

# THE LADDER

JUNE/JULY 1970

\$1.25



## ONCE MORE WITH FEELING

I have discovered my most unpleasant task as editor . . . having to remind you now and again of your duty as concerned reader. Not just reader, concerned reader.

If you aren't — you ought to be.

Those of you who have been around three or more years of our fifteen years know the strides DOB has made and the effort we are making to improve this magazine. To continue growing as an organization we need more women, women aware they are women as well as Lesbians. If you have shy friends who might be interested in DOB but who are, for real or imagined reasons, afraid to join us — write to me. I will send you a sample copy of THE LADDER, a copy of WHAT IS DOB?, and a copy of the article, "Your Name Is Safe", which shows why NO ONE at any time in any way is ever jeopardized by belonging to DOB or by subscribing to THE LADDER. You can send this to your friend(s) and thus, almost surely bring more people to help in the battle.

And for you new people, our new subscribers and members in newly formed and forming chapters, have you a talent we can use in THE LADDER? We need writers always in all areas, fiction, non-fiction, biography, poetry. We need photographers and artists, and CARTOONISTS. We need you — in any way you can help.

For you whose time and talents will not allow you any other way to help, send us money . . . every dollar helps. We don't like to ask, but as many of you know, if we did not beg, there would be no magazine. So, once more with feeling, we ask you to help us in our mutual fight for our rights.

Gene Damon



A thousand adult readers regularly receive THE LADDER, a magazine circulated throughout this country featuring news and views of the homosexual and the homophile movement of particular interest to women.

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# THE LADDER

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THE LADDER is regarded as a sounding board for various points of view on the homophile and related subjects, and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the organization except such opinions as are specifically acknowledged by the organization.

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COVER photo and photo on page 11 (JANE RULE), by Photographer Lynn Vardeman.

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# Poetry

by  
Gabrielle  
L'Autre

## EXPLANATION

Oh, yes, you stay quiet,  
Keep properly to your side,  
Contain your arms and legs.  
There is room enough in the bed  
For a gaping chasm between us.

Must you breathe?  
I hang stubbornly to my ledge of precipice.  
Your soft, soft breathing  
Wafts towards me,  
Impersonal as a stray breeze,  
Caressing my face.  
You stir ever so slightly.  
The covers move,  
Grazing my bare arm,  
Sliding along my hip.

So there is no contact  
And yet there is.  
Unless I arise and go,  
Breaking the invisible strands  
That pull me towards you,  
I know that I shall glide your way,  
Nulling the void that separates us,  
That I shall take you in my arms  
And startle you to wakefulness  
With a ferocious want  
You cannot or you will not or you dare  
not share.

GABRIELLE L'AUTRE

## PORTRAIT OF A LADY AS A CAMPSITE

I, too, would creep to your warmth,  
Tent under your hair,  
Invade your mouth,  
Explore your apertures;  
But these men and men have done.

Let them bivouac on your surface slopes,  
Light signal fires across your plains,  
Burrow into your trenches!

I want more:  
To tap your inner sources,  
To swim in your arterial rivers,  
To breast the tides of your thought,  
To swirl in the currents of your moods,  
To steep in the waters of your hidden depths  
Till I take tone of your inner color,  
Shape of your lost caverns,  
Cadence of your secret rhythms.

In short,  
I want to love you.

GABRIELLE L'AUTRE

## THE OUTSIDER

I saw desire rise in his eyes,  
Ignited by the sight of her olive skin  
Vivid against the stark white of her dress.  
Raising the blonde child in her arms  
Above her head, she whirled slowly,  
Laughing, preoccupied with the child.  
His wife, his son,  
His desire  
For the body he had intimately possessed  
And smugly knew he would have again.

Oh, I must beat mine down,  
The desire whelming from my depths,  
My desire  
That must not be,  
That swims in my envious eyes,  
That neither of them must see.

GABRIELLE L'AUTRE

# In the Air Milk Rain

By LYNN LONIDIER

A friend of mine learned he had cancer.  
I went to emergency. The nurse had to  
ask me where it was, it was so small. The  
doctor said scar tissue — foreign matter  
from a vaccination which had built up.

It grew larger. My friend got worse. The  
cancer spread.

I returned to the hospital. The doctor  
felt of it and said cyst.

Was it?

Probably.

Twice I cancelled the appointment while  
imagining it was getting larger.

My friend was taken away in a wheel  
chair. He had a hood over his head. He was  
thirty-three years old.

I felt the bump on my arm. Was it  
possible I had contracted cancer from my  
friend? We used the same bathroom and ate  
from the same plates.

I kept the third appointment.

The nurse stepped out of the room. I  
got the hospital smock on and peered at the  
remarks on the hospital chart.

I have heard of people avoiding going to  
the doctor when they had a mysterious  
bump on their bodies, and the bump proved fatal.

I lay on my stomach. Two interns came  
to watch — one, a young man with a shaved  
head; one, a woman. Both felt of my arm  
beforehand. I glimpsed at the woman. I  
thought of her while the needle was in my  
arm. I thought of her as I felt a surgical  
implement probe my leaden arm. This  
woman asked me where I had gotten my  
third right finger gold ring.

Found it.

Where?

In the ground.

Jeanne was holding Carol's arm out-  
stretched Carol's hand was lightly touching  
Jeanne's breast

Now the needle was out of the arm and  
Jeanne was standing very close to Carol  
Carol tried to imagine Jeanne as severe in  
appearance but Jeanne's looks made it  
impossible to do so Carol remembered  
reading somewhere that women doctors  
possessed more masculine traits than any  
other group of women but Jeanne's dark

hair though closely cut held softly to her  
head she wore large earrings and she had on  
a ring that resembled an engagement ring  
but it was on the fourth finger of her right  
hand Carol wondered if perhaps some func-  
tion of the left hand by M.D.'s made  
doctors prefer the right hand for their rings  
the diamond was set higher on the ring than  
Carol recalled seeing in engagement sets

Jeanne joked to the receptionist about not  
operating on Carol (most cases in derma-  
tology involve slow close examination or  
mynah surgery) how flushed Jeanne became  
at causing laughter her neck then her cheeks  
then upward to her hairline Carol wondered  
how Jeanne would react to intensification  
of some woman loving her

Jeanne told Carol come in two mornings  
later they agreed on 8:00 Jeanne said what  
we look for is a rising in the skin area or a  
bruising what we do is measure it

While she sat in a college class Carol  
wondered who was Jeanne's lover

Carol may have dreamed about Jeanne

All she really knew was what she wanted  
Jeanne to be like

Maybe all this was just a dwelling on doctor  
instead of diagnosis

Carol feared the skin test might read posi-  
tive

Two mornings later *she will look at my arm  
notate negative and that will be all why am  
I making so much out of this* yes Carol had  
gone there with some suspicion of illness  
within her she had wanted a skin test  
instead of an X ray because she feared  
radiation so much radiation was already in  
the air in the milk in the rain

Carol's heart was racing ahead to the  
moment she would be in the office with  
Jeanne would Jeanne remember to come in  
as early as 8:00 either way was no indica-  
tion of Jeanne's awareness of Carol's feel-  
ings for her perhaps Jeanne wouldn't come  
perhaps she didn't feel comfortable enough  
to be alone with a girl that breathed faster  
with her near perhaps Jeanne had arranged

for another doctor to do the reading perhaps her boy friend the man with the shaved head

The clinic was open Jeanne was there Jeanne told Carol bring your purse with you it isn't safe to leave it around you know (undertone) the receptionist can't be trusted

Jeanne's remark showed the receptionist and Carol laughing and Jeanne turning red

Jeanne led Carol into an office Jeanne resumed the position of holding Carol's arm outstretched the hand was again held against the cloth of Jeanne's breast Jeanne felt of the spot where the needle had gone in there was no color or raising while Jeanne was doing this Carol moved her hand over the curve of Jeanne's smock there was electrical contact between their eyes it came and went so fast neither was sure it wasn't of protest neither could believe Carol's hand had sought and Jeanne had not moved away Carol's voice nudged Jeanne and her eyes covered her over

Jeanne looked at Carol's face a face so intent on touch and reaction to touch and it was surrounded by long blond hair you have the urge to separate feel the fineness of then stroke then watch it fall into place again when Jeanne heard the sound the longing it made her further not move for if she moved how could she have heard another wanting her

A blush started at Jeanne's dress collar and went upward to her hair

Carol imagined it moving across Jeanne's breasts also

How close they were standing Jeanne noticed how the girl's presence seemed to have gotten larger as she was looking at her Jeanne broke from Carol moved as far away as she could Carol's head did not turn downward but her hair seemed to wilt

Don't tell

Jeanne held onto the table behind her she was breathing hard she was waiting to calm she recognized she had wanted this closeness with the girl she had been reluctant to stop she wouldn't betray the girl she didn't feel threatened by Carol so much as she did

by her own slowness to move away from Carol this frightened her she felt hysteria and couldn't stop the red from forming under her skin it increased it was profuse

God

Perhaps the girl would betray her she would deny it but how could she protect herself from the transparency of her own feelings

Uh the test shows negative do you want it on paper

Carol nodded and made appreciation in her eyes that the woman was not going to call in anyone Carol wanted to disappear under the sky

Jeanne handed Carol a scribbled note and refrained from looking at her maybe Carol had never done anything sexual with a woman before and was as lost from it

When Carol was fifteen there had been a girl in one of her classes who — — —

Slowly their eyes told each other about each other this was followed by *what is it like to kiss* when they were alone at one or the other of their homes they kissed

The narrowness of the townspeople kept them from sniffing out and condemning two girls who went together did everything together and held to each other inside each other's empty house but the same people fear what they do not know they are always on the verge of passing from ignorance to intolerance suspicion always did exist

Carol and her love were covered by people's naive overestimation of the naivety of two girls

But Carol had had punitive upbringing she sought praise did well in school but through love she had gained guilt

She left her parents left her town left love and in college did not know what she wanted there she turned to therapy

In a little office she learned that retribution does not have to go hand in hand with feelings that it was all right to love a woman if she wanted

Carol expressed love for her therapist (by

telling her) and overheard her tell the office secretary keep your ears open if you hear me holler come running (laughter) a ridicule-laden inference that the therapist was not safe when alone with Carol

The therapist entered where her desk was where Carol waited where confidential matters were supposedly kept Carol did not reveal that she had overheard the therapist had seemed so accepting so understanding people fall in love with anyone who seems caring of their thoughts

Carol still loved the therapist though she never went back

Carol and Jeanne did not make a parting remark the receptionist had engaged Jeanne in the next patient to be seen

Carol did not dwell on the encounter it frustrated her that she had to avoid seeing the woman again Christ how she wished she knew her name maybe after Carol left the woman had told someone what had happened maybe the doctors and nurses had had a big laugh about it it would be a long-standing joke with them Jeanne would turn red making her vulnerability to the men doctors more appealing

Breath

Jeanne saw many patients that day she was careful with each one but late afternoon she developed such a headache she could not go to med seminar the redness had seemed to linger

Before she went to the resident hall and after the nurses left she went through the office files for Carol's name

Jeanne copied name address and noted Carol's birthday

Twenty

She herself was twenty-nine Carol a girl herself a woman

She noted in the remarks that in the past Carol had had anxiety reactions to illness Carol was the sort of person that every year or so needed reassurance she had not contracted some fatal disease what she needed was a love to sustain her from death this was not in the records but Jeanne

recognized the malady it takes a very special person to eradicate another's awareness of death and since she herself handled many fatal cases she had to be wary of absorption in malignancies

They were waiting for the swelling to go down from the anesthesia. They could no longer tell where the growth was because it was within the swelling.

In clinical language, the resident and the interns tried to diagnose what the bump might be before they removed it. Each had a different theory. They agreed it was deep. We'll take such-and-such incision.

Here?

No. . . Here.

How could they be so casual about not being certain where it was.

During the course of the operation, I expressed my viewpoint on the war. The lady intern informed me the man operating on my arm had served in the armed forces as an M.D.

There was joking amongst the resident and the interns — doctor and patient dissented over the war (the advantage he had over me) — he had not sewn me up, yet!

There was discussion of their weekend.

They encountered so many people and so much death, they could be casual in the presence of someone who had cancer.

Even after the growth was removed, the doctor could not say it was not cancer. He held up a bottle containing what he had removed — tissue that resembled filter-tip fiber disseminated by the liquid it was in, a pimply core centered within. Repulsive, yet, not to be let go of.

The resident took a long time doing the stitches. I heard him say to the interns I was young; it was important I not have scar disfigurement.

Why should I be attractive. Statistics were half of all the men would be maimed or never come back. But I didn't dare be vocal on the war while the doctor was sewing me up.

I wasn't certain he really was careful. He might want to get even with me — his, a contradictory existence.

And I was going to have to wait a week for the diagnosis.

But I might not live that long.

I decided I would ask for a TB skin test. I was applying for a job which required one.



I might have TB. I have sputum in my throat, which has continued to thrive for three-, four years. I never tried to get rid of it. I have a cat and a dog, and I have been told doctors won't treat throat infections of owners of fur-bearing animals.

Jeanne had been in the city for over three years without having found a steady lover or mate often she thought it could not continue much longer I will find someone in the next month or two then she realized a year had passed since she started thinking the thought and two years and Jeanne was in the midst of men perhaps her failure (that is how she thought of it) to find a man resulted from the franticness of the hours kept by interns and M.D.'s herself and those who dated her how many days had she only gotten an hour or two of sleep

The times Jeanne was on a date were always tightly wound almost desperate she didn't have much contact with men in other professions they might not understand how work kept her yet she had read somewhere that most women doctors married men in other fields

She had come into contact with a lot of men dying

Perhaps she made excuses for herself when it came to finding a man

Charles was less assertive in his love-making than she with him she found herself holding back her thoughts and her gestures and assuming a role of naivety whatever the night required to make him feel everything was the way it should be she in turn felt impatient angry and developed headaches

Carl too had suffered a relationship with her he began to harbor competitiveness toward Jeanne when they were involved in clinical diagnosis the resident physician finally had to transfer him to another floor because he began to make up diagnoses to refute Jeanne's and insist on their accuracy when results from the lab proved otherwise the chief resident had called them both in and told them point-blank he must separate them

Jeanne's last date was with a man she could

not help but equate with money Al took her places showed her a good time and yet she could not even feel as much for him as for a friend she had her roommate say she was not in the last time he phoned however as the weekend wore on she found herself traipsing downtown with a group of nurses who wound up their evening at a movie Jeanne wishing she had not declined him not caring for Al but being *with* him would be better than wallowing in all that time and dwelling on the complaints of her patients until she felt possessed of malignancy

Jeanne knew what it was like to have a bump that appeared on her body be fatal she had felt herself consumed by the slow-moving fury of the power of certain cells over others only to come out of her dread on Monday when she again confronted so many patients she had no time to dwell on her death

Breath

Early evening two or three weeks from the time Jeanne and Carol had been drawn toward liaison Jeanne faced Carol in a doorway

Jeanne (the name Carol had given her) Jeanne's face was flushed as if she had just caused laughter by something she'd said

They stood inside the room and looked at each other

Why did you

I had to see you

Jeanne's face was burning in the dark Carol hadn't turned the light on

They were standing they looked at each other and saw near

You won't tell

Trust

All of a sudden they took hold of each other as two people might who hadn't seen each other for years like strangers remembering they had once been lovers

And the two women mouthed each other their flesh wanting out of their clothing

Kiss me

I will I will here

Kiss me

On your breast

Yes ooh love me

I will I will here

Breath

They were on top of the bed

Jeanne lay on her back her arms and legs outstretched

Carol was over her centering over the edges of Jeanne's breasts

Both caught a glimpse of something they had seen moving in water

Carefully carefully Jeanne lifted Carol's finger in between her legs in through the hairs into the wet Carol moved her finger in and out and knew what the woman was like inside and almost fainted upon the sound of woman-sounds

Faster the room went

In the middle of making love Carol stopped

Do you love me

I don't know you but I love you

Because darkness was around them Carol could not see if Jeanne was embarrassed or blushed but she guess it

Why do you always turn so red

Ask me that and that's enough to make me do it that's the way I am my blood is near my surface do I feel hot

You are hot sexy hot

Well continue please

Doing what

They smiled knowing what was to be done

The woman intern came into the room. She removed the stitches. She gave me a skin test. She did blush easily and hold my arm in such a way that my hand touched that part of her dress which contained her breasts.

Breath

I'd rather have a woman who treats m'good, 'n a man who treats m'bad.

In books the penis is everything the bigger the better in one of Faulkner's books a man uses a corncob to do it with because it is larger

Might as well use the handle of a hammer

The two women knew better of the implement

Jeanne had wondered when a man was in her what was the matter that she didn't feel it more Carl had wanted it in right away and Charles did not know how to get it in and no matter how big she couldn't feel it once it was in the harder they did it the more insensitive to it she became

Al she could not let enter her

(How close you feel to the one above is how much you will feel)

As soon as Carol put her finger in Jeanne turning her own delicious body onto the woman a rush of heat came

Carol's hair came down into Jeanne's the brown and the yellow mixed together made a most deep rich color Jeanne had Carol's tongue in her mouth through it Carol was lost to all but to ANIMALS! BREASTS! coming over her great wreaths of hair loveliness

Jeanne was on fire blazing and Indian she went down to the dance of Carol's heart all around

When one was too tired the other would

Jeanne tilted her thigh upward and Carol spread her legs over it so the TWO TOUCHED so that the rivers moving between them fitted together

They could go on like that and sometimes did 'til morning brought them 'round

They turned a light on smoked cigarettes and gazed at each other's moonflesh and Carol said who gave you the ring of the ring on Jeanne's finger

My parents did for graduation

Carol then saw a drop of blood replace the setting there it was as plain as though it had always been there Carol didn't say anything she didn't want to alarm Jeanne she tried to kiss it off but it stayed it was like a pin prick it was round and perfect and irremovable

Father and Mother both had had cancer. It tends to run in families.

Some doctors and psychiatrists maintain that people who are overly-busy, overly-conscientious, drive themselves hard, and are nervous, are prone toward cancer.

Do they care for you

My father's dead I write to my mother every two or three weeks

Strange that Jeanne's ring had acquired a red jewel and she really hadn't answered

Jeanne's parents in giving the ring to her had wired it to her conscience so it gave off blood (a peculiarity of her family lineage) whenever she strayed from their ways

It was a case of mistaken diagnosis the laboratory had gotten Jeanne's and Carol's charts mixed it was Jeanne who had disease and Carol who went free to bemoan the loss of the woman clear passed the grave

As though the bed were a pyre amongst all the heat of love and neither woman had a remedy for fire is the color of guilt through all centuries it has been so in *The Scarlet Letter* a remnant of conscience the mark on the adulteress's forehead stayed on

When Jeanne left Carol the ring turned from ruby to diamond

*I cannot live with someone who cannot live with herself* the red color of the ring came and went Carol waited awhile then left Jeanne

So Jeanne lay there and died (mortification it used to be called) and Carol could not do without her

Carol regarded Jeanne's outstretched form as that of the Saviour as all lovers are to each other and that implied a certain amount of death but in the morning Jeanne had to be alert to the line of patients waiting when she arrived with clothes on in the dermatology department of the impersonal hospital

I like to feel the bump I like to play with it ooh are you *sure* you won't let me remove it I simply *can't* leave it alone it's so cute

I'm sure Silly

Meany

Breath

Carol knew now that they would both live because they loved each other and could laugh about it without the burning starting

Love made death clear up and go away

Carol moved Jeanne's hand from the tiny lump in her flesh to between her breasts Jeanne's hand curved into the softness and stayed when they were asleep both had their hands on each other's breasts and if a hand slid off that was enough to awaken and once more grasp the security of roundness

How good to live

The woman in my story died only because I wanted to at the time my friend died. I was feeling illness all around, and I knew too much. I knew it was years experiencing intense love feelings for women — coupled with my father's, mother's, and friend's failing — that caused the bump to come. People can cause cancer to come onto their bodies. A change in cell growth occurs when too much unhappiness builds up in the system. It is a way of passing

sentence on oneself. Cancer as self-imposed death.

Both women were in myself; aspects of myself in both women.

One died and one lived.

Actually, the growth proved non-malignant; the skin test proved negative. I was healthy. The scar on my arm is only slightly visible to look at.

I want Jeanne and Carol to continue to love one another for many years. It's possible — love above death.

Since these visits to the hospital, I have seen the woman intern driving a car in a lane of traffic opposite mine. I don't think she saw me. If she had, she probably wouldn't recognize me from that day in the office until now.

## This Is Not For You

By JANE RULE  
N.Y., McCall's 1970

Reviewed by Isabel Miller

Good news — our lovely bright Jane Rule has published another novel. It's a letter to a girl named Esther, who is now a nun and will never read it. I don't think anything would be eased for Esther, or cleared up, if she did read it, but she might enjoy it; it's dazzling.

Kate (the narrator) and Esther meet as students at a women's college. They're rich, intelligent, serious, philosophical, poetic. They're in love with each other but Kate won't let anything happen. She has no reluctance about making love to other girls — just Esther. An open lesbian named Sandy takes an interest in Esther, but Kate keeps them apart, thinking, "You are not to spend yourself on a Sandra Mentchen. I haven't saved you from myself for that."

Kate and Esther travel in Europe. Kate picks up two men, Andrew and Peter, and the four of them then travel together. Esther doesn't especially like Andrew and Peter or like travelling with them. Kate goes back to England, leaving Esther with the men. Andrew wants to talk with Kate, but she's very closed and can't. He asks, "Why do you always run away?" "To keep from hurting people who aren't bright enough to protect themselves," Kate says.

Kate and Sandy have a little fling — once only, Kate's favorite way. Sandy asks

(Lynn Lonidier writes that she is too much involved with her work to be much of anything but its reflection. She lives in Southern California in a "tropical paradise" and admits to varied tastes including unusual foods. Her poetry, and articles pertaining to poetry, have appeared in many periodicals including TRACE, EVERGREEN REVIEW, MASSACHUSETTS REVIEW, SAN FRANCISCO REVIEW, THE HUMANIST, FORUM, etc., and in THE LIVING UNDERGROUND; AN ANTHOLOGY OF CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN POETRY. A collection of her work, PO TREE, was published in 1967 by the Berkeley Free Press.)



JANE RULE

Kate why she doesn't just go ahead and make love to Esther. Kate says, "It's just not her world, not her sort of thing." Esther's opinion is never asked.

Esther asks Kate why Kate doesn't want her. "Because I don't want to want you. It's as simple as that," Kate says.

There's a party. Esther says, "Absolutely everybody's kissed me tonight but you." Kate says, "Then it's probably time to go home."

Kate says, "It's time you met some men." (Esther is surrounded by men, but they're all homosexual so they don't

count.) Esther says, "All right, Kate."

They finish school, go to England. Esther obediently meets a creep named John, who, Kate says, "sounds like a Penguin Classic." Kate is "jealous and hurt and frightened," but doesn't tell Esther so.

There's a Christmas houseparty. Esther kisses Kate's hand. Kate tucks Esther into bed and lies awake for a long time — wondering whether mother will go to the Christmas Eve services!

Mother has a stroke. Kate goes back to America to be with her. Esther, later, comes too. They play chess a lot, have talks about philosophy and religion. Kate's "mind and body ached with obscurities of their own." What to do but kick Esther out? As she's leaving, Esther says, "You do love me — you do want me. Or you would have let me come to you years ago." "No," Kate says.

Esther lives for a year with a lout named Christopher. Kate sleeps one night with the night nurse, name of Mac. I like Mac, but Kate doesn't.

Kate and Esther go to Los Angeles to visit Sandy, who's a concert pianist and cheerfully mated to a girl. Esther, who is attracted to Sandy's girl, says, "Kate only allows me to sleep with men." Sandy says to Kate, "You're the most indecent prude I've ever known." That rolls right off Kate. She knows she's being fine and noble.

Esther takes up with a junkie/pusher/thief named Charlie. ("At least he's not homosexual," Sandy says.) Kate minds about Charlie. She says, "His whore and his mate. His slave and his keeper." "And I would have been that for you," Esther says. Kate touches her hand and leaves for Washington. "For one of my nervous, negative morality, risking failure is less terrifying than risking success. I could more easily have died for you than lived with you."

In Washington she works hard, has no clearance problems, reads reports at night. Even Esther's mother reproaches her for not loving Esther, who has been arrested for possession of Charlie's marijuana. Instead of helping Esther get out of jail, Kate sleeps with the boss, a married lady named Joyce. I liked Joyce, but Kate didn't much. "I was glad of her, grateful for her, as I'm sure I couldn't have been if I had really loved Joyce as I loved you . . . I couldn't be guilty of you. I hadn't that kind of courage." Joyce says, "You're an absolutely standard type, you know — the crude prude." It rolls right off Kate.

Esther's rich mother buys Esther off the

grass rap. Esther travels, sending postcards without return addresses. She gets engaged to a very uptight doctor named John. On the wedding day, Esther and Kate kiss, being "careful of each other's makeup." Esther goes off to be married, saying, "This is how it should be. This is how you told me to do it."

Kate, now twenty-six, goes to Greece to work for a relief agency; she wants to save the world. She falls in love at first sight with her boss, name of Grace, crowding sixty. After a long time, Grace, once, takes Kate to bed. I guess Kate likes it — she doesn't say. Grace says, "I have never been in love, except with my work." Nothing about Kate changes that.

Esther gets a divorce and contemplates entering a nunnery — an enclosed order. Kate goes to see her. "I would miss you," Kate says, but doesn't look at her. Esther enters the nunnery anyway. Now Kate is writing this letter which is not to be sent and feeling, I guess, generally pleased at how self-disciplined she's been. She's part Indian — maybe that's why she's so contemptuous of pain.

Why does Kate sleep with only women she cares nothing for or who care nothing for her? Why does she "protect" Esther — poor sweet vulnerable needful Esther — from herself and Sandy, but not from all those appalling men? In short, why does she despise lesbianism? Damned if I know.

Does Jane Rule know? I think if she did she would have said. She writes so wonderfully. If she'd write Establishment, she'd be one of the Titans. She can say what she wants to say, and there's room for everything in the wonderful loose free shopping-bag form she chose. It can go from narration to scenes and back again without a scratch, and leap across years or make pages of a minute, just as Jane pleases; I feel safe in saying she doesn't know.

But she doesn't need to. Suffice it that she's observed correctly and written everything down and given us this tragic admonitory tale of what happens when you make moral decisions for other people without consulting them, when you despise love, when your emotions are inaccessible to you, when you're closed and cold and self-righteous and condescending — when you're a prude: you drive your girl to sick men and drugs and doomed marriages and divorce. You make a nunnery look warm and yummy.

(Jane Rule lives and works in Vancouver, British Columbia. Her first novel, *DESERT OF THE HEART*, appeared in the United States in 1965. Her short stories have been published in magazines in Canada and the United States. She has often contributed stories to *THE LADDER*. Her next novel, *AGAINST THE SEASON*, will be published by McCall's in 1971. Chap-

ter Two of *AGAINST THE SEASON* appeared in the October/November, 1969 issue of *THE LADDER*.)

(Reviewer Isabel Miller is the author of the popular Lesbian novel, *A PLACE FOR US*. Under her own name she is a well-known established novelist. She also has contributed a story to *THE LADDER*.)

## Western Homophile Conference Keynote Address

By HENRY (HARRY) HAY

### Introduction by Jim Kepner

(My chief function in speaking here is to make an introduction. So I hope my friend, whom I am about to introduce, won't mind if I am a bit perverse about it. My method is perverse, in a way. It is a little like introducing Troy Perry by first saying a few kind words for Mohammedanism.)

I want to introduce one of those persons who has had a really revolutionary effect on the homophile community in the United States, and a person who isn't much a believer in reformism, so I want to say a few kind words for reformism first.

Without changing the system, without overthrowing the Establishment, whatever that is, we have made a hell of a lot of progress in the last twenty years. I don't think those of you who are under thirty can begin to appreciate just what it was like for homosexuals two decades ago, and some you older ones have forgotten.

We had no organizations of our own. No publications of our own. Bars — we had plenty of them, and some just as wild as any are today, but the arrest rate in some of the liveliest ones was great enough that if the same thing were to happen today, we'd be storming City Hall in a half hour. We couldn't meet in Churches — the very idea was unthinkable. For that matter, we couldn't meet much of anyplace else either. I spoke in this Church, the most progressive Church in Los Angeles, just ten years ago, and the Church was pretty upset about it afterward. I could go on a long time, but I just wanted a quick reminder, before we start talking about throwing out the system, of how much progress we have made.

It took revolutionaries to get that progress rolling. Until the homosexual cause began to be a bit respectable, it was only the revolutionaries that had

time for it. Everybody else was afraid of their shadow.

I was thinking about starting a magazine, or a defense organization, as early as 1942. But I didn't do it, I drew up some plans, talked to a few friends, but nothing came of it. Nothing at all.

One person was more persistent. In 1948, the dream became a bit more than a dream, and by 1950, the spirit became flesh and moved among us. The spirit, the hope, the dream that homosexuals had suppressed for centuries burst forth here in Los Angeles, and travelled to San Francisco and to San Diego within a few more months. The first homosexual organization, the first mass homosexual organization was born twenty years ago — the first Gay Liberation Organization.

I would like to introduce to you my very dear friend, and mentor and antagonist, the man who first brought us out of Egypt, if not quite over the Jordan, the father of the Homophile Movement, Henry Hay.)

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With all the members standing in a circle made suddenly transcendent through the fellowship-power of its crossed-hands couplings, the Moderator requests that they each repeat after him the following:

"Let us hereby resolve that no young person among us need ever take his first step out into the dark alone and afraid again!"

Does that sound like some fragment of a Gay Liberation ritual? Well, it is! It is the concluding sentence of the New Member Welcoming Ritual of the first Gay Liberation Movement in the United States . . . the original Mattachine Society, 1950 to April of 1953.

That first Movement called Homo-



sexuals to a brotherhood of love and trust; it called Homosexuals to rediscover their collective — as well as personal — self-respect and integrity. It raised into consciousness, for the first time, the concept of the Homosexual Minority complete with its own sub-culture, with its own Life-styles. It struggled to perceive — however dimly, and with little language to help it — that, in some measure, the Homosexual Minority actually looked out upon the world through a somewhat different window than did their Heterosexual brothers and sisters. The Homosexual world-view surely deviated in dimensional values from that of its parent society . . . a world view neither better nor inferior — but *athwart*.

Rejecting the ultimately unexaminable assumptions of Heterosexual Psychiatry, mired as they were — and still are — in the obsolescent modes of Aristotelian thinking, the first Movement called to its own fellowship to search themselves and their several cultures to find out at last "what WE are" — "WHO we are". It called to its membership to assemble these findings and then introduce to the Parent Society that widening dimension of spiritual consciousness our contributions would bring. And finally, upon the gift of such contributions, it postulated the integration of our Minority into the Parent Society AS A GROUP. . . not a "passing" assimilation by individuals but integration by the *total* group . . . for this was 1950-53 and Montgomery and Birmingham and Selma still lay in the unpredictable future.

In the scant generation between that largely non-verbal THEN — and now, a host of new scientific modes of discourse have flooded us with resources, with language, and revelations, to firm up our early hesitant footings . . . Ethology, Etho-Ecology, Bio-Genetics, Cultural-Genetics, to name a few. Penetrating voices, speaking in these dimensions that presage new horizons of higher consciousness for the Spirit of Man, have caught the ear of the new generations who would be free . . . Konrad Lorenz, R.D. Laing, Herbert Marcuse. And within their contexts, WE ARE THERE — if we will but seek at last to define and disclose ourselves.

In the long years between the miscalculations of, and the headlong flight of brothers from, that first dream of Liberation — and its rebirth in the Spring of 1969, the many elements of the earlier Society . . . continually grouping and regrouping . . .

devotedly attempted to retain such basic principles of the Mattachine Idea as were salvagable when the root thinking (the radicalism motivating and inspiring the original vision) had been precipitated out. Adjusting their sights to the more tried-and-true forms of the middle way the new groups sought respectability rather than self-respect, parliamentary individualism rather than the collective trust of brotherhood, law reform and quiet assimilation rather than a community of rich diversity within the Family of Man. One might say that they sought to be exactly the same as the D.A.R. — except in bed.

This is not to say that the long and futile struggle, of the Homosexual Minority Movement to wear shoes that could never fit, did not have its gallant and contributive aspects. For it did — and a number of the consequences are far-reaching. Occasionally these managed momentarily to deodorize spots in our putrefying Society within which the Organizations wheel-and-deal. Also, in the larger healthier growing edges of social-consciousness Homophile organizations have postulated several right questions . . . albeit for mostly the wrong reasons.

Yet — for all that — until now, the head count of the memberships throughout the United States was never able to equal the thousands who rallied, in California alone, to the original Mattachine Idea between 1950 and 1953. Why do the shoes of middle-class respectability and conformity never seem to fit? Why do our essays at right questions time and again bear witness that we postulated wrong reasons? Why is it that Homosexuals presumably high-principled and disciplined enough to join and serve the Minority's Democratically-run Service Organizations comprise so small a percentage of the Minority? Why is it that non-organized Homosexuals — in their thousands over the years — opine smugly that Homosexuals kid themselves when they think they can effectively organize at all . . . because they really have nothing in common but their sex drives? Why? Why? WHY?

Because . . . when the Queens of closet rank chose to seek respectability by turning their backs resolutely on their brothers and sisters of the Street, they shut out from their perspectives the first and primary task laid upon the Minority by the Original Mattachine Vision — the task of discovering "What ARE we?" "WHO ARE we?"

We Homosexuals know much about

ourselves we've never talked about — even TO ourselves. History knows much about us that it doesn't know it knows . . . but WE could recognize it if we would look. Myth and Legend, Tradition and Folk-ways know much about us that has been deliberately obscured by endless politically-motivated Conspiracies of Silence . . . WHICH WE CAN EXPLODE IF WE WILL. As the Free Generation, and the Third World, have revealed beyond any possibility of longer denying it, our vain-hallowed culture is slowly sinking into a veritable kitchen-midden of obscenely-generated *unexamined assumptions*, learned by rote, inherited without question, and having not one shred of a basis for possible justification in the modern world. That the three largest oppressed Minorities in the United States today are victims of politically-motivated unexamined false assumptions, sanctimoniously parading as religious *Revelations* of our Hallowed Western Civilization, should come as no surprise.

From the marriage of Hellenistic philosophy and Judaeo-Roman politics, projected to God-head and named Christianity, we proudly inherit through *REVELATION* the unassailable proof that *Women are inferior*. From the Divine Revelations of Renaissance Humanism, and the Reformational Elect, we inherit the unassailable proof that *both Women and non-Whites are inferior*. From the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant "Best of all possible Worlds" we inherit the unassailable proofs that *both non-whites and Queers are inferior*.

Second-class citizens ALL . . . it should not be surprising that as oppressed and harried Minorities *we three* learned lessons and share certain levels of consciousness in common. As with the largest oppressed Minority — Women — the Homosexual Minority knows the shape and substance of Male Chauvinism — we too have lived under its lash all our lives. As with the second largest oppressed Minority — the non-Whites, the Homosexual Minority knows the bitter harvest of being the Village Nigger!

*Women* know that no man has ever been able to describe or project what it means to be, and to feel like, a self-appreciating woman. Yet she does not need to be explained or defended. She is existential. She IS! Today Blacks are making it unmistakably clear that no *Whiteman* has ever been able to describe or project what it means, and feels like, to be a self-appreciating Black. Nor does he need to be explained or defended.

He is existential. He IS! We Homosexuals know that no *Heterosexual man* has ever been able to describe, or begin to project, what it means to be, and feel like, a self-appreciating Homosexual. To update Descartes, *COGITO ET SENTIO ERGO SUM!* And for each of our three Minorities — to *know this is to make us free within ourselves*, requires us (whether we like it or not) to move to social consciousness, and foretells our several potentials as allies in the struggle for the new world a-coming.

What is it that we know of ourselves that no Heterosexual as yet has begun to perceive? It is that we Homosexuals have a psychic architecture in common, we have a Dream in common, man to man, woman to woman. For all of us, and for each of us, in the dream of Love's ecstasy . . . The God descends — the Goddess descends; and for each of us the transcendence of that apotheosis is mirrored in the *answering glances of the lover's eyes*. FOR WE SHARE THE SAME VISION . . . Like to Like. Heterosexuals do not partake of such a communion of spirit. Their's is . . . other. And — in this mating of like to like — what is it we seek? Not the power and vanities of dynasty, not wealth or property, not social contract or security, not status, nor preferment, as does the Parent Society. We seek union, EACH WITH HIS SIMILAR — heart to mirroring heart — free spirit to free spirit!

We are a Minority of a common Spirituality, we are a Free People . . . and we have always been so — throughout the millennia, each in his generation! No allegiance, no sanctions, no taboos or prohibitions, no laws have ever been encompassing enough or powerful enough to stand between us and the pursuit of our Dream. It was no accident, no poetic stroke of whimsy, that translated our persons — in the King James Testament — as "Fools", nor translated our vision guests as "folly". Tradition knew us well — "Fools rush in where Angels fear to tread!" Throughout our millennia we were, and are now, in the faithful service to the Great Mother — Earth — Nature, and in loyal service to her children — the people who preserved the Great Mother's ecological harmonies, both psychically and materially, in the ritual of their everyday lives. To those of her communities who granted us respect and acknowledged our integrity, we gave loyalty beyond ordinary measures of endurance . . . Les Societes Mattachines of both Feudal and Monarchical France give



ample testimony to that. BUT — to tyrants, and to alien usurping Gods, the clear unflagging flame of our Dream was — and remains still — heresy — treason — witchcraft — the unforgivable sin. Towards the expropriators of the Spirit of Man we Homosexuals are forever alien; in their eyes we are forever Anathema!

We Homosexuals are a Minority who share each other's Dream whether we speak the same language or not, who share a common psychic vision whether we share the same cultural make-up or not, all the days of our years. Though we are born with all the aggressive fighting instincts of our common humanity, the psychic architecture — characteristic to our Minority natures — begins to reshape and redirect these vital energies with almost the first stirrings in us of spiritual consciousness. The aggressive competitiveness, taken for granted as an eternal verity by our Heterosexual Parent Society, in us *redirects*, under the guidance of the Blueprint of our Minority nature. In us, this genetic redirection transforms our perceptions of unconsciously-inherited animal Maleness or Femaleness into appreciations of — nay even a life-long passion to call forth, to call into being, the grace and tenderness *behind* that competitive strength, the humility and compassion *behind* that territorial ruthlessness, in our fellow siblings of the Great Mother. For grace and tenderness, humility and compassion are revealed to us as being implicit in the *aspect* . . . the spirituality . . . of the Masculine Ideal, the Feminine Ideal. He who answers, she who answers, our call into being is our LIKE, our SIMILAR, . . . *the one who finds in our aspect the ideal we find in his*, — that ideal which we can understand in him, in her, and cherish in ourselves, because we share its outlook in common. This shared commonality of outlook is a world-view totally unfamiliar to the accrued experience of our Parent Society. It is a view of the life experience *through a different window*.

The Free Generation, the young Millions, now striving to perceive the dimensions of the Family of Man, also seek to achieve that redirection of the fists of territorial aggression into the compassionate hand-clasp of the Community of Spirit. That capacity for redirection has characterized our Minority from the beginning. We were its proving-grounds in the processes of natural selection. We carried — we carry, through the millennia of lives-experiences, — the promise that one day all mankind might

be able to learn to make that redirection manifest.

For three hundred years, our useful contributive past in Western Culture has been pulverized and effaced by deliberate politically-motivated Conspiracies of Silence. In this hell of Anomie, we — of the Homosexual Minority — have been reduced to semi-conscious rudder-less wanderers, driven like sheep to conform to social patterns which atrophied our perceptions and shredded our souls, beset on every side by the bacilli of — to us — alien value-judgments which riddled the very sinews of our Dream. But now, even in this late hour, there is a light at the end of our long tunnel. There are voices on the wind giving dimensions to the freeing of the *Spirit* of Man. The time is *now* for our Minority to begin at last to comprehend what we have known for so long. The time is *NOW* for us to speak of, and to share, that which we have lived and preserved for so long. The reappearance of the "Gay Liberation Ideal" calls to each of us to stoke anew the passionate fires of our particular vision of the Community of Spirit. The breath-taking sweep of "Gay Liberation" challenges us to break loose from the lockstep expectations of Heterosexual life patterns so obliterating of our natures. Even the Free Generation, seeking a widened angle of worldview, challenges us to throw off the Dream-destroying shackles of alien thought that we may exhibit, at long last, the rich diversities of our deviant perceptions.

To liberate our Minority life-styles, we first must explode once and for all the obscene unexamined assumptions by which we *bind ourselves* into the obsolescent social conformities . . . as for instance our concern for the "Image" assumption. I conform to no Image; I define myself. WE DEFINE OURSELVES! To a people who would be free — images are irrelevancies. Again — we assume that to govern ourselves we must enact forcible restraints upon each other, and that the cumulative detriment will be negligible so long as these restraints are patently disguised as "Democratic" procedures. In this field the great unexamined assumption is that Robert's Rules of Order achieve a maximum of free expression within a minimum of collective restraints. To the competitive, to the territorialists, to the ego-ridden, to the status-seekers, of our decaying Society, the parliamentary coercions of "majority" votings . . . of special interest lobbyings . . . of cloak-room obli-

gations cunningly connived . . . of filibusterings and steam-rollerings . . . do appear to provide a set of minimal repressions whereby the random aggressions of delegates may be controlled. The sad truth is that, because of the failure of the Spirit of Man to surface into collective consciousness in our Western Society, these procedures serve only to assure the continued *domination of the pecking order*.

All this is NOT of us! these are the shoes which *never* have fitted us; these are the shackles of alien thought that — brain-washing us to accept a world-view through the WRONG window — hold us to our bondage. Our Homosexual Liberation Movement *must* consist of far-ranging Communities of Free Spirits. What have Free Peoples to do with politely-masked repressions of one another? With coercions, or with claims-laying upon one another? What have Free Peoples to do with the voting principles that divide people from one another, or with the pretentious mounting of resolutions? Each of these restrictions seeks to shame and cajole the many to conform to the ego-mania or the wishful-thinking of the few. Have we permitted our perceptions to become so atrophied that we can assume fellow Homosexuals, or ourselves for that matter, *vulnerable* to being shamed and cajoled by brain-washed sell-outs in our midst? Being shamed and cajoled by pressures inimical to our natures has been the ever-present bane of our Homosexual life-experience; we are past masters in the arts of dissembling, and/or vanishing under an invisible cloak, whenever such pressures threaten.

The Community of Free Spirits is not just a fantasy in the minds of wool-gatherers such as I. It has a history of long-lasting and exceedingly viable Societies outside of Western Europe (and even smaller contained communities within Western Europe) to recommend it. Anthropologists who, in recent years, have learned to perceive societal systems as things-in-themselves wholly within the context of their own self-developed referents, confess that individual life-styles within such systems are more free than life-styles conceived in Western Civilization. Our Homosexual Liberation Ideal *mandates* such a community of Free Spirits. Not for us the constrictions of political parties, of leaders who presume to speak for us, of experts who conspire to think for us, of alliances that obligate us to act in the name of others or that permit others to expropriate the use of ours. We

come together in a voluntary sharing of a spiritual outlook. We touch hearts. Together we grow in consciousness to generate issues, AND ACTIONS UPON THESE ISSUES, which make manifest the fleshing out of our shared world-vision. We consent, we affirm and re-affirm the Free Community of Spirit, we acknowledge a spokesman to voice our thinking when such voicings seem called for. Sometimes we may do a thing together and so we will act in the name of the Community. Other times we are, each or several, off on our own thing and here we act in the name of the self-liberated (or in the name of the group, depending entirely upon the specific Group's feelings in the matter.) BUT — within this Community — let the Spirit be betrayed, let coercion or opportunism attempt to bind any of us against our will . . . and PRESTO, like the Faeries of Folk-lore, suddenly we are no longer there. Shame me, call me names, resolve me to a position I do not share, couple me to an opinion I do not hold, vote my presence to an action against my grain . . . and I'm *long* gone. "Once bitten, twice shy!"

Our Faerie characteristic is our Homosexual Minority's central weakness . . . and, paradoxically, also the keystone of our enduring strength. For whether we are self-liberated, or still self-imprisoned within the territorial conformities of our oppressors, we Homosexuals are moved to answer *ONLY* when the call is to the special characteristics of our psychic natures. We Homosexuals are moved to act *ONLY* when the call — as heard in our hearts — is a Spirit call to freedom.

(This address was delivered to the Western Homophile Conference, held at the First Unitarian Church of Los Angeles, February 14, 15, 1970.)

#### SIGNS OF THE TIMES

The following advertisement appeared on page 30 of the April 10, 1970 issue of CHRISTIANITY TODAY:

*The Art of Understanding Your Mate*, by Cecil G. Osborne (Zondervan, 1970, 192 pp., \$4.95). Assumes that all married couples are to some extent incompatible because men and women are basically incompatible and offers practical suggestions toward a better understanding between husband and wife.

# Confessions of a Pseudo-Male Chauvinist

By MARTHA SHELLEY

I've always admired "masculine" women, despite the popular prejudice against women who step out of their traditional roles. This attitude has roots in my childhood. Somehow, inside the shy, bespectacled little girl was the vision of a woman jet pilot — the first woman on Mars — a woman brain surgeon — a guerrilla fighter in the French Resistance. Well, I haven't become any of those things, just a radical lesbian, a writer for the gay crusade — so I guess I'm not the epitome of passive femininity, even if I never did learn to fly a plane.

However, after I became involved with Women's Liberation, I began to notice something about myself that embarrassed me. I didn't really like women. In bed, yes — but all my friends were men. In rejecting the woman's role, from knitting to cooking to wearing mascara, I had also rejected women — except for women jet pilots, executives and astronauts. And since none of my female acquaintances piloted planes or managed General Motors for a living, I snobbishly (and self-destructively) treated women as sex objects and men as intellectual companions. In short, I was a pseudo male chauvinist.

So who's kidding whom? By identifying with the male oppressor class, I didn't become male or get any more privileges than other women. An Uncle Tom in a starched shirt makes a little more money than a black porter, but that doesn't make him white. As a pseudo male chauvinist, an Aunt Thomasina lesbian, I wasn't expected to do the dishes or bring my male friends their pipes and slippers — but I didn't come within light years of getting an executive job. And I didn't even get a mink.

I was putting myself down by despising my own sex for the roles we have been forced to play — despising the slave for being in chains instead of directing my anger towards the slavemaster who put her there. The trap of pseudo male chauvinism was so easy to fall into. It's easy to say: "How can I talk to someone whose head is full of recipes, soap operas and floor wax? Why didn't she go on to college and learn something? She must be lazy or halfwitted."

Not brainwashed. It never occurred to me that the average woman has been brainwashed into passivity and subservience — just as homosexuals have been brainwashed

into guilt feelings (which most of them still have). Women's oppression is the oldest form of oppression in the world, the deepest-rooted, the most subtle, the most widespread throughout the world. Blacks got the vote 100 years ago and are still struggling in agony against their oppression. Women, after oppression which goes back to the dawn of history, have not been liberated by a mere fifty years of possessing the right to vote. (Note: many people who accept the notion that bigotry is brainwashed into people are the very same people who say, "Why don't blacks or women study harder and pull themselves up by their bootstraps?") This line of thinking which finds excuses for the exploiter but condemns the exploited, is very popular in the United States today. Another example: the cigarette advertiser whose job is to get people hooked on a slow poison, "has to make a living within the system." The nicotine addict "should have more will power." In other words, you should have resisted all those ads that are calculated to undermine your resistance. If you didn't, it's your fault, not the fellow who makes the money off your habit — and I hope you have Blue Cross.)

It is easy to look at the kindly, intellectual gentlemen around me — and to forget that the leisure time they put into intellectual pursuits was stolen from wives and mothers who darned their socks, cooked their dinners, and worked as shopgirls to put these men through graduate school. Kingman Brewster, president of Yale University, recently objected to admitting more female students; he stated that it was the task of Yale to produce 1,000 male leaders for the U.S. every year.

Male leaders! — these self-assured, college-educated lords of the earth, every one of them brought up to believe that it is his birthright to rule over at least one woman!

I went to college (not Yale) with these gentlemen, saw them in all their arrogance of power — and to my shame, I admired them and strove to be like them. As gentlemen assured of power and status, they were polite to me — noblesse oblige — and I closed my eyes to their lower class counterparts. Now the lower class male hasn't got as many people to lord it over as does the upper class male. Furthermore, he is less polished, more direct. He doesn't seduce you by candlelight.

Every time I walk out in the street, in the ghetto where I live, I am subject to the open, brutal arrogance of these men. There's your male chauvinism laid on the line, the reality behind the courteous smile of a bank manager who refuses to consider you for promotion.

The charming southern gentleman, who has a thousand carefully constructed arguments in favor of maintaining segregated facilities, is but the thin veneer over the lynch mob. He will not stoop to do the dirty work — let the rednecks do it. The male psychology professor who argues for the necessity of male leadership and the importance of a woman building a man's ego, is but a mask on the face of a rapist. And the woman psychologist who backs him up and gently, deviously tells you to go back into the kitchen, is our pseudo male chauvinist. She's got her Uncle Tom job — and I wonder what it does to her mind, to her own sense of self-esteem, to behave in a way that is so contemptuous towards her sex.

Now before you go around beating yourself over the head for being a pseudo male chauvinist, or even worse, buttonholing some other woman and accusing her of the same, remember that most of our sisters haven't had too many choices. If you want to make it on the job — even just to keep the job — you have to kowtow to the men. Any woman who wanted to get ahead in any profession has had to play the game of being nice to the men, trying to convince them that she was not a threat to their egos, letting them take credit for her suggestions. And this sort of behavior — if you want to write for a newspaper, you get stuck with the fashion page and after a while you begin to justify what you are doing — will continue to be necessary for most women until the consciousness of the nation is changed; until the new consciousness of Women's Liberation has spread across the land so that no woman will be unaware of what she is doing.

I have walked on 42nd Street at night and seen dozens of my black sisters walking the streets in order to sell their bodies. They were well-dressed — better dressed than I was. And I have worked in Harlem and seen the schools they went to, and I have worked in downtown offices in New York City for \$75 a week — offices where they wouldn't hire a black woman to do anything but sweep the floor at night when no one could see her face — and do I dare

criticize these sisters? They couldn't get that \$75 a week legitimately, and now they get \$75 a night illegitimately. It's better than welfare, better than domestic work. And now that some jobs have opened up for black women, do you think the prostitutes can go straight now? Who will hire them, women with convictions and jail sentences? When black women college graduates are dying to get those secretarial jobs?

The psychology professor who defended the domination of the male was a man I admired . . . I craved the respect, the attention of the intellectual male and flattered myself to think that I was considered superior to the average housewife. Except I wasn't. To those men I was a bit of a freak, like a talking dog — amusing, but not to be taken seriously. And down in the ghetto I knew exactly where I stood: "Hey, baby, wanna f---?"

Many educated and/or butch-type women behave just as I did. Most straight women prefer men to women as friends, and will break dates with other women at the last minute if a man calls up. Many butch-types of my acquaintance — including myself — have expected their lovers to behave as housewives; in other words, we have often oppressed other women in the same way that men oppress straight women.

It isn't easy to become aware of your own oppression. It's much easier to avoid noticing a humiliating situation, to pretend that it doesn't affect you — that other women may be oppressed by their husbands or lovers or bosses, or may be brainwashed

## BACK ISSUES OF THE LADDER ARE AVAILABLE

Prior to October/November 1968, THE LADDER was issued monthly for the most part; we now issue six magazines a year. THE LADDER year begins with the October/November issue each year.

Where available, copies of each issue in Volumes 13 and 14 (Oct./Nov. 1968 through April/May 1970) cost \$1.25. Individual issues before that time are \$1.00 per magazine.

EVERY MAGAZINE IS NEW UNTIL  
YOU'VE READ IT!



but not you.

If you think that you aren't particularly oppressed or brainwashed, try this test: pick up a copy of "Playboy" magazine and look at the cartoons. Do you think they're funny? Now look again at how they portray women — as stupid broads, ever-eager sex objects. Turn on your television and watch the commercials — the ignorant housewife listening to the authoritative male voice as he tells her which floor wax to use. Look at a "woman's" magazine — compare its vocabulary and intellectual content to any men's magazine. Do you notice these insults to your sex — or do you just pass over them, assuming that the average housewife really does have an IQ of 35 and deserves to be addressed in this manner? Would you notice if they were insults to your race or religion?

If you aren't aware of these constant, daily insults, you've been brainwashed into ignoring and accepting them. If you prefer male friends or male bosses, if your "respect" for other women consists of opening doors for them but despising their conversation — welcome to the pseudo male chauvinist club.

And if, after reading this article, you think I mean YOU — yes, you personally — welcome, sister, to Women's Liberation.

## Bennett

By LEANNE BOSWORTH

Seeing her on the bus every day — she must live outside the city. Takes the bus almost as far as you do. Such pretty hair — would look wonderful spread out on a pillow. So chic — to impress all the young execs at the office, you suppose.

Look down at your loafers — what the hell, Bennett, it's a print shop. You'd break your neck. You got used to being your own kind of girl a long time ago. Smile at yourself. Look at you, giving up your seat to an old lady — not to show up the guys, but you're next to her now.

"Sorry, didn't mean to squash you." (Didn't you, Bennett?) From now on you take an earlier bus. Think about this sometimes, though, and wonder about that every tenth man statistic. Are you too picayune? Fastidious, you comfort yourself. After Lea, what else could you be? But it's been a long time — so long that the spring doesn't

even hurt this year.

How alone we are. The Isolated Society. Being gay doesn't make the difference; being urban does. "Reach out toward me. Care for me. Be my friend." All together now. In busses. In car-pools. In apartment complexes. At lunch counters. Never any privacy. Never any closeness. Always the asking eyes.

"Excuse me, thank you, I'm sorry, excuse me" DAMN! Wrong stop. Her stop. Tomorrow is even-up-your-keel day.

"Need some help? You look confused." Smile Bennett — she's smiling. "Wrong stop. I don't function in the morning."

"Coffee help?" Look up. Meet her eyes and know that there is now a question in yours.

"Where?"

"Around the corner." Walk and say nothing more. Feel the irony and the self-mockery — and don't swear — for God's sake don't swear at her. Lipstick for you tomorrow, Bennett. When you start getting picked up by stray people-collectors, it's getting bad.

The door is held for you and you realize that you have been out-classed. She has taken the street side of the walk. She has seen you seated first. She has ordered. Before you know it, you're angry.

"Now wait a minute, I'm . . ."

"Cute."

So sit there. Wonder how to articulate an exclamation point. Feel the laughter bubble up in her (and you!). But the coffee has come and you are being ordered to consume the sweet roll and informed that you didn't eat breakfast. You are going to be late for work, Bennett.

Where are all the rejected and hidden Lesbian and homosexual manuscripts? The publisher of A PLACE FOR US by Isabel Miller wants to see them. Bleeker Street Press, Box 625, Old Chelsea Station, New York, N.Y. 10011.

## We Need This Now

By LORITA J. WHITEHEAD

Recently on television I watched an interview with a few girls on the radical flank of the Women's Liberation Movement. The name of the particular group I did not catch, nor the names of the girls I most remember. This is what I remember, as close to the exact words as I can recall. The interviewer (CBS News) asked, "Then you think that all relations between men and women must end?" "Yes." "Then will women turn to women?" "Yes. As sisters, rebels, comrades-in-arms." "But what will women do about fulfilling their nature? What will women do for love?" "No one knows what woman's nature is. And love is just a word. It doesn't mean anything. Love doesn't exist. It's just a word we've got to throw out."

"Love doesn't exist." She could have said, "Yes, some of us will love women, some because they have always loved women sexually and will always want to, others because they are too bitter and resentful of men. And some will still love men, but either in totally open and passing relationships or, if long-term, on an open and equal basis which seldom exists in marriage as it is today. Others of us will love both men and women. Still others, like me, will make no ties of love with anyone, because sex in our experience has been repulsive and love a fraud." Something like that would have shown some comprehension of the range of people, the range of experiences and needs and capacities and possibilities, some sense of the breadth and depth of human existence. But what does she say? "Love doesn't exist!" She legislates that for all mankind and womankind. That world she would legislate for us all is a world so hollow and dead and nightmarish, I wonder how she can keep from slitting her throat with the horror of it. A world which exists only for roving bands of comrades-in-hate. After those bands dedicated to disillusioning human beings with what they call the illusion of love have done their work, let us hope there will mercifully follow bands of missionaries to teach people how to commit suicide as quickly and painlessly as possible. Or perhaps by then such missionaries will be funded to build huge prisons or hospitals where we can sit in our hygienically solitary cells and learn to be catatonic, to forget that we live in our bodies and breathe air.

That girl made me think of something I

just read in a beautiful book (a book that she must read). The book is Loren Eiseley's *The Firmament of Time*, and this is the passage:

*Some time ago, in a magazine of considerable circulation, I spoke about the role of love in human society, and about pressing human problems which I felt, rightly or wrongly, would not be solved by the penetration of space. The response amazed me, in some instances, by its virulence. I was denounced for interfering with the colonization of other planets, and for corruption of the young. Most pathetically of all, several people wrote me letters in which they tried to prove, largely for their own satisfaction, that love did not exist, that parents abused and murdered their children and children their parents . . . It was all too plain that these individuals were seeking rationalizations behind which they might hide from their own responsibilities. They were in the whirlpool, that much was evident. But so are we all. (Atheneum Publishers, p. 132)*

Who can contemplate the dazzling miracle of our exploding universe without wonder and awe and love? "The wonder of wonders," wrote Heidegger, "is that there is something rather than nothing." That is a statement of love. Who can really see the miracle that is a leaf, or a spider's web, or paintings left on the wall of a cave, and not feel wonder and love? We can't unless we are capable of wonder and love. We can't love anything unless we are capable of loving ourselves. We can't love anything unless we are capable of loving each other. Love does not exist? If that is true, then let us end ourselves, for we are dead. — But NO! Love does exist! The word *does* have meaning!

Another girl said that all pregnancy must end, not only because of the population explosion but because all women hate pregnancy, that pregnancy is hideous and hell and that it has never been more than that except in the myths of men. (She may speak for many women, but she doesn't speak for me. Bearing and nursing my two children was a private and personal, overwhelmingly glorious experience for me, one which had nothing to do with any male myth, or any myth.) The alternatives which she sees are, of course, test-tube babies and the rearing of all children by state institu-

tions. Certainly children would be better off in institutions than in homes of violent conflict, of lovelessness, of neglect, which unfortunately means many children now. They would be better off in institutions than in such homes only because there they might have a chance — a very little higher than zero — of making a loving connection with some human being, whereas in such homes, or with a single parent alone who hates herself and them and life, they would have no chance at all. But certainly child-rearing in institutions is no positive alternative. Studies ranging from machine-fed rhesus monkeys to autistic children have given clear enough pictures for anyone who wants to look at the kind of automaton vegetable we could expect to emerge from such institutions. A full-fledged human being which, contrary to these girls, I take to mean a being capable of curiosity and growth and wonder *and love*, does not spring fully armed like Athena from her father's skull (or from fatherly sperm in a tort); a child must be taught to grow, and the teacher is human love. A child gathers together his sense of identity, his sense of self-esteem, of confidence to explore and express himself, from the *loving* eyes of others. It is as simple as this: a child must have that love or he does not grow. Or he grows only into a fearful, bitter, spiteful person incapable of anything but hate. I have been told by a psychiatrist whom I respect that it doesn't matter whether it is a father and a mother, a father, a mother, a grandmother, an aunt, a nanny, whoever — as long as somewhere someone (or ones) establishes a deep and lasting loving relationship with a child. We don't need to resort to test-tubes to control the population explosion. The women who do want to have babies shall have to restrict them to two, and the women who don't want to will no longer feel any moral or social compulsion to have children. With that compulsion gone, the numbers of children born will be reduced to the possible level and at the same time the many ways children can be raised with love can open and flower in all their possibilities. Two women together could raise children — their own or someone else's — or two men, or a woman alone, or a man alone, or a woman and man together as it has been — as long as those children are raised in love! The answer is not to institutionalize ourselves more; children for decades now have been so institutionalized by schools, market and media

which give only a cynical damn about them, that as a culture, independent thought, clear and fresh perception and genuine feelings have almost dropped from our capacities. Certainly in performance we seem capable of little more than mindless roving (or milling) in gangs, gangs of sheep stupor or sheep hate. The girl who said from her absolute cynicism that love does not exist is sheep-sister to her sheep-brother counterpart on Madison Avenue who has been telling us for years now that *love*, that greasy kid stuff, does not exist, that love we all know (how long we've looked at his cynical wink) is no more than Gadget Sex, the realities of which are bad breath, bacteria in the armpits, and — bless us — the cash-nexus. And she believed him! Big brother taught little sister — and look! She has swallowed the whole putrid mess without a hesitation or a gulp, down to the last soggy corn flake. Another victory for the vegetables, for the loveless. Allies under the cloth.

No, the way is not to test-tubes, eugenics and institutions, to more and more lovelessness. One of the right ways has already begun. It is to attack the cynical lovelessness which sells us love as Miss America, and Bunny Girl, and "Super Feminine Deodorant Spray," and "Slims." And all the fury should not be spent just for women's plight. The standards of identity, of what one can expect from life, are just as putrid and cheap and empty for the men. No human being in any positive sense of the word could emerge from the blueprints for humanity presented by our media, manufactured by our industries and swallowed, in lieu of anything else, by millions! Is that why we have become so violent as a people? I think so. Because no one is *living* his life! The attack against Madison Avenue's Woman has, as we all know, started. But once that makes a dent — and even before it does, even *now* — the image presented to men as Man, that timid, mindless corporate cog who fills his well-groomed slot either in the Sex industries or the Big Kill factories and then goes home to the TV Football Circus and to play Bunny Boy to Bunny Girl with plenty of Mennon After Shave to salve his sense of his own uninterestingness — that death trap must go, too. Most men fulfill that image (these cynics — they know what they're doing) just as most women fulfill the one oozed out to them, but all of them — men and women — are loveless and unfulfilled and *miserable*! Woman, yes,

(Continued Page 26)

## Nine Poems By ELSA GIDLOW

### THE ARTIST

Let us leave off loving, my Lady,  
You have kissed me grey  
And still I have no peace.  
We thought we could make the night  
A tapestry of passion.  
Dear love! What a vain caprice.

Where's the immortal design  
We thought we had splashed on the indigo cloth?  
And where is the cloth?  
Dawn is forever the cynic:  
He shows us love is the flame,  
Our flesh the eternal moth.

Lady . . . loose me and rise.  
We are brief as apple blossom  
And I am shadowed by thought of the end.  
The hours are thieves, Time a beggar  
And we have little to spend.

I ache for the brush in my hand.  
The thrall of the compliant pigment  
Governs my blood.  
I will paint you, my Lady,  
The afterlove glow in your face;  
I would deify you if I could  
With enchantments of color,  
Bind you with fetters of terrible beauty  
Fast to my canvas forever,  
Give you the eternity God has denied you,  
Bind you to life with art's sacred chains  
That death cannot sever.

Love has betrayed us enough with its treacherous wonder;  
Let us go now while we ache with its magic  
Or what is the gain?  
Art is our one immortality,  
All we may win from the gods  
In exchange for our labor and pains.

Elsa Gidlow

### EPISODE

#### BEING DIFFERENT

In a dogs' world  
Being different  
Is no distress to the cat.

Should I —  
Though less elegant —  
Be less wise?

Elsa Gidlow

I have robbed the garrulous streets,  
Thieved a fair girl from their blight,  
I have taken her for a sacrifice  
That I shall make to this fleeting night.

I have brought her, laughing  
To my moon-enchanted garden.  
For what will be done there  
I ask no man's pardon.

Elsa Gidlow



# INVOCATION TO SAPPHO

Sappho  
Sister/Mother  
free—  
souled, fire-hearted  
Psappha of Mitylene on  
sea-lapped Lesbos  
miracle of a woman  
(Strabo wrote)  
now now  
let me declare  
devotion.

Not light years love years:  
on how many love years  
across fields of the dead  
does your fragrance  
travel to me?

Since maidenhood in brain blood  
by you haunted  
in my own armpits I have breathed  
sweat of your passion  
in the burning crotch of the lover  
tasted your honey  
heard felt in my pulse  
day-long  
night-through  
lure of your song's beat  
insistently echo.  
By dust of five-and-twenty centuries  
not smothered  
by book-consuming flames of  
the hate-filled churchman  
unsilenced  
your fame only haloed made  
more splendid

Sappho, little and dark  
The Beautiful, Plato called you  
(though his Republic had  
grudging use for poets  
Sappho, whose veins ran fire  
whose nerves  
quivered to loves illicit now  
in your day  
honored by the noblest  
Sappho, all roses  
do we not touch  
across the censorious years?

Elsa Gidlow

# CONSTANCY

You're jealous if I kiss this girl and that,  
You think I should be constant to one mouth;  
Little you know of my too quenchless drouth.  
My sister, I keep faith with love, not lovers.

Life laid a flaming finger on my heart,  
Gave me an electric golden thread,  
Pointed to a pile of beads and said,  
Link me one more glorious than the rest.

Love's the thread, my sister, you a bead,  
An ivory one, you are so delicate.  
These first burned ash-grey — far too passionate.  
Further on the colors mount and sing.

When the last bead's painted with the last design  
And slipped upon the thread, I'll tie it so,  
Then, smiling quietly, I'll turn and go  
While vain Life boasts her latest ornament.

Elsa Gidlow

# OF A CERTAIN FRIENDSHIP

Odd how you entered my house quietly,  
Quietly left again,  
While you stayed you ate at my table,  
Slept in my bed.  
There was much sweetness,  
Yet little was done, little said.  
After you left there was pain,  
Now there is no more pain.  
But the door of a certain room in my house  
Will always be shut.  
Your fork, your plate, the glass you drank from,  
The music you played  
Are in that room  
With the pillow where last your head was laid.  
And there is one place in my garden  
Where it's best that I set no foot.

Elsa Gidlow

(Elsa Gidlow was born in England, grew up in a French-Canadian village and moved to New York City at age 21, where she became associate editor of PEARSON'S MAGAZINE. Her first book of poetry, ON A GREY LINE, appeared in 1924 (Chicago, Will Ransom publisher). In 1925 she migrated to California and for a number of years edited a trade journal before becoming a full-time free lance writer. Her poetry has appeared in dozens of

magazines: VOICES, SATURDAY REVIEW, PEARSON'S, NEW MASSES, AMERICAN POETRY JOURNAL, POETRY, etc., and in many anthologies including CALIFORNIA POETS, N.Y., Henry Harrison, 1932, TODAY'S LITERATURE, N.Y., American Book Co., 1935, and that omnibus volume of variant and Lesbian poetry, CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN WOMEN POETS, edited by Tooni Gordi, N.Y., Henry Harrison, 1936.)

# LOVE'S ACOLYTE: GIRL TO WOMAN

Many have loved you with lips and fingers  
And lain with you till the moon went out;  
Many have brought you lover's gifts;  
And some have left their dreams on your doorstep.

But I who am youth among your lovers  
Come like an acolyte to worship,  
My thirsting blood restrained by reverence,  
My heart a wordless prayer.

The candles of desire are lighted,  
I bow my head afraid before you,  
A mendicant who craves your bounty  
Ashamed of what small gifts she brings.

Elsa Gidlow

# YOU SAY

You say you will not think of me:  
You shut me out and count your beads,  
The chaplet of your rules and doubts.  
But lovers never think of creeds.

You'll fill your mind with serious things:  
You'll think of God, or Infinity,  
Of a lover whose last charm is gone,  
Of anything in the world but me.

Yet every thought will lead you back,  
Infinity grow far and dim,  
And God, with His sense of irony,  
Will never let you think of Him.

Elsa Gidlow

# EXPERIENCE

Now you are gone I kiss your dented pillow  
And wonder if it hungers like my breast  
For the dear head we both have held in rest.

I said once: Love alone cannot assuage  
My thirst, my hunger, love has no reply  
For that wild questioning, for this fierce cry;

I said, there is no kiss can feed me now,  
Perhaps love is life's flower: I seek the root;  
Yea, I have loved and love is dead sea fruit.

Yet I lie here and kiss your dented pillow,  
A trembling girl who loves you overmuch —  
A harp in anguish for the player's touch.

Elsa Gidlow

## WE NEED THIS NOW (Continued)

must have the jobs she qualifies for, the pay she earns, the degrees she earns, the participation and recognition all her many creative and cultural contributions deserve — I couldn't agree more, we all couldn't agree more — but we must realize at the same time that most of the jobs men now monopolize *stink* and are not fit work for human beings. While we are fighting for the full participation of woman we must also fight to create a culture that is worth participating in. What good have we served if we attack Maidenform bras and then work to help produce more Maidenform bras, more collapsible, souped-up cars for Bunny Boy and Bunny Girl to (as the advertising goes) "escape in" (once we're not all so desperately unsatisfied with our lives, will we buy more cars, and that kind of cars?), more guns and rockets and firebombs for Bunny Boys to play pop-gun with, pretending at self-esteem and purposefulness they do not feel? While we're attacking the empty, loveless Image of Woman and, I hope, equally the empty, loveless Image of Man, we must also attack the empty, loveless jobs. That means we must work for (not just against) culture in a really huge way; we must all of us think together and work to create meaningful, purposeful, self-fulfilling (and non-polluting) work, the production of objects which are of solid high quality (not foods full of fillers and additives and poisons, not objects which in the making poison and which by calculation fall apart in the hand), objects which are really useful, not just junk which only mindless and mesmerized Bunnies would buy, objects in which a woman or a man making or selling them could take pride, not just cynical contempt. We've got to help create a climate of widely active and high quality art and thought as well, so that there is a viable alternative to mindless Muscle Shows and loveless Deodorized Sex between automatons. I think about that all the time. Let me tell you my dream of what we might do, and then you tell yours. Maybe together we can find ways and begin.

What I dream of, which I think might offer economic alternatives to psychological buying and to war industries and at the same time be an antidote to institutional anonymity and conformism, is to create in every town, in every city, borough or area, a spring festival on the Athenian scale — with locally written and produced and

acted theatre, sport competitions for all ages, writing competitions awarded with substantial prizes and local publication, and the same for painting and sculpture, and for music composition and performance. People's imaginations are so starved for real food, if it could be begun in a really vital way even in one town or city area, I think it would attract so much interest (and money, too) that it would spread like brush fire. I'm thinking of something like the Shakespearean Festival in Ashland, Oregon, which I understand (and hope) depends on local effort, but I think of that made much broader and combined with the dancing and singing in the streets of the Carnival in Rio before Lent. Not Shakespeare or Ibsen or O'Neill or Williams. Let all those be done by professional companies and by local players during the year; for the Festival let it be only locally written plays new that year, so that people will start at last to use their human imaginations again, use them from scratch. And poetry readings. And a market created where made or grown things can be bartered, not for money but in exchange — a song or poem for a hand-thrown pot, a painting for a hand-made and personally designed chair, a designed and made dress or pair of sandals for a basket of grown flowers. Maybe such a Carnival, such a Festival, would revitalize all our activities: maybe we could restore again real "participatory democracy," like the so desperately missed town meetings that once upon a time really were *meetings*, and maybe our churches so that religion could mean something again, and certainly not least, our schools. Maybe education could again become more than schools; maybe even we could learn to talk to each other again, to teach others in a neighborhood square as Socrates and Plato did. This, anyway, is my dream. Is it impossible, hopelessly naive? Then tell me your dream. Let us dream together and then work together to make it happen. We've got to change an economy which depends for its life-blood on an idiot level of culture, and we've got to change the idiot culture which would want such an economy. That's exactly the "revolution" we hope we are in, and nothing less will do. There is simply no point in throwing away your Bunny costume only to sit and make more of the same for others to be caged in.

And, lastly, let me make a plea for tolerance, for comprehension of our human range and our positive human possibilities. What was finally most appalling about those

girls interviewed was the way they projected their own attitudes and needs as the rigid and fixed Truth for all women, now and forever. What both the advertisers and the missionaries of categorical destruction need to realize is that human activities such as religion, art, schools, marriages, friendships, and love are not rigid Platonic Ideas relayed from a demon god through their media messengers in the popular culture. They are open-ended; they are creative; in other words, they are what the people in them are able to make them or not make them. A lot of marriages are miserable, a lot of homosexual relationships are miserable, a lot of single people without any ties are miserable; but, conversely, heterosexual people can also be happy, and many are; homosexual people can be happy, and many are; single people can live full and loving lives, and many do. Certainly if people can only think of themselves and others in the popular stereotypes, then what they do together can only be the popular stereotype. We must always keep in view our human creativity, our human freedom, our human range. We must not dictate to each other. I believe with all my soul, as does every reader of this magazine, that women have the right to love women (and men to love men) and that all covert social tyranny and all overt official law against homosexual love between consenting adults must be struck down. But doesn't the heterosexual or the bisexual person have the same rights to exist and fulfill herself? I and other bisexuals have insisted on our right to love members of our own sex as much as purely homosexual people have. No law and no group could keep me from loving a woman. And just as no law and no group

can keep me from loving a woman, so I will not allow any law or any group ever to tell me that I should not love a man. Love and sexual patterns of people, whether homosexual, bisexual or heterosexual, are nobody's business but the people's themselves. Don't we know this by now? Can't we have the same toleration and respect for others different from ourselves which we have always asked for? Should I and the woman I love abandon the husbands and the children we love and with whom we are deep deeply happy just because it is now being pronounced over us that love does not exist, that child-bearing and rearing are hideous, and that marriage is hell? Exchanging one kind of fat cat Puritan tyrant for another kind is not to improve matters. What we need — desperately need — is to exchange lovelessness in all its forms for *love* — real love in all its many varieties: between women and women, between men and men, between women and men, between parent and child, between youth and age, between black and white, between teacher and student, between worker and his work, between citizen and his community, between the human mind and the experience of being alive. Nothing short of that will do.

*(Lorita Whitehead is 31, a U.S. citizen now living in Vancouver, British Columbia. She is a graduate of University of Wisconsin, is married and has two children. She considers herself a "lazy but sometimes publishing poet" and has appeared in a number of Canadian little magazines, and in the States in THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY, POETRY NORTH-WEST, and THE LADDER.)*

## Ladies, Cowardice Does Not Become You

By LENNOX STRONG

The most literate view of the Women's Liberation movement is not found in the underground papers and organizational pamphlets but in the new quarterly, APHRA. Published from the home of Editor Elizabeth Fisher, Box 335, Springtown, Pennsylvania 18081, at the modest cost of \$3.50 a year, APHRA is named for Aphra Behn, the first woman to make her living as a writer.

The first two issues of APHRA — Volume 1, No. 1, Fall 1969 and Volume 1, No. 2, Winter 1970 — make it clear that LAD-

DER readers are, for the most part, going to want this quarterly.

Contributors include novelist and poet Jane Mayhall, poet and short story writer Jean Garrigue, novelist and short story writer Isabel Miller, and short story writer Sylvia Berkman. All of these names are familiar as well to students of Lesbian literature, and the last three named have made substantial and excellent contributions to the field. Indeed, Miss Miller's story "Coming of Age in Pectoral" (APHRA, Winter 1970) might well have appeared in the

## LADDER.

Leading feminist Rita Mae Brown has a poem in the Winter 1970 issue, and readers will be pleased to read an essay of hers reprinted from another liberation magazine in this issue of the LADDER, entitled "Say It Isn't So."

The by now-famous liberationist play **BUT WHAT HAVE YOU DONE FOR ME LATELY?** by Myrna Lamb is in the Fall 1969 issue. This is not pertinent here, but the play is excellent.

On the negative side, there are a couple of snide remarks made about Lesbians in one of these issues. A small point this, but a valid one in any assessment of the Women's Liberation movement. Only by fully recognizing the assistance more than available in their own ranks and elsewhere among Lesbians, will these women succeed in obtaining our mutual goals.

The quality level in APHRA is astonishingly high in so young a magazine, and Miss Fisher is to be complimented for this and encouraged to reach even higher. Wholly absent, and pleasantly so, is the shrill tone sometimes found in the periodicals that fea-

ture news in the movement. The only low note sounded, as far as I can determine, occurs in the Winter 1970 issue in an article called "The Woman's Rights Movement: 3 Views" by Nora Harlow. This consists of a collected review of three non-fiction titles in the field. One of the books reviewed — **EVERYONE WAS BRAVE** by William L. O'Neill, Chicago, Quadrangle Books, 1969, is deservedly scored for its "sexist" views. However, in refuting Mr. O'Neill, Miss Harlow makes the mistake of misinterpreting (to put it charitably) the life of a very famous and clearly Lesbian woman, Carey Thomas, long-time president of Bryn Mawr. Whether or not Mr. O'Neill is using the comments on Lesbians being prominent in the women's movement as a weapon, it does not enhance Miss Harlow's rebuttal to refute something that is quite patently true and, indeed, can be proven.

What it amounts to is this, sisters. Those among you who are not Lesbian would be wise to recognize that some of your best friends are, and not alienate them. Ladies, cowardice does not become you.

## The Best Women Are Thin And Rich

"Silva Thins are like women . . . the best ones are thin and rich . . ." Feel insulted? You should . . . on two counts: as a woman and as a consumer.

I haven't made up my mind yet if Silva Thins are symbolically appealing to homosexual males, with their aloof man who won't let a woman near his Silva Thins . . . or if they feel their "hero" is the epitome of masculinity. Personally, I find him intolerable. Perhaps that's because I'm neither thin nor rich.

This is the sort of advertising that nauseates me. To some, Silva Thins may taste rich . . . others (male or female) may like the size. But what in the world good women have to do with good cigarettes is beyond me, and an insult to anyone's intelligence.

What is this big kick that's on to make women look like absolute fools? White knights are flying in and out of their windows . . . marriages are about to break up shortly before the Man from Glad enters with his lock-proof, seal-proof, water-proof, mustard-proof plastic bag . . . the most important thing a woman can do is sit around a card table talking about furniture polish . . . if your breath is bad he won't marry

you . . . and your husband has to show you how to make coffee because you're a Maxwell House bride. About the best thing that could happen to a woman these days is to eat Cheerios because they give her go power. And finally . . . there's a cigarette for the two of you . . .

The problem is that it's so subtle. We can't see the forest for the trees. Constantly we're bombarded with these degrading ads to the point that we begin to accept them ourselves. Striving for identity is a hard thing these days. They pick the most typical woman . . . put her in the most typical kitchen . . . with the most typical appliances so we can all identify with her. Rats! I don't want a typical kitchen.

And then there's Rosemary DeCamp, with the Borateem package in her left hand, saying, "Well, you know me . . . I like my clothes really white . . ." I know her?

It's really getting out of hand, and despite the Women's Liberation Front's extremist tactics . . . I hardly think they're getting anywhere . . . as long as the ads keep telling us that the best women are thin and rich.

(Reprinted from *THE WEEKENDER*, Traverse City, Michigan, April 23-30, 1970.)

## Say It Isn't So

By RITA MAE BROWN

Female Liberation in Boston has long contained some of my favorite people in the movement. Last November at the Congress to Unite Women the New York radicals fought side by side with our Boston sisters to cut through some of the NOW bullshit. We felt good about each other and when ten of us went up there over the Washington's birthday weekend, we were elated. Our joy was short-lived.

Saturday night, Female Liberation presented a panel discussion that divided between Marlene Dixon's endless rap on women's history and Roxanne Dunbar. That in itself was pretty demoralizing. Ms. Dixon was at the podium entirely too long. Although our patience was strained by the length of her delivery, our spirits began to shred when we recognized that old professorial delivery, so popular among males in our academic whorehouses. I don't like to be talked at. That whole let-me-tell-you-something approach reeks of male identification. But in all fairness to Ms. Dixon, she may not have had time to discover new ways to transmit information. And isn't it part of our oppression that when given a chance we will imitate the male?

Sitting in the big hall, obviously bored beyond belief, my eyes began to travel the obese gilt framed pictures of our founding fathers. There was Admiral Preble, whoever the hell he was, and Samuel Choate, George Washington and John Quincy Adams. And behind the mothers of monotonous monologue there was the largest, most god-awful picture of Daniel Webster on the floor of the Senate . . . body poised in a heroic tremble, arm thrust forward and mouth open. It was his famous "Liberty and Union, now and forever" address. Just in case people couldn't identify this stirring scene, underneath the picture in large gold letters was "Liberty and Union, now and forever." Above the senators, like a chorus of imprisoned angels, sat the women — all in bonnets, all neatly attentive to the goings on below. What shit, I thought. What real, visible shit. At this point the speakers had somewhat quieted themselves and asked for audience participation. I shot my mouth off with the following:

Sitting here in this room, looking at all the pictures of rich white men and simultaneously listening (I listened a little bit) to your rap on women's history, things begin

to have a new perspective. Look at the picture behind you — we are still in the gallery and not on the floor like those women. It seems very clear to me that no woman in this room is bound by laws made by dead men, made when none of us had a voice in government . . . laws still preserved by rich white men today. To hell with those rich white men. They are polluting our environment and poisoning our souls. Our struggle is against the male power system which is a system of war and death. If in the process of that struggle we are forced to mutilate, murder and massacre those men, then so it must be. But simultaneous with that struggle we must also struggle to build a culture of life and love. We must respect and love each other. To date, the women's movement has consistently rejected women who are trying to build a new way of life, a life of loving other women. If we can't love each other, if we can't learn to grow together, then we will only have a rebellion against the male death culture — a rebellion which may be successful. But I think we are capable of revolution. To love without role, without power plays, is revolution. I believe these are our goals.

This was followed by applause from the audience and stunned disbelief from the panel. Ms. Dixon picked up on the struggle against the death culture. Roxanne Dunbar also commented on the battle lines. This was followed by an embarrassing silence. Questions were then hurriedly solicited. Forty-five minutes later, Cynthia Sun stood up and in a low, controlled voice repeated painfully:

I'm tired of hearing about the oppression of women. I'm tired of hearing a slick public relations rap that doesn't come from the gut. Let's look at the oppression right here in this room. You women on the panel have used your heterosexual privilege to silence the topic of love — especially since that topic was love between women, which would seem to me to be critical to the movement.

Another stunned silence. Marlene Dixon allowed as how some of her best friends were homosexual. At this point a woman two rows in front of us exploded with, "She said it! She actually said it!" Laughter. Roxanne evaded the question again and again until I yelled, "Your silence is oppressive. Why do you oppress us?" Then she



delivered what will always be in my mind one of the most incredible raps I've ever heard. "Sexuality is not the key issue. What I want to do is get women out of bed. Women can love each other but they don't have to sleep together. I think that homosexuality is a chosen oppression whereas being a woman is the root oppression. I don't think it's that important."

What we all want to do is get women out of bed. Sexuality is the key of our oppression. We are continually seen in sexual terms, we are defined by our genitals as brutally as a non-white is defined by pigment, be it red, yellow, black or brown. To ignore the issue of women loving other women, to label it lesbianism and divisive, is to turn around and define me and all my sisters in the same manner in which women are defined by men, by my sexual activity and function. The only way we are going to get ourselves out of the bed is to see each other as human beings. The entire Haymarket chaos was a vivid illustration of the fact that we see each other as men have taught us to see. One of the panel said lesbianism isn't an issue unless you wear a neon sign. Can anything more precisely illustrate how we oppress each other? Why is fighting to have your oppression recognized and dealt with, wearing a neon sign? In other words, no one will know you are homosexual unless you tell. Bullshit, sisters. One doesn't get liberated by hiding. One doesn't possess integrity by passing for "white." We are trying against all odds — from the male culture and from our "sisters" in the Women's Liberation movement — to develop a life style where there are no roles, where there are no power plays, where a human being is a human being and not a collage of male-

IF YOU LIVE IN THE MILE-HIGH REGIONS OF COLORADO, you should write to DOB DENVER, P.O. BOX 9057, SOUTH DENVER STATION, DENVER, COLO., 80209 to find out what's happening. Don't miss good friends!

LOUISIANA LASSES????? Now's the time to help start a new group. You can get in touch with them at DOB, P.O. BOX 24033, LAKEVIEW STATION, NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA 70124. Lend your support!

identified, half-smashed roles.

After the meeting, women in the audience came up to us. Many realized for the first time how women tear each other apart. Many who had never given the issue a first thought identified with our rage. One young woman said, "I don't know what I am. But I do know shit when I see it and they really shit on you."

Another woman mentioned that it was absurd to try to divide oppression between lesbian and woman's oppression as the two are solidly intertwined. One woman simply said, "Thank you," hugged us and hurried out.

As we went down the long, steep steps to the road we talked among ourselves about how class split the old feminist movement. Our movement is splitting over the "lesbian" issue, or more precisely, women's oppression of other women. We must deal with this in a constructive way or we will be at each other's throats just as we were in Boston. For a moment, I thought I heard the rustle of our skirts. Over one hundred years ago a meeting of abolitionists was threatened by a mob of angry, violent white men. One of the men who was an abolitionist escaped through the window and the hall was filled with trapped women. At that time, each woman took the hand of a black sister and calmly walked down that same row of long, long steps through the mob — their courage earned them a safe passage. I looked around at my "lesbian" sisters and realized we were quite alone — the Female Liberationists had exited out the side doors,

(Reprinted from RAT MAGAZINE, March 7-21, 1970, WITH PERMISSION.)

#### CHANGING YOUR ADDRESS?

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## Poetry

### MY HEART IS STILL A SCHOLAR

I know some day I'll mourn my utter loss  
Of fiery passion that you offer me,  
And weep afresh on youth's swift-faded gloss  
And search the earth alone and hopelessly.  
I know too well that I shall blindly grope  
And linger on half dazed and half disguised,  
Inimical to youth and life and hope,  
Denying love, myself always despised.  
Do not think the earth would near collapse,  
If at this moment I should quit your life forever,  
And leave you clinging to some outworn maps  
Recalling plans we dreamed in calm despair.  
My mind perceives the fate that lies in store,  
My heart is still a scholar learning more.

Susan Smpadian

### Luncheonette

the lonely listeners to jukeboxes,  
draped out over the country  
on endless counters, drinking  
the light liquid speed of caffeine,  
dreaming a form on the next  
vacant stool, such a long lonely  
line of them in the harsh counterworld,  
holding hard to their seats, to their songs —  
to the place least intrusive in a dream

Carol Lynk

### WITH SOLEMN EYES

I know your heart has arms for only God,  
With solemn eyes that feast on things divine  
And contemplate with purity unmarred  
Upon that which will rid your soul of mine.  
I know the latent misery and pain  
That lies in spiteful blindness to my flesh,  
And all those pleasures long forgotten lain  
In vice's graveyard cloaked with virtue's veil.  
Yet when your eyes dwell longingly on mine,  
As two candles that reflect a face divine,  
All doubtfulness has made its own decision  
To let people come and see in them His vision.  
But be not loath to say it is not so,  
I am your love, and all you'll ever know.

Susan Smpadian

### FLIES . . .

I have watched them  
lazily weaving through  
the summer pattern of  
the peach tree.

I have heard them  
droning on and on  
and wondered what  
they have to talk about.

I have seen them  
round your head  
drink in the wine-sweat,  
sweaty saltness  
of your body  
as you run up the sand-dunes.

I have brushed them away  
jealously.

I have run my fingers  
through the golden cluster  
of your hair,  
bathed in the deep-seaness  
of your eyes,

brushed away the flies.

Marion G. Norman

### Gold

the day's dwarfed hours  
slept round three minutes,  
grey against gold,  
like the clouds around  
the space of sky the sun  
moved down.  
Light split to our time  
through the clouds' hole,  
turning gold  
our vision for those moments,  
turning gold our memory  
of the day.  
We woke for a dream, we  
who live in the grey, and  
drank the nectar  
glow of one another's beauty,  
turning liquid gold in the sun's  
last rays.

Carol Lynk



# CrossCurrents

## LOVE'S FORSAKEN FOOL

It cannot matter if I play the part  
Of Love's forsaken fool, left lost and blind,  
Who seeks in poignant places of love's start  
The substance of a dream I once did find.  
But still your truant heart succeeds to stir  
The shackled memories of days that were  
Like scattered leaves my eyes just chanced to meet  
To grasp my mind, and guide my wandering feet.  
And now I cannot cry my tears of grief,  
For they are jaded things with no sensation,  
But slowly like a worm upon a leaf,  
They move along a path of desolation.  
Your words are echoes now, but do not fail  
To soothe this crazed heart's wince, and whine and wail.

Susan Smpadian

## Feast

The sweetsour savor of secret taste  
weaves through our lives, and leaves  
false cloths of lovely innocence  
to drape upon our tables  
set with ecstasy, to hang about us  
and keep our hunger hidden.

This is how we live, meal after meal  
is taken round the magic cloth,  
deep in a mad tea party,  
till trails of left love stain  
and mix new offerings with their  
foreign spices, sharpening our tastes.

Now we cloy our appetites in ever fear  
of famine, sowing seeds  
for later feasts against the day  
the cloth wears through, leaving  
us suspended round the cluttered table,  
guilt running from our eyes in tears.

Carol Lynk

## Summer 2

We fought with the sun for summer,  
burning days out with the sun's flame  
which we held at either end,  
working it to a skein of light  
around us, and weaving sturdy  
images of ourselves within.  
Even in the warm nights,  
we'd merge with the glow when,  
full with memory of sun,  
we burned our eyes on lights  
the night threw at us,  
and our lids surrendered.  
Then melted heavens coursed  
as falling stars, still bursting  
color at our eyes, which, weighted  
down by all that heavy light in dark,  
struggled to see us whole  
in the blur of the sun-wrecked season.

Carol Lynk

**WOMAN:** November 29, 1969. A member of the Australian DOB group (Melbourne Chapter) has sent (by slow mail) an article from this issue of this English magazine, entitled simply "Love," by Marje Proops. The article is excellent in its down-to-earth examination of a very ordinary Lesbian couple. The author quite frankly begs the audience to realize that it is the "love" that matters, not the biological sex of the partners. From the general tone of the material surrounding the article, it is clear that WOMAN is a general magazine for women, similar to REDBOOK or COSMOPOLITAN. All the more amazing in view of the acceptance registered in this article.

**EDWARD SAGARIN VS. FRANKLIN KAMENY: SEXOLOGY MAGAZINE:** February 1970. This issue of the venerable and respectable magazine about sexuality in human beings, features an excellent debate: IS GAY AS GOOD AS STRAIGHT?, with Dr. Sagarin on the "no" side and Dr. Kameny on the "yes" side. I suspect even the fairly biased might well opt for Dr. Kameny.

**LEO LAWRENCE WINS, ABC LOSES: BERKELEY TRIBE:** February 13, 1970. Leo Lawrence, ABC newscaster and writer, was fired by Station KGO in San Francisco. Following this, his union had him reinstated. The day after that, the station started proceedings once again to have him fired. Their charge is simply that he is a homosexual, and he admits it.

**WESTERN HOMOPHILE CONFERENCE:** February 13 and 14, 1970. LOS ANGELES. This conference, similar to the other regional meeting, ERCHO, was held at the First Unitarian Church of Los Angeles. Twenty-two western homophile groups were present. Highlight of the conference was the Keynote Address by Henry Hay, the man who founded the original MATTACHINE SOCIETY in 1950. (His address, citing the priority order of prejudice in our society, appears in full in this issue.)

**KNBC-TV, LOS ANGELES. SPECIAL TO THE LADDER:** Reporter Lyn Collins covered the eight-part look at the homosexual presented February 18 through 27 by Channel 4, Los Angeles. This project was some years in the making, and the final results were less than satisfactory. It was, says Miss Collins, "obvious to any gay viewers that the show was put together by hetero-

sexuals for heterosexuals." Only one of the segments included Lesbians — the February 20th airing. Lesbians were attacked more bitterly by the heterosexual male moderator than the male homosexuals were in the other segments. The usual idiot conversation about what makes Lesbians took up much of the air time, followed by endless shots of gay bars, though later the narrator did comment that these "bar types" comprise only ten per cent of the Lesbian population. A brief shot of an L.A. DOB meeting, including shots of Rita Laporte (who was imported months ago for the filming) and president of the DOB group in L.A., Delia Villarreal. The purposes of DOB were aired, so that was good publicity. A few shots of an atypical Lesbian couple completed the segment. Generally bad press.

**DETROIT FREE PRESS, BOB TALBERT:** March 1970. A nasty quip about DOB in this man's column prompted a local DOB supporter to write him a letter. It did not get printed, but she did get a nice apology in a personal letter. Wish we could demand retractions, but that day is tomorrow.

**BOSTON DOB MAIDEN VOYAGE:** March 1970. Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon's MOTIVE article on Lesbians was reprinted in this issue. This deserves very wide reading, and we are looking into the possibility

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of reprinting in pamphlet form for this purpose.

**NOW HAS A NEW PRESIDENT:** March 1970. Aileen Hernandez of San Francisco is the new National President of National Organization for Women, replacing Betty Friedan. Mrs. Hernandez is an honor graduate of Howard University, with a Master's from Los Angeles State College. She has held a number of high governmental appointee positions, including serving on the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (she was the first woman and the second Negro so appointed). Mrs. Hernandez indicated in an interview in the **SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE** that she intended to direct NOW more heavily into the political arena and to work to break down its all-white, middle class image. She is, as she recognizes, a good step in that direction personally.

**CANDICE BERGEN, SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE:** March 1, 1970. Drama Critic Stanley Eichelbaum interviewed Miss Bergen about her plans — personal and filmatically speaking — and obtained this comment: "I have no prospects right now. Maybe men actually believe I'm a Lesbian, because I played one in **THE GROUP**. I've been told I was too convincing. I even made the cover of the *Lesbian Review*" (the **LADDER**, April 1966).

**VERY EARLY ONE MORNING IN NEW YORK CITY. SPECIAL TO THE LADDER:** On March 8, 1970, 167 men were arrested in the after-hours bar, The Snake Pit. They were held inside the bar for an hour-and-a-half after the raid on the bar, and then arrested, herded into paddy wagons and taken to the Sixth Precinct station. It must be made clear that the police claim they are trying to clear up after-hours bars which are unlicensed and filthy hell-holes by and large, and that they **CLAIM** they are not specifically harassing homosexuals. There is strong evidence that this is both **TRUE** and **NOT TRUE**. This particular incident became national news when one young man, Diego Vinales, terrified that he would be deported (he is not a national) from this country for being homosexual, and apparently wanting to stay here, broke from his captors, raced to the second floor of the station, and threw himself through a window. He landed on an iron picket fence below. The fire department and police worked to free him (saw him loose) from the fence, and he was taken to St. Vincent's Hospital with parts of the fence still in his

flesh.

All of the other 166 men were charged with disorderly conduct; charges later dropped, of course — but Diego . . . he was charged with "resisting arrest."

Over 200 men and women, members of the Gay Liberation Front, Gay Activists Alliance, four or five Women's Liberation groups, the women's RAT newspaper collective and miscellaneous members of various other groups, including DOB and N.Y. MATTACHINE, gathered to form a protest march and marched to the hospital to keep what many termed a death vigil (since the horribly wounded man was not dead, this was not taken to be wholly in good taste). Father Weeks of the Church of the Holy Apostles offered a prayer for the man, and the group then returned to Sheridan Square.

As a result of this, the **VILLAGE VOICE** and a number of other periodicals finally had some good words to say about the Village gays, who have been protesting in ways and manners not altogether to the liking of the conservatives.

Very ironically, on the heels of this, New York City's Representative Edward I. Koch accused the Police Commissioner, Howard R. Leary, of permitting the Police Department to resume a policy of harassing homosexuals with illegal arrests. Mr. Koch, a Democrat-liberal from Manhattan, made the statement in a letter to the Commissioner asking him to explain the arrest of 167 men at the Snake Pit on March 8.

The whole affair is bound to be viewed with mixed emotions. The bars being raided are pits; they are filthy, they are unsanitary, and they do victimize and use the homosexuals who frequent them. The police have some point in wanting to get rid of them. On the other hand, if there is even a smell of police discrimination against homosexuals as a group, this has to be stopped. Deputy Inspector of Police Seymour Pine, who ordered the raids, said, "Even if I were anti-homosexual, it would be stupid for me to go after them because they have become militant and well-organized. I am not against homosexuals — I am against after-hours clubs." As unpleasant as the news may be, the man's remarks are extremely telling. We are told over and over again that the only way to win your rights (says the Establishment) is to take them away by force. Why just being entitled to them isn't enough, we do not know.

**NO EXCUSABLE HOMICIDE:** Los An-

geles: March 8, 1970. Rev. Troy Perry of **METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH** led a memorial service for Howard Effland, beaten to death by the Los Angeles Police Department a year ago. Over 200 people showed up for the services, held in front of the Dover Hotel on Main Street, the site of the vicious and cruel death. After the services Rev. Perry delivered a letter to the Police Station demanding an end to both entrapment and brutality.

**BOOKS TO LIBERATE WOMEN: NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW:** March 8, 1970. Marilyn Bender discusses the new trend in publishing circles to "get" a book on Women's Liberation in the works. She compares it to the rush a few years ago to get books on blacks. Some ten to fifteen books are in the works now with the first one due out in July from Doubleday: Kate Millett's **SEXUAL POLITICS**. And for those of you patiently waiting, she cites publication date of **THE HAND THAT CRADLES THE ROCK**, edited by Robin Morgan, as due from Random House in the fall, just about one year after original scheduling.

**RADICAL THERAPIST: VILLAGE VOICE:** March 12, 1970. In Minot, North Dakota, a group of young psychiatrists and psychologists are trying to start a monthly journal, the **RADICAL THERAPIST**. They hope to reach those who are no longer impressed with "Establishment" definitions of mental health, adjustment to society, Women's Liberation, etc. They plan to publish bi-monthly, with a tentative cost of \$6 per year. They are searching for contributors and support.

A portion of their statement includes this: "Therapists by training, what we have been taught is increasingly irrelevant in this changing world. The modes of therapy we were taught are increasingly revealed to us as biased, elitist, male-supremacist and racist. We are expected to maintain the status quo and accept our rewards. But this we are no longer prepared to do."

**EEOC CITED: HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION meeting:** March 12, 1970. The minutes of this meeting point out that homosexuals would be wise to take complaints to the EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunities Commission) for arbitration.

**MOVE TO END JOB DISCRIMINATION: SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE:** March 13, 1970. The Human Rights Commission of the City of San Francisco gave backing to a campaign for city legislation to

prohibit job discrimination against homosexuals in both public and private employment. The Commission voted 11-1 to recommend that the Board of Supervisors of the city hold public hearings on the subject. This is an excellent step in the right direction, and Larry Littlejohn of SIR is responsible for this action, since he requested the action at the Human Rights Commission Board meeting in November 1969. Thank you, Larry.

**MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY:** March 14, 1970. According to the **DETROIT FREE PRESS**, this school is taking steps to stop discrimination against women . . . good for them.

**SISTERHOOD IS POWERFUL: NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE:** March 15, 1970. Susan Brownmiller, in a generally good essay on Women's Liberation, made the error of speaking of Lesbians as the "lavender menace." The "Letters" column of the March 29 **NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE** contains an excellent reply by Lois Hart of New York's Gay Liberation Front. Right on, Lois.

**A CURE FOR CRIME: DETROIT FREE PRESS:** March 15, 1970 and on. Norval Morris and Gordon Hawkins, qualified lawyers and professors of law, have developed a total cure for "crime" in the true sense. This would involve the substitution of laws governing only those things that are governable, with the resultant ending of the vast majority of unnecessary monies spent in controlling non-criminal "crimes." Among their suggestions are the basic removal of all laws concerning those areas of behavior that are not, in any sense, subject to criminal jurisdiction. These include the obvious ones: the ending of all laws on drunkenness in public, narcotics, gambling anywhere and everywhere, restriction on the use of the laws on loitering, vagrancy and disorderly conduct to incidences where they actually apply, removing all restrictions concerning sexual activities between consenting adults, and the ending of all juvenile court jurisdiction over juveniles in cases involving anything for which they would not be in the jurisdiction of the court were they adult. Their book, **THE HONEST POLITICIAN'S GUIDE TO CRIME CONTROL**, was published recently by the University of Chicago.

**THE PUBLIC SPEAKING GRIND:** March 12, 1970, Rita Laporte spoke at Awalt High School in Mt. View, California, to over 200 students. Questions came in

faster than they could be answered. An adult present commented that today's high school students are more aware and more mature than yesterday's college kids . . . good. After the "formal" session, the classes gathered on the lawn with Rita and teacher Tim Young, and continued the discussion for another half-hour.

**NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF A WOMAN:** March 17, 1970. Over 100 women marched into the offices of the LADIES HOME JOURNAL on this date and demanded the editor throw down his typewriter and leave . . . leave the whole thing in their hands. It did not work out quite that way, but when the dust cleared the women had won some very important concessions. They were given an entire issue to write and were promised a column in each issue thereafter. More importantly, they were to be paid for the writing. This particular event was covered in virtually every newspaper in the country, and most of the comments were without editorializing, but virtually all of them, at some point in the write-up, mentioned that some of the women were wearing slacks. What we wonder is this: Where do the writers live between stories that they do not see women all over the place wearing slacks?

**KANSAS CITY STAR:** March 19, 1970. Three members of the PHOENIX SOCIETY, Kansas City's male homosexual organization, spoke before the influential congregation of the B'nai Jehudah. Usual questions and answers on homosexuality.

**AUGUST 26, 1970: THAT IS THE DAY.** CHICAGO TRIBUNE: Sunday, March 22, 1970, announces Betty Friedan's proposal for all American women to stage a sit-down strike on August 26 to bring home to men the importance of women and their need for civil rights. This is supposed to be followed by an all-night candlelight vigil at the "halls of political power." Realistically, I giggle to think of the condition of American halls of business following a day when all the women quit working . . . that would be some holy mess.

**WOMEN IN REVOLT:** NEWSWEEK: March 23, 1970. Young Helen Dudar of the New York Post reported on Women's Liberation for NEWSWEEK, and did a creditable job. Unlike many such articles, she managed to include a few paragraphs on the influence of Lesbians in the movement. Among other things, she quotes Robin Morgan as source for the information that Lesbians are now being welcomed as "sisters"

and that the idea of homosexuality is being considered as a means of population control and a path to equality.

**BOSTON DOB ON TV:** March 25, 1970. **SPECIAL TO THE LADDER:** Boston reporter Laura Robin covered the appearance of Boston President Ann Haley on the WBZ panel show, "On Woman Today," aired at 9 A.M. over Channel 4. The week before Easter dealt with the topic "Sex," and the March 25, 1970 segment dealt with "Homosexuality." Guest panelists were, besides Ann, Dr. Charles Socarides of Albert Einstein School of Medicine in New York; Rev. Robert Weeks, minister at St. John the Apostle Episcopal Church, Manhattan; and Frank Morgan, president of the Homophile Union of Boston. Questions from moderators took up one-half of the program, and questions from the audience, the other half. Dr. Socarides monopolized the entire hour, driving home again and again his personal view that homosexuals (and Lesbians) are pathologically ill. Even the moderators seemed to find him incredible. Rev. Weeks disagreed with Dr. Socarides, saying that from his experience the problems encountered by homosexuals were caused by the attitude of society toward homosexuality. He said he hoped for greater acceptance in the future. After Dr. Socarides got in a plug for his new book, Ann Haley got in a plug for DOB, Boston.

**VERY BUSY DAY FOR BOSTON:** March 25, 1970. Three members of Boston DOB spoke before the unique Brandeis University group enrolled in a course entitled THE HOMOSEXUAL AND SOCIETY. This course was offered by the university at the request of the student body, and is the only credit course of this nature on the East Coast. (Editor's Note: There are several such on the West Coast, and we understand that similar courses are in the works in many schools across the land). The Brandeis group is more concerned with an examination of homosexuality as a life preference than as a clinical study . . . GOOD for them. It is possible that Boston DOB will again speak to this group. Session consisted of the usual questions and answers on life styles.

**SAN JOSE STATE COLLEGE ATTACKED:** March 25, 1970. Trustee Dudley Swim (known for his extreme conservatism) objected to the fact that San Jose State College has a course on homosexuality. The school's president, Hobart Burns, said he would have been happier

without the course, but that experimental courses were run by the students and they chose to have it. Right on, babies.

**CHURCH FUNDS CUT FOR ALLOWING HOMOSEXUALS TO MEET:** DETROIT FREE PRESS: March 27, 1970. The Episcopal Diocese of Detroit has cut off funds to the historic old St. Joseph Church and its rector, the Rev. Robert Morrison, for allowing a homosexual group to hold regular meetings in the church. Rev. Morrison is said to have the "strong support of his inner-city organization."

**SATURDAY REVIEW AND RITA LAPORTE:** March 28, 1970. The April/May issue of the LADDER commented on the article, "The New Feminism," by Lucy Komisar in the February 21, 1970 issue of SATURDAY REVIEW. The following letter from Rita Laporte ran in the March 28, 1970 issue:

RE: "The New Feminism" (SR, Feb. 21). I wish to point out a misstatement in Lucy Komisar's article, namely: "The one organization with a constitution, board members, and chapters . . . throughout the country is the National Organization for Women." There is also the Daughters of Bilitis with a constitution, board members, and chapters throughout the country and overseas. Its founding was in 1955, and it has published a magazine for women, by women, since 1956.

What women would have the courage to do this fifteen years ago? Lesbians. We have been challenging the "sex role system" for millennia. We are neither man-haters nor man-lovers, which gives us a measure of detachment in the battle for our full human rights as women and as lesbians.

Feminists are labled not only "aggressive" and "unfeminine," but — and fortunately for us — "lesbians." In their hostile stupidity, men are giving us lesbians a helping hand. They are forcing feminists (at least 80 per cent of whom are not lesbians) to recognize, to understand, and to accept the most downtrodden and despised of all minorities.

Rita Laporte  
National President,  
Daughters of Bilitis, Inc.  
San Francisco, Calif.

The LADDER received free publicity in

the first issue of IN UNITY, new publication of the Metropolitan Community Church, Volume One, Number One. Thank you.

**POTPOURRI:** WASHINGTON, D.C.; NEW YORK CITY; DETROIT, MICHIGAN; MIAMI, FLORIDA, and on and on: March and April 1970. Clippings poured into DOB (bless all of you) from all over during these months, all dealing with various local aspects of women's rights, many concerning appointment of women to higher-ranking jobs, political for the most part, and women in "unusual" jobs. Some of the headlines would have sounded like science fiction a few years ago: "FIVE WOMEN WILL LIVE UNDER THE SEA"; "FEMALE COMMISSIONER IS CHOSEN IN DADE COUNTY"; "HAIRCUT, LADY? OR A SHAVE?"; "UD LAW FRAT FINALLY OPENS DOORS TO COEDS"; "FEMINIST EFFORT GROWS IN GROTTON"; "WOMEN PILOTS?"; "NEED A JOB, MOM? TRY THE TROOPERS." It becomes increasingly apparent that though small in numbers and bolstered by only a fraction of the male population, the women are winning in isolated instances all over the country. The big headline stories tell only a small part of the real victories, for it is in the courts, the individual companies and the political arenas where the irrevocable victories will be won.

**MONIQUE:** April 1970. Theaters all over the U.S. are running this movie. It may be another skin flick, but some of the comments make it sound fairly good. WE ARE NOT SURE, but thought you might like to hear about it. It concerns — we warn you — a menage à trois, which is a man's idea, not a woman's, ever.

**BOSTON ON THE MOVE:** SPECIAL TO THE LADDER: April 1970. In the last year-and-a-half, five homophile organizations have started in Boston. Besides our own chapter there and the often-mentioned HUB (HOMOPHILE UNION OF BOSTON), there is a COUNCIL ON RELIGION AND THE HOMOSEXUAL which just began in early 1970. Of extreme importance, however, in terms of liberalization in education, is the announcement of the formal recognition by Harvard of a homophile group on campus. The group is formally called HARVARD GRADUATE STUDENT HOMOPHILE ASSOCIATION, but it is simply another extension of the many, many loosely affiliated groups generally called STUDENT HOMOPHILE LEAGUE existing on



about thirty eastern campuses and a few western ones as well. The Harvard daily, HARVARD CRIMSON, ran an article on this on February 20, 1970.

L.A. FREE PRESS: April 1970. L.A. DOB was featured in an article in his paper by reporter Verda Murrell, sometime, in April 1970. At press time, however, we had not seen an issue and cannot comment beyond this mention.

WACS LOSE, GIRLS WIN, LOVE TRIUMPHS: April 1970. Antonitta Garland, age 23, and Sandy Hagen, age 20, joined the Wacs last September 30, 1969. However, Antonitta enlisted in Nashville, Tennessee and Sandy enlisted in Brooklyn, New York. Thrown together during basic training, they fell in love, just like in the stories. Not too long after they discovered their hitherto-unthought-of life style and mutual love, so did Uncle Sam, in the form of a friendly Wac sergeant. After that they suffered a lot of harassment. Managing to take leave at the same time, they just kept on going, heading for California in the belief that "if they had a chance anywhere," it would be there. Never having known they were Lesbians before, they knew nothing of the organizations. Their stopping place was Los Angeles, and they found an ad in the LOS ANGELES FREE PRESS for the METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH. Morris Kight, a leader in Gay Liberation in Los Angeles and a member of the church, received several of the "tentative," not-quite-trusting calls the girls made to the church before both sides agreed to meet and talk.

Mr. Kight immediately began arrangements to get the girls out of the Wacs with honorable discharges. He talked with C.H. Erskine Smith of Birmingham, Alabama (the attorney in the Wac case covered in the LADDER article, "Wacs Prevail Over Army," August/September 1969); Dr. Franklin Kameny of Washington MATTA-CHINE SOCIETY, and the ACLU. On February 12, 1970 (Lincoln's birthday) Kight arranged with the Army to turn the girls over to them at 1:30 P.M. in the courtyard of the First Unitarian Church in Los Angeles. The girls were there, the press was there, Kight was there, but the Army wasn't.

Negotiations began all over again, and it was finally decided that the girls would fare best if they were driven back to their original station, Ft. McClellan in Anniston, Alabama. They were taken there by private car. Verbal assurances that the women were

to receive honorable discharges on March 18 at Ft. McClellan were received by the women and by Morris Kight. As this is being written, we have no further information, except the pleasant information that the girls plan to live in either San Francisco or New York City and that Antonitta Garland is an English major and plans to write fiction and poetry. We wish them well and admire them for their courage. It takes guts to fight the system in public - at 20 and 23, it takes guts.

IMPORTANT REPRINT: COSMOPOLITAN: April 1970. Vivian Gornick's superlative article on Women's Liberation entitled "The Next Great Moment in History" first appeared in the November 27, 1969 VILLAGE VOICE. COSMOPOLITAN carries it with the title, "The Women's Liberation Movement!" This is must reading, and the magazine will be easily available to most of you.

COUNTDOWN 2: April 1970. This is a magazine in paperback form, published by New American Library. Apparently this is the second issue of a continuing magazine which would imply the first was COUNTDOWN 1 (we have not seen it). This issue contains "Women as Objects. Toys and Commodities" by Uta West, a good general run-down on Women's Liberation including some nice words on the Lesbian element in the movement.

WOMEN ARE 38 PER CENT OF THE LABOR FORCE: FORBES MAGAZINE: April 1, 1970. Labor Department reports indicate that between 1958 and 1968 the number of working women increased 32 per cent to a total of 29.2 million working. This is almost 38 per cent of the total working force in the country.

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY WOMEN ASK DOB FOR HELP (KENT, OHIO): April 2, 1970. In a letter to Rita Laporte, a group of women at KENT STATE requested help from DOB in putting together a course for credit on Womanhood. They wish to include Lesbianism in the course. At time of writing they have been directed to the nearest chapter of DOB, Cleveland, Ohio. More on this later.

THE INDEPENDENT FEMALE: VILLAGE VOICE: April 2, 1970, contains a short notice of this new play now being written for the San Francisco Mime Troup by Joan Holden. This is said to be a Women's Liberation play with a heroine named Gloria who gets "fits" of independence. Seems she is inspired by a "tough Lesbian

chick" (fellow office worker?). The girls pull off an office workers' strike. Shades of Betty Friedan's August strike date.

MORE VOICE: Same issue of VILLAGE VOICE (April 2, 1970) reviews a 1924 (right, 1924) movie called MAN OF THE HOUSE by Carl Dreyer. Dreyer (Carl Theodore Dreyer) is a little-known in this country, but this Danish director is considered one of the all-time great movie-makers. MAN OF THE HOUSE is said to be a Women's Liberation movie, and is supposed to be available for rent from Contemporary Films (a New York firm?) on 16mm.

DOB IS BUSY IN BOSTON: April 3, 1970. The Boston Chapter held a public discussion session on this date for members of the heterosexual community, who honored the invitation, for the most part, by failing to arrive. However, a number of members of various other Boston organizations (primarily male) came, and the panel of six DOB members and the audience enjoyed the discussion.

YWCA JOINS WOMEN'S LIBERATION: UPI: April 5, 1970. Planning their triennial convention in Houston, April 13-18, YWCA officials announce their unhappiness at being relegated to a back seat in Women's Liberation, pointing out they have been in the battle since 1867.

HARVARD AND MANY OTHERS: NEW YORK TIMES: April 5, 1970. Two feminist groups have charged Harvard, the University of Maryland, the University of North Carolina and the City University of New York City with discrimination against women in admissions, financial assistance, hiring, promotion and pay. We commend the action taken, but wonder why limit it to those schools? We would be more interested in seeing a list of schools where this discrimination does NOT exist.

KINSEY AGAIN: SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE: April 6, 1970. As of this time the well-publicized study of homosexuals and Lesbians now going on in San Francisco seems to be reaching most of its goals. However, they are still desperately in need of black Lesbian subjects. If you live in the included Bay area, are black and a Lesbian and have not been interviewed, please contact the Kinsey researchers at 771-0466. (Editorial note: Having worked several times in close contact with the Kinsey Institute, as it is popularly known, there is little doubt but that they will do everything possible to present a fair and unbiased

picture. Helping them is helping all of your people; please do help.)

FOLLOW-UP: NEWSWEEK: April 6, 1970. National DOB President Rita Laporte had a long letter in this issue of NEWSWEEK in reply to the WOMEN IN REVOLT article which ran March 23, 1970 in that magazine. Text follows:

We Lesbians are not only being welcomed into the women's rights movement, but, welcome or not, we have been most active therein from the start. Though most of us pass as heterosexual, those of us who can afford the risk are working in the movement as known Lesbians.

Like our heterosexual sisters, we range from conservatives who prefer to work in NOW to radicals who belong to various gay women's liberation groups. We bring to the movement our unique strengths for the benefit of all women. And in turn, our heterosexual sisters are helping us with our particular weaknesses: the fears and insecurities engendered by the need to live double lives. Great as our differences appear, from conservative to radical, from Lesbian to celibate to heterosexual, they are minor compared with the forces, as yet more underground than visible, that unite all women.

Rita Laporte, National President  
Daughters of Bilitis, Inc.

THE VOICE: ISSUE 98: April 7, 1970. This is a Hollywood-based entertainment magazine which we had not seen before. It is strictly for use in the Los Angeles area, but after seeing it we are wondering why so many people speak of San Francisco and New York City as the homosexual centers of the western world. In any case, in this issue, DOB gets a boost, and we are most grateful.

ANOTHER RADIO SHOW: BOSTON DOB AND HUB: April 10, 1970. Four women from Boston DOB and one man from HOMOPHILE UNION of Boston discussed homosexuality and Lesbianism with two moderators on a closed circuit radio, WCSB-AM, at Grahm Junior College in Boston. The two-hour program, from 7 to 9 P.M., was the longest session on radio in a series called "Encounter" regularly held at the school. It is felt that this particular exposure was most beneficial for the audience, since it was clear from the telephone calls from the listeners that many of the



common misconceptions were cleared up completely in the minds of the listeners.

GROVE PRESS: April 13, 1970. A number of women invaded the editorial offices of GROVE PRESS and raised a bit of hell. Nine of them were then carted off to jail. Primary target is the denigration of women by Grove in their publications and films, although other demands were included: day care for children of employees; equal pay for women doing the same work as better-paid male employees — the usual line of protest. As a result of this, nine employees of Grove were fired, including leading editor Robin Morgan.

NBC-TV: April 16-23, 1970: FRANKLY FEMALE, program moderated by Betty Groebli, featured Dr. Franklin Kameny, Dr. Charles Socarides, Anka Ehrhardt and Lilli Vincenz. Discussion on acceptance of homosexuality, with no difference indicated between the male homosexual and the Lesbian (despite the fact that this program is a daytime program, geared to and aimed at a 90 per cent female audience). Everything in the discussion and audience participation went well, though, reports our Washington "ear and eye," though Dr. Socarides continued his personal vendetta (you may have noticed he goes around the country speaking with or immediately following representatives of homosexual groups), and the positive portions were the well-worn ones.

AND STILL MORE RADIO EXPOSURE: BOSTON DOB AND HUB: April 19, 1970. Guests on the Bob Sterling Smith COLLOQUY show on WHDH-FM on this date were Gail Carpenter of Boston DOB and Frank Morgan of HUB, along with Rev. Robert Winget from the Church of Our Savior in South Boston. Excellent airing was made of this show, since it was run at 9 A.M. on this date and repeated in the evening at 10 P.M. Primary discussion this time was on the liberation aims of the homophile movement in general. Rev. Winget urged heterosexuals not to seek to impose the sexuality that feels right for them upon others. He urged churches to welcome homosexuals. (This was the second program in a series, the first having been on April 12 and featuring speakers from HUB and STUDENT HOMOPHILE LEAGUE).

LOOK MAGAZINE: April 21, 1970. Someone named Michael Thomas has an "editorial" in this issue on "Battle of the Sexes — 1970." If there was ever any doubt in any woman's mind just what the average

well-educated man thinks about women, this is must reading. The naked loathing for any woman who does not get "all wet-eyed and reverent over motherhood" and who does not "make you breakfast in the morning and nurse your kids and keep quiet when the boys drop in . . ."

BOUQUETS to Laura Robin of Boston. Laura has been providing the material used in this column from the Boston area, and a measure of their usefulness is that she provides about ten times what I can use in terms of space and national interest. We need this sort of reportage on the public service encounters your local groups have in your area . . . CHAPTERS, ARE YOU LISTENING?

NEW YORK CHAPTER: PUBLIC SPEAKING. SPECIAL TO THE LADDER: New York DOB President Ros spoke on Lesbianism at the Ninth Annual John Hunter Fuchs Memorial Lecture presented by the Queen County Chapter of the American Academy of General Practice on Sunday, April 12, 1970, from 2:30 to 5:30 P.M. Other speakers included Dick Leitsch of MATTACHINE, N.Y., speaking on male homosexuality; and Drs. Isadore Rubin (editor of SEXOLOGY MAGAZINE), Albert Ellis and Philip K. Kaufman. Dr. Kaufman was narrator, and Dr. Leo Woolman spoke on transvestism and transsexualism. Over 500 people heard the talks, with the majority of them doctors and their wives. This sort of presentation helps to point up the differences between categories so often confused in the public mind.

MINORITY STUDY: SPECIAL TO THE LADDER: April 22, 1970. On this date two members of DOB, N.Y., Julie and Ginny, joined by two men from MATTACHINE, N.Y., spoke to about 120 women and two men, all psychology and sociology students at the Manhattan College of the Sacred Heart, Purchase, N.Y. They were warmly received and, happily, Julie and Ginny were asked to return to speak to another group of girls at this well known Catholic girls' college in the New York area.

"WHO WILL LISTEN IF YOU HAVE A CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLAINT?" is the title of a new government pamphlet explaining how and where to file civil rights complaints. This pamphlet will provide direction for those with complaints of discrimination based on race, color, religion or sex. Order by sending 20 cents to the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

## Readers Respond

Dear Gene Damon:

I'll wager that lesbian pornography fills a greater need for many of us than simply the one for vicaries.

Most of us have problems with hostility towards ourselves as women and as lesbians, towards the women we love and the world at large. I think that nowhere is this hostility so obvious as in the intimate relationships we have with other women. Many viewers of the gay scene have detected the explosive elements of gay relationships, and we are very defensive about this. Most of us are well-adjusted enough to keep those elements operating on a subtle level, at least. But it is on this subtle level that I have discovered them to be most energy-draining, destructive and confusing.

All of us are strongly conditioned by our cultural environment; most of us are not too aware of how we manifest this conditioning. So many lesbians share the history of early heterosexual involvements that were sad, unfulfilling and often damaging; we share this history with many heterosexual women, too. Why do some of us become repeatedly involved with men, and why do some of us become so immediately and exclusively involved with other women in relationships as taut as high wires, lived out on such a tense plane that only two exceptional, unusually compatible women can handle until they're able to surpass that plane?

I believe that we are often negatively conditioned by the hetero atmosphere. Usually — and especially in the pre-coming-out adolescent years — lesbians get only encouragement towards heterosexuality and all the trappings of society's rubber-stamp approval of heterosexuality (hetero-dominated advertising, for example). We all grow up with the idea that it's right, normal and expected that men and women use each other sexually. I think lesbians often enter into early heterosexual involvements because they're encouraged by society, and it's acceptable to release early sexual drives in experimental physical expressions with boys. But lesbians — and surely many heterosexual women — suffer guilt in these relationships, guilt they're only vaguely aware of. Some of them know that the sexual arousal is not a response to

the boy himself but rather "what he is doing to her." They know they're using the boy because there's something missing, the emotional involvement just isn't there: they know the response is not to man as a real and warm human being. Confused by a world that urges her to live out the role of woman as man's love object — and man as woman's! — which the lesbian's instincts tell her is morally wrong, she sometimes enters into her first lesbian relationships in this confusion which has festered into guilt and even contempt for herself and all women. Surely if she despises a part of herself for having been exploitative — even unconsciously — she naturally transfers this contempt to other women: her image of them as a group, and individual women in particular.

Here is my point: in my own life I've found it extremely easy to become sexually involved with men. I can even make a "pass" at a man, but never, never a woman. Even if I suspect strongly she's gay, I suffer inhibiting guilty confusion that freezes me. The moment of physical expression comes only after much game-playing, subtle hinting, absurdly and ill-disguised problings. All of it is energy-draining and destructive and breeds an atmosphere of coy dishonesty. In contrast to me, I have found a very few well-adjusted lesbians who do not suffer such paralyzing inhibitions. It is much easier for them to come to a woman with desire. But almost all of them have, at some time, felt like me. Now, the times I have identified with lesbians in either literature, movies (like "The Fox"), photographic sequences, I have experienced such dramatic release and relief (from guilt?) that it's apparent I'm getting more than vicarious experience. I need to read good lesbian literature, and with the inclusion of erotic scenes; I need to see pictures of lesbians together — tasteful pictures —; and I need to see "Gay is o.k." on the screen — for my own sanity! And I suspect that this need has little to do with whether or not I'm currently involved with a woman. Surely if I lived on some American Lesbos where gay was the rule and not the exception, I wouldn't need all this so strongly. But even there I'd need to see my culture acknowledging the validity of the lesbian

experience, and in all the usual taken-for-granted ways: in advertising, in fashions, in positive attention from the news media, and in the promotion of homosexually aware organizations and causes, of marriage and legal counselling. I'd want marriage "laws" and other legal protections for individual lesbians as well as couples. I'd need — I need! — all this to feel like a human being, a full human being.

And so I say that no matter how poor the pornography, no matter how tasteless the advertising, how negative the attention from the various media, right now it all has value. Cultural awareness and acknowledgement provide some kind of mirroring for us, and even a distorted mirror is better than none at all. Surely the mirror will become less distorting as awareness of homosexuality and its validity as a human experience grows, and cultural consciousness is penetrated by positive acceptance and not mere curiosity and then indifference.

J.L.  
Texas

Dear Editor:

As a member of the Boston DOB I must ask you to withhold my name if you use this letter. I am wondering why DOB does not join actively with the many dozens of male organizations (such as HUB here in Boston) to fight for our mutual goals? And why are so many Lesbians interested in women's liberation?

I also wonder why you seem so liberal in the magazine and yet I hear you aren't in favor of our taking a stand on issues like the war in Vietnam.

Name Withheld  
Boston, Massachusetts

*(Editor's Note: I am liberal where I am liberal. I am conservative where I am conservative. This has nothing whatever to do with DOB, nor do your liberal or conservative views have anything to do with DOB. But the formal answer to your question follows.)*

All of the homophile organizations are primarily for men except DOB which is exclusively for women. Organizations such as Mattachine, New York and its new satellites (of which HOMOPHILE UNION OF BOSTON, HUB, is one) and other old

line groups (TANGENTS, ONE, SIR, MATTACHINE, S.F., etc.) tend to be apolitical on the quite reasonable grounds that male homosexuals are to be found in every race, religion, age group, profession, trade and political affiliation and that they have, primarily, only ONE thing in common, their sexual orientation, and therefore, only ONE battle to be fought first.

DOB has always also adopted a deliberate apolitical stance believing that Lesbians are also as widely diversified. There is, however, one further very basic difference. When all the male groups have achieved their rights many Lesbians believe they will also join in the bounty. There are theoretical, even logical reasons to believe this is true. It will not, however, do any such thing because it will not alter the fact that the fully accepted male citizen in our society is accorded first class citizenship while women are still lesser human beings.

For these reasons DOB occupies a unique position in the homophile movement. Long before the Betty Friedan-inspired upsurge in the rights of women battle, we were very active in this area. Many articles appeared during the very early years of THE LADDER on women's rights. This was at a time when you NEVER saw anything about the subject in the general media. A sampling of letters in the early issues also shows an enormous concern in the rights of all women. Women's rights have a much more direct bearing on the lives of all Lesbians than any comparable issue has on the lives of male homosexuals.

This leaves us betwixt and between and we must so remain — allied where mutually profitable with the male homosexuals and their organizations and allied automatically with the burgeoning drive for freedom being waged by many thousands of women all over the world. Regardless of what dozens of subordinate classifications we might have we are human beings first, women second and Lesbians third. We haven't had to battle for the right to human status for about 400 years now . . . we are still vigorously battling for women's rights and even more for the right to be Lesbians — freely and equally.

To the Editor:

The February/March LADDER'S comments on Manfred DeMartino's latest book, *The New Female Sexuality*, fails to point

out that this book was not intended to deal primarily with Lesbianism but rather with nudity. Mr. DeMartino is writing another book which will focus on Lesbianism and which presumably will make greater use of the material obtained from DOB subjects.

Florence Conrad  
Research Director, DOB

Dear Gene Damon:

I didn't care for "Personal File" by Carla (the LADDER, February/March 1970). I don't understand bi-sexuality. I don't believe anyone bi-sexual can be considered a Lesbian. If I wanted to give a copy of the mag to a hetero to help explain Lesbianism and this hetero had already pre-judged all Lesbians, they would bypass the truth in the mag and pick this personal file as an example of what Lesbians are . . . kink of flakey people, indecisive, who sleep around. Her remark about "dismissing sexual fidelity" but believing in marital fidelity makes no sense (to me) . . . and here's the point: bi-sexuality can only produce infidelity, and in most cases, promiscuity. This is also my reason for not caring for this type of thing in the LADDER. If I were a missionary in the cause of Christianity, I wouldn't begin to preach it by showing the killing that has been done in the name of Christianity. Proselytizing is only done with examples of good or worth in the belief. How can we benefit by showing the unsavory? Especially when faced with the type of minds we are trying to reach? For our readers I guess this type of thing is o.k., and perhaps has merit . . . maybe some can identify with it (and, I hope, make a moral decision after reading it), but to reach "the outside," it won't make it.

Ann Carll Reid  
Michigan

Dear Miss Damon:

THE LADDER has opened a whole new world for me I didn't even know existed before this. That person who wrote saying that DOB opened up a new life for her was so right. For me, for now and the near future till I can get out on my own, THE LADDER and DOB are all I have or can allow myself to have. They are the hope and promise that I may someday find peace in this world. I read THE LADDER each time it comes and I become alive. The great loneliness was near to being unbearable till

by sheer luck I came across the address of THE LADDER and DOB. It came at a time when I really needed it. Thank you for my life and peace.

Paula G.  
Canada

Dear DOB:

Thanks again for your wise advice and encouragement. It helped me through what was a very trying time. I calmed down and recently met a woman several years older than I. Now I am happy, contented, at peace. I wish I could announce my happiness but you seem to be the only people I can announce it to. I wish I were in a position to tell others who are as miserable, hopeless and lonely as I was, that a little waiting, patience, courage as well as pain will make you more ready and able to love someone when you find each other . . .

Gabrielle S.  
Canada

Dear Editor:

I felt your readers might enjoy this 1946 essay (portions) by Dorothy L. Sayers, called "The Human-Not-Quite-Human" and appearing in the book UNPOPULAR OPINIONS:

*The Human-Not-Quite-Human*  
By Dorothy L. Sayers

Probably no man has ever troubled to imagine how strange his life would appear to himself if it were unrelentingly assessed in terms of his maleness; if everything he wore, said or did had to be justified by reference to female approval; if he were compelled to regard himself, day in, day out, not as a member of society but merely (*salva reverentia*) as a virile member of society. If the centre of his dress-consciousness were the cod-piece, his education directed to making him a spirited lover and meek paterfamilias; his interest held to be natural only insofar as they were sexual. If from school and lectureroom, press and pulpit, he heard the persistent outpouring of a shrill and scolding voice, bidding him remember his biological function. If he were vexed by continual advice how to add a rough male touch to his typing, how to be learned without losing his masculine appeal, how to combine chemical research with



seduction, how to play bridge without incurring the suspicion of impotence. If, instead of allowing with a smile that "women prefer cave-men," he felt the unrelenting pressure of a whole social structure forcing him to order all his goings in conformity with that pronouncement.

He would hear (and would he like hearing?) the female counterpart of Dr. Peck<sup>1</sup> informing him: "I am no supporter of the Horseback Hall doctrine of 'gun-tail, plough-tail and stud, as the only spheres for masculine action; but we do need a more definite conception of the nature and scope of man's life.'" In any book on sociology he would find, after the main portion dealing with human needs and rights, a supplementary chapter devoted to "The Position of the Male in the Perfect State." His newspaper would assist him with a "Men's Corner," telling him how, by the expenditure of a good deal of money and a couple of hours a day, he could attract the girls and retain his wife's affection; and when he had succeeded in capturing a mate, his name would be taken from him, and society would present him with a special title to proclaim his achievement. People would write books called "History of the Male," or "Males in the Bible," or "The Psychology of the Male," and he would be regaled daily with headlines, such as "Gentleman-Doctor's Discovery," "Male-Secretary Wins Calcutta Sweep," "Men-Artists at the Academy." If he gave an interview to a reporter, or performed any unusual exploit, he would find it recorded in such terms as these: "Professor Bract, although a distinguished botanist, is not in any way an unmanly man. He has, in fact, a wife and seven children. Tall and burly, the hands with which he handles his delicate specimens are as gnarled and powerful as those of a Canadian lumberjack, and when I swilled beer with him in his laboratory, he bawled his conclusions at me in a strong, gruff voice that implemented the promise of his swaggering moustache." Or: "There is nothing in the least feminine about the home surroundings of Mr. Focus, the famous children's photographer. His 'den' is panelled in teak and decorated with rude sculptures from Easter Island; over his austere iron bedstead hangs a fine reproduction of the Rape of the Sabines."

He would be edified by solemn discussions about "Should Men Serve in Drapery Establishments?" and acrimonious ones about "Tea-Drinking Men;" by cross-

shots of public affairs "from the masculine angle," and by irritable correspondence about men who expose their anatomy on beaches (so masculine of them), conceal it in dressing-gowns (too feminine of them), think about nothing but women, pretend an unnatural indifference to women, exploit their sex to get jobs, lower the tone of the office by their sexless appearance, and generally fail to please a public opinion which demands the incompatible. And at dinner parties he would hear the wheedling, unctuous, predatory feamle voice demand: "And why should you trouble your handsome little head about politics?"

If, after a few centuries of this kind of treatment, the male was a little self-conscious, a little on the defensive, and a little bewildered about what was required of him, I should not blame him. If he traded a little upon his sex, I could forgive him. If he presented the world with a major social problem, I should scarcely be surprised. It would be more surprising if he retained any rag of sanity and self-respect.

<sup>1</sup>Dr. Peck had disclaimed adherence to the *Kinder, Kirche, Kuche* school of thought.

K.A.  
Los Angeles, California

Dear Gene Damon,

"The Uses of Sexual Guilt" by James Colton might be dismissed as an irrelevant bore were it not for its appearance in THE LADDER. The Lesbian is starved for meaningful articles about Lesbians and yet in the one publication presumably by and for Lesbians we must be "treated" to yet another male homosexual exhortation. This in itself would not be sufficient cause to propel me to write you, for I have become inured to the ever increasing spate of literature dealing with male homosexuality.

What prompted me to break my silence is nothing less than fury, fury at the not so subtle implications that Lesbians are riddled with sick guilt and that they use sex in twisted ways as outlets for this guilt. James Colton's analysis of the problem shows his knowledge of male psychology in general and male homosexual psychology in particular. I would have no quarrel with his article had he confined himself to the male (though I would wonder what he was doing in THE LADDER). But he tosses in a 'she' or a 'her' now and then, thus betraying his abysmal ignorance of the female and the

Lesbian. What right has Mr. Colton to speak of female psychology? "Well, I'm married to one, aren't I?" might be his reply.

I am a woman and a Lesbian. I am also a professional person, one of those few fortunate women whose salary approaches that of male homosexuals in the professions and who would lose all should word of her Lesbianism leak out. In short, I am as qualified to speak about the psychology of Lesbianism as Mr. Colton is to speak of the psychology of the homosexual. In addition, having the wisdom of the female, I never pretend to a definitive knowledge of the male. I let the intelligent male speak for himself while continuing to wonder at the conceit that permits him, in blind and humorless confidence, to set himself up as an authority on the female. (It was nice of Mr. Colton to insert the word 'male' before 'homosexual' in speaking of the members-only baths.)

Now permit me to present the Lesbian side in this matter of sex and guilt. The "woman with brains and ability who never makes the top in his [sic] employment sphere" is, in 99 out of 100 cases, stopped because of her sex. The males, homosexual and heterosexual, who are above her form a tightly closed shop to block her advancement. The "obscurity of a low-paying, drudging job" is the best that most women, Lesbians included, can find. And the Lesbian, of all women, fights hard against this injustice, fights till fury and frustration threaten to destroy her "brains and ability." If she is an artist, she may have to resort to using a man's name. But she will most certainly NOT blame her Lesbianism.

No, the homosexual is not "the most disadvantaged of all" for he can enjoy the advantages of both worlds: the male and the heterosexual. The Lesbian, particularly the black Lesbian, is THE MOST DISADVANTAGED. At best she can pass as a mere woman. She is insecure in her lousy job. If she wants a political career, forget it.

Yes, I have long known about the male homosexual who needs the excitement of possible discovery to achieve orgasm, so important a goal for the male. What has this to do with the Lesbian, for whom sex is an intimate and most private expression of love? She hates any threat of discovery — the merest hint of such a possibility and all desire to make love dies. Sexual expression for the Lesbian has nothing to do with rebellion or conformity, conscious or unconscious. It quite simply expresses love.

And love, as opposed to pure sex, does not seek punishment. Nor, for the Lesbian, does sex have a high value of its own. Its value lies in its deep meaning and joy as the pinnacle of love. Pursued for its own sake or worse, it becomes nothing less than disgusting.

The male homosexual in our male chauvinist society suffers the guilt of society's judgment that he is not quite a full male, not quite the mighty and superior creature the heterosexual male is said to be. We Lesbians, being women, cannot hope to achieve the status of mighty maledom, nor do we wish to, nor do we see it as mighty. (I leave to one side the problem of the Lesbian 'male' or 'butch' chauvinist, a minority within the Lesbian community.) Our problem is not one of aspiring to become fully male, to be accepted as heterosexual males are, but to become accepted as full human beings, to be and remain WOMEN, women different from other women only in that our emotions lead us to love another woman rather than a man.

Now, why are so many Lesbians still in hiding? Most certainly NOT because they have bought "the whole ugly bag of accusations." Some, yes, but most, no. At the risk of becoming tiresome, I must repeat once again that Lesbians are women, members of that oppressed majority, second class citizens who are not considered "persons" within the meaning of our U.S. Constitution, creatures who have only recently in history emerged from that legal class comprising children, the insane, slaves and women. We Lesbians are born with this handicap — no male homosexual is. And we must work, along with our heterosexual sisters, to overcome it. Added to this crippling heritage we bear the stigma of our Lesbianism, or homosexuality, if you will. We, intimidated from birth, also fear loss of economic security, a weak security at best for all women. In addition, we are generally more concerned than the male about hurting our families. These two concerns, very real and conscious and in no way "sick," keep so many of us in hiding. And I am one of these. Nor am I proud. I am more often ashamed. My justification is that, should I openly proclaim myself, I would cease immediately to be able to do anything at all in the cause for Lesbians. Keeping my job, my status such as it is, and my economic security is all that enables me to work underground toward that day when all of



us, Lesbians and homosexuals, may live free of fear.

Hope Thompson  
Rhode Island

Dear Miss Damon:

I have lately fallen into a bad humor with respect to radical activists and have made a step backward from radical to liberal. Convinced that our society is in critical need of radical change, it is with disappointment that I observe that those elements dedicated to change are conspicuously lacking in desirable personal qualities. All the way from SDS to GLF one hardly sees anything but psychic and moral weaklings who seek to abandon all personal responsibility for their existence. Curiously, they all tend to look alike, as physiognomically undifferentiated as they are psychically undifferentiated; in short, characterless. They have little or no sense of self, and therefore no self-respect, and they display an almost psychopathic disregard for other's rights. They are compulsive exhibitionists who will demonstrate at the drop of a hat without any real cause that can arouse public sympathy; thus, the public has grown understandably indifferent to the spectacle of demonstrations, which renders useless an important tool for communication and (valid) social change.

The GLF and other similar groups have been pulling some boners lately that may result in reprisals against organized and unorganized homosexuals alike. New York DOB itself got a caseful of their contempt recently. Gay power was up in arms when the police raided an illegal after-hours joint operating without a shadow of a license and arrested the proprietors and some hundred or so male patrons. One of the men, trying to escape, leaped from a second story window and was impaled upon an iron spike of a fence. One gay power group decided to run off leaflets to protest, so they broke into the DOB office and damaged their new mimeo which cost the chapter a great deal of money. Their excuse was: dire circumstances justify dire means. An especially annoying fact is that they had every opportunity to ask for permission to use the machine and they didn't. They would have got permission, too, due to a misguided loyalty I wish I had the power to get straight.

There is no reason why the DOB, chapter or national, should carry men on their backs. Why women are so willing to

bear this burden is something I'll never be able to understand or sympathize with. The hot-blooded loyalty that women are bound to display toward men (homo, hetero, bi, poly) is conspicuously one-sided: the men do the taking, the women the giving.

In spite of real anger it was all the New York chapter could do to vote to censure the offenders, and there were many who proposed forgiveness on the grounds that we're all in the same "thing". What this "thing" is that we're all in, I wish someone would tell me. There are no grounds for alliance between Lesbians and male homosexuals, no emotional or sexual affinity. The public is already under the impression that female homosexuals are merely opposite-sexed versions of male homosexuals, which is a nasty distortion of reality. It seems to me that many homosexual women serve the same supportive functions for homosexual men that heterosexual women serve for heterosexual men. How silly! I can't help thinking that if a WLM group had broken into DOB and wrecked the mimeo there would have been hell to pay and no maudlin tears about loyalty and togetherness.

Gay power is a man's thing, with a sprinkling of silly women who follow along on the assumption that whatever the men do is *smart*. I heard one girl say, "I don't belong to GLF. I *hate* it." Nevertheless, most of the women who wouldn't actually join it feel honor bound to defend any male homosexual simply because he is "one of us", a baffling identification. The quality of a human relationship is the quality of the sentiments invested in it. If the men reveal neither hide nor hair of a human sentiment, how can they be grouped with *us*?

Lesbians should tend their own garden and stop squandering their resources. I heard one of the girls telling about a gay girl friend of hers who was beaten up by a gang of heterosexual males. The account didn't raise an eyebrow. Just let them hear about a male getting beaten up! All the guns roll out in an instant. I just don't understand it. I guess it's like B. Friedman says: "Women don't think they're *important* enough to fight for." It makes me so mad I feel it is my duty to protest in an effort to shock women into some sense of proportion. If women go down fighting, it's a cinch they'll be championing a cause that is not their own.

R.B.  
New York

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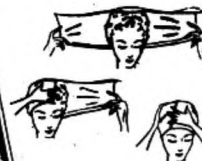
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## purpose of the *Daughters of* BILITIS

A WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROMOTING THE INTEGRATION OF THE HOMOSEXUAL INTO SOCIETY BY:

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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