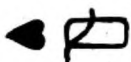


THE LADDER

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 1970

\$1.25



THE LADDER Up

from under



FEBRUARY 1958

50 c



May/June 1970

THE LADDER, published by Lesbians and directed to ALL women seeking full human dignity, had its beginning in 1956. It was then the only Lesbian publication in the U.S. It is now the only women's magazine openly supporting Lesbians, a forceful minority within the women's liberation movement.

Initially THE LADDER's goal was limited to achieving the rights accorded heterosexual women, that is, full second-class citizenship. In the 1950's women as a whole were as yet unaware of their oppression. The Lesbian knew. And she wondered silently when her sisters would realize that they too share many of the Lesbian's handicaps, those that pertained to being a woman.

THE LADDER's purpose today is to raise all women to full human status, with all of the rights and responsibilities this entails; to include ALL women, whether Lesbian or heterosexual.

OCCUPATIONS have no sex and must be opened to all qualified persons for the benefit of all.

LIFE STYLES must be as numerous as human beings require for their personal happiness and fulfillment.

ABILITY, AMBITION, TALENT –
THESE ARE HUMAN QUALITIES.

ADVERTISING RATES

Half Page	\$45	Back Cover	\$100
Quarter Page	\$25	Full Page	\$ 80

Repeated Advertisements at Reduced Rates

CONTRIBUTIONS are gratefully accepted from all who wish to support our work. We are a non-profit publication depending entirely upon subscriptions, donations and volunteer labor.

(ORGANIZATIONS OR GROUPS wishing to order bulk quantities of THE LADDER may do so at the rate of 10 copies for \$8.00. Send check or money order with your order to THE LADDER, P.O. Box 5025, Washington Station, Reno, Nevada, 89503.)

VOLUME 14 No. 11 and 12
AUGUST/SEPTEMBER, 1970

THE LADDER

THE LADDER STAFF

Editor	Gene Damon
Director of Promotion	Rita Laporte
Production Editor	Hope Thompson
Circulation Manager	Ann P. Buck
Production Assistants	Lyn Collins, Kim Stabinski, King Kelly, Ann Brady, Robin and Dana Jordan
Secretary to the Editor	Tracy Wright

August/September, 1970
IN THIS ISSUE:

Women's Liberation Catches Up To The Ladder	
<i>Cover Story by Gene Damon</i>	4
The Undefeatable Force, Editorial by Rita Laporte	4
The Woman-Identified Woman by Rita Mae Brown	6
Middle Children, Short Story by Jane Rule	9
<i>Illustrated by Kate McColl</i>	
The Problems of the Single Taxpayer by Stephanie Diamond	12
Women Show They Can by Sydney J. Harris	15
Twelve Poems by Lynn Lonidier	16
Zenobia and Priscilla by Melinda L. Brown	20
My God It Happened To Me Too! by Vern Niven	22
Two More For Champagne, Short Story by Lorna P. Gulston	23
Four Poems by Rita Mae Brown	31
Cross Currents	32
Lesbiana by Gene Damon	38
Virginia and Vita by Jane Alden	42
<i>Portrait of Virginia Woolf by W.B. Edmonds</i>	
Readers Respond	44

COVER: "Up From Under" portion by Muriel Castanis
Cartoons by Candi McGonagle

Published bi-monthly at Box 5025, Washington Station, Reno, Nevada, 89503.
All rights reserved. No part of this periodical may be reproduced without the written consent of THE LADDER.

Women's Liberation Catches Up To The Ladder

The cover of this issue is a reproduction of the cover of the first issue of the periodical, UP FROM UNDER, Volume 1, Number 1, May/June, 1970, and a reproduction of the cover of THE LADDER for February, 1958, Volume 2, Number 5. We find the similarities of the two striking and we feel this points out a significant fact: that women must band together, all women, or human freedom as dreamed of by all men and women, heterosexual and homosexual alike, will never be possible.

A number of far-reaching sociologists have predicted women's liberation to be the first successful revolutionary force in the world today, and predicted that following this will be freedom for blacks and for homosexuals. We feel this is very probably true, with the specific addition of freedom and full citizenship for all minorities of all types carried along in the sweeping changes. True human civil rights for all.

We make no predictions, except one, that until women are free it isn't likely any group will make it; for in sheer numbers, there are MORE women . . . more women than anything else in the way of separate groups. We have an unlimited potential to literally direct the course of human history, and more than sufficient moral obligation to carry it through to some logical and equitable form of life style for all persons.

Our cover, we feel, also points out how little separated Lesbians are from women as

a total group. Literally, since the beginning of history, women have been kept in line in all and every sphere by the doctrine of divide and conquer. Men have worked this so well, with our unwitting help (while banding together among themselves into myriads of groups, organizations, unions, fraternities, armies) that they take this for granted. It is now considered a FACT of female existence that women are unable to work together for their mutual good, while men are considered bound together automatically into their multiple and overlapping groups.

If women's liberation fails, an idea that has not been, apparently, seriously considered by the new "movement" groups, then we will have done so by failing to disprove this, as yet, unproven FACT about our nature. We either work together or doom a few more hundreds of generations of women as yet unborn to the spheres available to them today, TODAY, in TWENTIETH CENTURY AMERICA: Kinder, Kirche, and Kuche . . . caring for children, church and kitchen. (And before you pooh pooh that with "Oh, it's not that bad at all", make a list for me of fields outside of children, bearing and raising, and the kitchen of the family home, where women are in complete control.)

Gene Damon, Editor

The Undefeatable Force

The most fundamental and far-reaching of all social upheavals, the women's revolution, has begun. History has witnessed many revolutions (or wars): male have-not groups against male have groups. The current minority rights movements in this country, the Black, the Indian, the Chicano, the homosexual, good as they are in themselves, are still no more than old-fashioned male versus male jockeying for power. 'Male' has always been synonymous with 'human', the female being merely a vessel of propagation. This is still for the most part the way it is, many Black women, for example, seeing themselves as Black first, women second. Many Lesbians too see themselves as primarily the Ladies' Auxiliary to the homophile movement. But this

'divide and conquer' is on the way out. As more and more women join hands in sisterhood the day will come when our common humanity transcends our sex, our color, our nationality.

We women are brainwashed from birth to accept the male as the standard of humanness and thus we help perpetuate the male versus male violence that is human history. This violence ranges from that of small male gangs bent on protecting and enlarging their "turf" to global wars by full-fledged nations seeking essentially the same thing. Yet always throughout history there has been a small and undefeatable force that has had no interest in furthering male power: the world's Lesbians. Like uranium, to use an inanimate analogy, we

have always been there in small and apparently useless quantities. But humanity is progressing. It has left behind its infancy and childhood and, we might guess, is entering puberty. The phase of mere survival and reproduction is past. More diversity of talent and temperament is needed now to bring humanity to a fuller measure of maturity. It is not simply that it is more desirable, more just, for the other half of the human race to acquire equality; it is utterly necessary if male versus male nuclear holocausts are to be avoided and if our home, the earth, is to be kept clean enough to sustain life. This is not because women are better than men in some mysterious way, but because slave societies carry the seeds of their own destruction.

With this issue THE LADDER, now in its 14th year, is no longer a minority publication. It stands squarely with all women, that majority of human beings that has known oppression longer than anyone. THE LADDER will present some unique points of view, studies of the human condition as it is and as it may become, visions not be ignored for they come from that undefeatable force. No one person or group can claim a total vision, nor can society as a whole afford to ignore the wisdom of any of its parts. The Lesbian has been labelled sinful by the Church, criminal by the Law, and emotionally ill by the Psychiatrist, but she has never been labelled mentally inferior and rightly so. Many of history's greatest women have been Lesbians.

One view I wish to put forth now is that tolerance is not enough. We have long heard

about 'being tolerant of' the Negro, the Oriental, the Jew, the Catholic, the Hindu, and on and on, as though tolerance were a great virtue. Tolerance is more nearly a vice for it is patronizing and breeds a subtle contempt for the tolerated. What is needed is a genuine desire for diversity, for the encouragement of differences among people. We must replace our fear of those who differ from us with a joy that so many differences exist. Forcing human beings into conformity via conditioning (whether the methods used are those of the Communist, the Fascist, or the Behaviorist psychologist) *increases* the strength of everyone's latent urge to be herself or himself and raises the human total of hatred and fear. Nurturing the individuality of each of us, fostering our personal uniqueness, *freed* us to seek each other out in friendship and love.

In the May, 1957, issue of THE LADDER Lorraine Hansberry (author of "Raisin in the Sun" for which she won the Circle Award for "The Best Play of the Year") writes to the Editor:

" . . . You are obviously serious people and I feel that women . . . indeed have a need for their own publications. Our problems, our experiences as women, are profoundly unique as compared to the other half of the human race. Women, like other oppressed groups of one kind or another, have particularly had to pay a price for the intellectual impoverishment that the second class status, imposed on us for centuries, created and sustained."

Rita Laporte

THE LESBIAN IN LITERATURE a bibliography

By Gene Damon and Lee Stuart

AN ALPHABETICAL LISTING BY AUTHOR OF ALL KNOWN BOOKS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE, IN THE GENERAL FIELD OF LITERATURE, CONCERNED WITH LESBIANISM, OR HAVING LESBIAN CHARACTERS.

THE LADDER

P.O. Box 5025, Washington Station, Reno, Nevada 89503

\$2 plus 25c handling charge.

The Woman-Identified Woman

By RITA MAE BROWN

What is a Lesbian? A Lesbian is the rage of all women condensed to the point of explosion. She is the woman who, often beginning at an extremely early age, acts in accordance with her inner compulsion to be a more complete and more free human being than her society — perhaps then, but certainly later — cares to allow her. These needs and actions, over a period of years, bring her into painful conflict with people, situations, the accepted ways of thinking, feeling and behaving, until she is in a state of continual war with everything around her, and usually with herself. She may not be fully conscious of the political implications of what for her began as personal necessity, but on some level she has not been able to accept the limitations and oppression laid on her by the most basic role of her society — the female role. The turmoil she experiences tends to induce guilt proportional to the degree to which she feels she is not meeting social expectations, and/or eventually drives her to question and analyse what the rest of her society more or less accepts. She is forced to evolve her own life pattern, often living much of her life alone, learning usually much earlier than her "straight" (heterosexual) sisters about the essential aloneness of life (which the myth of marriage obscures) and about the reality of illusions. To the extent that she cannot expel the heavy socialization that goes with being female, she can never truly find peace with herself. For she is caught somewhere between accepting society's view of her — in which case she cannot accept herself, — and coming to understand what this sexist society has done to her and why it is functional and necessary for it to do so. Those of us who work that through find ourselves on the other side of a tortuous journey through a night that may have been decades long. The perspective gained from that journey, the liberation of self, the inner peace, the real love of self and of all women, is something to be shared with all women — because we are all women.

It should first be understood that Lesbianism, like male homosexuality, is a category of behavior possible only in a sexist society characterized by rigid sex roles and dominated by male supremacy. Those sex roles dehumanize women by

defining us as a supportive/serving caste in relation to the master caste of men, and emotionally cripple men by demanding that they be alienated from their own bodies and emotions in order to perform their economic/political/military functions effectively. Homosexuality is a by-product of a particular way of setting up roles (or approved patterns of behavior) on the basis of sex; as such it is an inauthentic (not consonant with "reality") category. In a society in which men do not oppress women, and sexual expression is allowed to follow feelings, the categories of homosexuality and heterosexuality would disappear.

But Lesbianism is also different from male homosexuality, and serves a different function in the society. "Dyke" is a different kind of put-down from "faggot," although both imply you are not playing your socially assigned sex role and are not therefore a "real woman" or a "real man". The grudging admiration felt for the tomboy, and the queasiness felt around a sissy boy point to the same thing: the contempt in which women — or those who play a female role — are held. And the investment in keeping women in that contemptuous role is very great. Lesbian is the word, the label, the condition that holds women in line. When a woman hears this word tossed her way, she knows she is stepping out of line. She knows that she has crossed the terrible boundary of her sex role. She recoils, she protests, she reshapes her actions to gain approval. Lesbian is a label invented by the Man to throw at any woman who dares to be his equal, who dares to challenge his prerogatives (including that of all women as part of the exchange medium among men), who dares to assert the primacy of her own needs. To have the label applied to people active in women's liberation is just the most recent instance of a long history; older women will recall that not so long ago, any woman who was successful, independent, not orienting her whole life about a man, would hear this word. For in this sexist society, for a woman to be independent means she *can't* be a woman — she must be a *dyke*. That in itself should tell us where women are at. It says as clearly as can be said: woman and person are contradictory terms. For a

Lesbian is not considered a "real woman". And yet, in popular thinking, there is really only one essential difference between a Lesbian and other women: that of sexual orientation — which is to say, when you strip off all the packaging, you must finally realize that the essence of being a "woman" is to get layed by men.

"Lesbian" is one of the sexual categories by which men have divided up humanity. While all women are dehumanized as sex objects, as the objects of men they are given certain compensations: identification with his power, his ego, his status, his protection (from other males), feeling like a "real woman", finding social acceptance by adhering to her role, etc. Should a woman confront herself by confronting another woman, there are fewer rationalizations, fewer buffers by which to avoid the stark horror of her dehumanized condition. Herein we find the overriding fear of many women towards exploring intimate relationships with other women: the fear of being used as a sexual object by a woman, which not only will bring her no male-connected compensations, but also will reveal the void which is woman's real situation. This dehumanization is expressed when a straight woman learns that a sister is a Lesbian: she begins to relate to her Lesbian sister as her potential sex object, laying a surrogate male role on the Lesbian. This reveals her heterosexual conditioning to make herself into an object when sex is potentially involved in a relationship, and it denies the Lesbian her full humanity. For women, especially those in the movement, to perceive their Lesbian sisters through this male grid of role definitions is to accept this male cultural conditioning and to oppress their sisters much as they themselves have been oppressed by men. Are we going to continue the male classification system of defining all females in sexual relation to some other category of people? Affixing the label Lesbian not only to a woman who aspires to be a person, but also to any situation of real love, real solidarity, real primacy among women is a primary form of divisiveness among women: it is the condition which keeps women within the confines of the feminine role, and it is the debunking/scare term which keeps women from forming any primary attachments, groups, or associations among themselves.

Women in the movement have, in most cases, gone to great lengths to avoid discussion and confrontation with the issue of

Lesbianism. It puts people up-tight. They are hostile, evasive, or try to incorporate it into some "broader issue". They would rather not talk about it. If they have to, they try to dismiss it as a "lavender herring". But it is no side issue. It is absolutely essential to the success and fulfillment of the women's liberation movement that this issue be dealt with. As long as the label "dyke" can be used to frighten women into a less militant stand, keep her separate from her sisters, keep her from giving primacy to anything other than men and family — then to that extent she is controlled by the male culture. Until women see in each other the possibility of a primal commitment which includes sexual love, they will be denying themselves the love and value they readily accord to men, thus affirming their second-class status. As long as male acceptability is primary — both to individual women and to the movement as a whole — the term Lesbian will be used effectively against women. Insofar as women want only more privileges within the system, they do not want to antagonize male power. They instead seek acceptability for women's liberation, and the most crucial aspect of the acceptability is to deny Lesbianism — i.e., deny any fundamental challenge to the basis of the female role.

It should also be said that some younger, more radical women have honestly begun to discuss Lesbianism, but so far it has been primarily as a sexual "alternative" to men. This, however, is still giving primacy to men, both because the idea of relating more completely to women occurs as a *negative reaction to men*, and because the Lesbian relationship is being characterized simply by sex, which is divisive and sexist. On one level, which is both personal and political, women may withdraw emotional and sexual energies from men, and work out various alternatives for those energies in their own lives. On a different political/psychological level, it must be understood that what is crucial is that women begin disengaging from male-defined response patterns. In the privacy of our own psyches, we must cut those cords to the core. For irrespective of where our love and sexual energies flow, if we are male-identified in our heads, we cannot realize our autonomy as human beings.

But why is it that women have related to and through men? By virtue of having been brought up in a male society, we have internalized the male culture's definition of

ourselves. That definition views us as relative beings who exist not for ourselves, but for the servicing, maintenance and comfort of men. That definition consigns us to sexual and family functions, and excludes us from defining and shaping the terms of our lives. In exchange for our psychic servicing and for performing society's non-profit-making functions, the man confers on us just one thing: the slave status which makes us legitimate in the eyes of the society in which we live. This is called "femininity" or "being a real woman" in our cultural lingo. We are authentic, legitimate, real to the extent that we are the property of some man whose name we bear. To be a woman who belongs to no man is to be invisible, pathetic, inauthentic, unreal. He confirms his image of us — of what we have to be in order to be acceptable to him — but not our real selves; he confirms our womanhood — as he defines it, in relation to him — but cannot confirm our personhood, our own selves as absolutes. As long as we are dependent on the male culture for this definition, for this approval, we cannot be free.

The consequence of internalizing this role is an enormous reservoir of self-hate. This is not to say the self-hate is recognized or accepted as such; indeed most women would deny it. It may be experienced as discomfort with her role, as feeling empty, as numbness, as restlessness, a paralyzing anxiety at the center. Alternatively, it may be expressed in shrill defensiveness of the glory and destiny of her role. But it does exist, often beneath the edge of her consciousness, poisoning her existence, keeping her alienated from herself, her own needs, and rendering her a stranger to other women. Women hate both themselves and other women. They try to escape by identifying with the oppressor, living through him, gaining status and identity from his ego, his power, his accomplishments. And by not identifying with other "empty vessels" like themselves. Women resist relating on all levels to other women who will reflect their own oppression, their own secondary status, their own self-hate. For to confront another woman is finally to confront one's self — the self we have gone to such lengths to avoid. And in that mirror we know we cannot really respect and love that which we have been made to be.

As the source of self-hate and the lack of real self are rooted in our male-given identity, we must create a new sense of self.

As long as we cling to the idea of "being a woman", we will sense some conflict with that incipient self, that sense of I, that sense of a whole person. It is very difficult to realize and accept that being "feminine" and being a whole person are irreconcilable. Only women can give each other a new sense of self. That identity we have to develop with reference to ourselves, and not in relation to men. This consciousness is the revolutionary force from which all else will follow, for ours is an organic revolution. For this we must be available and supportive to one another, give our commitment and our love, give the emotional support necessary to sustain this movement. Our energies must flow toward our sisters, not backwards toward our oppressors. As long as women's liberation tries to free women without facing the basic heterosexual structure that binds us in one-to-one relationship with our own oppressors, tremendous energies will continue to flow into trying to straighten up each particular relationship with a man, how to get better sex, how to turn his head around — into trying to make the "new man" out of him, in the delusion that this will allow us to be the "new woman". This obviously splits our energies and commitments, leaving us unable to be committed to the construction of the new patterns which will liberate us.

It is the primacy of women relating to women, of women creating a new consciousness of and with each other which is at the heart of women's liberation, and the basis for the cultural revolution. Together we must find, reinforce and validate our authentic selves. As we do this, we confirm in each other that struggling incipient sense of pride and strength, the divisive barriers begin to melt, we feel this growing solidarity with our sisters. We see ourselves as prime, find our centers inside of ourselves. We find receding the sense of alienation, of being cut off, of being behind a locked window, of being unable to get out what we know is inside. We feel a real-ness, feel at last we are coinciding with ourselves. With that real self, with that consciousness, we begin a revolution to end the imposition of all coercive identifications, and to achieve maximum autonomy in human expression.



MIDDLE CHILDREN

By JANE RULE

Clare and I both come from big families, a bossy, loving line of voices stretching away above us to the final authority of our parents, a chorus of squawling, needy voices beneath us coming from crib or play pen or notch in tree. We share, therefore, the middle child syndrome: we are both over earnest, independent, inclined to claustrophobia in crowds. The dreams of our adolescent friends for babies and homes of their own we privately considered nightmares. Boys were irredeemably brothers who took up more physical and psychic space than was ever fair. Clare and I, in cities across the continent from each other, had the same dream: scholarships for college where we would have single rooms, jobs after that with our own apartments. But scholarship students aren't given single rooms; and the matchmakers, following that old cliché that opposites attract, put us, east and west, into the same room.

Without needing to discuss the matter, we immediately arranged the furniture as we had arranged furniture with sisters all our lives, mine along one wall, hers along the other, an invisible line drawn down the center of the room, over which no sock or book or tennis racket should ever stray. Each expected the other to be hopelessly untidy; our sisters were. By the end of the first week, ours was the only room on the corridor that looked like a military barracks. Neither of us really liked it, used to the posters and rotting corsages and dirty clothes of our siblings, but neither of us could bring herself to contribute any clutter of her own. "Maybe a painting?" Clare suggested. I did not know where we would get one. Clare turned out to be a painter. I, a botanist, who could never grow things in my own room before where they might be watered with coke or broken by a thrown magazine or sweater, brought in a plant stand, the first object to straddle the line because it needed to be under the window. The friends each of us made began to straddle that line, too, since we seemed to be interchangeably good listeners, attracting the same sort of flamboyant, needy first or last or only children.

"Sandra thinks she may be pregnant," I would say about Clare's friend who had told me simply because Clare wasn't around.

"Aren't they all hopeless?" Clare would reply, and we middle children would shake



By Kate McCall

our wise, cautious heads.

We attracted the same brotherly boys as well who took us to football games and fraternity drunks and sexual wrestling matches on the beach. We used the same cool defenses, gleaned not from the advice of our brothers but from observing their behavior.

"Bobby always told me not to take the 'respect' bit too seriously if I ever wanted to have any fun," Clare said, "but I sometimes wonder why I'd want 'respect' or 'fun'. Doesn't it all seem to you too much trouble? This Saturday there's a marvelous exhibit. Then we could just go out to dinner and come home."

We had moved our desks by then. Shoved together, they could share one set of reference books conveniently and frugally for us both. We asked to have one chest of drawers taken out of the room. Neither of us had many clothes, and, since we wore the same size, we had begun to share our underwear and blouses to keep laundry day to once a week. I can't remember what excuse we had for moving the beds. Perhaps by the time we did, we didn't need an excuse, for ourselves anyway.

I have often felt sorry for people who can't have the experience of falling in love like that, gradually, without knowing it, touching first because pearls have to be fastened or a collar straightened, then more casually because you are standing close together looking at the same assignment sheet or photograph, then more purposefully because you know that there is comfort and reassurance for an exam coming up

or trouble in the family. So many people reach out to each other before there is any sympathy or affection. When Clare turned into my arms, or I into hers — neither of us knows just how it was — the surprise was like coming upon the right answer to a question we did not even know we had asked.

Through the years of college, while our friends suffered all the uncertainties of sexual encounter, of falling into and out of love, of being too young and then perhaps too old in a matter of months, of worrying about how to finance graduate school marriages, our only problem was the clutter of theirs. We would have liked to clear all of them out earlier in order to enjoy the brief domestic sweetness of our own sexual life. But we were from large families. We knew how to maintain privacy, a space of our own, so tactfully that no one ever noticed it. Our longing for our own apartment, like the trips we would take to Europe, was an easy game. Nothing important to us had to be put off until then.

Putting off what was unimportant sometimes did take ingenuity. The boys had no objection to being given up, but our corridor friends were continually trying to arrange dates for us. We decided to come back from one Christmas holiday engaged to boys back home. That they didn't exist was never discovered. I gave each other rings and photographs of brothers. Actually I was very fond of Bobby, and Clare got on just as well with my large and boisterous family. Our first trip to Europe, between college and graduate school, taught us harder lessons. It seemed harmless enough to drink and dance with the football team traveling with us on the ship, but, when they turned up, drunken and disorderly at our London hotel, none of our own outrage would convince the night porter that we were not at fault. Only when we got to graduate school did we find the social answer: two young men as in need of protection as we were, who cared about paintings and concerts and growing things and going home to their own bed as much as we did.

When Clare was appointed assistant professor in art history and I got a job with the parks board, we had been living together in dormitories and student digs for eight years. We could finally leave the clutter of other lives behind us for an apartment of our own. Just at a time when we saw other relationships begin to grow stale or burdened with the continual demands of

children, we were discovering the new privacy of making love on our own living room carpet at five o'clock in the afternoon, too hungry then to bother with cocktails or dressing for dinner. Soon we got quite out of the habit of wearing clothes except when we went out or invited people in. We woke making love, ate breakfast and made love again before we went to work, spent three or four long evenings a week in the same new delight until I saw in Clare's face that bruised, ripe look of a new, young wife, and she said at the same moment, "You don't look safe to go out."

In guilt we didn't really discuss, we arranged more evenings with friends, but, used to the casual interruptions of college life, we found such entertainment too formal and contrived. Then for a week or two we would return to our honeymoon, for alone together we could find no reason not to make love. It is simply not true to say such things don't improve with practice.

"It's a good thing we never knew how bad we were at it," Clare said, one particularly marvelous morning.

When we didn't know, however, we had had more sympathy for those around us, accommodating themselves to back seats of cars or gritty blankets on the beach. Now our friends, either newly wed in student digs where quarreling was the only acceptable — that is, unavoidable — noise, or exhausted by babies, made wry jokes about missing the privacy of drive-in movies or about the merits of longer bathtubs. They were even more avid readers of pornography than they had been in college. We were not the good listeners we had been. I heard Clare being positively high minded about what a waste of time all those dirty books were.

"You never used to be a prude," Sandra said in surprise.

That remark, which should have made Clare laugh, kept her weeping half the night instead. I had never heard her so distressed, but then perhaps she hadn't the freedom to be. "We're too different," she said, and "We're not kind any more."

"Maybe we should offer to babysit for Sandra and lend them the apartment," I suggested, not meaning it.

We are both very good with babies. It would be odd if we weren't. Any middle child knows as much about colic and croup as there is to know by the time she's eight or nine. The initial squeamishness about changing diapers is conquered at about the

same age. Sandra, like all our other friends, had it all to learn at twenty-three. Sometimes we did just as I had suggested, sitting primly across from each other like maiden aunts, Clare marking papers, I thumbing through books that could help me to imagine what was going on in our apartment. Or sometimes Sandra would call late at night, saying, "You're fond of this kid, aren't you? Well, come and get him before we kill him." Then we'd take the baby for a midnight ride over the rough back roads that are better for gas pains than any pacing. I didn't mind that assignment, but I was increasingly restless with the evenings we spent in somebody else's house.

"You know, if we had a house of our own," I said, "we could take the baby for the night, and they could just stay home."

I realize that there is nothing really immoral about lending your apartment to a legally married couple for the evening so that you can spend a kind and moral night out with their baby, but it seemed to me faintly and unpleasantly obscene: our bed . . . perhaps even our living room rug. I was back to the middle child syndrome. I wanted to draw invisible lines.

"They're awfully tidy and considerate," Clare said, "and they always leave us a bottle of Scotch."

"Well, we leave them a bottle of Scotch as well."

"We drink more of it than they do."

I didn't want to sound mean.

"If we had a house, we could have a garden."

"You'd like that," Clare decided.

Sandra's husband said we could never get a mortgage, but our combined income was simply too impressive to ignore. We didn't really need a large house; just the two of us, though I wanted a studio for Clare, and she wanted a greenhouse and work shop for me. The difficulty was that neither of us could think of a house that was our size. We weren't used to them. The large, old houses that felt like home were really no more expensive than the new, compact and efficient boxes the agent thought suitable to our career centered lives. Once we had wandered through the snarled, old garden and up into the ample rooms of the sort of house we had grown up in, we could not think about anything else.

"Well, why not?" I asked.

"It has five bedrooms."

"We don't have to use them all."

"We might take a student," Clare said.



By Kate McCall

We weren't surprised at the amount of work involved in owning an old house. Middle children aren't. Our friends, most of whom were still cooped up in apartments, liked to come out in those early days for painting and repair parties, which ended with barbecue suppers on the back lawn, fenced in and safe for toddlers. Our current couple of boys were very good at the heavy work of making drapes and curtains. They even enjoyed helping me dig out old raspberry canes. It was two years before Clare had time to paint in the studio, and my greenhouse turned out to be a very modest affair since I had so many other things to do, cooking mostly.

We have only one room left now for stray children. The rest are filled with students, boys we decided, which is probably a bit prudish, and it's quite true that they take up more physical and psychic space than is ever fair. Still, they're only kids, and, though it takes our saintly cleaning woman half a day a week just to dig out their rooms, they're not bad about the rest of the house.

Harry is a real help to me with the wine making, inclined to be more careful about the chemical details than I am. Pete doesn't leave his room except to eat unless we've got some of the children around; then he's even willing to stay with them in the evening if we have to go out. Carl, who's never slept a night alone in his life since he discovered it wasn't necessary, doesn't change girls so often that we don't get to know them, and he has a knack for finding people who fit in: take a turn at the dishes, walk the dogs, check to see that we have enough cream for breakfast.

Clare and I have drawn one very careful

line across the door of our bedroom, and, though it's not as people proof as our brief apartment, it's a good deal better than a dormitory. We even occasionally have what we explain as our cocktail there before dinner when one of Carl's girls is minding the vegetables; and, if we don't get involved in too interesting a political or philosophical discussion, we sometimes go upstairs for what we call the late news. Both of us are still early to wake, and, since Pete will get up with any visiting child, the first of the day is always our own.

"Pete's a middle child," Clare said the other morning, hearing him sing a soft song to Sandra's youngest as he carried her down the stairs to give her an early bottle. "I hope he finds a middle child for himself one

day."

"I'd worry about him if he were mine," I said.

"Oh, well, I'd worry about any of them if they were mine. I simply couldn't cope." "I just wouldn't want to."

"There's a boy in my graduate seminar . . ." Clare began.

I was tempted to say that, if we had a family of our own, we'd always be worrying and talking about them even when we had time to ourselves, but there was still an hour before we had to get up, and I've always felt generous in the early morning, even when I was a kid in a house cluttered with kids from which I dreamed that old dream of escape.

THE PROBLEMS OF THE SINGLE TAXPAYER

By
Stephanie
Diamond

Strange to think that this country was founded — at least partially — on a protest over high taxes. Stranger yet is the fact that after more than 350 years, the protest still pervades the American scene. The target is the same — the government, but the nature of the objection plunges deeper than the surface facts of high taxes. Sure, we all yell about the high taxes we're paying, but what one particular segment of the population is screaming about, and justly so, is discrimination.

That segment, which now includes some 25 million single taxpayers, has been the victim of flagrant discrimination by our federal government for too long a time. The single taxpayer has been discriminated against because the American tax system looks more favorably on the married taxpayer than on the single citizen.

And even though last year's tax reform act will provide some relief to the single taxpayer in 1971, it does not offer single taxpayers the main "income-splitting" tax advantage enjoyed by married couples. This advantage allows a married taxpayer and his wife to divide their total income in two and then pay a lower percentage rate on each half than you pay on the same total income.

For example, you are single, and you are earning a gross salary of \$15,000 a year. Your taxable income under present law, and as shown in Table II, is \$13,400. After deductions and exemptions are handled, your tax amounts to \$3,334 while your married friend, earning the same gross salary, has to pay a tax of \$2,216. In other words, you, the single citizen, are paying \$1,118 more than your friend.

Table II
1969 INCOME TAX

Single Person		Married Couple Filing Joint Return	
Total Income	\$15,000	Total Income	\$15,000
Deductions (Standard)	1,000	Deductions (Itemized)	2,000
	\$14,000		\$13,000
Exemptions	600	Exemptions	1,200
Taxable Income	\$13,400	Taxable Income	\$11,800
Tax	\$ 3,334	Tax	\$ 2,216

Why? Well, because your married friend has been able to take advantage of three breaks provided him.

First, because he has more expenses and is more likely to own a home, he can itemize his deductions and arrive at a fatter figure and thus more savings than you, who usually take the standard deduction, which, under present law, is \$1,000.

Secondly, the married couple can declare a double exemption; you can only declare one, yourself.

Finally, that married friend of yours cashes in on the income-splitting provision described above. The 50-50 split of income between the spouses for tax purposes generally produces a lower tax than you pay on the same total income.

Let's see how this works. Table II shows you that after deductions and exemptions are taken care of, the single person has a taxable income of \$13,400. Her tax amounts to \$3,334-\$1,305 on the first \$6,700 and \$2,029 on the second \$6,700 (since under the American system of graduated income-tax rates, the tax bite rises as income increases.)

Your married friend, with the same gross income, would file a joint return with his wife, with the effect of dividing his \$11,800 taxable income into two \$5,900 bundles, one marked "his" and one marked "hers". The tax on "his" \$5,900 would be \$1,108 and the tax on "hers" would be the same. Adding these together, their joint tax would be \$2,216 instead of the tax of \$3,334 computed without the income-splitting advantage.

Let's now take a look at how the tax reform act will affect the single person in 1971. (See Table III.) In 1971, the single taxpayer, in this example, grosses \$15,000 a year with a taxable income of \$12,850 after

the increased standard deduction of \$1,500 and the increased exemption of \$650 are taken into consideration. While her tax will amount to \$2,876.50, her married counterpart's tax will amount to \$2,194. In other words, she will be paying \$682.50 more than her married friend.

What the tax reform act has done essentially is retain the two tax advantages of standard deduction and personal tax exemption and increase them gradually in stages beginning in 1970 and expanding to their maximum ceilings in 1973. At the same time, the act brings the tax rate schedule of single taxpayers more into line with that of married couples.

While under present law, the single taxpayer has had to pay taxes from 17% to as much as 40.9% higher than her married counterpart making the same gross salary, her tax liability under the tax reform act will not be more than 20% above that of married couples with the maximum differential of 20 percent being at \$20,000. (See Table I).

Noteworthy is the fact that singles with a gross annual income of between \$4,000 and \$7,000 will save \$20 million annually under the tax reform act, and singles with a gross annual salary of between \$10,000 and \$15,000 will save some \$75 million annually. The government will suffer a \$445 million loss with this new provision for single taxpayers, a trifle when compared to a federal budget of \$200 billion.

But regardless of the overtures accorded by the Tax Reform Act of 1969, there still remains a question of the constitutionality of our tax system and its incorporated inequities. Although Congress and the courts have declared unconstitutional discrimination in our public schools, public accommodations, private housing and clubs,

Table III
1971 INCOME TAX

Single Person		Married Couple Filing Joint Return	
Total Income	\$15,000	Total Income	\$15,000
Deductions (Standard)	1,500	Deductions (Itemized)	2,000
	\$13,500		\$13,000
Exemptions	650	Exemptions	1,300
Taxable Income	\$12,850	Taxable Income	\$11,700
Tax	\$ 2,876.50	Tax	\$ 2,194.00

Table I
TAX LIABILITY FOR SINGLE PERSONS

Taxable Income	Present Tax	Tax Effective 1971	Percent Above Joint Return
\$2,000	\$310	\$190	7.4
\$4,000	\$690	\$650	12.1
\$6,000	\$1130	\$1050	11.7
\$8,000	\$1630	\$1490	14.6
\$10,000	\$2190	\$1970	14.5
\$14,000	\$3550	\$3050	17.3
\$18,000	\$5170	\$4290	19.2
\$20,000	\$6070	\$4970	20.0
\$26,000	\$9030	\$7150	18.8
\$32,000	\$12,210	\$9670	18.2
\$38,000	\$15,510	\$12,490	18.1
\$44,000	\$18,990	\$15,610	17.6
\$50,000	\$22,590	\$18,850	17.5
\$100,000	\$55,490	\$48,850	17.5

and employment and political participation, these two branches of our government have stubbornly retained a discriminatory tax system.

Concerned citizens have had no other choice but to band together to fight the tax system's inequities falling upon the single citizen. One major group organized to lobby for reform is the National Association of Single Taxpayers, a non-profit organization established in Washington, D.C. with offices at 1010 Vermont Avenue, N.W.

In an effort to correct the injustices, its members have met with various congressmen, the House Ways and Means Committee and the Senate Finance Committee.

By Candi McGonagle



"TILL WOMEN'S LIBERATION DO US PART."

One of its services is to provide its members with tax information which is designed to show legitimate ways of reducing their taxes substantially in the current fiscal year.

Certainly it is encouraging that some partial relief has been afforded by the Tax Reform Act, but this is not sufficient. Pressure must continue to be applied until the serious injustices of the tax system are extracted once and for all.

(This article was provided to THE LADDER by the National Association of Single Taxpayers at our request.)

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 following cost \$1.25. Individual issues before that time are \$1.00 per magazine

EVERY MAGAZINE IS NEW UNTIL
YOU'VE READ IT!

Women show they can

By SIDNEY J. HARRIS

In a column a few months ago, I discussed the discrimination against women in business and the professions, where they are either barred from job equality or paid less for doing the same work as men.

The other day, I happened to find myself in the company of the manager of a new steel works employing 6,000 people. He told me that since the works opened, it has hired some 250 women to perform tasks formerly done only by men.

"We tried it because of the labor shortage in our area," he said. "And at first everybody objected — the foremen insisted that women simply didn't have the physical strength, apart from the skills to do these jobs."

Actually, he went on, the women have turned out to be more satisfactory employees than the men. What they may lack in strength, they more than make up in diligence. Their attendance record is far better, and the turnover among female employees is substantially lower than among the men.

"I think we've convinced the foremen," he said, "but it was an uphill fight. The prejudice against women is as strong as ever, even though during World War II they proved they could do defense plant work."

The only men they had been able to get were in the 19-24 age group, who could take work or leave it alone, who would

work for a week or two and then goof off, who changed jobs seasonally, or rested on the benefits of unemployment insurance.

"But the women are a different breed," he explained. "Many of them are working wives who are helping pay off a mortgage. Some are divorced, with small children. They're a lot more stable and responsible than the young men, and they take their work more seriously."

There is another factor militating toward the hiring of women in industrial plants these days. Automation has decreased the need for physical strength, and increased the proportion of supervisory to manual employees. As plants become more and more automated, quickness and intelligence and conscientiousness are valued higher than muscles.

Women all over the world are performing tasks that formerly were the exclusive province of men; it is doubtful, indeed, if the state of Israel could have survived without its women on farms, in factories and even in the military. And it is foolish male chauvinism to suggest that such jobs *defeminize* women, when for millennia men have been *dehumanizing* them into bovine creatures for breeding purposes.

(Reprinted by permission of Sydney J. Harris and Publisher's Hall Syndicate.)

WRITERS ★ ARTISTS ★ CARTOONISTS — WE NEED YOU!

Have you a talent you can offer to THE LADDER? We need short fiction dealing with women (whether Lesbians or not . . . but with women in women's situations and problems and interests and activities). We are soliciting articles on women's liberation, all aspects. We need biographical studies of famous women from all lands, with especial interest in those that overcame in one manner or another the onus of being a woman in a world of men.

Can you draw for us, illustrate material? Can you supply photographs? One aspect of women's liberation which is sadly, sadly neglected (ironically this is the aspect of Lesbian civil rights that through the years has brought the most complaints by its absence) is HUMOR. Life, even slave life, has a funny side. No individual group is as

oppressed as the Lesbian, and yet, there are funny things in our lives. We need to HEAR about the humor and we need cartoons illustrating it. No one (we hope) in women's liberation is claiming women are simon-pure, fault-free and without blemish, and until they are, there will be humorous, chagrining and delightfully amusing moments. We feel that some of them should be presented in these pages, and invite you to help.

Keep the clippings rolling in to feed CROSS CURRENTS. Write letters to the editor. We would prefer to know how happy or miserable you are with the material in THE LADDER than to have to guess. Let's TALK about it. Let us hear from YOU, and often.

Twelve Poems by Lynn Lonidier

WAVES DO ME THIS, WRITE THIS

No night like last night and no one in the waters but your Fish Born

There were two of us in bed By morning there were three And slower
And though the light made our bodies milk I couldn't feel you so clear
as the ocean surface as before You "Barely kissed her" said A New
Island raised between yours and mine's sandforms Now there are four For
I want to learn to turn the edges of a dance A man has to take me
It's not proper for women to go sea voyages alone Or together
Always has to be plenty more

Toe

Play around with the tow To me the ocean is serious undertaking Has span
to take under Though the waves yet give throes Ten-In-The-Bed is
more like taunts The shape of a flaunt I'm not amicable to more than
one at once I will show you before for me 'Twas love that Rolled the sea

Crab walk side wise

Remember the reason the prisms were not exhibited There for everybody the
lighthouse less beautiful because it could not be gone through I would've
given you tour But you'd have addressed me Keeper Twasn't me to prison you
in the first place Mate So go the way the shape of your lady of wood
Lady What-Was-Her-Name Bessie Hester Carressa takes the front of your
boat The Brow Multi-sided sanddancing set me dancing with a man

Barbara

From nun to schoolgirl to filmmaker to topless dancer whatever
you do is rumor I heard you slipped away from the nunnery
slipped back in You held hands with another nun in the nunnery
You never learned in school You never looked at the movie
you made You got kicked out of a gay bar for baring your breasts
climbing onto the GoGo boys' platform showing all those queers
a thing or two

Why'd you do that then confess to me you're gay and afraid you'll
be made fun of you'll be alone you won't have any friends Then
you're off disappear for six months in a noise thick of avoiding
what you are Wearing the mod wide pants shouting Age of Aquarius
for bravery while your breath comes to you in frightened
puppydog pants saying shit repeating everything is groovy man
Next confession I'm going to say Go ahead be the one thing
you haven't tried

Lynn Lonidier's poetry has appeared in a number of periodicals including TRACE, EVERGREEN REVIEW, MASSACHUSETTS REVIEW, SAN FRANCISCO REVIEW, THE HUMANIST, and FORUM. Her short story, IN THE AIR MILK RAIN, appeared in the June/July issue of THE LADDER. Her poetry was also included in the anthology, LIVING UNDERGROUND; AN ANTHOLOGY OF CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN POETRY. A collection of her poetry, PO TREE, came out in 1967.

INCONSPICUOUSNESSES' KISS

Very pain

A not plain very German lady narrowly drove me crazy Beneath her clothes
were softnesses not swiftly crushable I had thick need of forests there
The musk of silence when we were together made my tongue grow her name
When she stood close worth death were the all-the-while feelings of
increasing ripening In corridors and halls her eyes made toward me
risks of full translation

Treat treatment

Safe in the forefront of disclosure should I maneuver a mountain
chance the eye raring back Claim were you willing your breast
Your eyes caught sloping toward me Cause me softness . . . mmmmm . . .

You you turn as from another time Not even an eye lashes
Slow gestures have the same effect I did not expect to stand in marrow
yellowed to white Judgment withheld from the pulse

Raw licking

When is my cracked lip ever going to heal Ever practicing inconspicuousnesses'
kiss You setting a tray of devoid dewy glasses on the table You
weren't the waiter Carrying that tray Where did you get it Yet It
was yours to manage And me my conversation spilling on the spot on the
table that was yours An Whole Beer Very pointed And you didn't notice
I barely saved you from dipping your sleeve at will What in hell we doing
here rollicking with audience like to practitioners at public request
You the magician with glue glassed to the tray swaying my table onto you
Why aren't we home where doves and rabbits of privacies can appear Leerless
Why aren't we Here

DUO CONCERTANTE

At the concert a woman

A woman sank down beside me asked Do you know who I am Added I remind her
of an old-time movie Yes I told her You are an authority You live
in a three-tiered house and your husband is a dead doctor You are a
segregationist and when you get up from me your furs breathe

This woman told me she

She had blood on her from her period or a smashed bottle She said she
had a brother and had a drink Would I take her to the depot would I
transport her toward involvement I let her out Ripped dress
smear on her hand She might rob me

YES WE HAVE PETS

We have a nodding dragon outside our window between ourselves and
next door neighbors and the Telephone Company It's facing us It's
looking in Sometimes it nods Sometimes it shakes furiously Sometimes
it looks like a man It's something you referred to in the garden once

YEAR OF THE SNAKE

New Year I am new woman No I'm new Skip the woman I'm what I was
born Shouldn't have to do more I am more Rabbit Frog Ambi-Creatureous
Every year leaps if let Bee Swarming and stinging and new Breee Blat Cram
A matter of slight shift of sliding The stem on the parthorn coils
the same as a butterfly's tongue Let Out Sound And Skip Not Feeling A
Swollen-Up Brain On New Year's Eve Balloons and Screamer's And In the
morning leavesLeavesTREES

THE BOYS AT THE BEACH

In drive-ins movie foyers men's magazines they comment on my body
as though they owned me are as familiar with my butbreastthighs
as they are with rings on their fingers It's not rape that they
heighten their bodies by removing mind earmindfeelings tossing
away the body they've mass-raped Because I'm their prerogative
to imagine their penises are rolled-up dollar bills in my
penny vagina

SATIN PUFF, VELVET HANDBAG

I faint on the curves of your limbs trembling giantess straw
in a room inside Will you put me in your side to sand shovel
satin puff and climb and climb Will you put me in your garden Lioness
I am trees at the heights and cherub gazing idyl I am raw
appeal to jaw I am ginger in your stomach and all the roots
and all the toppings and all the wind to pull to make you have gardens
Don't be frightened

THE GENIUS POEM

Whoa

Being Genius recognize Genius speaking to HER ALTER EGO: I'm a genius
and don't you forget it Baby You don't have a monopoly on genius Baby
asking me how much time I spent at it All the time Baby all the time
Like My-Life-is-not-my-own So Don't give me none of that sewing-on-
the-bit-of-buttons bit that could six months ago Now Impossible Go

Salooning

Ah caught trying to stir up a little dramatics are you Off Get off
Oiling me with your eyes then looking Round Well I'm reserving
excruciations for poems For Poems You can have your little muddling Hamlet
Anybody could tell I'm a Mover By The Immensity Of My Bedrooms AMounts to
making allowances For Lubricative Poet I I am Charged I Am A Changed
Mover I tell you We're the same Baby we're the same Therefore likely
to wind up in different straits Where you think they going to put me Miss

Yap has gone Giddy

Let's see how magnanimous you are at your new occupation Anger Come
mounting at me It will do you good and arouse me to your bearings' dew
Though writing poems is scanty way to court a Lady it's A Jesus of a
way of panting On Get on You Asked For Passion Whew I am tired too

FIREWORKS AND WATER MUSIC IMPERVIOUS TO EARS, LIVES, MINDS

Mouth on hand on Mouth

I put my mouth on my hand Hand was your mouth Words came in starts
Our bodies kept rocking in their tether Continual did we move along bed
center 'til Bed went To the Top and House made Sound of The Coming Together

Noah new

I never knew before how many animals are stored in moistures Your wet eyes
on your wet face Your body's urges off on me

Dove

You are the dove in my hand The dove not held

Don't love off

Don't love off touching me to the hemispheres of your tender Days my body
lies between you and the sea Masters to my willing Assuage then roll me
into uttermost delicious lip

Swiggle

I saw black curling things I never saw before
was was

Lit/Sizzling/There

Sweet on my face are the moments that run out of my lips Of the weaving Of
Your Firmament Over Me Whole days downpull into this Magnitudinal Raising
Richnesses Rushing Off The edge High heaviness Then
lightness lightness lightness

Night which on the roof reigned dear

Which on Myself am Edge Which On Comet Gabriel slid profuse the fledgling on
the swedge Which am Eager Edging quaffing eaglet am me On Dancer Which
won't Let Sleep On

Let's sleep On Jupiter while the sun throws red sand In Love's Steaming Rep-
tilian Repetitiveness Sleep Prolific Sleep While In eyes' lives lives Olive
Dream Of Dromedary

All day I want to keep the smell of you on me

lean to-ward the po-lite Emily Dickinson 's Dolly "K" tea
pol-len ex-plo-sions 'the powdery residue of a substance that has been burnt:
usually in the plural'
light-ness-es' Legend ledge which On The Wine Stood

Miltoic extract

The morning over I take time to house once more The Indian The Medusa The
Trumpeter The Mother My SELF am Found In the morning In a eagle's roost
Celebrating the Complete Person The Multitude Of Your Person

WHEN THE BELOVED IS LOST

When the beloved is lost to you you ask for your own name
No one responds No one knows you You deny the sun yet it has not left
You cannot remember where you carried your heart nor who it was for
Yet your hands are warm like a heart inside will not let go
You hold onto where the sun once was mistaking it for the thing found

BLOOD RUBY

Heartbeat collecting in me until it was a too rich thing I released it to
others And called it other peoples I passed on feelings to them
they don't have Easier to allusion they loved me then The furniture
pentacles and hounds of my will made the people Kings of Me They have the
chairs I be underneath I who studded their thrones The life they sit beside
twinkles with live drops Mine In plain straw light I watched the stars' ever
strengthening reds THAT GROWING IN ME said I no longer feared feelings
Meant Feelings are worthy of being held above burial Belatedly it IS ME
who walks with the feelings

Zenobia and Priscilla in *The Blithedale Romance*

By MELINDA L. BROWN

In *The Blithedale Romance* Nathaniel Hawthorne uses three major devices to emphasize the disparity between appearance and reality: disguises, irony, and paired opposites. Blithedale Farm itself appears to be an effective utopia of brotherly love, when contrasted with the materialistic life of city society. Slowly and subtly Hawthorne strips away the Farm's superficial appearances and pretenses, revealing that utopias are an idealistic impossibility; city society provides the one opportunity for brotherhood that is available to mankind. The high-minded Blithedale experimenters appear much superior to coarse, practical Silas Foster, yet Silas is, perhaps, the only character who is able to see events clearly and realistically throughout the book.

A major ironic contrast exists among the four major characters, Hollingsworth, Coverdale, Zenobia and Priscilla. Hollingsworth is revealed to be a monomaniac, overly concerned with his dreams for the reform of criminals; his opposite, Coverdale, proves to be a man lacking involvement and concern. One of the most important contrasts in the book is between Zenobia and Priscilla, the two major female characters, who provide a focus for many of the central events. Both Coverdale and Hollingsworth are drawn initially to

Zenobia, but at the book's end, Hollingsworth marries Priscilla and Coverdale confesses his love for Priscilla. But the two women's lives are similar in other ways: they are step-sisters, daughters of Old Moodie, and both are involved with Professor Westervelt, the mesmerist from the city.

Despite such similarities, Zenobia and Priscilla are far from alike. In both appearance and behavior, they are opposites. Zenobia is sophisticated, witty and talented; she is a strikingly beautiful woman who is said to resemble a rare tropical flower. She appears to be set apart from other women, perhaps superior to them. Her principal activities in the city have centered around the feminist movement, and she would seem to be an excellent example of the womanly independence and self-assurance which she is working to develop in all women. Priscilla, on the other hand, is pale, frail and not particularly talented; she resembles nothing so much as a wilting wild flower. Quiet, inexperienced and shy, she seems almost too agreeable in the manner in which she accedes to the wishes of those around her. Far from active, Priscilla has been the passive subject of Professor Westervelt's mesmerism in her role as the Veiled Lady.

It must be remembered, however, that

The Blithedale Romance is a book in which appearances are deceiving. With enormous irony, Hawthorne reveals that nothing in the book is what it would seem to be. Zenobia, the emancipated woman who would appear to be disinterested in the confines of matrimony, kills herself out of unrequited love for Hollingsworth. Her sophistication and experience have been superficial; underneath the disguise, she proves to be a very typical woman longing for love and fulfillment with a man.

Neither is Priscilla what she appears to be. Priscilla is difficult to analyze and understand, however; one important fact about her is that she is the Veiled Lady. All the major characters in the book wear masks and veils, but Priscilla's disguise is the most difficult to penetrate. Much of her true nature is hidden from view.

At the book's end, Priscilla is married to Hollingsworth and is the object of Coverdale's love. Yet Priscilla has not sought this love; she has extended a sisterly affection to both men, but her deeper interests lie elsewhere. A careful examination of chapter XXV, "The Three Together," reveals that Zenobia has forced the issue of Hollingsworth's regard for Priscilla; because Hollingsworth rejects Zenobia, Zenobia presents him to Priscilla, whom Zenobia regards as the victor. Priscilla's first reaction at this moment is to turn to Zenobia and plead with her almost wordlessly, until at last Zenobia orders Priscilla to accompany Hollingsworth, gesturing them away from her in an imperial fashion. Priscilla may appear superficially to have won, but it is a shallow tasteless victory, for her goal and desire was not Hollingsworth (or Coverdale), but Zenobia herself.

Priscilla's deep, passionate, and virtually inexpressible love for Zenobia is evident from the moment Priscilla first appears at Blithedale Farm. She has come to the Farm for one purpose: to see Zenobia and to be with her.

... Priscilla followed her [Zenobia] to Blithedale. The sole bliss of her life had been a dream of this beautiful sister, who had never so much as known of her existence. By this time, too, the poor girl was enthralled in an intolerable bondage, from which she must either free herself or perish. She deemed herself safest near Zenobia, into whose large heart she hoped to nestle.¹

Hawthorne speaks ironically here; Zenobia's

"large heart" does not welcome Priscilla in any way:

She [Priscilla] stood near the door, fixing a pair of large, brown, melancholy eyes upon Zenobia, — only upon Zenobia! — she evidently saw nothing else in the room, save that bright, fair, rosy, beautiful woman. It was the strangest look I ever witnessed; long a mystery to me, and forever a memory. Once she seemed about to move forward and greet her, — I know not with what warmth, or with what words; — but, finally, instead of doing so, she drooped down upon her knees, clasped her hands, and gazed piteously into Zenobia's face. Meeting no kindly reception, her head fell on her bosom.²

Zenobia's response to this is, "What does the girl mean? . . . Is she crazy? Has she no tongue?"³ To which Hollingsworth replies, "The very heart will be frozen in her bosom, unless you women can warm it, among you, with the warmth that ought to be in your own!"⁴ Hawthorne's use of dramatic irony is evident here; unknowingly, Hollingsworth has spoken the truth, for only a woman's love will be able to thaw Priscilla's heart.

Ironically, Priscilla's father, Old Moodie (and Zenobia's father, as well) has encouraged his daughter to come to the Farm to be with Zenobia; it is unclear if Old Moodie realizes the true situation. Yet Old Moodie's hopes — and Priscilla's — come to naught; Coverdale relates, later in the book, his impression of the relationship between Zenobia and Priscilla at Blithedale:

The mysterious attraction, which, from her first entrance on our scene, she evinced for Zenobia, had lost nothing of its force. I often heard her footsteps, soft and low, accompanying the light but decided tread of the latter up the staircase, stealing along the passage-way by her new friend's side, and pausing while Zenobia entered my chamber. Occasionally Zenobia would be a little annoyed by Priscilla's too close attendance. In an authoritative and not very kindly tone, she would advise her to breathe the pleasant air in a walk, or to go with her work into the barn, holding out half a promise to come and sit on the hay with her, when at leisure. Evidently Priscilla found but scanty requital for her love.⁵

None of the book's major characters emerge victorious at the end of *The Blithedale Romance*. It is easy enough to see that Coverdale remains withdrawn and introverted, Hollingsworth mourns and regrets his own criminality, and Zenobia has killed herself. Yet only a close and careful reading of the book will reveal that Priscilla has lost, too, like the others. Zenobia is denied to her for all time, and she must spend her life with Hollingsworth who has been thrust upon her.

The first American novel dealing with Lesbianism or variant relationships between women is generally considered to be *Ormond; or the Secret Witness*, by Charles Brockden Brown, privately printed for H. Caritat by G. Forman in 1799. Yet Nathaniel Hawthorne's portrayal of Priscilla in *The Blithedale Romance* must be considered one of the early works dealing with variant female relationships. Priscilla's role as the Veiled Lady is an ironic clue to her true nature, just as the references to Zenobia's resemblance to Eve are a key to understanding the motivations for her eventual suicide. Priscilla, whose name summons up images of gauzy ruffled curtains and freshly-scrubbed kitchen floors, may

appear to be the sort of frail female who needs a man to care for her; Zenobia may appear, as her name suggests, to be an exotic independent woman. Ironically, the disguises are totally misleading. Zenobia is the homebody at heart, and Priscilla is the one who would prefer to hold herself aloof from marital confines.

1 Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Blithedale Romance*, intro. by Arlin Turner (New York: W.W. Norton, 1958), p. 199.

2 Ibid., p. 54.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid., p. 73.

(Melinda Brown, under a variety of pseudonyms, is a long-time contributor to *THE LADDER*.)

(Editor's Note: *THE BLITHEDALE ROMANCE* was first published in Boston, by Ticknor, Reed and Fields, 1852. It has been issued many times and is currently in print in a quality paperback edition from Norton and a lower priced paperback from Dell.)

My God It Happened To Me Too!

By VERN NIVEN

Sometime this past year, or perhaps even the year before, Bill Cosby had an hour long special on TV . . . a low-keyed quiet look at the Negro in history (all male, of course). It came as a shock to me, too, to discover that a number of inventions, discoveries, events, were the result of Negro invention or labor, and that I had never heard of this in school . . . though I clearly remembered hearing about all the famous white men . . . Remember that paragraph in 10th grade American history about Eli Whitney and the cotton gin? For weeks after the TV show I talked to people about it, unable to forget the grimmer parts of the story . . . how Negro children draw faceless people with tiny heads . . . sometimes people without limbs, reflecting the stunted, disadvantaged view of themselves that they receive(d?) from cradle to grave. I was a very concerned citizen.

I continued to be concerned and it never occurred to me, even after a lifetime working for Lesbian rights (and women's rights)

that I was very much in the same position, until I saw the third issue of *WOMEN: A JOURNAL OF LIBERATION*. Unlike *APHRA*, reviewed in June/July, 1970 issue, this journal contains no fiction. It consists of short articles on varying aspects of women's rights, book reviews, scant media coverage; and each issue of the quarterly covers a specific area or topic. Volume One, Number One, Fall, 1969, was subtitled "Inherent Nature Or Cultural Conditioning"; Number Two, Winter, 1969, was "What is Liberation;" and Number Three, Spring, 1970, is "Women in History: A Recreation of Our Past". It was this third issue, in a field where I have written extensively for *THE LADDER* and for historical journals, that the message came home to me . . . Oh, I'd heard of some of these women, not in school but since . . . and not much. The more famous among them, anyway. One name, though, was totally unfamiliar to me, Emma Goldman. In a well-done but much too short (for my eager reading mood) article, Alix Shulman

discusses Emma's life. If you were to read *WOMEN: A JOURNAL OF LIBERATION*, you'd probably want to find out more about Emma Goldman, as I intend to.

All these years I have bitterly noted that to research a 5-page biographical article on some "famous" woman for the pages of *THE LADDER*, I've often had to read 4 or 5 books (or portions thereof) and dozens of articles . . . to find a scrap here, a scrap there. For some time (since most of the subjects were Lesbians or variant women) I credited the lack of available material to this extraneous fact. So I decided to test it . . . and find that unless the woman in question is "famous" for the man or men with which she is associated, material on her life is probably rare. If she were single and at all reclusive, it is likely to be almost wholly unavailable . . . This no matter how great her accomplishments in her field. Try it, you armchair historians . . . pick com-

parable men and women in a field and do some research on them. Despite the fact that there are ALWAYS hundreds of men to every woman "famous" in the various areas where we accord acclaim, you will find that the information on the men is much more available, much more extensive. There are exceptions, of course, in these areas . . . prostitution, physical violence directed against males, and criminal activities.

I am an even more concerned citizen now, having discovered to my sincere surprise that MY GOD IT HAPPENED TO ME TOO!

(Editor's Note: An article on the life of Emma Goldman will appear in a future issue. *WOMEN* is available for \$5 a year (four issues) from 3011 Guilford Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland 21218.)

Two More for Champagne By Lorna P. Gulston

"A toast? In coffee?" said Gail, arching one eyebrow.

"Why not? It's our first day in Peregrin Lodge and only a week until our fifth anniversary, so we have a moral obligation to celebrate." Jan grinned, and raised her coffee cup. "To Uncle Frank's gallbladder."

"Or the Dear Departed."

They sipped, giggling, viewed morosely by Uncle Frank's cat Nimrod who deplored this disruption of his routine.

"Three weeks of good country air!" exclaimed Gail, stretching happily. "I'll be a new woman."

"I hope not. I love you as you are. If you're considering any activities while we're here, however, I'd appreciate a little secretarial help."

"Oh God - don't tell me you've brought the office on vacation."

"Perish the thought. No, you and I are about to dispatch some invitations to an anniversary party."

"Jan! Do you mean we're going to give a party here?"

"Well, we'd need a can-opener to wedge more than six bodies into our apartment. At Peregrin Lodge we could entertain the entire island of Lesbos and still have room for hide-and-seek. How does the proposal strike you?"

"Wonderful. I'll get some paper, envelopes, and stamps."

Gail got to her feet, and Nimrod wailed hopefully.

"Your watch is fast," she told him. He puffed out his whiskers and looked pretty.

"Oh, all right." Gail weakened, and went to the cupboard. "But just a mouthful, mind." She spooned tinned food into his dish. He bent his elegant gray persian head to it, sniffed, and with a flick of his paw dismissed it as opened that morning, stale. "Damwell go without then," snapped Gail. Nimrod registered indignant reproach melting into haggard neglect. "I cannot think why the Egyptians worshipped your silly ancestors," scolded Gail, slapping down a saucerful of pure cream.

"Ingratitude will get you nowhere. Remember he is responsible for our being here," reminded Jan. "And you know very well you're crazy about cats."

"We all have our mental aberrations. I'll fetch the stationery."

To the sound of satisfied lapping they settled down to draft out a letter.

"Read it to me," said Jan, when they had finished. "I can't decipher my own writing."

"Likewise. But I'll try." Gail cleared her throat, and began:

Dear Blank.

As you'll glean from the address, we are at Peregrin Lodge, a charming olde-worlde house owned by Jan's charming olde-worlde Uncle Frank, who unfortunately had to go to hospital to be detached from his gall-bladder. By an awkward coincidence his housekeeper, Mrs. Banyon, developed a varicose ulcer on her leg a few days before he went and will be out of action for at least another three weeks, so he asked us if we could arrange a vacation and move in to look after his cat, Nimrod. And here we are.

Can you join us for the weekend 19/20th? 19th is our 5th anniversary, and we'd like to make it special. Unlimited parking, unlimited bed-space (N.B. Strictly for *sleeping*), in glorious technicolor *Cone With The Wind* setting. How can you lose?

Don't bother to write, just phone (number above). Look forward to seeing you.

Jan and Gail

"Well, it won't rate the Pulitzer Prize, but it gets the message across," said Jan. "Now, who do we send it to?"

"Pat and Grace, for two."

"Of course. Vi and Dandy."

"Yes, and we can't leave out Margot and Tess. They are two of our closest friends."

"How about Lynne and Beth?" asked Jan.

"Beth's so shy she'd curl up in a crowd."

"Do her good to mix. Let's put them on the list. Enough?"

"Counting ourselves, it's ten," said Gail.

"Just right for an informal gathering. That makes four invitations to write, two each. If we hurry, we can catch the afternoon mail, then sit back and listen for the phone."

The phone rang diligently three days in succession. Everybody was coming. It rang again on Friday evening. Jan answered it.

"Jan?"

"Pat - hi there. Trouble?"

"With a capital T. Looks as if we won't be along tomorrow after all."

"Patricia Eleanor Stewart, you can't do this to us?"

"You know I wouldn't for the world, only we've got a visitor."

"And by the way you're whispering, the visitor is neither welcome nor too far away."

"In the bedroom, having hysterics. Jan, it's Carmen."

"Hell's teeth. That angular weirdie Laura's so ga-ga about?"

"The same. Laura and she have had a fight, so she flounced off to the first people she could think of - lucky old us."

"Can't you wheel her back to Laura?"

"She's armed and dangerous with a bottle of sleeping pills tucked in her bra."

"I see your problem."

"Complications?" asked Gail, in transit with a duster. Jan palmed the receiver.

"It's Pat. Carmen has descended for the weekend, so they can't come."

"Tell them to bring her."

"You wouldn't mind?"

"It's the lesser of two evils. We can't have an anniversary party without Pat and Grace. We've been at all six of theirs."

"As usual, you're perfectly right. Well, well, so now we are eleven."

With a rueful shrug she returned to the phone.

"I do think you've been clever with the table, honey," said Vi. "Hasn't Gail been clever, girls? Eleven is such an *awkward-shaped* number, if you see what I mean, but the way she's fixed it, we *blend*."

"I don't," murmured Carmen, waving her ebony cigarette holder so that a flick of ash fell in Pat's champagne. "Sorry, darleeng," she drawled, and drank the lot. Pat cast her eyes to heaven and poured another glass, comforting her conscience that since she and Grace had brought a bottle she wasn't being greedy.

"Why don't you blend?" asked Dandy, who liked to get to the bottom of things, especially when she was slightly drunk.

"You are all *pairs*; I am the *odd* one. Quod erat demonstrandum. Hic. I might add that I am in no mood to be contradicted."

Beth giggled, and Lynne squeezed her hand under the table. Margot and Tess exchanged a glance of anticipation. Was there going to be a Scene? Scenes were such fun, when they weren't your own, though it would be hard luck on Jan and Gail.

"How about a toast to the anniversary couple?" put in Grace, who had also noted the storm signals and felt terribly responsible for Carmen.

"Oh, sure, but I still don't see why Carmen thinks she doesn't blend," pursued

Dandy doggedly.

"I do not *think*, I *know*!" proclaimed Carmen, eyes flashing. "The Dooms are all around me."

"Well, ladies, glasses filled," jollied Pat, rising to her feet. "Come on now, get up even if you fall down afterwards, because, God help me, I am about to make a speech." The champagne bottle made a quick circuit of the table. "All of us here have known Jan and Gail for quite a time. I guess maybe Grace and I have known them for a little longer than the rest of you by virtue of the fact that the four of us once shared the dubious privilege of working in a firm that went bankrupt. How much we collectively contributed to its downfall, history does not record, but it certainly contributed a lot to our friendship by laying bare the defects of all our characters so we knew we liked each other notwithstanding - (I suspect I am on the brink of inebriation, but we shall overcome). What I am trying in my drunken way to indicate is that in all sincerity they're two of the nicest people one could meet. When the head-shrinkers et cetera sound off that we're all sick and antisocial and contaminated, I want to drag them round to see Jan and Gail living their ordinary decent life like any ordinary decent heterosexual married couple, only maybe that would upset the statistics (didn't I manage that word well?). So anyway, here's to them, and I bet this old house - and I mean that of course as a term of historic antiquity - this old house has never sheltered a happier couple. Ladies, I give you Janet Leyton and Gail Viner, affectionately known to us all as Jan and Gail."

There was a jumble of congratulations and a merry swilling. Dandy yelled "Whoopee" and smashed her champagne glass against the wall.

"Oh God - I should have kept her on Coke!" groaned Vi. "Never mind, darlings, we'll buy you another glass."

"For they are jolly good fellows," sang Beth unexpectedly in a sweet soprano. Everyone took it up, then clamored "Speech, speech."

Jan rose, red to the ears, grinning hard to control the lump in her throat.

"At the risk of sounding hackneyed," she began, "I am tempted to quote Shakespeare: 'The friends thou hast and their adoption tried, grapple them to thy soul with hooks of steel.' Not only are Gail and I privileged to have each other, but we have

added the very necessary privilege of having you, all of you who have come a pretty substantial distance to be with us tonight. I'm not going to be either long-winded or emotional - God forbid - but there are just a few things I'd like to say on behalf of Gail and myself."

At that moment the lights went out.

Someone screamed.

"Shut up, Carmen, it's only a fuse," snapped Pat.

"I said nothing," bridled Carmen, "and please don't raise your voice to me."

"No, sorry, it - it was me," admitted Beth. "It was so sudden."

"It's all right honey, Dandy will fix it. She's a genius with electricity," promised Vi.

"She's also stoned," pointed out Lynne.

"No, I'm okay," said Dandy in a surprisingly sober tone. "Where's your fuse box, Jan?"

"In a cupboard below the telephone."

"I've got a flashlight in my purse," volunteered Margo. "It's small, but it throws a good light."

"Great. Just what we need."

Jan and Dandy groped their way to the cupboard. Jan held Margot's flashlight while Dandy took out the fuses one by one and turned them over in her big hands.

"Are these the only fuses in the house?" she asked.

"The only ones Uncle Frank ever showed me."

"Then we've really got trouble. They're all okay. Look for yourself."

Jan examined the fuses. The wire in each one was clean and unburned.

"Must be something elsewhere along the line, then."

"Which we can't do much about tonight. Might even need an electrician."

"Well, we'd better get back and break the glad tidings."

The smokers of the party had set their cigarette lighters on end on table mats. The light wavered on the circle of faces: Margot sharp, fallow, cynical; Tess plump and alert; the matching fairness of Lynne and Beth; Vi pale-skinned, lean, nervy, in contrast to jovial, big-boned, lumbering Dandy; Pat square and sensible and dependable; Grace naturally auburn, with a wide mouth and generous eyes; the blond, patrician beauty of Gail which after five years still stirred Jan with a thrill of pride. Carmen, hunched in the corner, appeared all beak and claws like an ailing crow.

"It isn't the fuses," announced Jan, "so I'm afraid we're stuck with a blackout until tomorrow."

"I could have told you it wasn't the fuses," said Carmen in a hollow voice. "Something is trying to communicate."

"For God's sake, Carmen," Pat peered at her watch. "Well, 10:30. Anybody fancy a game of flashlight poker?"

"Some-thing, some-thing," droned Carmen, ignoring Pat. "It is here, in this room - aaaaah!"

With a yowl and a thud a gray form landed on the table.

"Nimrod - you crazy cat," gasped Gail.

And indeed Nimrod looked crazy. Tail bushed, eyes popping, he leapt onto Gail's knee and tried to bury his head beneath her arm.

"Poor thing, he's scared," said Grace.

"This house is haunted, isn't it?" shot Carmen. "Don't deny it. My great-great-grandmother was a Spanish gypsy."

Everyone digested this revelation in silence.

"I'm right, am I not, Jan?" Carmen thrust her head forward. Shadows flickered on her high, gaunt cheekbones. "If you don't tell me, I shall go to bed and swallow all my sleeping pills."

After reaching inside her bra she produced a plastic phial.

"For Holy Moses' sake if you *do* have a tame ghost, tell her," pleaded Tess. "She wants a spook, so okay, dream one up - two or three, if your imagination can rise to it."

"No need to imagine; what exists, exists," snapped Carmen. "My aura is being oscillated."

"Campfire Girl's honour, I swear I never touched the woman!" cried Dandy in a mock-horror falsetto. Vi kicked her shin.

"A happy place like this wouldn't be haunted," scoffed Lynne, feeling Beth's hand creep nervously into hers.

"The truth, Jan," hissed Carmen, gently shaking the phial of sleeping pills.

Jan passed around a pack of cigarettes, lit one, and blew a lopsided smoke ring.

"Well, there is some sort of old wives' legend," she admitted, "but it's *only* a legend."

"Oh, that hoary tale you told me?" said Gail.

"Yes, but I didn't believe a word of it."

This was too much for the collective curiosity of the dinner party. Even Beth, trembling, begged to hear the story.

"All I know is what I read years ago in an old book Uncle Frank has," began Jan. "According to that, Peregrin Lodge was built by an English baronet who came to America at the beginning of the nineteenth century. There was just himself, his wife, and a daughter who was so ugly that none of the local eligibles would marry her, so she grew up an embittered old maid and in sheer frustration eloped with one of her father's grooms when she was over thirty. When her father found out where they were, he had them followed. The groom was shot and wounded. While he lay bleeding, this daughter - Henrietta was her name, I think - threw herself from a buggy and fell across his body to protect him, but she fell too hard and broke her neck. The book I read was written sometime around the 1850's, so it was pretty much hearsay, I guess."

"And she haunts Peregrin Lodge?" murmured Vi, enchanted.

"So the legend goes, but she's only been reported seen once, in 1869."

"Ooh - just exactly one hundred years ago!" gasped Beth.

"Poor old Henrietta. She really must have been cat-on-a-hot-tin-roof for a man," mused Pat, marvelling how anyone could feel that way. "Can't you just see the smoke rising from the lace of her frilly pantalets!"

"Dammit, woman, I ought to take my riding crop to you for that!" cried Carmen. All heads snapped round toward her in surprise, which turned to startled amazement when it was clear that she was fast asleep. She lay relaxed in her chair, long hair flopping on her shoulders, mouth half open, breathing out an opaque white mist.

"Devil take this ectoplasm - it's like walking through molasses," came the voice again. "And this cursed ankle-length habit doesn't make it any easier. Come, my sweet, allow me to give you a hand - ah, there we are. Out onto the table - gently, that's right. Splendid. I must own I've got devilishly stiff, haven't you? Hah. One moment; that's better."

Simultaneously the cigarette lighters were extinguished.

Beth began to sob hysterically.

"Oh, don't be silly, gel, I'm not going to hurt you. Come now, a pretty little thing like you shouldn't cry. You'll get wrinkles. It'll be better when you can see us, but we're out of practice. Lean on me, Mercy, I believe you're a trifle faint."

"For God's sake, Jan, what's happening?" shouted Lynne. "What's that goddam Carmen up to? Can't we get some light?"

"No, you can't," said the voice equably. "The fact is, ladies, that I had to - er - tamper with your power supply. I must admit that I'm rather proud of how I've kept abreast of technological advances over the last century or so."

"I'm going to shake Carmen till her teeth rattle," threatened Dandy. "Making that poor kid Beth cry like that." She bounded up, but Jan pushed her back into her chair.

"Hold it, Dandy, it isn't Carmen," she said quietly.

"Well, if it isn't Carmen, who the merry hell is it?"

"I rather think," said Jan, trying not to let her voice tremble, "it's Henrietta of Peregrin Lodge."

"Ha - sense at last." A brusque chuckle came from the center of the table. "Henrietta Battersea-Park at your service. Come along, Mercy, we simply must materialize. One, two, three, and *heave*. Oh blast, there goes the front seam of my ectoplasm. Never mind, I'll take it to the Invisible Menders. And *hop*. Voila!"

An eerie glow in the middle of the room took shape into two remarkable forms. One was a large, plain woman in top hat and riding habit, the other a demure girl dressed as a Quaker.

"You don't mind if we sit down?" said the large woman. Two chairs at the back of the room slid suddenly over to the table. The tophatted spectre helped her companion into one, then eased herself into the other.

"My word, what a scared-looking bunch you are," she said, with a grin. "Haven't you ever seen a ghost before?"

"Speaking personally, no," admitted Gail, trying to imagine it was a dream.

"Well, well, we're a select breed and particular about whom we hob-nob with, so perhaps not. Oh, how remiss of me. Happy anniversary to the celebrating couple."

"Why - uh - thank you," stammered Jan.

"You're most welcome." The vigorous ghost raised her tophat, then her eyes grew wistful. "I trust you would not think it too impertinent if I were to ask you for two glasses of champagne?" she said diffidently.

"Not that Mercy would drink it, being a Quaker, and of course neither of us has a stomach to put it in, but it's so long since I

sat over a glass of wine - a minor joy one misses."

Margot, nearest the bottle, poured out two glasses and slid them across the table.

"Most civil of you, most civil indeed." The ghost beamed, then her face set into an expression of stern determination. "I would, however, have you know that we did not come to savor champagne. We are here to eradicate a most dastardly stain on our characters; dastardly, *dastardly*." She struck the edge of the table with her riding crop, which having no substance, made no sound. "Miss Leyton, in the library next door reposes a libelous volume stupidly purchased by your Uncle Frank. It was written by a damned fool of a parson in 1858 after some halfwitted umpteenth cousin of my equally halfwitted father had bequeathed him a bundle of family papers. Had I encountered either of them in Limbo, I'd have laid about them with my crop, Gad, wouldn't I, but so far that satisfaction has eluded me. I materialized once before, without Mercy, in 1869, to what seemed a sensible young fellow browsing in the library, but he turned out to be one of those long-nosed reporters, and all I got for my pains was a front page rehash of the lies in that wretched book. If only I were concerned I might let it rest, but there's Mercy, d'you see, and shan't see the gel suffer, 'pon my soul, I won't." She bent such a look of possessive tenderness on the gentle Quaker that the watchers were quite touched.

"And you think we might be able to help you in some way?" ventured Jan.

The tophatted ghost sighed.

"If you can't, then my last hope is gone. You see, you have provided ideal conditions - a group of lesbians, *your* anniversary year which is also the 150th of Mercy and my meeting, and the young woman who is the medium. We couldn't fail to materialize successfully. When you hear our story I trust you'll understand why we have approached you. But make no mistake, ladies." She again rapped noiselessly with her crop. "Should you *not* wish to become involved, I shall take up no more of your evening. I never begged for favors in my lifetime, and I do not intend to begin now." "My God - pure Eleanor Butler!" burst out Margot, who had been raptly examining their strange visitor.

Henrietta Battersea-Park inclined her head.

"A pleasing compliment, my dear. Very

fine couple, the Llangollen ladies. We visit them frequently."

The ten mortals were stunned to silence. To think that their guests were cronies of the famous ladies.

Grace broke the hush.

"I'm sure we'll help you all we can," she said sincerely. "Please tell us how."

"Hadden't we better start by hearing your story?" put in Pat.

"Indeed you shall." The ghost cleared her throat, and raised the glass of champagne to her ephemeral lips. "In 1805, when I was nineteen, Papa (Sir Peregrin Battersea-Park, Bart.) at last fell into an eagerly-awaited legacy from a palsied old aunt who'd refused for years to die. America was just opening up and land was cheap, so Papa, sharp as a cutlass, bought this rather splendid plantation, built Peregrin Lodge, and dragged Mama and me off to the New World. Contrary to what that wretched book portrays, I wasn't a bad-looking gel in those days, even if I do say so m'self, but oh, those damned trailing skirts! You modern women don't know how lucky you are. I lived in absolute misery, I confess, subjected as I was to the social grind of visits and balls, shuffling round like a ninny with a succession of callow officers and exported dullards of titled families while all the time I longed for a woman to give my heart to. I consoled myself with looks and horses, and as the years went on and people pitied me as an old maid, didn't I laugh up my sleeve. Then in February 1819 Mercy came as a sewing wench, of all bizarre things. She was the orphaned daughter of a Quaker parson and his wife who'd both died of fever, and she needed a position at once. She was just nineteen, I was thirty-three, but it was love at first sight, and it got better at second and third sight. But Papa was very much a man of the world, and Mama had eyes in her head as well, and though such things were never spoken of in those days, I expect they'd - hm - 'figured me out.' I think you say? Well, to cut the story short, one morning in June 1820 I found Mercy crying in the stables while Slopp, our under-coachman, hitched the mare Dinah to the gig and with a lot of persuasion I got it out of Mercy that Papa had dismissed her and was sending her away. She was prepared to slip off for my sake, noble soul that she is - she'd even written a note and left it in the hollow tree that was our secret post-box. I saw then that we'd reached the point of no

return, so I hurried back to the house, flung a few things into a valise, bribed Slopp ten guineas to leave the stables long enough for us to drive off, and there we were, Mercy and I, eloping with not much more than we stood up in and not the slightest notion where to go or what to do. We drove hard and long that day, only stopping when poor Dinah showed signs of exhaustion. We travelled for a week, sleeping in the gig at nights and both the Indians, until we came to a cabin and corral where a widower named Culcott and his five sons were running a horse-breaking concern. They laughed in a singularly vulgar fashion when I asked for a job, though they reckoned Mercy would make a fine housekeeper. But when I hooked up by skirts and bestrode a few of their wildest stallions they didn't laugh any more. The old man was shrewd enough to realize that a female bronco-buster would be a big business draw, and so I was - if you'll pardon the egotism. They built us our own little cabin half a mile from theirs. Mercy did all the cooking and washing and mending for the men, and I worked in the corral. It wasn't what we'd have wished for, but beggars can't be choosers and we were very very happy together for almost a year." The ghost paused, sipped abortively at the champagne glass, and heaved a heavy sigh. "Then one day a passing rider brought news that some English gentleman was in the area searching for his daughter who'd run off with a groom. We discovered later that my father had promised Slopp one hundred guineas - a lot of money in those days - if he'd disappear, catch up with me, and allow it to be broadcast that he'd eloped with me. Oh, the indignity of it that posterity should imagine me besotted with a *man*!" She sat silent and brooding for a moment. "Well, well, there was nothing for it but a moonlight flit. So off we rattled behind faithful Dinah with a horse pistol beside us and no plans except to put as much space as possible between Papa and us. I think, yes, I really think we could have made it to the Mexican border - the Indians were so amazed to see a brace of white women bowling along unescorted that they simply stood goggling - if it hadn't been for that damned scoundrel Slopp who'd been sent on ahead to follow my trail and be sure to be seen 'fleeing' with me when the rest caught us up. The third day he appeared from behind a rock, in our very path.

"Ah, Miss Henrietta, your lover salutes

you," he said, tipping his hat with an insolent leer.

"Bedamned to you, Slopp, let us pass!" I ordered.

"Not I, ma'am. You're worth a fortune to me," said he, snatching Dinah's bridle.

"I cocked the horse pistol.

"Now, now, Miss Henrietta, that's not a pretty toy for a lady," he sniggered. "Best give it to me before you do yourself an injury."

"So I put a ball in his shoulder. He yelled and tumbled off his horse. It was a very satisfying moment."

"And you escaped - hurrah!" cried Dandy, quite carried away by the thrill of the story.

The ghost shook her head.

"Alas, no," she said somberly. "Slopp's horse reared and kicked poor Dinah, who bucked with shock. Mercy was flung on the floor of the gig and was much shaken but unhurt. I - well, I went over the side, and, curse it, broke my neck."

The listeners gasped in horror, and the modest ghost of Mercy dabbed her eyes with a spectral lace handkerchief.

"Come, my darling, don't distress yourself. It was a long time ago." Henrietta patted Mercy's transparent shoulder. "It's all over now, and here we are together forever. Beg pardon - where was I?"

Nobody liked to say. It did, after all, seem indelicate to remind their visitor of her broken neck.

"Ah, I remember. There was I dead as mutton on the Lone Prairie and Mercy bruised in the gig. She tells me that Slopp recovered himself - miraculous what therapeutic properties a fisful of guineas possesses - galloped off, and reappeared in a trice with Papa, plus a gaggle of pompous neighbors. Slopp, the fiend, told a cock-and-bull story about the pistol discharging accidentally and me falling out of the gig with alarm, but they later embroidered that theme to suit their own ends, as you know. I gather they took my corpse to the nearest ranch, made me a pinewood coffin, and shuttled me back in a succession of express wagons to Peregrin Lodge, where I was buried as soon as they could dig a grave, somewhere at the bottom of that hill you can see from the back bedroom window. My headstone's long crumbled and forgotten, of course - after all, it was April of 1821, and, lacking an heir, the family died out with Papa, who was more anxious to forget than remember me. Mercy was kept

at the Lodge for the look of the thing (I was supposed to have taken her along as my servant), but in July she slipped into my old bedroom, where your Uncle Frank sleeps now, and threw herself from the window so that she, too, could die of a broken neck, bless her. They buried her in the Quaker churchyard with her parents, but by that time her astral self had joined mine, so you might say we died happily ever after."

Beth was weeping helplessly with the pathos of it all, and even cynical Margot was blinking hard.

"Oh, Lynne, we must do something to put it right for them," sobbed Beth. "I don't know what's wrong, but we've got to help."

"Why sure we will, but what do they want us to do?" said Lynne.

"My dear young woman, you must re-write in its true version the story of the Lady Henrietta Battersea-Park and Mercy," commanded the ghost.

"That's a tall order," pointed out Jan. "The other version has been in circulation for over a hundred years, and besides - please don't be offended, but you're not really *news* anymore."

"Then we shall *become* news. Fear not, I have it all planned." The tophatted ghost chuckled grimly. "First, we need a quantity of genuine early-nineteenth-century writing paper, and that you will find in the secret drawer of my one-time bureau in your Uncle Frank's bedroom."

"My gosh, this beats Edgar Allan Poe!" exclaimed Dandy.

"But how do we open this drawer?" asked Gail.

"Ha, very bawdy, that drawer handle. On the front of the bureau you'll see the carved figure of a vacant-looking maiden carrying a cornucopia - thoroughly nasty imitation Greek. Just press her right breast and there you are. I left quite twenty sheets there, I recollect, plus a quill pen and a full inkwell."

"I'll go," said Jan.

"I'm right with you," seconded Pat. "I'll carry the flashlight."

They were soon back, carefully holding a sheaf of yellowish pages, a brittle goose-quill and a massive silver inkwell in which, remarkably, some liquid had been preserved.

"Splendid." The ghost eyed them with obvious excitement. "I would ask you please to place the quill in your medium's hand."

Jan slipped the goose-quill pen into Carmen's fingers, which at once tightened around it.

"Now, the paper on the table in front of her — yes, just so. And now, I must beg your indulgence of absolute silence for fifteen minutes — *absolute* silence, you understand?"

They watched dumbly as Carmen, still with closed eyes, bent over the paper and began to write, the quill scratching across the curling pages in a firm mannish script. When she had finished, she sagged back in her chair, snoring audibly.

"Aaaaaah!" The ghost gave a sigh of infinite relief. "It is done." The pages rose from the table and hovered before her face. "Excellent, a perfect forgery. Pray examine it for yourselves."

The manuscript sank back to the table top where the ten awed mortals could read the heading:

TRUE AND AUTHENTIC DEATH-BED CONFESSION OF SIR PEREGRIN BATTERSEA-PARK, BART., AS TO THE SHAMEFUL DECEIT PRACTISED BY HIM TO CONCEAL THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE LADY HENRIETTA BATTERSEA-PARK, HIS DAUGHTER AND ONLY CHILD.

"Words cannot express my gratitude ladies," said the ghost with dignified emotion. "Tonight Mercy and I, now that we have materialized, intend to appear at the bedsides of all the leading dignitaries of this town. Tomorrow we shall be a front-page sensation, and in the morning I would ask you to hasten to the local newspaper office, explain that you, too, have had a visitation in which you were instructed how to find this document and that it was the wish of the — ha — spectres that it be made public. May I presume upon you to do that for us?"

"Yes, of course," promised Jan. "But, if you don't mind my asking, how will it benefit you and Mercy?"

The ghost smiled, and her craggy face became quite handsome.

"We shall be at peace, free to go to England, to Devon where Mercy's ancestors came from. We shall inhabit the cottage of a dear old lady who is at present haunted by a poor homosexual American naval lieutenant who perished off that coast in 1841, and who has been breaking his heart to get back to his boyfriend, who is languishing

alone in another big plantation house not fifty miles from Peregrin Lodge — too sad. The lieutenant is under a special obligation and cannot leave England until someone takes over his haunt, so you see the many-sided humane service you have wrought. We are deeply in your debt, ladies, a debt which perhaps we may repay when in years to come you join us. Meanwhile, however, there is one small recompense I can make. By pressing the *left* breast of the dreary Greek maiden you will unspring another secret drawer. What you find therein will, I guarantee, not come amiss for your festive evening. Now, alas, we must leave you, for we have much to accomplish before dawn." She stood up, helping Mercy from her chair, and doffing her tophat, made a courteous bow. "Again, our thanks."

There was a flurry of ectoplasm, then the electric light suddenly came on. While everyone was exclaiming and shielding their eyes, Carmen yawned and sat up.

"Oh my God, how many sleeping tablets did I take?" she cried. She plunged her hand inside her bra and dredged up the phial, found it virgin and stoppered, and stared wildly about her.

"Jeez," said Margot, shakily lighting a cigarette, "I need a double Scotch."

"Don't we all," muttered Tess.

"They were real, weren't they?" puzzled Vi. "I mean, it wasn't a case of mass hypnosis or anything?"

"That's real enough." Pat touched the pile of foolscap.

"We musn't break faith with them," breathed Beth earnestly. "We must go to the newspaper tomorrow."

"I guess they'll tuck us away where all good psychos go," said Dandy gloomily, heading for sobriety, pessimism, and a king-sized hangover.

"Even so, we'll do what Henrietta asked, won't we, Jan?" begged Gail.

"Yes, I promise we will," responded Jan.

They all sat quiet, each deep in her own thoughts, the silence broken only by Nimrod's perplexed mewing and a rattle as Carmen restored her tablets to safe keeping in her bra.

"Ye gods, that reminds me!" Jan kicked back her chair.

"Darling, what's the matter?" asked Gail anxiously.

Jan grinned shakily.

"You are about to witness the notorious

Lewd Leyton Curiosity in action. Call it vile infidelity to my partner on our anniversary if you like, but I am enroute to the bedroom to press a strange woman's breast!"

(Miss Gulston writes that she is a very large, 37-year-old cat-worshipping un-Civil Servant. Honorary Secretary of MRT and member of "A3" editorial staff. Interests — writing; soldiering; swimming/sailing/riding (sustained by gruesome messes cooked on a tiny odorous meth stove); folk-singing with guitar; welfare and rescue work for Cats' Protection League; safe driving.)



"WHO NEEDS CHARLIE BROWN?!"

By Candi McGonagle

Four Poems by Rita Mae Brown

ORIGINAL SIN

This hand behind my back
Holding the other
As if some brother
Clutching its partner in crime,
The sins of the right hand.
Ten tight witnesses
Interlocking,
A hung jury
Locked in the fingers of indecision
As a hand fills a hand
In loneliness
Its other;
Awaiting,
Awaiting another.

COLORADO RAINS

Her name hangs heavy on my lips
In long nights I dream
A bright ringed hallucination
I reach and find her taken.

THE MIDNIGHT CAESURA

At the end of the afternoon
She kindly disengaged me
Or was I abandoned?
No matter what the term,
She let me go
Alone to my bed where her name is sewn
Along the edges of my dreams.

LOVE ON THE RUN or THE TRACKSHOE SONATA

Ask me — do I love her,
I would have to answer, "Yes"
For I have smelled laughter
lurking in the folds of her dress
I have felt her hard beating and
half mended heart
And sung litanies upon her breast.
Ask me — do I love her,
Yes, Yes, Yes.

Cross Currents

WOMEN'S LIBERATION: COAST TO COAST, CITY TO CITY, TOWN TO TOWN: MARCH, APRIL, MAY AND JUNE 1970. We want to thank all of you who have sent in clippings on local women's meetings of all kinds concerned with the varying, various but basic problems of the liberation of women. We would like to see all of them from now on. Not all of them will be mentioned in this column, but most of them will be. **KEEP THEM COMING IN.**

LIBERATION: February 1970. Carl Wittman, in *A GAY MANIFESTO*, hits out at male chauvinism and points out that the way for liberty for all lies in the path of women's liberation.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE IRON CURTAIN: THE HOUSTON POST: March 8, 1970. Bob Green, Hong Kong-based writer for Dispatch News Service, points out the "baggy trouser" equality now beginning to be experienced by mainland Chinese women and their relative dissatisfaction with no life but the revolutionary one. A good article and one to ponder, especially for those so disheartened with conditions for women here.

LOS ANGELES WOMEN'S LIBERATION: L.A. FREE PRESS: March 27, 1970. Varda Murrell describes in detail visiting the Los Angeles DOB with an eye to increasing their interest in women's liberation. She concludes with, "It is time we in women's liberation stop letting men's taunts divide us, and start calling the Lesbian sister."

YALE AND THE NEW SISTERHOOD: YALE ALUMNAE MAGAZINE: April 1970. Barbara Packer and Karen Waggoner report on the women's liberation movement as it pertains specifically to YALE women and general area, with tips of use to women on other campuses. Good.

FORBES MAGAZINE: April 15, 1970. In "Trends and Tangents," *FORBES* cites the rotten statistics for working women. A survey conducted by the American Society for Personnel Administration with 150 companies found that 59 percent disqualified women on the basis of sex alone from many jobs. 40 percent had no women in any type of managerial position, and where large numbers of women were employed they did the lowest jobs. **this is NEWS?**

DAYTIME TV GETS ONE IN THE

SCREEN: NEW YORK TIMES: April 16, 1970. Ten young women disrupted the annual meeting of the Columbia Broadcasting System and caused a short recess. They came to protest both TV advertising and soap operas.

WELL, WELL, WOMEN'S LIBERATION IS NOW A CAPITALISTIC DELIGHT TOO: TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT: April 30, 1970. A full-page ad in the leading review journal of the world features "The Source Library of the Women's Movement," from Source Book Press, 185 Madison Avenue, New York City, 10016. For a mere \$850 it seems one can own 40 titles, 63 volumes of women's rights literature, all being reprinted to meet current demands. After November 1, 1970 (scheduled publication date) the price goes to \$950, so get your orders in fast!!! Women are the "new thing" just as "black history and culture" have been for the past several years. Actually, the library as presented is excellent reading, and a good many of these proud names will be known to all of you. Those of you living near large college, university and public libraries should raise holy hell via the women's groups to get the nearest institutions to purchase these. They will all, stated without fear of contradiction, spend a good deal of money this and every year on far less important material. **RIGHT ON, AND NOW, READ ON.**

CIVIL LIBERTIES: May 1970. This is the publication of the American Civil Liberties Union, and a kind reader has begun sending pertinent data to me from it. In this issue, for example, appear the following items:

ABORTION LAWS CHALLENGED in four more states: Indiana, Illinois, New Jersey and Iowa. Suits have been filed, based on different but similar reasons, in each of these states to knock out the existing abortion regulations.

FORTY-SIX WOMEN AT NEWSWEEK supported by the ACLU and its New York affiliate have filed a complaint with the Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission stating that *NEWSWEEK* discriminates in employment on the basis of sex. They point out that there is only one female writer at the magazine and over 50 male writers. Women are barred from correspondence and editing positions as well,

and training programs are reserved almost exclusively for men.

HOMOSEXUALS ASK U.S. WORK RIGHTS: This issue of *CIVIL LIBERTIES* also reports on the two cases now before the Supreme Court involving the right to work restrictions now placed on homosexuals by the federal government. One of these is the famous Bennington Wentworth case often cited in these pages, and the other involves the civilian employment of a homosexual administrative officer with the Department of the Army. Grounds for the case are that there are no sane reasons for the restrictions.

ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON (New York, May 1970). Mrs. Norton has been named Chairman of the New York City Commission on Human Rights. She is a former assistant legal director of the ACLU and has been associated with virtually all major civil rights movements.

THE CITY POLITIC: SEX AND THE CITY COUNCIL. unidentified magazine article by Deborah Harkins, ca May 1970. A hard-hitting look at the condition of being female in the city of New York where it seems it is hard for women to find places to eat after dark unless they are accompanied by a male, where even apartments are hard to find for two or more unmarried females. According to George Zuckerman, Assistant State's Attorney General in charge of the state's civil rights bureau, they receive "dozens of calls from women complaining about the renting problem and the restaurant problem." He adds that they tell them "There is no remedy under the existing law." The article is a long, long list of incidents that sound like medieval torture. We would appreciate hearing from someone in the New York area who might be able to identify this slick paper magazine with pages about the size of *TIME* magazine and which apparently deals exclusively with the New York City area. The article is amazing, and for those of us living in the Midwest where very little such activity exists, astonishing. Miss Harkins tells us, also, that the reason given for this unbelievable prejudice is that establishments wish to discourage prostitutes and that is why the law in the city is hard to change. What one wonders is if the city fathers feel that sufficient numbers of prostitutes inhabit their city to constitute a "danger" to its restaurants and apartments?

WOMEN'S STUDIES AT CORNELL: Special to the *LADDER*: May 1, 1970. Dr.

Joy Ososky, a 25-year-old Ph.D. in psychology, organized and partly taught a course designed to study women, not as they have been shown to be but as they really are. 200 students enrolled for the course; 100 others audited it. Among the expected topics were, "The History of Black Women", "Women as Sex Object in Playboy" and "Power Relationships in the Family." The last lecture by Dr. Ososky was "The Prospects for Androgeni" . . . toward a society without sexual differentiation.

CONGRESS TO UNITE WOMEN: May 1, 2 and 3: Special to the *LADDER*. Depending upon whom you are reading these days, this was a highly successful conference wherein a number of previously ignored but very present Lesbians in women's liberation had their say in public to the cheers and huzzahs of their heterosexual sisters, or it was a fiasco in which all hell broke loose and no group had an adequate say. Since I attended the whole thing, please let me make clear that while not the most orderly meeting in women's liberation that I've been honored to attend, it was certainly the most illuminating and did more to convince all women that cooperation is essential than any prior meeting to it (at least on the East Coast).

VILLAGE VOICE: May 7, 1970. In *THE FEMINIST WALLOP*, writer Jonathan Black comes out with more intelligence than most men on women's liberation. He points out, too, that men have a good deal more to gain than lose in this "battle."

WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND PROTECTIVE LEGISLATION: Special to the *LADDER*: May 9, 1970. This meeting, sponsored by DOB, INDEPENDENT CAMPUS WOMEN, GRADUATE WOMEN'S SOCIOLOGY CAUCUS, WOMEN, INC., BERKELEY NOW, NEWS-REEL, SUDSAFLOPPEN, THE GALL-STONES, SISTERS OF LILITH and the WOMEN'S COALITION CONFERENCE, was held to consider the equal rights amendment now before the California legislature. Speakers of various women's rights groups were featured, including Del Martin (speaking on behalf of NOW).

BOSTON SUNDAY GLOBE: May 10, 1970. Writer Diana Crawford describes the Boston Daughters of Bilitis fairly but mildly inaccurately in a reasonable article that lacks the usual prejudices but does manage to misquote and mislead. Article head, "Lesbians in Boston Organize to Explain

Problems to Public," probably did as much good as the rest of the article.

CORNELL CONFERENCE ON THE FUTURE OF FEMALE STUDIES: May 10, 1970. This was held to prove what we all know: women have been neglected. Amen. Good write-up on the efforts this fine school is making to rectify the errors of centuries in the weekly paper of CORNELL UNIVERSITY, *THE CORNELL CHRONICLE*: May 21, 1970.

QUOTED FROM BOB TALBERT'S DETROIT: DETROIT FREE PRESS: May 11, 1970: "Asked what he thought about the more militant women's liberation leaders, one government official said, 'Well, I sure wouldn't want my sister marrying one.'"

WOMEN'S LIBERATION AND GAY LIBERATION TAKE ON THE SHRINKS: San Francisco, May 14, 1970. A militant group of women's liberationists and a militant group of gay liberationists disrupted a meeting of the American Psychiatric Association. Later comments by writers coast to coast praise the disrupters but are very upset over the behavior of the doctors. One paper being read was about the aversion theory wherein homosexuals are "cured" by subjecting them to torture. (What kind of witch doctors??)

MORE (movie), DETROIT FREE PRESS: May 14, 1970. Critic Susan Stark gives a rave review to the film MORE, which is supposed to be about the drug-filled youth culture. Set up to show the last six months of life of a 24-year-old German boy, MORE also features a hoydenish lesbian played by Mimsy Farmer. Miss Stark calls it the "ultimate contemporary romance."

WOMEN IN LIBERATION BATTLE IN THE CHURCHES: NEW YORK TIMES: May 17, 1970. Edward Fiske contributes a short article on the uprising of women in virtually all the denominations toward more equitable treatment. It sounds pretty tame compared to the liberationist press, but it's a good beginning in a very, very prejudiced area.

RELIGIOUS STORM CENTER: NEW SEX CODE: DETROIT FREE PRESS: May 17, 1970. Religious writer Will Oursler, writing of the United Presbyterian Church's new sex code, which took three years to write and includes, among other provisions, "Removal of any stigma that makes homosexuals feel they are in irresolvable conflict with the Christian fellowship," discusses the

wide-spread controversy forming coast to coast over the giant step taken by this enormous church body. (This later passed at the group's convention and is part of the church's official policy.) As one writer put it, SEX AND SIN ARE NOT CONNECTED.

AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND: AP: May 18, 1970. Anglican minister Rev. Morris Russell, vicar of St. Matthews in Auckland, is pressing for some legal means to marry homosexual couples within the church. Right on, Rev. Russell. Legal and church marriages for any two persons so wanting them should be available, just as those, of whatever sex, who wish to live together and not marry, should be allowed to do so.

MIAMI HERALD: May 18, 1970. Staff writer Molly Sinclair describes the all-day conference at Gainesville, Florida, wherein professionals, students and faculty members worked together to present WOMEN: THE VAST MINORITY. The conference consisted of speeches, workshops and panel discussions. Among other things, the group agreed on resolutions to repeal all existing statutes which make private sexual acts between consenting adults a crime. Catherine East (executive secretary of the Citizens' Advisory Council on the Status of Women) and Caroline Bird (noted author of BORN FEMALE) were among the many speakers.

HUGH HEFNER IN TROUBLE or UP AGAINST THE WALL, MALE CHAUVINIST PIG: PLAYBOY: May 1970 and **NEWSWEEK:** May 18, 1970. Morton Hunt wrote a rotten and rather stupid article on women's liberation with all the cute tricks of a real woman-hater included for PLAYBOY. Well, that's not news, but NEWSWEEK has told the story of how this article came about and the flak that flew during the creation of it. It seems that Miss Shelly Schlicker, Hugh's private secretary, got a bit uptight at this memo, referring to Women's Liberation, and dictated by Hugh himself: "These chicks are our natural enemy . . . it is time to do battle with them. What I want is a devastating piece that takes the militant feminist apart. They are unalterably opposed to the romantic boy-girl society that PLAYBOY promotes . . . Let's get to it and let's make it a real winner." Miss Schlicker took that memo to the media press and along with it the rest of the story. In December 1969, PLAYBOY paid \$2,000 to writer Susan Braudy for an

article on women's liberation. This thoughtful piece was discarded, though, following the above memo. On came Morton Hunt, and out to the press went Miss Schlicker. Hugh fired her, of course. But Hugh Hefner was right about one thing, very right: as time will tell, those "chicks" are his natural enemy . . .

REP. JONATHAN BINGHAM, a Democrat from New York, has suggested that MISS and MRS. be deleted from use at once and for all women. He suggests MS. in its place for all women, just as all men are called MR. (*CHICAGO TRIBUNE*: May 18, 1970).

AILEEN HERNANDEZ SPEAKING IN LOS ANGELES: May 20, 1970. Special to the LADDER. Speaking before a women's rights group in Los Angeles, Aileen Hernandez, new National President of NOW, was asked by a member of the audience: "My women's liberation group accepts the Lesbian as sister; what is NOW's policy, and how do you answer the news media?" She said: "Sex is a private matter. We don't have people fill out cards stating their sexual preference." The audience applauded. Another asked: "What about women who want to live in communes for women only or as Lesbians?" Aileen answered: "The purpose of NOW is to let people to their own thing."

DUTCH WOMEN ORGANIZE: NEW YORK TIMES: May 20, 1970. In four months' time, some 3,000 women have joined a Dutch women's liberation group called "Dolle Minas" with chapters in Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Arnhem. The group gets its name from Wilhelmina (Mina) Drucker, a 19th-century women's rightist in Holland. The literal translation of the name is MAD MINAS.

DETROIT: May 21, 1970. Gale Aldrich, 26-year-old four-year veteran of the Detroit police department, was suspended for refusing to act as a "decoy" in setting up traps for muggers. She is quoted as saying, "I went to Michigan State University and I studied hard to be a policewoman, but I don't think all the training was done just so I could pose as a prostitute." The Detroit Police Officers Association is backing her fight for reinstatement.

KATE MILLETT AND VILLAGE VOICE: May 21, 1970. In an excellent interview by Minda Bikman, combined with a general information survey, called "Where Do All the Women Ph.D's GO?", Kate Millett discusses her ten years' of ex-

perience teaching in "good" eastern colleges and universities, including the horribly low wages paid to her. The article goes on to document case after case of restricted educational facilities and opportunities . . . blatant in-classroom prejudice from male professors . . . example after example of insult and vicious treatment. Worse, cases of cheating are included, where women working toward higher degrees are discriminated against unlawfully to make damned certain they cannot complete the work. The information was obtained in hearings held in a Columbia University lecture room where over 100 women employed in many capacities by Columbia met. Everywhere we go, overt and covert discrimination, and it must stop.

MIAMI HERALD: May 24, 1970. A lengthy article by Molly Sinclair outlines the history-making Ida Phillips' case. This is the Florida woman with many children who was turned down for employment simply because she had a number of young children. The Supreme Court has agreed to hear this case, and if it is a favorable decision, the result will be considerably better employment practices where women are concerned. Curiously, the U.S. Justice Department and the NAACP Educational and Legal Defense Fund, Inc., have supported Mrs. Phillips by providing her with legal aid.

SPECIAL MESSAGE FOR LITTLE GIRLS AND PARENTS: Ithaca (N.Y.) *ITHACA JOURNAL*: May 28, 1970. Thomas and Alice Fleming, writing for the parents of young girls, cite the oft-mentioned study by Matina Horner which proved that both male and female students have been trained (by the time they reach college) to completely believe that men are superior to women. Her study used the simple device of telling identical stories about a superior student, only changing the first name in one case from John to Anne, and asking the students then to comment on the fact that this student "continues working hard and eventually graduates at the top of his/her class." Without exception, the students (both male and female) provided glowing and romantic testimony about the probably future life of John, but when the story was about Anne the results were uniformly denigrating, with the females providing the worst "fates" for Anne. The Flemings end their article pleading for an end to one-sided, one-direction education and the full utilization of the human potential in everyone.

LIBERATION FROM WHAT? May 28, 1970. Some 200 women from conservative, moderate and radical groups met for an all-day conference. Highlights included Ti-Grace Atkinson's suggestion that for every woman arrested for prostitution, four men should be arrested for obscenity. Mrs. Ersa H. Poston, president of the N.Y. State Civil Service Commission (thus the highest-ranking woman in the state government), spoke on the fact that no matter how few women are admitting it yet, the stirrings caused by the vocal few are getting through and many American women are "beginning to accept the notion that their present role in the kitchen or behind a typewriter has been thrust upon them by a society dominated by men and government by masculine values."

VILLAGE VOICE: May 28, 1970. In **STOP SQUIRMING, MEN**, Ann Gottlieb takes Jonathan Black to task for his **THE FEMINIST WALLPAPER** (VV: May 7, 1970) primarily, one notes, for his choice of words rather than his content.

SUPREME COURT RULES FOR WOMEN: May 28, 1970. The Supreme Court has ruled that women must be paid at the same rate as men for the same work. Took 50 years to get the ruling; hope it won't be 50 years more for its enforcement.

FIGHT Demeaning Ads: We simply do not have a race to report on the clippings from coast to coast about women's groups and individual women who are suddenly and thoroughly turning on the advertising industry to **FORCE** them to stop demeaning women in advertising. It is enough to note that it is big news in **TIME**, **NEWSWEEK** and some 20 papers during the months of May and June 1970. **DETROIT FREE PRESS:** May 2, 1970, has an excellent article about Franchiellie Cadwell, who heads her own advertising agency, **CADWELL DAVIS**, which specializes in selling to women. Speaking to the **AD CRAFT** and **WOMEN'S ADVERTISING** clubs in Detroit, she said she was campaigning to end especially television advertising which "demeans and insults" women.

FIGHT INDIVIDUAL JOB DISCRIMINATION: May and June 1970. Again, we cannot cover the some 200 clippings on individual women from coast to coast in all possible fields who are bringing suit against companies for unfair employment practices. We are just delighted to see it happening.

THE MOD DONNA: New York; May and June 1970. The new feminist musical, **MOD DONNA**, opened in New York City on May 1, to the general bewilderment of the dramatic establishment. None of the reviews sound faintly plausible until one comes to Vivian Gornick's "WHO IS THE FAIREST OF THEM ALL?" in **VILLAGE VOICE:** May 28, 1970. In any case, you lucky ones in New York City will want to see this. The rest of us will hope it gets produced somewhere nearer us in the future. (Note: *Dramatist is Myrna Lamb, and it's playing at the Public Theater.*)

FIRST WOMEN GENERALS: June 1970. President Nixon promoted Col. Elizabeth P. Hloisington, director of the Women's Army Corps, and Anna Mae Hays, chief of the Army Nurse Corps, to Generals. This is the first time in American history that women have held the high office.

McCALL'S MAGAZINE: June 1970. Shana Alexander's editorial, "The Feminine Eye," is a bad news cop-out. She means well, but the road to hell is STILL paved with good intentions. Her slaps at women's liberation are hardly countered by her own admitted Aunt Thomasina pose. You are too intelligent, Shana Alexander, to betray your own kind.

WOMEN AT COLUMBIA: MORE KATE MILLETT: **VILLAGE VOICE:** June 4, 1970. In the second of two articles, Minda Bikman covers Kate Millett's argument in favor of women's colleges to help dispel the image of the "co-ed" which destroys any chance for co-educational education in the mixed schools.

WOMEN ARE SISTERS: **WASHINGTON POST:** June 7, 1970. One of the finest articles on women's liberation, written by Gloria Steinem, was run in this paper this date. It is worth writing for to get a copy. The article is excerpted from Gloria Steinem's commencement address at Vassar, 1970.

PSYCHOLOGY TODAY SURVEY: **WASHINGTON POST:** June 7, 1970. 20,000 readers of this magazine out of a possible 100,000 replied to a survey which was included in a recent issue of the magazine. 101 questions were asked and results show that the 20,000 who replied averaged 30 years of age, were college-educated and had incomes of over \$10,000 a year. 45 percent were single, 42 percent were married, most were self-proclaimed atheists or agnostics, and most lived on the East or West coast. Which brings us to the

interesting parts of the survey. 37 percent of the males admitted homosexual experience, 12 percent of the females admitted Lesbian experience, with 4 percent of these claiming exclusive Lesbianism. This is higher than the experts would like us to believe — a lot higher. In July 1968, the estimated female population of the United States was 102,296,000. 4 percent of that would be 4,091,840 exclusive Lesbians, with some 13,000,000 other women who have had some Lesbian experience.

WOMEN WILL RUN BANK: **MIAMI BEACH:** AP: June 9, 1970. A group of nine women have petitioned for a state charter to begin the First Women's Bank of Florida, to be located on the southern end of Miami Beach. **WOMAN CAPITALISM** at work.

LABOR DEPARTMENT GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN: **KANSAS CITY TIMES:** June 10, 1970. On June 9, 1970, the Labor Department announced its guidelines to assure equal job opportunities for women on work paid for under federal contract. The details pertain to wages, hours, advertising in newspaper columns, seniority, job classifications and retirement benefits. Elizabeth Duncan Koontz, director of the Labor Department's women's bureau, made the announcement. This is an important step forward. It is not enough — nothing will be for quite some time to come — but it is a breakthrough.

BAY AREA WOMEN'S LIBERATION magazine, **TOOTH AND NAIL**, Volume 1, No. 3. This issue explains "for the benefit of librarian types" that **BAY AREA** magazine began in August 1969 and the first issue was called **OFF THE PEDESTAL**. The second issue was called **TOOTH AND NAIL**, and marked Volume 1, No. 1, which makes Volume 1, No. 3 really the *fourth* issue of the **BAY AREA WOMEN'S LIBERATION** magazine — now you know.

94 OUT OF 260 WOMEN: That number of women editorial staffers of **TIME** filed charges with the New York State Division of Human Rights, alleging that the corporation discriminates against women because of their sex.

DR. GEORGE W. ALBEE, June 18, 1970. Speaking before the Wisconsin Psychiatric Association on June 17, 1970, Dr. Albee, president of the American Psychological Association, branded today's repressive forces as patriarchy. He cited exaggerated masculine virtues, militarism, war, sports and cut-throat competition. Speaking of the patrist attitude toward women, he

said: "Women are accorded in this group low status; men use them rather than accept them as equals. At the same time the importance of chastity is stressed and strict controls are imposed on the freedom of women." Dr. Albee is on the faculty of Case-Western Reserve University in Cleveland.

LESBIANS IN THE NEWS AGAIN: **LOS ANGELES TIMES:** June 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25, 1970. Writer Lynn Lilliston, staff writer on L.A. **TIMES**, has created a generally good view of the Lesbian in her five-part article. Despite the (apparently?) inevitable factual errors (including such horrors as Bilitis was a lover of Sappho's instead of a fictional character created in the 1800's), Lynn Lilliston covers the private lives of a number of Lesbians accurately. She emphasizes their relationship to all women and women's rights rather than the usual (and very inaccurate) tying-in of Lesbians to male homosexuals. The unfortunate and necessary sensationalistic approach is mitigated in this series by the inclusion of the examination of a stable marriage. In the course of the investigation of this particular marriage (Part 3 in the series), Miss Lilliston includes sufficient in-depth information on the lives of both partners to show a far more usual Lesbian household than is usually portrayed in the popular press. When the day comes that the general public realizes that Lesbians are so among them, so present, so beside them in every job, on every street, in every building, and so unlike the common stereotypes, we will receive far less publicity and possibly have far fewer problems. The one sad thing all minorities have in common is their minority status. If the day dawns when

CHANGING YOUR ADDRESS?

If you are planning to move, please let us know six weeks before changing your address. Please send your old address and your new address, clearly marked. You **MUST** include **BOTH** your old and your new zip codes. **REMEMBER**, third class mail is not forwardable. Send to **CIRCULATION DEPARTMENT**, P.O. Box 5025, Washington Station, Reno, Nevada 89503.

there is no such thing as a recognizable minority of any kind, then we will all be human beings. Valhalla? Utopia?

AAUW REPORT: MUCH SMOKE, LITTLE FIRE: WASHINGTON: June 22, 1970. Results of the AAUW survey on women's rights, conducted coast to coast last winter, show that 80 percent of educated men and women feel women suffer sex discrimination in the working world. But the same survey shows that men continue to believe that women belong in the

kitchen and bedroom and nursery, and nowhere else. Amazingly, women in the South were the most liberal in the survey. One rather magnificent example of how brainwashed slaves react: 51 out of every 100 women felt that women's rights efforts would "do more harm than good." One wonders how you can worsen a slave's condition.

WHERE WERE YOU ON AUGUST 26, 1970, AND WHAT WERE YOU DOING ?????????

LESBIANA

By GENE DAMON

A kind reader pointed out to me that in my raving about Lynn Strongin's poetry in 31 NEW AMERICAN POETS, N.Y., Hill and Wang, 1969, I had overlooked the poetry of Marge Piercy. I apologize, and quickly share with you (the same reader even sent the book to me) the fact that Miss Piercy is indeed most interesting. Of her nine poems in the book, only "For Jerriann's Hands" can be cited as specifically pertinent . . . but several of the others are noticeably feminist in tone . . . likely to be enjoyed by most of you.

And, for the poetry lovers, there is an unusual serial poetry anthology, **MAN-ROOT**, being published in San Francisco (P.O. Box 982, South San Francisco, California 94080). The first issue, August, 1969, featured, among many talented souls, Judy Grahn, who has been a **LADDER** contributor in the past and we hope again soon in the future. The second issue, with vastly improved format and presentation, includes a long section of poetry by Lynn Strongin, much of it pertinent, all of it lovely. Excellent idea . . . hope it works. **MAN-ROOT** is caviar for the poetry people.

Brigid Brophy's **IN TRANSIT**, N.Y., Putnam, 1969, is held together by what must be deliberate adulteration of the English language. She terms it "compulsion". If you can take this annoying cleverness for wit — perhaps even enjoy it — the story is a spoof on sexual identification. The main character seems at first to be a girl but is confused about her/his gender. Homosexual exploitation, including a Lesbian revolt against male domination, is introduced as one of the contributors to the chaos of sexual breakdown. Miss Brophy's books commonly encourage mild outrage despite her very real talent. Few readers here will go for the book, especially her use

of the Lesbian figures in the plot. The comedy is inescapably bad, but there are some telling comments on modern sexual confusion.

Oscar Meek, who has been mentioned before in this column for his bibliography on homosexuality (non-fiction) has compiled a good selected bibliography entitled **PORNOGRAPHY, OBSCENITY AND CENSORSHIP**. As was his earlier title, this is published by the New Mexico Research Library of the Southwest, in Santa Fe, New Mexico (1969). Cost is \$1.75, and it's a valuable tool for anyone interested in the constant threats to our freedom to read. In discussing this book with friends, someone commented that we don't have much censorship today. Not so, as anyone who has seen two or three consecutive issues of **THE READER'S DIGEST** can testify . . . there are still a large number of people in the world who are determined that others will not have the right to choose what they wish to read, to view, to enjoy.

Georges Simenon, grand champion of psychological detective yarns, included minor but fairly substantial Lesbian portions in his novel, **IN CASE OF EMERGENCY**, which is out from Macfadden in paperback, 1970. First incarnation, I believe, since the Dell, 1959 edition. And from the same publisher, also out this year, that evil genius, Vin Packer, in her fairly early book, **EVIL FRIENDSHIP**. Why anyone reprinted that one I do not know, but Vin Packer is a good writer — though hardly likely to be popular in this tale of terrible children committing terrible crimes.

Back in 1958, Ballantine Books brought out young Harold Greenwald's book, **THE CALL GIRL**. The book caused quite a stir because, despite the limited number of subjects, Greenwald showed that the vast

majority of prostitutes dislike men intensely and are, in their personal orientation, Lesbians. This "fact" was not entirely new, but before Greenwald's study, it had been limited to generalizations and occasional bits of data in other studies. It was backed up by the fact that Greenwald had not begun his study expecting to find this . . . and had, indeed, changed his research when this pattern emerged strongly enough to interest him in the phenomenon. Now, the distinguished publisher, N.Y., Walker, has brought out an expanded and updated version (claims run to 50% new material . . . reading shows about 25% new material) called **THE ELEGANT PROSTITUTE**. The new edition has a properly inflated \$6.95 price tag. It is unlikely, despite its superiority, to stir up as much interest as did the first view, but it brings up some interesting viewpoints . . . reinforcing the alienation that women are very likely to feel when put into contact with men at their most "natural" level. It is a very sad look at the facetiously termed "oldest profession".

Dr. Ann Sheriff, gynecologist, and her battle against a version of the birth control pill which she has found to be clinically damaging to the women using it, is the basic tale of **THE FACTS OF LIFE**, N.Y., McGraw-Hill, 1969, 1970. Author Richard Gordon (Gordon Ostlere) is a doctor, and his previous books have leaned toward the less serious side of medicine. None of Dr. Gordon's women, including his heroine, are very realistic. However, the book is good for its portrayal of the attitude of men in medicine toward women, and excellent for its view of the casual value placed on the lives of women in general. Our interest here is in a girlhood friend of Ann's who is a Lesbian. It is not a particularly valid view, but it occupies a fair portion of the novel, and the character is important in the plot. The unwitting feminist argument here is more important, though, than the Lesbian portion of the book. Worth looking for at your library.

Here's an interesting reprint switch. Marijane Meaker (also known as M.J. Meaker) brought out a collection of sensationalized biographies of people who died via the suicide route called **SUDDEN ENDINGS** in 1964, published by Doubleday. This year (1970) Fawcett Gold Medal has reprinted it, but knowing how much better known Miss Meaker is by one of her many pseudonyms, Vin Packer, they have

brought it out under that name. Several of the subjects are, not surprisingly, homosexuals or Lesbians. Well worth the cost of paperback if you've not seen it.

When Gavin Lambert's 1968 novel, **A CASE FOR THE ANGELS**, came out, reviews cited it as male homosexual, and fairly substantially. Not till recently did I learn that, indeed, it is more importantly a Lesbian novel. Though not particularly sensationalized, few are going to like the ingredients of the book. Dora Poley, deserted by husband Kieth who is more impressed with four on the floor than with two in the bed, cannot quite keep up with Kieth's groups of pals which include various and sundry males and females and a pair of Lesbians named Rosemary and Octavia. A kindly male homosexual pal, Chad, tries to steer Dora away from the gropy group, knowing she is not a part of their world. Octavia is a "friend" of Dora's, but the friendship includes trying and succeeding in bedding down with her. Despite the hair-raising sound of it all, there is little explicit sex; and the kind reader who provided these comments liked and generally recommended the book.

Another reader supplied the information that Erskine Caldwell's novel, **THE WEATHER SHELTER**, N.Y., World, New American Library, 1969, is pertinent. It is, minor, and quite poor. The novel's protagonist's wife, Madge, turns him down, is cold, etc. . . . turns out to be a Lesbian. Not good in any sense of the word; and worse, he cannot write as well now as he was writing back in 1944 when his novel, **TRAGIC GROUND**, also included a minor and unsympathetic bit of Lesbianism.

We are informed that a book called **LES GUERILLERES**, by Monique Wittig, Paris, Editions de Minuit, 1970, is very major Lesbian and a strong women's liberation novel. Miss Wittig is the author of **THE OPOPONAX**, a 1966 Lesbian novel. It is said to be written in the third person feminine plural (in French this would be *elles*). Undoubtedly this will be translated into English, and we look forward to reviewing it for you.

Have you ever heard of Kate Chopin? Probably not, for she was not a he, and that "crime" quite directly ruined her promising career. Born Katherine O'Flaherty in 1851, a convent-educated Irish Catholic, she married, in 1870, one Oscar Chopin, a Louisiana cotton broker. She bore six children. Her husband died in 1884, and in

1888 she began to write seriously. Between 1888 and 1898 she produced a novel and two collections of short stories. Reviewers and the reading public were outraged by her books; and rather than fight it out, she stopped writing, dying in obscurity in 1905. Belatedly, her importance as a writer is now being discovered, and two fine books have been published: *THE COMPLETE WORKS OF KATE CHOPIN*, Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1970; and *KATE CHOPIN, A CRITICAL BIOGRAPHY*, by Per Seyersted, also from Louisiana State University, 1970. Wondering why Mrs. Chopin was so unpopular? Knowing how we are conditioned, I'd bet 90% of you have already decided that she probably wrote purple prose on sexy subjects. On the contrary, she wrote about women as they really are. Her heroines are usually reluctant wives either appalled by the grubby intimacies of marriage or unhappy about relinquishing their privacy and independence. Some of her women long for the cloister, others for careers. Many among them have eschewed marriage altogether, and most reject all social protocol (meaning in those times "smoke cigarettes and dream of escaping domestic bondage"). One reviewer alludes to Lesbianism in one of her stories, and when we have investigated all 1,032 pages of her *COMPLETE WORKS* . . . we'll confirm or deny the rumor . . . Libraries of fair size will have these books . . .

I ask, and often, for help in finding material usable in this column. A reader in Michigan supplied the information which follows, and I am very grateful. However, I am angry that those of you who read *KENYON REVIEW* regularly did not take the trouble to tell me about this story when it first appeared. "Paper Poppy" by Miriam Rugel first appeared in *KENYON REVIEW* in the September 1968 issue . . . so we have been missing it all this time. The tone is set in this sentence, as the heroine goes over her life: "Yes, I appreciate my husband, even though unexpectedly my own life has more and more suspended itself between book covers and he has not opened a magazine in thirty years." We learn that she had had, in her late teens, a chance encounter with a Lesbian (someone who needed to be entertained for an evening) arranged by her family; and that she had forgotten it until her awareness was stimulated by the vicarious enjoyment of the affair which her hairdresser is having with

another man . . . and she goes away from witnessing his last "scene" in her life to "long for the touch of a hand that I know" . . . "I wait for the touch of her hand on my pearls." All this from a slight evening . . . where nothing more precipitous than a firm hand on her elbow while crossing a street and a sudden goodnight kiss occurs. Lovely lovely story . . . and available now to the whole world by virtue of its inclusion in *THE BEST AMERICAN SHORT STORIES*, 1969, edited by Martha Foley and David Burnett, Boston, Houghton, Mifflin, 1969. Really, not to be missed.

The same reader earlier cited concerning the poetry of feminist Marge Piercy also provided clues concerning proof of my inadequacy in the field of poetry by citing 1930's poet, Genevieve Taggard. She sent copies of the poems "Millions of Strawberries" and "The Enamel Girl." These are explicitly Lesbian, and any other interpretation would have to come under the heading of apology. In what can only be described as a "crash" course in Miss Taggard, I went through her collections: *FOR EAGER LOVERS*, N.Y., Thomas Seltzer, 1922; and *COLLECTED POEMS*, 1918-1938, N.Y., Harper, 1938 — and two other volumes not sufficiently pertinent to cite. As might be expected, the first book of poetry, *FOR EAGER LOVERS*, provided the most pertinent work. This one has "The Enamel Girl", and a lovely one, "Tired Girl", and a number of variant works. Very nice and worth looking up. Some libraries will have. I was unable to locate "Millions of Strawberries" in my hurried search, but did note that in *COLLECTED POEMS* there is a poem, "To Marcia With Asphodel" which is very clearly Lesbian in orientation. The interest here is that "Millions of Strawberries" also concerns a girl named Marcia. You non-poetry folk who follow biography may be running this name over in your heads; and to clear up the mystery, Genevieve Taggard is best known for a very fine biography of Emily Dickinson (not the best one, though — honors there go to *THE RIDDLE OF EMILY DICKINSON*, by Rebecca Patterson).

EVERGREEN REVIEW, May, 1970, has one of those portfolios of Lesbian photographs that anger half the readership and please the other half. Depending upon your views, you have been directed, either to or away from. Photos by Jean-Francois Bauret, and technically they are not good, erotically they are. In the same *EVER-*

GREEN REVIEW, there is a witty and hilarious, irreverent play, *UNTIL SHE SCREAMS*, by Joe Orton. Mr. Orton was murdered in 1967 at age 34, and his loss is considered to be a substantial one in literature. On the evidence of this short play, very probably so. It is pertinent, but not for everyone.

A half page ad in a recent *SATURDAY REVIEW* is headed "The Giant Pursues Greta The Strong". This is followed by a lovely picture of a hairy brute holding a club, and a small, lithe figure in knight's armor facing him. Under this we read: *GRETA THE STRONG*, by Donald J. Sobol/Illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman. The blurb reads: "When King Arthur's Round Table was dissolved, aged Sir Porthal rode in search of a new hero, a pure and gentle knight who would smite evil and restore peace to the land. 18-year-old Greta, earning the honor over her four brothers, becomes the knight-errant who rights wrongs and overcomes evil, sometimes with wit and sometimes with strength, but always with honor." It is a \$3.95 book for children published by Follett Publishing Company of Chicago, well-known and distinguished children's book publisher. I'll forgo reading the book to discover that in the end Greta lives in suburbia raising four boys and one girl . . . for her commuting husband, and enjoy instead the idea that, like the telephone company jingle, "Things are changing, for the better . . ."

A recent *ARENA 3* contained a review of Maureen Duffy's volume of poetry, *LYRICS FOR A DOG HOUR*, London, Hutchinson, 1968, citing one section of the collection as pertinent. We haven't seen it yet, but wanted to pass along the information. At the same time, an Australian reader lent us the Spring, 1970 issue of *POETRY REVIEW*, an English quarterly, and this contains a single poem by Miss Duffy, "Chinoiserie", which is specific, lovely and highly recommended. Large libraries will have the periodical.

DOCTORS AND WIVES, by Benjamin Siegel, N.Y., McKay, 1970, is a fast-paced somewhat better than average doctor novel. Actually very good summer reading of the sort you can't put down but can't remember well when you are through. Among the doctors and wives are some women doctors without wives. One of them remedies that nicely before the end of the book. Pertinent chapter is surprisingly well done, coming as it does, from the pen of a

male writer. There is no condemnation implied or experienced and this, coupled with Siegel's general championing of the women in the book (most of them downtrodden for various reasons) makes it welcome. Recommended . . . and it will hit paperback for sure if you are too lazy to buy in hardcover.

Alec Waugh's *A SPY IN THE FAMILY*, N.Y., Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1970, is subtitled "An Erotic Comedy" . . . to tell, presumably, the stupid reader (who isn't going to be reading it anyway) that it is a joke, a put-on, a literate version of *GOLD-FINGER* without the slapstick. Mr. Waugh, distinguished British novelist of the famous family of writers, of course would do this sort of thing better than ye olde local hack because he is a better writer. Myra Trail is very intrigued by the au pair girls in her nursery and very bored with marriage and her proper husband and very sure that he is playing fast and loose anyway, when she travels to Malta on vacation. As a result of her vacation adventures, she finds herself part of a blackmail attempt . . . embroiled in dope smuggling . . . and . . . but you see the picture. We have no way of judging, of course, if this book reflects male sexuality . . . but we assure you it reflects no woman we've seen around in our short life. But it is fun to read.

Up

from under

A new magazine which talks about the down-to-earth issues behind the women's liberation movement. 5 issues for \$2.50.

Write 339 Lafayette St., New York, N.Y. 10012.

On to one less humorous and seriously more intending to be at that, *SHOOTING STARS*, by Patricia Welles, N.Y., McCall's, 1970. This one is billed "An Astrological Novel" in honor, I suspect, of the Age of Aquarius. All about a "swinger" writing a doctoral dissertation on love . . . while moving about in London at a pace that would prohibit writing a grocery list very accurately. And, come to think of it, this is less interesting than a good grocery list. It has one of those Lesbian scenes wherein one non-Lesbian attempts making love to another non-Lesbian (*why* we are not told, and we are not curious, either).

There is a rather placid biography of Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell by Dorothy Clarke Wilson called *LONE WOMAN*, Boston,

Little, Brown, 1970, mentioned for the record. Her unprecedented M.D. degree from Geneva University, N.Y., in 1849, and her subsequent work for women and children . . . particularly among the poor, make her a very current sort of heroine. This book is probably best for the teenage market, though is not apparently billed as such by the publishers. Dr. Blackwell is to be honored, of course, but somewhere along the way her effort is diminished by these facts: not until 1945 did a woman gain entrance to Harvard Medical School; 75% of all doctors in Russia today are women, 25% in India, and 7% in the United States (where we are presumably FREE . . . or at least, freer). That title, *LONE WOMAN*, is a bit too accurate.

Virginia and Vita

By JANE ALDEN

For quite awhile, I've thought that perhaps, perhaps Virginia Woolf and Victoria ("Vita") Sackville-West had enjoyed a profound relationship together; had, in fact, once been in love. Recently, Jill Johnston ("Dance Journal", *VILLAGE VOICE*, April 30, 1970) gave impetus to my thoughts when she broached the same idea. She cited portions of Virginia Woolf's diary, quoting in particular an entry dated February 16, 1930: "Two nights ago Vita was here; and when she went I began to feel the quality of the evening — how it was spring coming: a silver light; mixing with the early lamps; the cabs all rushing through the streets; I had a tremendous sense of life beginning; mixed with that emotion which is the essence of my feeling, but escapes description (I keep on making up the Hampton Court scene in *THE WAVES* — Lord how I wonder if I shall pull this book off! It is a litter of fragments so far). Well, as I was saying, between these long pauses, for I am swimming in the head and write rather to stabilize myself than to make a correct statement — I felt the spring beginning; and Vita's life so full and flush; and all the doors opening . . ." (*A WRITER'S DIARY*, ed. Leonard Woolf, Harcourt, Brace and Co., New York, 1953, pp. 150-151.)

I'd like to share further insights into this relationship, beginning first with Leonard Woolf's comments contained in his autobiography of the years 1919-1939, *DOWN-*

HILL ALL THE WAY (Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., New York, 1967, pp. 111-112): "The first time Virginia met Vita Sackville-West (Mrs. Harold Nicolson) was in December 1922, and the first entry in her diary describing Vita is rather critical: 'It was not until 1924 that we got to know them very well. At that time, they lived partly in London and partly in a very pleasant house . . . not far from her ancestral home, Knole. We stayed with them there, and Virginia began to see a great deal of Vita. She was then literally — and so few people ever are literally — in the prime of life, an animal at the height of its powers, a beautiful flower in full bloom. She was very handsome, dashing, aristocratic, lordly, almost arrogant.'"

These "manly" virtues described by Virginia's husband were embodied in "a strangely masculine woman who wore breeches and gaiters in winter and linen slacks in summer, and who often said that her one enduring regret was that she was not born a boy." ("Books", *TIME*, Jan. 6, 1967, a review of Harold Nicolson's 1930-1939 *DIARIES AND LETTERS*.)

Vita, in her book *NO SIGNPOSTS IN THE SEA* (Popular Library, New York, 1962, pp. 106-108), gingerly approaches the subject of Lesbian love, using her chief character, Laura, to express her ideas on the subject: "I had one close friend in my life, once, a woman, but she died some years ago and since then I have never cared to make

another [friendship!] . . . Perhaps a relationship between two women must always be incomplete — unless, I suppose, they have Lesbian inclinations which I don't happen to share. Then, or so I have been given to understand, the concord may approach perfection. You see, there is a kind of free-masonry between women — and no doubt between men also — which makes up for the more elemental excitement of the sex war."

Vita's close friend was, of course, Virginia Woolf. And Virginia wrote her many letters in the course of their friend-

certain doubtful points. About your teeth, now, and your temper. Is it true that you grind your teeth at night?" (p. 256) Miss Pippett writes that Virginia "turned to Vita almost as though the younger woman were her mother . . . But why should she put her burdens on Vita? It must be some deep psychological impulse, she concluded. But 'Vita, Vita, why have you taught me this piercing cry?' " (p. 319)



Portrait of Virginia Woolf by W.B. Edmonds, reproduced through permission of the artist.

ship, letters which are quoted in Aileen Pippett's *THE MOTH AND THE STAR: A BIOGRAPHY OF VIRGINIA WOOLF*, (Viking Press, 1957). The following lines refer to Miss Woolf's book *ORLANDO*: "But listen; suppose Orlando turns out to be Vita — suppose there's a kind of shimmer of reality which sometimes attaches to my people, as the lustre on an oyster shell . . . shall you mind? Say yes, or no . . . I would like to untwine and twist again some very odd, incongruous strands in you . . ." (p. 254) "I want to see you in the lamplight, in your emeralds, just to sit and look at you and get you to talk and then, rapidly and secretly, correct

I think the most complete appraisal of Virginia Woolf's life and *oeuvre* is found in *VIRGINIA WOOLF AND HER WORKS* by Jean Guiguet (translated by Jean Stewart, Hogarth Press, London, 1965). On pages 257-258 of this book, Guiguet writes: "One can even see . . . a certain bias which reflects the tendencies that were strongly marked in her: on the one hand, her feminism, in the broad sense of the word, which might be defined as a defiant belief in woman's superiority in the quest for truth and the almost occult knowledge of

life; on the other hand, a kind of nostalgic yearning for a relation between women, opposed to love between man and woman . . . " Guiguet illustrates Virginia's interest in Lesbian relationships: "While writing MRS. DALLOWAY, she drops a hint in her diary: 'Yesterday, I had tea in Mary's room and saw the red lighted tugs go past and heard the swish of the river. Mary: in black with lotus leaves round her neck. If one could be friendly with women, what a pleasure — the relationship so secret and private compared with relations with men. Why not write about it? Truthfully?'"

"No doubt", Guiguet continues, "these lines only express aspiration and longing, but at the same time they admit concealment and tabu. In the summer of 1926, when TO THE LIGHTHOUSE was nearing completion, Virginia Woolf saw a great deal of Victoria Sackville-West, as she did again the following summer, when the idea of ORLANDO occurred to her. In January 1927, she went to Knole. And it was in September 1928, after the publication of ORLANDO, that the two friends went to France together by themselves. The biographical enigma posed by these facts, these allusions, these literary transpositions can only be answered . . . by Mrs. Ramsay's reflection [in TO THE LIGHTHOUSE, p. 295]: 'Love had a thousand shapes.'"

In his Preface to A WRITER'S DIARY (p. vii), Leonard Woolf writes: "The diary is too personal to be published as a whole during the lifetime of many people referred to in it. It is, I think, nearly always a mistake to publish extracts from diaries or letters, particularly if the omissions have to be made in order to protect the feelings or reputations of the living". One looks forward to the appearance of unedited, unexpurgated letters and journals by Virginia and Vita to clarify the intimate pattern of their lives.

(Editor's Note: Victoria Sackville-West's 1934 novel, *THE DARK ISLAND*, rather melodramatically deals with an intense love affair between two women, destroyed when the cruel husband of one of them murders the other woman.)

Readers Respond

Dear Gene Damon:

There are two women whose fiction you have noted in your bibliography without mentioning their poetry. One of these is very minor and her prose is much better than her poetry. That is Dorothy Parker. The verse she writes is very anti-male, and is always expressed in complaints of male treatment of women. There are also a few ambiguous love poems which might be addressed to women. Among these, for example, are "Recurrence" and "Lullaby" (both in *THE PORTABLE DOROTHY PARKER*, N.Y., Viking Press, 1944). In other of her poems she seems to be disillusioned by heterosexual love and possibly have turned to Lesbianism as a more satisfying alternative for a woman with some pride. Some of the poems indicate a line of reasoning which she used on women, sharing with them her views of men (very anti) and hinting that things are different between women. Both of these themes are very evident in the short story, "Glory In The Daytime", listed in your bibliography.

The other woman is Djuna Barnes, surely one of the greatest of all our contemporary writers. You have *NIGHTWOOD* listed in the bibliography and the short story, "Dusie", and the very rare novel, *LADIES ALMANAC* . . . but these are only some of her pertinent works. Her poems, "Six Songs of Khalidinc" and "Lullaby" are fairly obvious examples, both from *A NIGHT AMONG THE HORSES* (short stories, plays and poems), N.Y., Liveright, 1929. Also in that book you'll find "No Man's Mare", a short story, and the play, "The Dove", and the short story, "A Little Girl Tells A Story To A Lady". This last story can also be found in *SELECTED WORKS OF DJUNA BARNES*, N.Y., Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1962, under the title, "Cassation". Also in *SELECTED WORKS*, there is the relevant story, "The Grande Malade", as well as the play, *THE ANTIPHON*, which *MIGHT* be pertinent (though it is very complex and difficult to comprehend).

Carol Lynk
Connecticut

(Editor's Note: Carol Lynk has been asked to supply us with a review of the

cited pertinent Djuna Barnes works. She is also responsible for the finding of much of the poetry that has been shared with you in recent *Lesbiana* columns.)

Dear Gene Damon:

I was fascinated by Karl Ericson's "Transsexual Experience" in the April/May *LADDER*, because I have been living for the past twenty years with a person exactly as described by Ericson IN EVERY DETAIL except for one important difference: my friend is living her life as a woman, and has made a rousing success both of her professional career and in the area of personal happiness and fulfillment.

When T. was young, in the early 1930's, there was no such word as transsexual, and no such operation. You were as you were born, and you made the best of it. T. did not commit suicide, as some transsexuals say they would be forced to do if they could not be changed. She got an education and fashioned a career. She also developed the type of personality which enabled her to find the person of her choice (lucky me!) who understood and made allowances for her unique feelings concerning her body, etc.

The one big mistake she made was around the time of her graduation from high school. Someone told her of a mythical doctor who changed people's sex, and she went to see a physician in a near-by town who, she was told, could refer her to this magician. She appeared at that doctor's office dressed as a man, and got neither help nor sympathy, but was told to go home and put on a dress. But T. still hoped that "something" could be done, and turned down a college scholarship, preferring to obtain her degree as a man. In this way she missed out on the advanced degrees she undoubtedly could have earned, had she started college at the proper time. It has cost her considerable loss of income, and possibly — one never knows with women — an even better career than the excellent one she has.

I am in no way an advocate of the "school of hard knocks", and I don't like difficulties any more than the next person. But people get where they are by overcoming difficulties. It worries me that so many people today take "ups" when they

are down, and "downs" when they are high. Air-conditioning in the summer, and an electric blanket in the winter. A car to go two blocks, and a machine to do everything else. Changing one's sex, when one doesn't like the one to which one is born, seems to me to be another of those easy cop-outs which I view with some alarm.

Sure, T.'s life has not been a bed of roses. But whose has? She overcame her difficulties, and made a huge success of the whole thing. IT CAN BE DONE, and I know that T. is a better person for the experience — as a matter of fact, she is by far the finest person I have ever known.

Beth Baer

Dear Gene Damon:

I read Karl Ericson's "Personal File" with great interest. The personality he describes is, indeed, very similar to what I was some 30-35 years ago. I can well understand his feelings, and appreciate his wish to become a man. I would have done the same, had it been possible years ago. Of course, it wasn't, and I had no choice but to live as a female.

My life has not been an unhappy one, once I passed my teens and early twenties. When I finally realized that nothing could be changed, I worked hard to make a career for myself, and was as successful as is possible in my field for a woman and in this country. I never seemed to have much trouble finding congenial girlfriends, and I had a pleasant social life until I found my life companion when I was in my early 30's. I can say that for the past 15 years my life has generally been more satisfying and fulfilling than that of the majority of my friends — both straight and gay.

It is difficult to say how different things would have been, had I been able to change my sex in my youth. I would undoubtedly have obtained a doctorate in my field, and there is no doubt that I would have made a lot more money as a man, and I would probably have had a more prominent career. The higher echelon positions in my profession are just about closed to women, regardless of talent or proficiency. I also would have married earlier, and might have chosen a different type of woman. It is, of course, impossible to say now whether this would have been better or worse. I very much doubt that my personal life would

have been more satisfactory than it is today. I would most likely have devoted more time and energy to my career, to the detriment of my health and personal happiness.

It is hard for me to say whether I would have the operation if I were in my 20's today — knowing what I do. I suspect that I would have it. Beth thinks that I am a better person for having had to make a difficult adjustment; this is, of course, impossible for me to judge. Since I never had a chance to try it, I have no idea what kind of a man I would have made. It is possible that I am a more aware and sensitive person this way.

The overwhelming feeling that a "mistake had been made" which was constantly with me when I was younger, is not as strong as it once was. I still prefer masculine clothes, masculine occupations, and the masculine role — such as it is. But I have come to terms with most of the other problems. The fact that I have found a congenial life companion helps, of course.

I do not disagree with Beth that a sex-change operation is a cop-out necessarily. I think it is great that such operations are possible today, and available to those who feel a strong need for them. However, I also know that it is possible to have a happy, productive and satisfying life, even when one feels that one was born with the wrong body, without going through such a transformation.

Tommy Baer

Dear Miss Damon:

I wonder how many Lesbians who read Karl Ericson on "The Transsexual Experience" in the April/May 1970 LADDER had the same reaction I had? Are transsexuals that different? I'm far from being a transsexual today, but "his" description of how "he" felt is a dead-ringer for the way I felt as a child and through early adolescence.

In those days nobody had ever heard of sex change operations; but let me tell you that I dreamed of such things! Although both parents wanted a girl and treated me as one, yet had I been able to wave a magic wand and change my sex, I'd have done it at once. Everything that Karl Ericson mentions was there: interest in male vocations and avocations, preferring boys' company

to girls' — yes, even (and I remember it with particular vividness) "something inside that let me know" that I was a boy inside a girl's body! As puberty approached, strong parental authority made me adopt the surface trappings of femininity, which made me feel shamed, trapped, bitter and grotesque. There was not, in my case, any physical masculinity, except for rather small hips — but I haven't words strong enough to describe the intensity of my early feelings of masculinity. I knew nothing of the possibility of hormone imbalance; I *did* know that I fell in love with women, rather than men. I came to think of myself as a homosexual, after I read about this sort of thing — but for many years I knew no others.

Yet long before my introduction to "gay" life, that deep inner conviction of masculinity began to ebb. Why, I often wonder? Was it a change in hormone balance? Was it a gradual surrender to reality? (I have never really understood how a woman who menstruates can continue for long to feel masculine.) If you dress like a woman long enough, and if you are treated like a woman, it's damned hard to *keep* on feeling masculine! And added to that, as time went on, was the fact that I came to value the tender feelings that were becoming increasingly important to me, and which were indeed "feminine", (if that word means anything at all). So I eventually lost much of my sense of masculinity, though never quite all, and never did homosexuality give way to heterosexuality. Nor have I ever been attracted to very masculine women!

Yet, from time to time, I still ask myself — what if someone had given me a hormone test when I was 14? What if I had had the option of a sex change? What if . . . ? Is there really such a big demarcation between the transsexual and the Lesbian? But then I wonder about many things . . .

Roberta Albert
Canada

In her article on the Second Bay Area Women's Coalition Conference (The LADDER, April/May 1970), Jess K. Lane stated that the spokeswoman for NOVA did not identify herself by name. I wish to correct her, as the woman did, indeed, identify herself, as Jill Bray.

T.W.
San Francisco

NEW IMPROVED!... STRONGER!

Lu Wane
Magic Turban



keeps your
hair-do
beauty shop
fresh much
longer.

\$1.50



Wrap —
Press —
Presto!
Clings to itself!
No fasteners!

BRANSON GIFTS
1619 Lincoln Place — DOB
Brooklyn, New York 11233

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 following cost \$1.25. Individual issues before that time are \$1.00 per magazine.

EVERY MAGAZINE IS NEW
UNTIL YOU'VE READ IT!

Gay & Proud?

Then you're our kind
of men and women.

- * Gay Guides
- * Fiction & Non-Fiction
- * Homophile Periodicals
- * Gift items, etc.

**OSCAR WILDE
MEMORIAL BOOKSHOP**
291 Mercer St., NYC 10003
(212) 673-3539
Stop by or send 25c for catalog.

THE LADDER

P.O. Box 5025, Washington Station, Reno, Nevada 89503.

Please send THE LADDER for year(s) to the address below.

I enclose \$ at the rate of \$7.50 for each year ordered.

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY State Zip

(Signed)

ALL CHECKS MUST BE MADE PAYABLE TO THE LADDER