Villiers Publications in the U.S. and Great Britain, has listed *THE LADDER* in its "chronicle" section in issue Number 70. *TRACE* is a triannual magazine of more than 200 pages per issue, featuring quality fiction, poetry and critical articles, and serving the writing community through its continual listing of sources and outlets for writers. This same issue contained two poems, one of them very pertinent, by Lynn Strongin, the young American poet reviewed in the October/November, 1969, issue of *THE LADDER*. *TRACE* costs \$5 a

year, and it is also likely to be available in your nearest large public or college or university library.

It never fails . . . if I decide the reviews are skimpy and don't bother to check out a suspicious title before it hits paperback, I miss a big one. *THE MADONNA COMPLEX*, by Norman Bogner, N.Y., Coward, McCann, 1968, Dell, 1969, is a good example. This novel has been done a gross injustice by the reviewers, for it is a beautifully written story of sexual and mental obsession to the point of personal destruction. Teddy is a millionaire, long alone in the world except for a beloved grown son and a faceless succession of women. He falls in love with a translator at the United Nations, Barbara Hickman, and in his efforts to win her love, destroys himself. Barbara, fascinating and very very well drawn, is deeply disturbed by the death of her college friend, Laura. It is transparent to all but Teddy that Laura is everything and all to Barbara. The means that Teddy uses to find out what is disturbing Barbara, and the side effects created by his successful invasion of her mind, make up the story. Mr. Bogner's lyrical recreation of Barbara's analytical revelations of her time with Laura are must reading. The suspense in this is excellent, and in the most complimentary sense this would be a very good movie.

Through the years various serious researchers have made use of voluntary DOB subjects in projects. Some of you will recall the name Manfred F. DeMartino as among these researchers. His book, *THE NEW FEMALE SEXUALITY*, N.Y., Julian Press, 1969, has almost nothing to do with the primary research material that DOB provided to him, but the book does make use of one small aspect of the questionnaires and does credit DOB extensively for having helped him. The book purports to prove that women are sexier than ever . . . To some extent we might be grateful that he found so little usable material among the Lesbian subjects of the study.

The off-Broadway hit, *TO BE YOUNG, GIFTED AND BLACK*, is the life of Lorraine Hansberry. The material used in that hit and supplementary writings are presented in the book of the same title, edited and adapted by Robert Nemiroff, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, 1969. A great deal has been written about this woman . . . but most of what she was, is and did in the historical sense can be summed up by saying that in March, 1959,

her first play, *A RAISIN IN THE SUN*, opened on Broadway. A couple of months later the New York Drama Critics gave her the most coveted honor a playwright can get . . . she became the YOUNGEST person, the fifth WOMAN, and the ONLY BLACK WRITER to win the Circle Award for "The Best Play of the Year." She was 29 . . . she was really beautiful, bursting with talent, grace, charm . . . everything . . . and when she was 34 she died of cancer . . . and that's that. By now you are wondering, those of you new to these pages, what this is all about. Simple answer . . . Lorraine Hansberry was an early N.Y. DOB member, and she contributed to this magazine in its very earliest years. Her letter essays on the nature of being homosexual, on prejudice in general, and the handicap of being female in a male ordered world are as fresh and real today as they were when they appeared in the May, 1957, and August, 1957, issues of *THE LADDER*.

When Robert Nemiroff, Lorraine Hansberry's caucasian husband, asked help of readers everywhere in the *NEW YORK TIMES* "capsule ads" for material about and by Miss Hansberry, I wrote to him and offered her *LADDER* material. I did not receive, nor did I expect to receive, a reply. However, this book, *TO BE YOUNG, GIFTED AND BLACK*, should be read by all of you . . . if for nothing more than this woman's extraordinary courage in all situations, her lack of pretension, all the graces we so frequently do not find today. She considered herself, at least toward the end of her life, as a revolutionary in her primary causal behalf . . . as a black woman. Even in that she retains the wry humor . . . asking herself if, indeed, she would really want to be cold to be out . . . to be alone. The book is jammed with excellent photographs, a number of them by a photographer called "Gin Briggs," whoever he or she may be . . . the talent is tremendous; this person saw and was able to record the inner woman . . . it is a lovely lovely book, full of stirring moments . . . and if you can read it and not weep and cheer alternately, you are, as is Dr. Seuss's "grinch," fitted with a heart two sizes too small.

Edward Sagarin is a real name . . . one can afford to use a real name . . . one's own real name . . . when one writes very nasty things about homosexuals. One can do this without fear. It's simple . . . the man is safe because a code of honor developed by all of the homosexual organizations at all times

protects him from being identified. We cannot tell you who Edward Sagarin is, because that is his real name . . . so he is only, for those of you who do not know better, Edward Sagarin; but it is, in a sense, a name to remember. It won't achieve the same fame as single names, such as Judas . . . but then, Judas had a last name too. So a man named Edward Sagarin has written a book called *ODD MAN IN*, published in Chicago by Quadrangle Books, 1969. It has an interesting subtitle . . . "Societies of Deviants in America." Mr. Sagarin ranges far and wide . . . he has a lot of nasty things to say about almost every group of people in this country (or any country) who, for one reason or another, cannot say anything much back . . . most of them are too busy fighting for their lives, and that doesn't leave a lot of time for war games. Mr. Sagarin is on record now as disapproving of Alcoholics Anonymous, Gamblers Anonymous, Addicts Anonymous (and all similar related groups) . . . he dislikes Synanon, he is apparently averse to convicts in or out of jail, mental patients, dwarfs (why, for any reasonable reason, inflict any more pain on the physically handicapped???) . . . and, oh yes, he has a lot of nasty, and in many cases wholly untrue, things to say about homosexual organizations and organizations for transvestites and transsexuals. His homosexual targets are *MATTACHINE SOCIETY OF NEW YORK* and *DOB*. He is more malevolent about the male organization. You ask, why does Mr. Sagarin dislike *MATTACHINE* and *DOB*? Simple . . . they are working to win civil rights for an underprivileged minority . . . and what does he suggest instead . . . that all homosexuals and Lesbians are sick sick sick and we should not band together to further our rights, but surrender gracefully into the arms of Albert Ellis and become promiscuous bisexuals . . . which is normal and healthy and good for us. He doesn't say what dwarfs should do, nor addicts, nor any of the other groups he discusses, because the poor guy has worked this whole book out to blast the homosexual groups . . . now why would he do that? Could it be that he is one of those homosexuals who has surrendered gracefully into the "sick sick sick" school? Right. But I assure you that if you knew who this man really is . . . then you'd wonder, really wonder, for he is as responsible for the founding of the homophile movement as any other single man . . . he would have to be considered a primary causal factor. We are

sorry, truly sorry, that he got so lost . . . we hope he does not suffer too much.

Another pair of reprints . . . neither book worth having in hardback or paperback, really. *THE MALEDICTION*, by Julian Claman, is out from Bantam, 1970, and Calder Willingham's impossible *PROVIDENCE ISLAND* is out from Dell, 1970.

One for collectors only or those who enjoy autobiography for its own fun . . . Graham Green's wry and witty *TRAVELS WITH MY AUNT*, London, The Bodley Head, 1969, is, on its own, fun to read. For our interest here, he includes some witty descriptions of a local Lesbian pub and minor bits and pieces . . .

And for the record keepers, Anais Nin's third autobiographical volume is out . . . *THE DIARY OF ANAIS NIN*, V. 3, 1939 - 1944, N.Y., Harcourt, Brace and World, 1969. It is not pertinent enough to record statistically, but those of you who read volume one and two and who enjoy her literary circle will want to read this as well.

Lytton Strachey, charter member of the literary giants Bloomsbury group, left an unpublished novella, *ERMYNTRUDE AND ESMERALDA*, originally written in 1913 and written to and for Strachey's great love of that time, artist Henry Lamb. It has been published in London and N.Y., by Anthony Blond and Stein and Day respectively, in 1969; and we who adore every scrap of this famous coterie owe these publishers a debt of gratitude. The novella is delightful, the tongue in cheek imaginary correspondence of two Victorian girls who are determined to discover just what it is that grownups do, and what this has to do with marriage and babies. Among other things they learn is that men can and do love other men, and that "one pussy might pout for another." The \$5.95 tariff on this might discourage you, but large libraries will have it if it does. Fun for all and essential to collectors.

CASSANDRA, by William Bentley Edmonds, N.Y., Arcadian, 1969, is a bit special. Properly subtitled "The Ballad of a Dancer" and more properly described as having not only been written by Mr. Edmonds, but illustrated by him, *CASSANDRA* is a story in verse . . . a narrative poem of epic length about an ugly, beautiful girl. The duckling tales are always popular and rightly so. A remarkably discerning editor of Arcadian brought the book to my attention because of a sequence which involved the restorative care of

Cassandra by Miranda, a Lesbian nurse. Though the actual section of the novel involving Miranda is short and muted, the one full page illustration of Miranda speaks for itself and makes the book worthwhile on that count alone. Arcadian Editions come from Box 2994, Grand Central Station

Building, Lexington Avenue at 45 Street, N.Y., N.Y. 10017, and the cost is \$2.95. It's hardly likely to be in book stores. The poetry is not remarkable . . . the art work is, and the idea is wonderful. Sentimentalists will join me in enjoying this.

Cross Currents

REFORM THE LAWS FIRST: Norman Stevas, well known British MP spoke to a small group at the University of San Francisco on October 13, 1969 according to *THE SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE*, October 14, 1969, urging that all laws against homosexual behavior between consenting adults be stricken from the books. Humorously, Yorke Henderson, writing in the *SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER* on November 9, 1969 points out that the law change in England has had no benefits whatsoever for the garden variety homosexual, who is "as susceptible to blackmail as ever". He goes on to point out that though the laws have been changed, people haven't and popular attitudes ranging from "distaste to abhorrence" remain "as firmly entrenched" as ever.

MORE ANN LANDERS, November, 1969. Ann got a sharp reply from a Lesbian who, with her friend, has raised a large foster family, in reply to her rather casual remark to the Chicago couple that they needn't buy near a school. Many have written about Ann's increasing liberal views . . . we thank her for them.

TIME COVER STORY EXPLOSION: The October 31, 1969 issue of *TIME* MAGAZINE contained a general overview of the homophile movement in the U.S. (as reported in the December/January *CROSS CURRENTS*) and the fall out was enormous. *TIME*, November 14 and 21 carried letters from all over the world, both pro and con, well worth looking up if you missed them. (Rita Laporte's letter in that same issue brought a flood of mail from all over the world addressed simply to *DOB*, San Francisco . . . it's getting delivered . . . the blessings of fame.)

OVERLOOKED: *McCALL'S MAGAZINE*, November, 1969. Dr. Gerald Caplan, writing in this issue, gave an excellent brief coverage of Lesbianism. Very free of the mumbo-jumbo we are accustomed to finding in popular media. A good one to use

with parents . . .

BRICKBATS TO MARY HAWORTH: *WASHINGTON POST*, November, 1969. Writing to a woman who bitterly regrets having given up a happy Lesbian affair for marriage and a family, Miss Haworth refers to the October 31 *TIME* article and says: "And in my view, the most concise common sense evaluation of the nature of the difficulty was given by panelist Dr. Charles Socarides . . ." need we quote more?? (A formal letter of protest went to Miss Haworth. We do this automatically when anything appears in the media that is inaccurate on the subject . . . send us your clippings . . . good and bad, please.)

CHRISTIAN CENTURY, NOVEMBER 5, 1969 had a brief writeup on the *NACHO* conference in Kansas City this last summer . . . unusual place to find it and the report was reasonable if not particularly enlightening to the lay reader.

MIXED NOTICES TO DR. JOYCE BROTHERS: *GOOD HOUSEKEEPING*, November, 1969. In an article, very provocatively entitled "Women Who Don't Need Men", Dr. Brothers (who rose to fame, you may recall, via the TV game shows of yesteryear) says some very nice things about women, and some very nasty things about Lesbians. She does repeat the old and often verified fact that studies show married men are our happiest citizens (why not, with a full time unpaid slave?), and that single women (which would include all of us, however unsingle we might really be) are the next happiest (again, why not, with a full time partner of equal footing?) followed by married women (and no one has to explain what makes them unhappy).

VITAL NEWS FOR TEACHERS: *SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE*, November 21, 1969. The California Supreme Court ruled that a teacher in that state may not have his teaching credentials revoked simply for engaging in homosexual activity. Justice Mathew O. Tobriner wrote: "If the state

wants to take away a credential, it must show that the activity 'adversely affected' the teacher's 'future classroom performance and overall impact on his students'.

SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER GIVEN A GAY HALLOWEEN: Robert Patterson of the Examiner staff wrote a particularly malevolent and vicious attack on the homosexual community in San Francisco on October 25, 1969. On Halloween over 50 people picketed the Examiner offices, representing both COMMITTEE FOR HOMOSEXUAL FREEDOM and GAY LIBERATION FRONT, as well as other groups who were not formally part of the demonstration. The demonstration was necessary simply because the paper refused to print a retraction. The picketing was orderly and peaceful, at first, and then someone threw ink out of the windows of the building onto the picket line. Immediately thereafter the Tac Squad (there, but out of general area until the ink was tossed) moved in and broke the line up, literally and figuratively, with their clubs. Many were arrested on the charges that are usually later dropped or reduced and a number were seriously injured. Fall out was excellent and generally sympathetic press and radio and TV coverage. The message is as clear as it is distasteful, if you picket peacefully you may or may not get coverage. If your peaceful picket is made unpeaceful by others than your picket line, and your heads are broken, you'll get coverage. Must we bleed and go to jail for our rights? (Extensive coverage, of course, provided by the BERKELEY BARB and BERKELEY TRIBE on all of the more militant gay activities in the Northern California area.)

COME OUT OF THE CLOSET BEFORE THE DOOR IS NAILED SHUT: COME OUT, a newspaper by and for the gay community (New York City area) made its debut in November, 1969. First issue very uneven, but some of the articles excellent and well written. A particularly excellent feature article by Marty Stephan, "Bitch, Summer's Not Forever", should be must reading for all the old established organizations. . . . COME OUT can be obtained for \$6.50 a year, or 50 cents for a sample issue, from P.O. Box 92, Village Station, New York, N.Y., 10014. A child of the New York GAY LIBERATION FRONT, it is, however, a wholly separate entity, without any particular group identification. Martha Shelley, often seen in these pages, is one of COME OUT's writers.

PEOPLE, ETC. November, 1969. A syndicated questions and answers column from the Miami Herald's TROPIC MAGAZINE, appears in newspapers all over the U.S. They recently featured a silly short item about DOB which happily resulted in many inquiries from all over. Good, bad and indifferent, publicity "makes it".

RADICALS GAIN AT EASTERN HOMOPHILE CONFERENCE. Bob Martin, officially reporting the November 1 and 2, 1969 meeting of ERCHO (Eastern Regional Conference of Homophile Organizations) covers the various brou-ha-has that all conventions of all kinds are wont to have, and then explains that despite various radical resolutions passing, that conservatives won most of the election seats. Among the conservatives in office are Bobbi Simpson of New York City's WEST SIDE DISCUSSION GROUP, Barbara Gittings of Philadelphia's HAL, and Franklin Kameny of WASHINGTON D.C. MATTACHINE. (Signs of the times, less than ten years ago the latter two named would have been considered extremely radical . . . as some of you will recall.)

SWINGING SAN JOSE: SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER, November 25, 1969 and SAN JOSE MERCURY, same date. President Hobert Burns of San Jose State College got blasted by State College Trustee Dudley Swim for allowing the student newspaper to run an article on homosexuality. The article, "Campus Gay Liberation Front Begins Organizing at SJS" also enraged the infamous Max Rafferty, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, who asked President Burns if he were "running a cesspool up there" . . . None the less, a group is forming, and Dean of Students Robert Martin has said that the group would be recognized as a legitimate student organization if it followed lawful procedures for obtaining organizational status . . . (San Francisco's COUNCIL ON RELIGION AND THE HOMOSEXUAL sent Max Rafferty a telegram asking him to address their annual meeting on January 29, 1969!!!)

WHILE UP IN MERRY MINNESOTA: WASHINGTON POST, November 24, 1969. The University of Minnesota has recognized as a legitimate student organization a group calling itself FREE, the members are 75 homosexuals. FREE's advisor is 20 year old Miss Koreen Phelps. FREE has held a dance in the student union and plans regular activities.

ON THE LIFE STYLE OF THE HOMOSEXUAL: SYMPOSIUM, October 24-26, 1969. Another in the popular continuing symposiums sponsored by The Council on Religion and the Homosexual working with most of the homosexual groups in San Francisco was successfully held over this weekend. It seems probable that the altering of fixed ideas in the heterosexual minds participating is the most valuable result of these gatherings.

HOMOSEXUAL REVOLUTION: WASHINGTON POST, October 25, 1969. Nancy L. Ross, whose sentiments are often mentioned in this column, devoted a long article to the "revolution" with a few remarks about other homosexual and Lesbian activities around the country these days. Nothing new, but the publicity is good, and getting better.

CAVALIER MAGAZINE, December, 1969. Having just praised our publicity, we turn to a very silly and hashed-up article called "Gay Power: The Birth of the Pink Panthers", by Claudia Dreifus. It is an amazing combination of the very newest events in New York City together with a few statements that used to appear (erroneously) in the news back in 1956 and 1957. We find, for example, that Daughters of Bilitis is "a kind of ladies auxiliary" of Mattachine Society. In this case the implication is that it's an auxiliary of Mattachine Society of New York City. That's a neat trick considering how DOB pre-dates that group by several years.

KFOG-FM GRANTS EQUAL TIME: BERKELEY TRIBE, November 27, 1969. KFOG-FM's general manager, Robert Brokaw, offered air time to the militant Committee for Homosexual Freedom, after a threat to picket them was made by CHF. KFOG-FM aired an editorial branding homosexuals as "perverted", and soon regretted it.

WESTERN AIRLINES FIRED LESBIANS: BERKELEY TRIBE, November 27, 1969. Don Burton reports that famed attorney Melvin Belli is handling a case involving six women fired by Western Airlines for being Lesbians. No further details at this time . . . but before this column goes to press we may have more . . .

LOS ANGELES PROTEST: BERKELEY BARB, November 28, 1969. Led by Rev. Troy Perry of Metropolitan Community Church and Don Slater and James Colton of TANGENTS, over 100 homo-

sexuals and Lesbians marched through the downtown Los Angeles area on Sunday, November 15, 1969. In addition to protesting the unfair state laws, the group was objecting to recent heavy gay bar raids in Los Angeles. (The Barb and militant gay groups, however, feel that the ghetto bars are obstacles to freedom since they enforce isolation from the community at large.)

FEET FIRST: BERKELEY TRIBE, November 27, 1969. Gary Weinberg, 25, a senior at San Francisco State College wanted to fly Delta Airlines to Dallas, early in November, 1969. He was refused permission to board his plane for "unacceptable appearance and grooming". He was wearing a clean shirt, clean blue jeans, a blazer and sandals without socks. He was also wearing a button saying "Homosexuals For Peace". Delta gave Gary the excuse that his sandals without socks were the reason for barring him from the flight. A United Airlines agent told Gary it was probably the button. The ACLU handling the case for Gary are very excited about it . . . reason, the sandals . . . (Have you been in an airport lately? Many people with bare feet fly these days . . . we'd guess, too, that it was the button . . .)

MY HOME AND FAMILY, September, 1969. This astonishingly ordinary and conservative appearing British magazine (very very like magazines of the COSMOPOLITAN, WOMAN'S DAY, REDBOOK variety) published an excellent scientific approach article to Lesbianism by Dr. Hilary Worth, followed by "The Viewpoint of The Homosexual Woman" presented by England's Lorna Gulston in a general article called "The Well of Loneliness". Too bad about that title use, since that is hardly applicable today, but the article is among the very best ever done on Lesbians. We are left wondering if all British periodicals run as informative material with as little bias and if only many U.S. periodicals insist on the consistent mud-slinging, lies and lies.

THE LIBERATION OF WOMEN is a subject that seems to share the popularity spotlight these days with homosexual rights . . . magazines and newspapers run one or the other seemingly every issue . . . and often in the same issue. McCALL's MAGAZINE, October, 1969, ran a two-part article for and against women's rights (if you read only the headlines). The first section, "Yes", to the question "Is A Women's Revolution Really Possible?", was written by Leslie Aldridge Westoff, and it's not the best

of its kind by any criteria, but it repeats the basic points. The "No" side is contributed by famed sociologists John Gagnon and William Simon (who are more or less favorable to civil rights for homosexuals . . . which translates into "men" in most vocabularies and actions). Their "no", however, is based on practical difficulties and the usual argument that "liberating" women will take away the male ego. They offer no comment (in all fairness, how could they) about the fact that women are raised almost universally to give up their personhood about the time they enter their teens to prepare for their "role" in life.

THE NEW FEMINISTS: REVOLT AGAINST SEXISM. TIME MAGAZINE, November 21, 1969. Right on the heels of two articles on homosexuals that raised tempers and interest all over the country, TIME published an excellent article on Women's Liberation. Nothing new in this one, but a good historical survey and not too rampantly against.

PSYCHOLOGY TODAY, December, 1969. The editorial of this issue, signed by T. George Harris, features militant feminist Jo-Ann Gardner, physiological psychologist from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Miss Gardner, an active NOW leader, is newly head of the Association for Women Psychologists. This is worth looking up and reading.

WILLIAM RASPBERRY, Columnist for WASHINGTON POST in his December 7, 1969 "Potomac Watch" discusses the recent change in regulations in the Washington, D.C. police hiring. Formerly requiring college from female applicants and only high school from male applicants, this has now been changed to high school only for both sexes. On the other side (and we think wise) the height requirement for men and women has been equalized, with women required to be as tall as the minimum for males . . . Good.

LONDON, November 27, 1969. Women's Liberation Workshop of England booted during the crowning of Miss World, a blonde model from Vienna. Some 50 demonstrators handed out leaflets to the crowd of about 5,000 spectators protesting the degrading of women.

CHICAGO NOW LIBERATES A FAMOUS LOOP BAR: CHICAGO TODAY, November 21, 1969. Winifred Gandy, and six other members of Chicago's NOW chapter, entered Berghoff's Bar (an all-male stand-up bar) on November 20, 1969, and

were first refused service and then served. They went armed with the "no discrimination" clauses from the Illinois and Chicago statutes . . .

THE NEXT GREAT MOMENT IN HISTORY: VILLAGE VOICE, November 27, 1969. Vivian Gornick, writer, contributed the longest most detailed and excellent report on women's liberation yet to appear in print. It is almost as long as a short book, and is must reading. Very few libraries carry the VOICE, but sending \$1.00 to them at VILLAGE VOICE, SHERIDAN SQUARE, NEW YORK CITY, 10014 should get you a copy.

THE RAGE OF WOMEN, by Richard E. Farson, LOOK MAGAZINE, December 16, 1969, is also excellent, and in some ways, more truthful. Mr. Farson, of course, being a male, is in the ironic position of being able to publicly say the whole truth about women's liberation in a way many of the leaders in this movement are afraid to. Farson, a psychologist, is the author of statements quoted in the December/January CROSS CURRENTS, indicating that women who do not feel themselves oppressed are "part of the problem". He also feels (as expressed in this LOOK article and in FORBES MAGAZINE, August 1, 1969) that this revolution is well on its way and that women leading it will be out to get everyone (including women) who stand in its way. What is astonishing is that Dr. Farson welcomes, embraces wholly the idea of such a revolution and looks to it as the source of liberation for all men and women alike and the end of war, and a number of other things. He has convincing proofs of his statement as well, and this LOOK article is also a must. Unlike VILLAGE VOICE, this will be very easy to find in any library . . . do read it. Dr. Farson, by the way, is well aware of the Lesbian influence in this movement, and very very well aware that what people today envision as "sexual liberation" is unlikely to come to pass where women are concerned. He says: "Sexual liberation could mean something quite different, depending upon each woman's previous personal experiences. For some, liberation will be a freedom from sexual pressures and guilts. Sex for countless millions of women has been so full of pain and fear and shame and disappointment that their liberation may be to enjoy a non-sexual life. Others may tend toward Lesbianism or bisexuality. In any case, women are likely to become more domi-

nant and aggressive. And studies by Abraham Maslow show that dominant women, contrary to popular myth, enjoy sex more than submissive women".

DECEMBER 2, 1969: SAN FRANCISCO. On this date the Public Utilities Commission of the State of California found for the defendant, The Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company, in the suit brought by Council on Religion and the Homosexual, SIR, DOB and Tavern Guild, in their attempt to get "Homophile Organizations" as a separate listing in the yellow pages of the San Francisco telephone directory. Dissenting commissioners who filed dissents were Thomas Moran and A.W. Gatov. The latter considering the finding a travesty and stating that the case would not, in his opinion, stand judicial review. It is hoped this will be appealed, if such is possible in a case of this type.

THE WOMAN HOMOSEXUAL: MORE ASSERTIVE, LESS WILLING TO HIDE: NEW YORK TIMES, November 17, 1969. Enid Nemy's article, occupying virtually an entire page of the "food fashions family furnishings" section of the paper is an excellent examination of the New York DOB chapter, with some minor reference to the overall national activity of the organization. Lengthy quotations from various members of the group lend authenticity to the article . . . but there is an overly generous portion of the view of Dr. Charles Socarides, who is rapidly becoming the most active homosexual and Lesbian hater in the profession. Comments by Dr. Lawrence LeShan and his wife, Eda LeShan oppose Dr. Socarides, but he has made a name for himself in this field . . . by publicly endorsing the more vicious prejudices and lies. (Editor's Note: Those of you who kindly wrote and asked me why this article did not mention THE LADDER will be pleased to know that Mr. Nemy's original article was considerably longer and one of the "edited" sections contained mention of the magazine.) While this is not nearly as long as the San Francisco CHRONICLE series of last summer, nor as far reaching, it will be wanted by all of you who wrote for the CHRONICLE article. Remember that the NEW YORK TIMES is available in most large public libraries and almost all college and university libraries. AP picked this up and we have so far heard that the CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER has reprinted it (early in December, 1969).

MORE PUBLIC ENCOUNTERS: Rita

Laporte spoke to a Sociology class at FOOTHILL JUNIOR COLLEGE, October 30, 1969. This was a panel talk, with representatives of the male homosexual community and an expert on the law and the homosexual as well as Rita speaking for Lesbians. Panel moderator James F. McCausland III made a cash contribution to DOB at the end of the evening . . . nice.

BOSTON CHAPTER ON THE AIR, November 22, 1969. Three members of the new Boston group spoke for the Lesbian on Steve Frederick's Talk Show on Radio Station WMEX for 3 hours, from 11:00 PM to 2:00 AM. The Boston group was able to publicize their address a number of times, causing inquiries to pour in. Following this, the local periodical, BOSTON AFTER DARK ran an ad for the new chapter . . . which also helped.

A group of sociology students at SKYLINE COLLEGE in Pacifica, California, hosted a panel consisting of both male and female members of SIR, Rita Laporte for DOB, and a transsexual (male to female) on December 3, 1969. Usual question and answer session.

WIN MAGAZINE, November 15, 1969 contains 14 pages of essays exhorting homosexuals to join the radical new left. Articles by famous writers, including homosexual Paul Goodman, all favoring radical activity. However, these same writers make clear in the very body of their own texts that the homosexual is more likely to find acceptance from the so-called "square" society than from the revolutionaries . . . Why, one wonders, do they therefore expect homosexuals (or even want them) to join radical groups???

ANOTHER L.A. PROTEST: Earlier this issue we reported on the picket lines of November 15, 1969 in Los Angeles. THE LOS ANGELES ADVOCATE for January, 1970 (out early in December, 1969) reports that the TANGENTS GROUP (sometimes known also as Homosexual Information Center) picketed the LOS ANGELES TIMES on November 5, 1969 to protest the TIMES refusal to print the word, "homosexual", in any of its ads . . . Considering how often that word appears in the pages of every paper these days, it is an absurdity to refuse to use it in an ad. This will end, and probably soon.

CUTTING YOUR OWN THROAT: Matina Horner writing in PSYCHOLOGY TODAY, November, 1969, shows how women deliberately fail in achieve-

ment-oriented situations because they have been taught it isn't feminine to be brighter than the boy in the next chair.

THE RISE OF A NEW WOMEN'S MOVEMENT: RAMPARTS MAGAZINE, December, 1969. Another remarkably good and very angry-making article about the real problem of surviving as a woman in today's world, by Marlene Dixon, a professor of sociology at McGill University and an activist in Women's Liberation Movement.

THE BUDDHIST THIRD CLASS JUNKMAIL ORACLE, December, 1969. This, believe it or not is Cleveland, Ohio's underground newspaper, and surprisingly more literate and well put together than most of them. This issue includes a long letter about DOB, Cleveland Chapter, by Eve Devon, its president and founder. Eve tells us that they have had many new inquiries as a result of the publicity, which includes both the National address and the address of the Cleveland chapter. (Please note, all of you, that CLEVELAND CHAPTER is now chartered and listed with the fully active groups elsewhere in the magazine.)

THE POWER OF AN EDITOR: Herb Caen's Column, Nationally Syndicated, December, 1969. This small item appeared in Mr. Caen's column all over the country, read it and think about the implications:

"Such sentences as 'Police rounded up narcotics addicts, drunks, panhandlers, homosexuals and drifters' won't be seen again in the impudent N.Y. TIMES. 'Homosexual is no longer universally considered a term of opprobrium,' read an editor's memo to the staff."

Mr. Caen went on to poke fun at the memo and the idea behind it, but the point is clear, homosexual is not the loaded word it once was . . . and that's as big news as we have had the privilege of running lately . . . especially from the N.Y. TIMES.

IN THE PRESENCE OF MINE ENEMIES: SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, December 15, 1969. On December 14, 1969, Richard Daller, 32 year old Episcopal acolyte and lay reader greeted the several hundreds gathered at Grace Cathedral with an unscheduled five minute plea that "homosexuals be treated fairly among God's children". It may be a sign of the times that after the initial shock wore off, there were many obvious signs that the congregation approved of the proceedings . . . wonderful and amazing.

SEATTLE GROUP PUBLICITY: SEATTLE TIMES, December 9, 1969. Any publicity is considered good, but one could well imagine the article about DORIAN SOCIETY of Seattle was less than wholly pleasing to its 100 or so members. Writer Paul Henderson does bring out the civil rights aspects of the work, but the usual mish-mash of pseudo-crime connections is made and the usual complement of very nasty remarks included . . . But for that area, at least something, and therefore mildly welcome. One interesting point is that the Seattle people own their own meeting house . . . as does the PHOENIX group in Kansas City, Missouri. This is not the usual pattern, and while it has drawbacks, it should have virtues to outweigh them.

POOR PLANNING: We have noticed that the various newspapers around the country are following the lead of the major magazines and running articles on the new women's liberation movement in this country. However, we have also noticed that in most cases they are in the "women's pages" which were a source of irritation to women before the current movement, and must be doubly so now . . . A fairly good, but badly located series ran in the HOUSTON POST, December 18, 19 and 20, 1969.

LOOK MAGAZINE, January 13, 1970. An excellent and serious editorial, WHY WE NEED A WOMAN PRESIDENT IN 1976, by Gloria Steinem is a must for those of you who care . . . reasonable reasoning . . . when all else fails, maybe this will work.

NEW MAGAZINE: GAY, a bi-weekly magazine, published by Four Swords, Inc., in New York City, began publishing December 1, 1969. At press time we had seen the first three issues and are very impressed. So far GAY appears to be a middle-of-the-road commercial magazine, with only sufficient sensationalism to provide the revenue to keep it in print. Politically modest, and generally conservative, this looks like the New York City version of the successful LOS ANGELES ADVOCATE. Contents primarily for the male audience, but some things of interest to Lesbians. We wish it very well. We are often asked which magazines and newspapers to get to keep up with the national scene. Right now, in addition to THE LADDER, we recommend TANGENTS MAGAZINE out of Los Angeles, The Los Angeles ADVOCATE, COME OUT (for the radical view) and gladly add to this, GAY. San Francisco's

VECTOR (from Society for Individual Rights) is also excellent for the male audience in Northern California.

BOSTON DOB SPEAKS OUT: Special to THE LADDER, January, 1970. Two members of DOB Boston, Ann Haley and Marty Kelly, appeared on the Ed Miller Speak-Out Show on station WMAC-TV, Channel 7, Monday, December 29, 1969. The program, second in a series on homosexuality, engendered by the recent publicity in various magazines, aired from 11:30 AM to 12 Noon EST. Ann and Marty discussed DOB as an organization as well as the general topic of Lesbianism. Ed Miller, the show's host led the discussion and frequently expressed surprise that Lesbians were just as happy as heterosexuals. The address of Boston DOB was given on the air many times. Following the general discussion, the audience was invited to participate by calling and asking questions. The entire interview and question period was successful and serious, without flak and discord. The station has indicated intentions of doing a future hour-long special and invited the two women to return should this occur. Everyone connected with DOB should be grateful for this type of successful public confrontation. Education is the way, and the television media is a potent tool. (Boston DOB is now chartered, hoorah!!)

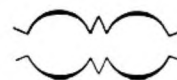
For some months a member of DOB's San Diego Chapter, who spent some years in England, has attempted to interest the English group, KENRIC, in writing something about their organization for publication in THE LADDER. We are often asked about other groups, especially those groups that restrict membership to women only. KENRIC, at BM/Kenric, London, W.C. 1, is such a group. Founded by a dissident group from ARENA 3 (originally a group called MINORITIES RESEARCH GROUP) about 3-4 years ago, KENRIC is a limited social organization with a program primarily directed toward its members and with very little public relations or educational activities. In November, 1969, the group claimed 355 members, which is a good increase over a first year figure of around 100. They issue a newsletter which discusses only events in the immediate past and events to take place in the future, ranging in areas of upper middle class interests. They do not publish a magazine. A prominent member of their group, Cynthia Reid, wrote a short sketch of the organization in the December, 1969 issue of MENSА BULLETIN (MENSА is a

private organization for people of high IQ).

MORE THAN EVER BEFORE IN HISTORY: January 15, 1970. As of this date, DOB has six chapters, with the two newest arrivals, Cleveland and Boston, achieving this status in January, 1970. Never before have we had this many fully active groups, and this is just the beginning. Chicago, which can be reached at P.O. Box 2043, Northlake, Illinois, 60164, is rapidly growing and has just issued its first newsletter; Denver, reachable at P.O. Box 9057, South Denver Station, Denver, Colorado, 80209 is younger and needs your help. If you live in the area, join up. The same goes for Portland, Oregon, their number is P.O. Box 8857, Portland, 97208. And we are happy to add to this the news that Reno, Nevada, at last has sufficient women to seriously begin working toward a chapter . . . they may be reached at P.O. Box 5025, Washington Station, Reno, Nevada, 89503. Those of you who live in or near Detroit may contact women there through P.O. Box 4490, Detroit, Michigan, 48228. **NEWS FROM DOWN UNDER:** Melbourne, Australia . . . A large number of women all over Australia have expressed interest in forming a DOB chapter in that country. Several women in the Melbourne area have already begun this work, and you can reach them by writing to G.P.O. Box 2131 T, MELBOURNE, 3001, AUSTRALIA.

MORE LOVE FOR WILLIE L. BROWN, JR., SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, December 17, 1969. San Francisco Democrat, Willie Brown, whose bill to remove criminal laws concerning homosexuals was defeated in the 1969 regular session, has announced he will introduce the Bill all over again. We greatly admire him for his efforts and urge all citizens in the area applicable to show your strong support for this courageous man. He has no ax to grind . . . you do.

CLEVELAND, CHICAGO AND DENVER, Late January, 1970. Next issue we'll have a full report on Rita Laporte's appearance on the Alan Douglas Show (both radio and TV) originating in Cleveland, Ohio, and a full report on her visit to the Cleveland DOB Chapter, the Chicago group and the new Denver group.



Readers Respond

To the Editor:

The old BERKELEY BARB, under Max Scherr's editorship was a mish-mash of "grouch revolution" (white panthers, black panthers, pink panthers, and the Yippies), nude photography and sexual advertisements. It was wholly committed to violence and name-calling (pigs); very little of it in the service of love and joy.

The new BERKELEY BARB at first appeared to be an improvement over the old, in its rejection of violence and hatred, and its greater interest in "turned-on" happiness. However, it began running some articles by David Superstraight entitled "The Violent Generation". The first article was a fairly intelligent analysis of the Haight-Ashbury scene, and the turning of certain embittered hippies to the Marxist revolutionary sects. It ended with a bitter denunciation of the woman's liberation front, and Marxists in general. The second and third articles were vicious diatribes against women in general, with reference to

Lesbians (he called them dykes), liberals (pigs), and again the Marxists (ginks). In the third article, he outlined his "New Society", wherein men and women are to be educated separately in the arts of masculinity and femininity, women are to remain at home with their fathers until marriage (compulsory marriage), and women shall limit their interests and spend their entire lifetime in raising children and serving the men. Women are to be denied employment and legal privileges on grounds that they are inferior. Politically, the society is to be a paternalistic feudal order, run by a small council of "big daddies" over the mass.

Needless to say, I have written an angry letter, which has not yet been published. However, the last article was headed by a comment that Mr. Superstraight's views were not necessarily those of the Editor or staff of the BERKELEY BARB. Presumably, Allen Coult has been barraged with letters from "liberals, Ginks and Dykes", and was personally embarrassed by

the series he contracted. The latest BARB was accompanied by an editorial condemning the unjust sex and marijuana laws, and discrimination against deviants altogether. It also contained a sensitive letter to a Lesbian. Perhaps some of the Daughters of Bilitis might write articles to the new BERKELEY BARB in view of a possibility that the new editor (Allen Coult) would be sympathetic. The address is: BERKELEY BARB, 2042 University Ave., Berkeley, California.

The former staff of the BERKELEY BARB now put out their own paper called THE BERKELEY TRIBE, with its pro-Yippy, pro-Panther, and pro-violence philosophy.

Barbara Stephens
San Francisco, California

Dear Gene Damon:

It would not be difficult to object to the article ("The San Francisco Journal," October/November 1969) if I were to judge it by my own views and principles. However, I have unlimited respect for the rights of each and every individual and this young woman is no exception. She is without question entitled to freedom of expression.

However, there was a phrase in the article that I found abrasive to my dignity as a human being. The phrase was, "finally taking her on the rug." I realize that the phrase "taking her" or "took her" is a common form of expression. Nevertheless, this method of expressing the act of sex is a product of erotic and impersonal literature and speech in which sex is normally depicted without love or respect and basically as an animalistic act.

Unlike animals, the human sexual act is a mutual consent through implementation of one's thought process to engage in physical pleasure. The exception to mutual consent is rape; and unless the author violated this woman, I cannot conceive how she "took" her.

It is not for me here to question the meaningfulness of their act. No matter what the author and the woman's relationship, the coarseness of the above-mentioned phrase is still far below their dignity as members of the human race.

J.J.
Detroit, Michigan

Dear Editor:

Lesley Springvine's article might better


be called STAY UNDER THE ROCKS. Traditionally a woman was expected to help everyone but herself. Is this requirement henceforth to be limited to the Lesbian? The male homosexual is hardly devoting himself to maintaining the overlordship of the heterosexual male. The Blacks are not struggling to augment the white man's power. The women of NOW and other women's rights groups are not dedicated to liberating, say, the male American Indian. Yet we Lesbians are being asked to work in humble self-denial for the rights of heterosexual women, presumably because, by continuing to lead lives in shame and in hiding, we too may reap a few benefits.

I am not saying that Lesbians should desert NOW. This network of undercover agents is, under present societal conditions, both wise and useful. But I would wish that every Lesbian understand that DOB is her best hope and that DOB welcomes ALL women. We have no intention of adopting a questionable and crippling moral position, a position that advocates rights for some women only. Until all human beings are free, no one, not even the white heterosexual male, is truly free.


It may well be that infant NOW already counts more Lesbian members than DOB. This simply points up the need for all women to work together for their civil and human rights. Whether NOW will survive, whether heterosexual women in sufficient numbers can withstand all the temptations to give up, remains to be seen. The Lesbian, and by extension, DOB, cannot and will not give up. DOB, however small and poorly publicized, is unquestionably in the lead. This may sound hopelessly presumptuous to many of you. Is it really? The object pushed furthest down into the water is the one that rises with the greatest force. As Lesbians rise, all women will rise. And as women rise, so will all other oppressed minorities. We Lesbians, in or out of DOB, are not interested in finding some other group to oppress. We do not measure our progress by those left behind.

I appreciate Lesley's concern about frightening off the little housewives of NOW. But, even if NOW could cleanse itself of all Lesbian impurities and maintain total silence with DOB, this would not prevent men from screaming Lesbian. Nor need this be a lethal weapon. Let us consider the nature of the "enemy." It is the largest minority, the one in power, and its members have one thing in common: fear of

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women. Our enemy consists of terrified children who are frequently incapable of calm and rational action. When men hurl what they fancy to be devastating epithets, women should accept them with wild enthusiasm. Why of course all of us NOW women are Lesbians, so patent an absurdity that this "lethal weapon" fizzles into a joke. And there is that old saw about losing one's femininity. We might from time to time reassure the men that, as soon as important matters like equal pay for equal work are settled, we will spend every weekend diligently searching for lost or mislaid femininity. We may even dig up some left around by the old suffragettes. NOW might wonder out loud why men are so terrified of Lesbians. Why not let an especially "feminine" Lesbian (real or fake or even a good drag queen) invite men to explain why she is such an object of terror. A few well publicized sallies such as this and we can get on with serious matters.

All women's rights groups would do well to back DOB, for here is a force working for women that will not be stilled. The vast majority of Lesbians must today remain in hiding while making up a large minority of the full time labor force, in the professions as well as at the typewriters. It would not only be a tactical advantage for women to acknowledge their Lesbian sisters, but it would be a moral victory in tolerance to put men to shame.

Rita Laporte
President, DOB

Dear Miss Damon:

I would like to reply to Barbara Stephens ("Thoughts on Berkeley's Finest", and Letter to the Editor in the October/November *Ladder*) and to the letter from L.B., Cleveland, Ohio, in the same issue, regarding anti-homosexual attitudes in Black Panthers and Eldridge Cleaver.

It seems pretty well established that the taboos against homosexuality grew out of the struggle to keep the species going. Apparently, if given really free choice, humans would choose homosexual behaviour frequently enough to cause a drop in the rate of reproduction. Until some 50 years ago, this presented a serious threat to the survival of the species. Now, of course, the opposite is true.

Not so, however, for a group struggling as desperately as our Black activists here in the United States. Their struggle is, in every sense of the word, one for survival of their

"race" — or whatever expression you wish to use. Casualties are tremendous, especially in the case of the Panthers, but also generally. Black life expectancy is much lower than white life expectancy; black infant mortality is sky high in many areas. Black Americans are where white Americans were fifty years ago, or longer. It is therefore more than understandable that homosexuality is regarded with fear, loathing, hate and every other feeling appropriate where survival is of the essence.

Much the same is true for movements of the extreme left. Revolution is a dangerous scene, and you are apt to lose people. This generates protective instincts for the preservation and continuation of life, meaning: anti-homosexual attitudes. This might not help us, but it should certainly be no surprise to us, if we are at all up on our anthropology and psychology.

Really ladies; how about a *little* effort to put yourselves into the other person's shoes!

Julie Lee
New Jersey

Dear DOB:

I would like to respond to the letter in the October/November *LADDER* from Barbara Stephens, concerning the alleged anti-homosexual, anti-female and pro-violence bias of the Panthers, Eldridge Cleaver and Stokely Carmichael. I am white and gay.

In my opinion, it is unrealistic, at this point in American history and cultural attitudes, to expect that most black people, whatever their political attitudes or affiliation, are going to have any more enlightened attitudes about homosexuality than the masses of whites do. It is also unrealistic to expect that most black men, struggling out from under centuries of white racist oppression which negated both their humanity and masculinity, are going to be inclined towards empathy or sympathy with homosexuals, male or female. The stereotypes of gay men as passive and effeminate, and of gay women as domineering and men-hating are present in the black community as in the white, and are incompatible with the drive of the black community to assert personal and political strength, to destroy white society's inaccurate image of black women as matriarchal, male-castrating figures, and to gain an equal place for black men in the economic and political functioning of this

society. The references to "bull-daggers" or "fags" are no more numerous in the black scene and papers than in the white scene and papers, which does not render them excusable but does not make anti-homosexuality a unique Panther bias, either.

The quotes from Cleaver re: "pussy power" and Carmichael re: "the only position for women in S.N.C.C. is prone," are both several years old. Anyone reading the current issues of the Panther paper will find a great deal of emphasis upon the equality of women in the movement, and criticism of male chauvinism as inappropriate in a liberated society. While putting down male chauvinism is not the same thing as accepting or understanding the gay scene, it is certainly an important allied issue, and a definite refutation of Carmichael's statement.

As for the alleged advocacy of violence, crime, terrorism and assassination — I refer Miss Stephens and other readers who may share her perceptions to the 10-Point Platform and Program which is printed on the last page of every issue of the Black Panther paper. Aside from the total misunderstanding Miss Stephens seems to have of the Panther program, tactics and history, I wonder, however, if the gay community were to become as visible, assertive, articulate, organized and relevant in their demands for personal and broad social change as the Panthers, Third World and white radical groups have, only to have their leadership and community brutally ripped off, busted and terrorized — would they respond with "flowers, incense and perfume" as she advocates? If and when gay whites are accepted openly in society, they will still be part of the white racist structure unless they take steps to refute racist thinking and behavior in themselves, and to combat institutionalized racism and oppression and the individuals, classes and structures that foster and perpetuate it.

K.M.
Berkeley, California

Dear Miss Damon:

The War of the Sexes is more usually called "The Battle of the Sexes." It can and does give rise to delicious humor, but it is also in deadly earnest. This War is in no way different from the "wars" between the ancient Greeks and their slaves, the ancient Romans and their slaves, the Southern plantation owners and their slaves. These wars are often quiescent over long periods,

but invariably erupt in open revolt from time to time. The history of the American South is replete with isolated and doomed uprisings of slaves.

No one today denies the right or justness of slaves, of the oppressed, to feel anger against the masters, the oppressors, with one glaring exception: women are wrong to feel anger because of their oppression. To be feminine includes the virtue of delighting in enslavement. Therefore, to be a feminist is automatically to be a "man-hater." It might be easier simply to agree with this foolishness and forget about it. Too many people prefer to believe an easy lie than a hard truth.

What is a feminist? She is a woman who would like to see an end to the WAR OF THE SEXES. Not a victory — just an end. It is, after all, the silliest war of human history and it is thousands of years old. We are all, women and men alike, human beings. This is so simple and fundamental a truth that it is almost universally ignored. Also, being all of us human, we are imperfect and subject to all the sins that flesh is heir to. From this it follows that we cannot end The War without first intensifying it beyond anything history has yet witnessed. With only rare exceptions, those in power hang on to it fanatically. Those in power today are men, not all men but certainly no women. The War cannot be ended until women have full human status, until they enjoy the rights now accorded men and bear their share of the responsibilities in the work of the world and in its governance.

One of the most vicious weapons used against the feminist, by both men and women, is the brand "man-hater." There are no doubt many women who have hated one or another man at some time. (The person I most hated was a Wac officer back in World War II. But then, I am a Lesbian.) The trouble with the emotion of hate directed against a human being is that it requires so much energy and accomplishes nothing. Anger is the more constructive emotion, anger at injustice of all kinds. The oppression of women is a gross injustice and it makes me angry, angry enough to want to do something about it. Men who laugh at women who want the rights and responsibilities that belong to all human beings make me angry. That these men are dupes of our male-worshipping culture does not make my anger the less. To smolder with suppressed anger is an unhealthy condition for anyone. Anger that leads to a con-

structive reshaping of society is to be commended.

Roberta Door
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Editor:

"It is obvious," says Dr. Helen Hacker (*The Ladder*, October/November 1969), "that producing enough children to insure survival is dependent upon fostering heterosexuality as a value . . ." (Underlining mine). Obvious? In law school we were taught to watch for that word in opponents' briefs and never to use it ourselves. It betrays a bit of uncertainty, to say the least.

I think we can safely assume that most adults know how babies are made. And since many Lesbians and homosexuals would like to have children, I find it not in the least obvious that heterosexuality need be fostered. Occasional heterosexual acts, sufficient for population needs, are quite sufficient and not even necessary — there is artificial insemination. So what is so grand about heterosexuality as a life style?

Robert Block
Detroit, Michigan

Dear Editor:

I've been thinking about the picket — my impressions are mixed. The reaction of observers was not at all what I expected. I had a notion that we would be besieged by hecklers, at least, but the only heckler I heard was a soft-voiced elderly man, who wanted to know, "Just what is 'Justice' anyhow?" And I heard one man say rather loudly to another, "They aren't all 'queers' — most of them are paid to picket." That one *did* surprise me; so I really looked at my fellow picketers for the first time.

Very few looked at all like the popular conception of "swishy queens" — most looked like (and were) businessmen and women, well dressed, responsible citizens. I especially noticed a rather plump gentleman in a blazer — he looked like everyman's CPA, or perhaps a professor. There were a few exceptions, mostly in the younger people present. There seemed to be a clear generation gap: the older, more discreet, conservatively dressed people; and the young casually attired handholders. I was told that the younger, wilder element may eventually "bring down the level of the

picket to a 'parade of queens'" by one of the older men present, who seemed very upset about the hand-holding. The emphasis, he said, should be on total respectability and responsibility — to prove that homosexuality is a personal preference (private, of course) rather than a sickness. I had to agree with that one.

But I don't really see all that much wrong with slightly more casual dress and attitudes — being closer to the younger than the older myself (if not chronologically, at least in spirit). The younger people dress more casually than their elders — regardless of sexual preference. Lately I've had trouble telling the girls from the boys — gay or straight. In fact, it's often easier to tell girls from boys in a gay group. So why *not* relax the ruling on dress just a little? But not *too* far. People will accept a well-dressed, neat person (and his views) sooner than a bearded, sandaled "hippie." And that is the purpose of the picket: to be accepted as equals in a society that is based on equal rights for *everyone*.

Personally, the issue has not been raised. Down here, a small town in South Carolina, "those people" don't exist — or if they do, they go unrecognized. People here would recognize the word, if it came up, but I really doubt if they would recognize the *fact*. They're so busy with gossiping about "loose women" and "husbands that run around", that anything else would be utterly alien, and therefore nonexistent. I *do* know several boys and men who either have been or are gay, but they are quiet about it. I've also seen a few girls who have what I call "the look", but I've been unable to prove it — purely instinct with me to look, purely instinct for them to hide it. (My "Gay is Good" button, for instance, produced no reaction at all.)

I really enjoyed the picket — heat and blisters and all. And I hope I'll be able to join in next year — and bring along my own "younger generation." That should get a rise out of *somebody*, anyway!

Alice Bingham
South Carolina

Editors Note: Alice Bingham is divorced and the mother of 3 young children — explaining that reference to the younger generation. Her comments concern the Fifth Annual Reminder Day picket in Philadelphia at Independence Hall, held last July 4, 1969.)

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