

*You've come a long way baby*



# THE LADDER

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER, 1970

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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.

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

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# THE LADDER

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# Can Women Unite?

By RITA LAPORTE

We all know the usual answer to this one. There is no need to list the unflattering qualities attributed to women that are supposed to make it impossible for them ever to cooperate in significant numbers to accomplish major goals. This is simply the "nature" of the female. The other side of the coin is that she is not very competitive, except in the one area vital to her — catching a man, and hence is not suited to the rough and tumble world of men where the important affairs of humanity are handled. She is neither cooperative nor competitive. But she makes up for this with her mystical gift for serving a man and raising his children.

If one is a man, this is a delightful and self-serving "fact" of nature. Aristotle distinguished three kinds of people: freemen, slaves and women, all basically different. It took only about 2000 years to discover that Aristotle was wrong about slaves. Any group has the potential for enslavement if the exploiting group is powerful enough. However, about half of any slave population consists of men, and it is not altogether wise for some men to enslave others. Even a male slave is heir in some fashion to the manly virtues and telling him he is not does not work forever. Now, females — that is another story. Anyone can see that they are really different and hence inferior. For their own good they must be owned in some manner by a male. (We will skip the ego-enhancing aspect of such ownership.) There is another marvelous thing about women: they actually enjoy a slave status. They love the protection that belonging to a strong man provides. Every woman yearns to find her lord and master and it is here and only here that she understands the meaning of competition. She has sharpened her wits and wiles over millennia in her fight for survival — snaring and keeping a man.

Men, on the other hand, according to Lionel Tiger in *MEN IN GROUPS*, have learned to work together, originally in the "vital" occupation of the hunt. They have perfected the arts of leadership and followership. Biologically they are the sex capable of dreaming great dreams and carrying them to fruition, dreams requiring the smooth working together of large numbers of men. While men look to other men where great accomplishments are to be wrought, women

look to a particular man for their protection and fulfillment, having no mind for the larger, more important affairs of society. Natural selection over millions of years has equipped the male for the cooperation required to carry out the grand designs of humanity. It is thus a scientific "fact" that the male is meant to govern and to handle the vital affairs of society.

We could look at this "fact" in another way. Only by banding together and following a leader can men find strength, for they are emotionally and spiritually weaker, more dependent and more sheeplike, than women. This animal-like urge to band into groups, while giving the individual members a feeling of potency, also necessitates fighting to defend the prowess of their leader against other, exactly similar groups. (My Daddy is stronger than your Daddy.) And so flowered the art of war.

Women, on the other hand, are determined by no such group pull. Women who wish to cooperate with other women do so on the human, not animal, level. Not being pushed by instinct to fall into gangs behind a more powerful woman, they are free to join together intelligently and they are free to leave the group by intelligent choice when they feel the group is up to no good. With no male-like biological compulsion to join a herd, they are free to cooperate where that is the wise thing to do. This makes it impossible for vast hordes of women to be led into activities destructive to the human race. At the same time it makes agreement harder to come by. Obeying animal urges is easier than making conscious decisions to follow a certain course of action. Living on our distinctively human, as opposed to animal, level is not easy. Yet this is what we women must do. We must pioneer a new and better form of cooperation, a new and better sort of leadership.

The women's rights, or women's liberation, movement consists of very diverse persons. Outside the movement are millions of women dead set against it. Switzerland now has an association of females dedicated to defeating the right of Swiss women to vote. What is amusing about these silly women is that they will not be allowed to vote against the right of women to vote. Perhaps there is a message here: anti-feminist women are powerless indeed and we

should not give them a second thought. Inside the movement it would be folly, a pitiful aping of men, to expect to rally all of us behind one leader and one platform. So what do we do, we women who, for whatever reasons, are driven by discontent with the status quo?

It is not a foregone conclusion that women will free themselves from slavery and usher in a better world for all. What are some of the pitfalls awaiting the women's movement? I have thought of some simply by observing my own reactions to articles about the movement. I find myself becoming furious at times, for a moment forgetting that these writers want essentially the same things I want and that, beyond disagreement on many levels, there is a very real unity of purpose among the awakening women of the world.

As a Lesbian I especially fear a split between heterosexual women and Lesbians. Not only are Lesbians hated and feared by most women, but many Lesbians lose no love over their straight sisters. All of us, straight and Lesbian alike, have heard much about how terrible Lesbians are. We are the only really "respectable" scapegoats left. For me at least this side of the split has become one big bore. I can no longer bother to get angry at such ignorant, heterosexual drivel. But the other side, what Lesbians think of straight women, is seldom heard. While these women damn Lesbians without fear of reprisal and out in the open and earn points from their men besides, Lesbians are quite capable of giving as good as they get. So far they do this in private, among themselves. What we all, at one time or another, think of straight women is hardly flattering. The straight woman is a weak-willed jelly fish endlessly fawning on the almighty male whom she fears and hates and treats with unbounded contempt. But she dare not let him know this for he is her meal ticket and she will do anything to insure her own survival, short of standing up to him. She is the ultimate hypocrite. If she can wangle a few rights without angering him, fine. If not, she will retreat.

Gloria Steinem is quoted in *Time*, August 24, 1970, as saying, "Men think that once women become liberated, it will mean no more sex for men. But what men don't realize is that if women are liberated, there will be more sex and better." So there we have it from the heterosexual woman's point of view: "I'll make a deal with you,

dear. If you allow me more freedom, I'll give you more and better sex." What a sellout! It has been my conviction all along that the reason women should have equal rights and responsibilities in a world of human beings is that they are human beings. As a Lesbian I am nothing less, one of God's children, a subject in my own right and an object to no one. I would be the last woman to promise better sex to men in the hope they would give me a little more freedom. Freedom is not something I have to pay men for — it is my birthright.

It is this attitude, this fear of displeasing men, that worries many Lesbians in the movement. Will straight women eventually give up as men, notoriously unchivalrous, fight back more and more below the belt? There is a large reservoir of goodwill in the hearts of feminist Lesbians. We ache to see the unhappiness of so many of our straight sisters, to see how men take advantage of their goodness. But this reservoir is not infinite. I have often found myself trying to justify the ways of straight women to angry Lesbians. I cannot see either Lesbians alone or straight women alone succeeding in the revolution for greater humanness in all people. We Lesbians are fewer in number than you heterosexual women, but we make up for this by our greater determination to live whole and free. Men give us none of the questionable advantages they give to straight women nor do we desire those "advantages". We are committed from the start to total victory. Compromise with members of the ruling sex does not tempt us. We look to the day when we can converse with men and women and enjoy the company of people who are no longer bound up in heterosexual chauvinism. If a by-product of this human maturing is more and better sex for the sex-starved heterosexual male, find and dandy. Better still, perhaps a result will be better LOVE for the sex-strangled male.

Lesbians, being unconcerned with the libidinal problems of the master sex, are nevertheless unavoidably entangled with that sex, employment being a prime area. Here we have to swallow arguments applicable only to heterosexual women employees: Women are just marking time on the job until they find a man and/or begin breeding; it is bad business to give them management training or to consider them for promotion. Try to imagine the fury and frustration of the Lesbian when she hears this. If she speaks up to say this has no



bearing on her, she is fired on the spot. She says nothing and seethes. She knows she and her Lesbian sisters are a major factor in giving women in the labor force a good reputation, while many of her heterosexual sisters drag that reputation down. Small wonder that some Lesbians come to hate straight women, not as straight women hate Lesbians — out of ignorance — but out of a realistic appraisal of the facts. This kind of divisiveness, Lesbian against non-Lesbian, must be overcome and can only be overcome by goodwill on both sides.

There are other areas of divisiveness having nothing to do with the Lesbian-heterosexual dichotomy, a dubious dichotomy based upon male chauvinism in the first place. An area that particularly gets my dander up is the notion that only Socialism (whatever that is — the articles never say) will free women from male exploitation. I am a little surprised that otherwise bright women should slavishly follow the thinking of an old, 19th century male or some current "In" neo-Marxist. This is something of an emotional reaction on my part for, if following some old or new male is correct, then so be it. An idea is not to be discarded simply because it sprang from a male brain. (In my youth I thought all good ideas came from men only). No, my objection has, I think, good logic, or I should say, good "psycho-logic" behind it. I see the human being as the basic unit in any society and in any political system. A social system can be no better than the people who make it up. And people are plagued with ignorance and stupidity, with selfish ambition, with cruelty, with hatred, with fear, with their very finitude in all directions. A political system can be better or worse, but it cannot create human nature.

We are, all of us, still prone to magic shibboleths and incantations. MARXISM! Che! Mao! (I can almost hear Red Chinese youth crying, out of earshot of government officials: CAPITALISM! Nixon! Goldwater!) I expect this from men, the sex more given to magic, to secret societies, to fraternity foolishness. I am saddened and alarmed that so many otherwise liberated women should stoop to this. Join the class struggle (in a country where most of us are middle-class?) and wipe out exploitation, the profit motive, the desire for success and who knows what other human traits! Some of what I read sounds as though I myself should be destroyed in the interests of women's lib. I came up the private school

route, governesses, Europe, college and graduate school — hardly the desirable working class background. Whether the current crop of revolutionaries would forgive me this in light of my having driven a streetcar and worked in factories, I cannot say. This reverse snobism can be more vicious than the common variety, for those used to power wield it with more humane-ness than those who suddenly acquire it.

I know a good deal more about human nature than about political systems and am frankly out of my depth with the latter. I think of a political system as a means of concentrating power in order to accomplish the goals of society. I have no idea what "Power to the People" means. If every citizen has the same amount of power as every other citizen, no one has any power. How can 200,000,000 individuals take equal part in the management of our country, from deciding Supreme Court cases, to voting on federal and state laws, to passing local ordinances, to running corporations, to setting up medical standards, to putting out a new Betty Crocker cake mix . . . The problem here is one of Power. And power is dangerous. Some women seem to be saying that we must abolish power. The only way I know of abolishing human power is to abolish human beings.

Any group of people will engage in some minimal cooperation and will decide in some fashion who is to do what. Unavoidably some individuals acquire more power than others, even without meaning to. One man throws his spear farther and more accurately than another. One woman grows better vegetables than another. Someone makes a better basket. A social or political system evolves with some people more highly regarded than others. Elitism rears its head. This is a dirty word today, but elitism is not bad per se. It is so only when the elite in question is based upon false values, as many elites are today.

We are not born equal in genetic endowment, something no amount of social reform or radical revolution will eradicate. Some people will become better at certain tasks than others and some people will gather up more power than others. Power in the right hands is all to the good. Power in the wrong hands must be combatted. We women must think out the problem of power — perhaps we can bring to it some new solutions. But it is no solution to try to tear down women who have gained a measure of power within the heterosexual

male establishment.

I have noticed a curious development among some women and one I find amusing. In their fear of power they have decided to remain anonymous, to refuse to speak up in public or to give interviews to members of the media. If all of them cannot be equally famous (or notorious), then none will be, for fame, even short-lived fame, brings with it a measure of power. But this strategy does not seem to apply to women who have been safely dead for some time. On the contrary, the prominent women of the past, particularly those who spoke up on behalf of women, are written about and admired. We women DO have a history and one to be proud of. Must our leaders all be dead before we are permitted to admire them? Cannot we allow ourselves to have some live leaders?

What is this fear of leadership? Again,

## Beginning

By  
ISABEL  
MILLER

You say, "They show what becomes of people who have no spiritual life."

I say, "No spiritual life!"

"Irene said herself she's not a Christian. And certainly she's done things a Christian woman wouldn't be able to do. Most un-Christian women couldn't for that matter."

You have not understood her. You have got hold of a few externals and shut your mind to all the rest.

I say, "You might equally think that because she was sustained by the great spiritual force of love, she was able to take a moral action that saved the lives and health and happiness and sanity of several people — her children, her ex-husband, his new wife, herself, Laura. How many's that? Eight."

But my heart is out of the argument. I don't really hear you, your words. I hear only that my friends don't delight or move you, that you don't approve of me or them, that you wouldn't want for us a life like theirs. Well, I must be reasonable. I have spent six weeks in refining and defining my feeling for you. Shall I call those six wasted weeks? What might I have spent them on instead? And haven't they been, often, blissful? Should I regret the hours I spent wondering what it meant that you caught my cold foot and warmed it in your hands?

leaders, the embodiment of power, can be dangerous. But how can we do without them? To go back to what I said in the beginning: women are not instinctually bound to follow leaders. We must use our minds in deciding which potential leaders to follow. We are free to choose some and reject others. We are free to follow leaders in part only. We can follow some here and some there. I can follow a Lesbian-hater where I find common ground with her. We can differ over which intermediate goals are most urgent: acceptance of the Lesbian, repeal of all abortion laws, child care centers, equal employment opportunities, etc. There is no reason why we should all agree on priorities for we cannot all of us be working in all areas at once. Underlying all our disagreements, even our rages at one another, there is unity and we all feel it deep down. **WOMEN CAN UNITE!**

From far away I hear you. Something about evil not being able to produce good, something about our having only Irene's own assertion that everything worked out well for everyone.

I say, "We have only her assertion for any of it. If she didn't say there'd been a divorce, we would have no way of knowing it. Believe one, believe the other. Is she a reliable reporter of her own life, or isn't she? To me she seems reliable."

"And those are your friends!"

"Yes!" I say. "And I think most people would honor them and honor me for having won their friendship."

It is done. There will be nothing. How can I live without your caress to imagine? In these six weeks, such dreams have become the breath of my life.

Can I claim you led me on? Yes and no. You piled hope on me with one hand but unloaded it with the other. I suppose what you put me in would come close to being literally a flap — back and forth, the winds of hope and despair. And now it will be only despair, my emotion a limp rag, broken balloon, sagging in one dull position.

The cab leaves us at my building. You pay the driver. I go up the steps and unlock the door. I wait. I am not certain you will come in. The cab drives off. You stand at the bottom of the steps. Perhaps you need an invitation. I can't speak. I hold the door invitingly as though I expect you. Awkwardly you climb the steps. Stumble. I am reminded of the many times I've stumbled



in walking with you — how awkward one can be on feet numb with love and doubt. You are awkward. You are a big lady, tall, and fond of food. At her age, you will be a magnificent mountain like Irene. It's one more reason you should have liked her.

I thought we could make a long happy life. I thought it was hopeful that it's taken six weeks, which have made me love you more and more. I spoke to Irene of the time it was taking, as a good hopeful thing, and she said yes but not necessarily. She said that she had loved and waited for years and ended with nothing, nothing at all, not even a kiss after years of waiting love. So it can go that way too, she thought I should know. Now I will have to ask her whether not having had a kiss makes it easier afterwards. I think it must. She told me once that it's harder to give up real children than imaginary ones. That was to suggest that I should know myself now and choose what I really am. And it's probably likewise easier to give up a fantasy kiss than a real one.

Well, so much for the ouija board. I suppose Laura pushed it. It said, yes, you're gay. It said introducing you to them would precipitate our love, but it would be up to me to make the first move. In my fantasy I can easily approach and touch and hold and kiss you, but in life the ouija statement is ridiculous. You are a scholar, you are tall, you are four years older than I, you pay the cab, you buy the theater tickets, you pick up the checks at dinner. It isn't possible that if you loved me you wouldn't be able to move towards me.

You sit on my couch. I used to plot how to get you there, keep you out of the chair, make you sit beside me. You go there now by yourself. "Drink?" I ask.

"No. Thanks. I can't stay." But you do stay.

"I'm sorry the evening was such a bust," I say.

"I knew we shouldn't on a Friday. The fish and everything. They didn't really respect that. And I doubt you did either. I resented, I must admit, the three of you sitting there boasting of the religions you've outgrown, so confident that in time I may mature to apostasy too."

"I don't think that was meant."

"Have you considered that I may not?" you say. "Do you ever seriously think that I may have found the true faith and that I may keep it? And that I may want friends who respect it? And that I may not want to

share my life with someone who is just waiting for me to get over it?"

No, I haven't thought of that. But I think I won't say so. Could I become a Catholic for you? I don't know. Laura has made an occultist of Irene, but I doubt it was set up as a pre-condition.

"People who love begin to agree, I think," I say. "I suppose your faith would influence whomever you lived with. Irene has taken up Laura's superstitions — says, 'Bread and butter, like a child now.'"

"Catholicism is not a superstition."

"That was just an example. Why are you trying to pick a fight?"

You are quiet. I think I know why you want a fight — so we can make up. I say, "I think I'll have a drink."

"Then I will too."

I go to the kitchen. Make drinks. You stand in the doorway watching me, but as I come towards you, you fade back to the couch. I wish I knew what to do. I set the drinks on the coffee table.

I say, "I'm sorry you don't respect their life. It's what I'm looking for, I think."

"I didn't say I didn't respect it."

"Oh, I thought you did."

"It tempts me very much. Perhaps as an idea more than as a real thing. I would hope that even living such a life, I could be a Christian good person and do some good in the world. They seem completely unaware of anything that doesn't relate to their own — peculiarity. I wouldn't want to be as narrow and cut off as that. I would want to live in an ordinary house in an ordinary city and move among ordinary people. They've made their own little false world as though the sexual function is all they define themselves by and all that interests them about other people."

"You misjudge them. They're interested in more things than anyone else I know. Economics, politics, art, history, architecture, music, the occult, psychology. When they take me walking in New York, I realize I've spent my life with my eyes shut."

"And yet they live in a homosexual neighborhood and devote the evening they first meet me to a discussion of what one would hope were intimate and painful revelations, which I have not requested, and I do not speak in kind."

"They were talking to me. They were assuming that I'd told you about them, which I had."

"Where did you meet them?"

"Where? At their house. I was taken

there by a friend."

"What friend?"

"Barbara."

"I've wondered what she is to you."

"Was."

"Was she?"

"Yes."

"How long?"

"A few months. Summer to summer. A year."

"What happened?"

"Intimate and painful revelations — haven't you just told me you disapprove of that kind of talk?"

"Only from those I've just met. Tell me. Why did it end with Barbara?"

"Many reasons. We never did get along. The last thing was that she wasn't — faithful — to me. So I left."

"Did she want you to stay?"

"She didn't want to fail again. In that way she wanted me to stay. It wasn't reason enough. I thought if I had to suffer anyway, I might as well have some of the positive things of life. Like children. Like money. Like a respectable home."

"Like marriage."

"Yes. That's what I thought. Suffering being my fate, a loveless life. Have those anyway. And there were plenty of men ready to oblige me. And no women to confuse me."

I stop. You know what comes next. One of us should say, "Until —" but neither of us does.

I say, "I talked with Irene and Laura about it. I thought Irene's life might be my guide. I might go her way. She's had it all — the whole range. Life can go that way. She proves it. But she doesn't recommend it. Even though some of us think it ended well for her."

"What does she recommend, as though I need ask?"

"I said nobody interested me. She said when I became internally ready someone would."

"Such as herself?"

What! You don't know anything or understand anything or deserve the evening they gave you or the weeks I kissed my pillow calling it by your name. I unname my pillow, I call back my love.

Oh, God, despair. Not to love you or hope for you or wait for you or plan for you or wonder what you mean and why you keep me waiting. There has been more pleasure in waiting for you than in embracing anyone else in my whole life. Not loving

you brings back all the clouds and knots and griefs I ever fought against. I suffocate. I die. I would try to drink my drink but I think I would choke.

We sit side by side on my couch, which is my bed. I am unable to speak, and for reasons of your own you don't either.

My cat jumps to your lap. You pet him although you don't like cats. Just tonight, at Irene and Laura's, you said, "Well, I like Tigger but that's because—" and then left the sentence for me to finish in my heart. Many times you've petted him on my lap and caught some of my leg or hand in the caress.

I watch your hands. Skillful, strong hands. Short nails, no ring, no polish. They are hands I dreamed would heal me. Tigger's hairs fall and cling to your dark slacks. It's wild to have a cat. I think I'll try to get Barbara to take him back. Hairs on my furniture, on my clothes, cat food in my refrigerator, kitty litter in my bathroom. It is mad. I think I will make my life very stripped and simple and get a lot of sleep.

You say, "I see I made you angry."

"No. You just remind me that there is a reason, after all, why I spend twelve hundred dollars a year on a shrink. I was planning to give him up. I felt so well."

"My heart's just held together with a little spit and brown paper, too," you say.

"Don't you see how scared I am?"

I reach out and lay my hand on Tigger's back. Your hands are very near and do not move away. Awkwardly and anxiously I capture one. You let it lie in my hand. I take courage to improve the relationship, to bring them palm to palm. Experience with men makes me so afraid; so many times I have let my hand be taken and felt only boredom or oppression. I couldn't bear to make you feel such things. My sins of insincerity are coming home to roost.

I am not ready. I cannot immediately recover from the despair of so few minutes ago. Memory must guide me: until you spoke against my friends and the kind of love they symbolize, I longed for you. Somewhere inside I still must long for you. If you will receive me now, now is the time even though I have to go by memory. I remember many times that would have been better: the night we watched TV and you almost put your arm around me but then played with the ornament on the wall instead; the many nights you have said you were leaving and then loitered against the door unable to go; the afternoon you

warmed my feet. If I had let you catch my eye any of those times, we would be already begun and not have this doubt and pain to go through.

Since it was I who held us back before, you leave it to me now. I have never done this, darling! I have only waited and let things happen.

Still holding your hand I lean against your shoulder. Because you do not move, I trust that you don't object. But what a thing to trust in a woman! I turn my face. It is at the level of your neck, which is a good place to kiss you, so I kiss you there and you sigh and tilt your head back to give me your whole throat. The wonderful flow of power and possession and desire I feel at this sweet gesture makes me sure that I can, after all, be the one who makes the moves and starts things. It is easy and natural now to get up on my knees and lean above your lifted face and take your glasses off and kiss your eyelids and face and mouth.

I feel a nervousness in you and I let your mouth go so you can tell me why. Your glasses worry you. What have I done with them? Have they fallen? Am I bending them? I say, "No darling." I show them to you. "Look, not even smudged." But to ease you I put them on the table beside our evaporating drinks. We laugh. I like you very much. I say, "There's nothing the matter with either of us that a year or two of happiness won't fix."

You say, "This is terrible. I'm going to fall in love with you."

"You already have. It's all right. I won't hurt you."

"I'll just want to make love all the time."

"That's not terrible. That's nice."

"But I won't want to work and I won't get the good of my fellowship and it'll be awful."

"And I'll have to take care of you. I thought I was the baby and you were the grownup, but it's the opposite. You're a little lost child and you need me and I'm here and I love you."

Something in you draws back. Have I offended you? No. I think I have said something you've heard before. Jesus God, who do I look like? Who do I sound like? Does my kiss feel too much like somebody else's? Can't we have fifteen minutes without problems?

Gently I press your side to lay you down. You resist and then go. I lie against you, petting and kissing. Tigger leaps to the

couch back and watches. I'd like to be watching, too. I have never seen two women kiss. It must be nice to see. I wish movies showed it. They show other kinds of love. Why not ours?

I consider opening your shirt but you press so close that I think you don't want me to. It's all right. There's plenty of time. As many as sixty years maybe. Twenty-five plus sixty equals eighty-five. Twenty-nine plus sixty equals eighty-nine. Quite possible, as healthy as we'll be once we get happy.

But you are crying. My cheek is wet with your tears. How bravely you cry, without a sound.

I say, "What is it, angel?"

"I have to sit up. My nose is plugging."

I let you up. You sit very straight. Tigger jumps into your lap. I go get you a Kleenex.

I say, "What is it, baby?"

"I find. That. In my heart. I am. Married to someone else."

I wait.

"A girl. Woman. I knew at school. It was very hard for me. Because not natural, you know. And the Church has no sacrament for it. But I needed it. And maybe I rationalized or something — I came to feel that it was somehow a secret sacrament and no more unacceptable in the eyes of God than any other childless marriage. Because we didn't avoid children, we just couldn't have any. Through no choice of our own."

"Where is she now?" I ask.

"She's in Chicago."

"Chicago! Then you saw her last month."

"Yes. She said it's definitely over."

"Only last month!"

"Nothing's happened between us for two and a half years but I always felt it would again, you know?"

"But now you love me," I say. "It's all right. I still loved Barbara until I began to love you. It always overlaps. You can't expect to stop until you have someone else. That's why you went there, to be divorced, so you could love me. And now you do."

"That's not the point. She can divorce me, but I find I can't remarry."

I shake my head and reach for my drink. It is mostly melted ice, but it helps. It keeps me from saying this is a conversation too surrealistic to keep track of. It keeps me from saying, well, nobody can say you're one of these no-good, reckless, irresponsible, amoral modern kids. I feel many such

unwise thoughts crowding to be said.

"Can you have a roll in the hay?" I ask. I may as well have said the other. Before I can hurt you more, I go to the bathroom and wash my face and breathe a while and comb my hair.

When I come back, you have your coat on. "I'll phone you," you say.

"All right."

You have never got away so fast before. You are in the hall when the panic hits me. I run to the door and call your name. You come back. I kick the door shut and stumble into your arms. Your big body enfolds me. You kiss me a long aching goodbye but afterwards you still say, "I'll call you."

It is morning. I haven't slept. I wait for it to be late enough to call Irene and Laura. They are my mothers and will comfort me and tell me everything will be all right and that I will soon be happy. At ten I can wait no longer. Irene answers, not crossly but strangling with sleep. I choke and say nothing and hang up. Ten o'clock on Saturday morning is too early to call even the fire department.

So I call the shrink at his home in Connecticut. This I may do because I pay him twelve hundred dollars a year to be there for me to lean on. He too is sleeping but I think of the money and have no pity. I am crying, I find. He makes me very young. I curry favor.

"You'd better come up," he says. I am to go to his house and we'll talk it over. He'll meet me at the station. I suppose I am to see a healthy household and be given a pill and watched. A good enough way to spend a Saturday I have no possible use for.

From Grand Central I phone Irene and Laura again. Irene answers, still asleep, although it is now eleven. But since I can be no other inconvenience all day, I am bold and speak. Her voice brightens. She calls me dear. (She would have done the same at ten!) I say I'm on my way to Connecticut. I say the ouija was right in saying I would have to be the one to start it. "Then it has started — how good," she says.

I say, "Well, there are problems. What's the noise in the phone?"

"Pay phones always do this. It's nothing."

"What did you think of her?" I ask.

"Well, I'm not a quick judge. I liked her. I felt she's someone who doesn't have to have everything her own way — who can

discuss. And any problem you can discuss you can get somewhere on."

"You think so?" I say. Oh, poor Irene, liking you and being judged by the Spanish Inquisition in return!

She says, "I regret I yattered so much. I was so curious about her I was afraid I'd try to pump her if I didn't yatter." Non-Christians have morals you wouldn't understand.

I say, "What's the clicking in the phone?"

"It's signalling the operator to make her ask you for a nickel."

"I have to go. I can't talk on this phone."

"How long will you be gone?"

"Till Monday morning," I say and wonder where that came from. Yes, it is what I want her to tell you if you ask her where I am.

"Call us when you get back, please." Her voice is loving and concerned. She would have been this way at ten.

But the train is a good enough place to be. I get glimpses of the Sound. I need the sight of water. I need to walk and get very tired and think. I need to decide how many more times I can let a woman break my heart before it breaks beyond repair.

I will rent a hotel room in Connecticut and walk and get very tired and not come back until Monday. I want you to ring and ring my phone and lurk at my door. If you ask Irene and Laura where I am, I will know there's hope for you and me.

*(Isabel Miller, frequent contributor to THE LADDER, is the author of the popular Lesbian novel, A PLACE FOR US. Under her own name, she is an established novelist and short story writer. Her story, "Hope Deferred", appeared in the February/March 1970 issue of THE LADDER.)*

#### 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  
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# ??? QUESTIONS for CASSANDRA ???

By MELINDA L. BROWN

Dear Cassandra,

I am just desperate, I don't know who to turn to. My girl up and left me, my dog died, my mother won't let me in her house, and I think the boss is about to up and fire me. I don't see no way out except suicide. Please help me.

Ugly To Boot

Dear Ugly,

You really are in sad shape. Luckily, I have the perfect solution to your problems. Sign up immediately for a remedial English course. (Your grammar and punctuation are incredibly incorrect, dear.) Pray that you have an attractive female instructor. After that, you need have no fears. The educated person always succeeds.

\*\*\*

Dear Cassandra,

What about joint checking accounts? We have been together for five years and can't decide if we should have one or not. We argue all the time.

Rose and Lily

Dear R and L,

I advise against it. Obviously the two of you need something to quarrel about, and the checking-account problem provides a subject for your arguments. Just think, if you ever decided one way or the other, you'd probably break up. Don't take the chance, dears; money comes easily, but love does not.

\*\*\*

Dear Cassandra,

I am twenty and my girlfriend (I'll call her Sadie) is twenty-two. We have been sharing an apartment for a year, going to bars, and all that stuff. Yesterday, a friend of Sadie's asked her what I was like in bed. When she said that I wore striped pajamas and slept like a log, the friend laughed. Now we think maybe we are missing out on something. Could you fill us in?

Addled Adelaide

Dear Ad,

Gracious but you two are so innocent! You do need help, and fortunately I am able to provide just what you are looking for. Send four dollars (\$4.00) in stamps (no coins, bills, checks, C.O.D.'s, or money orders) to Cassandra, in care of this publication, and I will send you my new booklet, just off the presses, *Sex for the Lesbian*. Forty illustra-

tions (in color) are provided with the booklet. It should solve your problems quite nicely.

\*\*\*

Dear Cassandra,

I am so distraught that I don't know what to do. Four different times during the past month I have gone to McMurphy Bridge to jump off into the bay and kill myself. Each time I lost my nerve and decided to live. Yesterday I went to the bridge again, and this time I didn't lose my nerve. Unfortunately, someone had put a heavy wire mesh above the railing, and I couldn't get through it. What shall I do now? I am determined to die. Please answer quickly.

Deirdre of the Sorrows

Dear Deirdre,

Not only are you distraught; as well, you've lost all semblance of common sense thinking. Buy a pair of wire-cutters, dear.

\*\*\*

Dear Cassandra,

I don't know who the Ladies of Llangollen are. (I'm not even sure that I'm spelling it correctly.) No one will tell me. Am I a failure?

Terrified in Detroit

Dear Terri,

Yes.

\*\*\*

Dear Cassandra,

I am 64 years old, with fourteen children, five grandchildren, and a great-grandchild on the way. Last night I suddenly discovered that I have been a Lesbian all these years. Do you have any words of advice for someone like me?

Old And Gay

Dear O and G,

Yes: better late than never.

\*\*\*

Dear Cassandra,

I am really in a mess. My dad says that he'll kill me if I don't stop fooling around with girls and settle down and get married. My girlfriend Alice says she'll kill me if I ever leave her. The thought of violence absolutely terrifies me. To make matters even worse, my mom says she's going to kill me, my dad, and Alice if we don't stop yelling at one another. Who shall I listen to? What shall I do? I have tried to be patient and

reasonable, but it doesn't seem to work.

Betty in Burbank

Dear BB,

My dear, how absurd to think that you could be reasonable with a group of people like your father, your mother, and Alice! Try the obvious solution to the problem: buy a gun and threaten the three of them. Pacifist though I am, still I must admit that there are times when violence is the only answer. Besides, if worst comes to worst, remember that life in prison will be infinitely more pleasant and peaceful than is your present situation.

\*\*\*

Dear Cassandra,

This girl I'm going around with, Elsa, thinks that I am a fellow. But I'm not. The thing is, I am afraid that Elsa will find out that I am a girl, because we spend so much time playing touch football together. In fact, touch football brought us together to begin with. Don't ask me to give up sports, because Elsa is very sports-minded and I'd lose her if we stopped sharing athletic interests. But I may lose her anyway, if she touches me in the wrong place and discovers the truth. Do you have any suggestions?

Bruno

Dear Bruno,

Yes. Why don't you take up croquet? If you have no lawn available, try tiddlywinks.

\*\*\*

Dear Cassandra,

I am very much in love with a girl who has a

revolting skin condition. She has huge purple splotches all over her face, her arms, and her legs. (I'm not sure about the rest of her body, but I'll let you know after this weekend.) My problem is this: all my friends say that this girl is disgusting and that I should stop seeing her. I know you are a broadminded person who speaks the truth. What is your comment?

Hilda

Dear Hilda,

The girl sounds disgusting. You ought to stop seeing her.

\*\*\*

Dear Cassandra,

I am twenty-three years old, with green eyes, long black hair, and a good figure. My parents are dead, and I live alone on an inheritance my uncle left me. I think I may be a Lesbian. How can I be sure?

Samantha

Dear Samantha,

I can imagine how worried and distressed you must be at this moment, and I am longing to help you. However, I will need more information. Please send me (by air mail) your telephone number, your measurements, and the hours each day when you are free. I will do my best to assist you in this matter.

\*\*\*

Cassandra can clarify *your* questions! Write Cassandra, in care of this publication, stating your problem and enclosing a self-addressed stamped envelope.

## "SEXUAL POLITICS"

By HOPE THOMPSON

Kate Millett presents sexual politics, what it is, its history, in a straightforward manner and almost entirely in the words of men. A short discussion of Henry Miller, Norman Mailer, and Jean Genet at the beginning sets the tone of the book. There follows a section on the theory of patriarchy, that social structure that ensures the war between the sexes. Theory is examined from the points of view of ideology, biology, sociology, class, economics and education, force, and anthropology. A long, interesting section recounting the historical background of the sexual revolution from 1830 to 1930 is followed by a thorough review of the counterrevolution from 1930 to 1960. The last third of the book examines closely the writings of Lawrence, Miller, Mailer, and Genet. Readers inclined

to pooh pooh the substance of the book are perforce constantly reminded sotto voce that they are reading what the great male minds of the past 100 years or more have written. Ms. Millett has picked her quotations with consummate skill and judgment and has acquainted the reader with the content of these men's thoughts in expository prose seldom equalled for clarity and honesty, an honesty that some of these men would find embarrassing. With great subtlety of wit and without distortion of meaning she has quietly allowed the enormous, subterranean humor of the whole patriarchal system, its essential ridiculousness, to rise up before the reader. Her section on Freud and his pompous theory of female sexuality (penis envy and its consequences) is a gem of its kind. She



allows Freud, in his own words and with his own ideas, to do a takeoff of Freud. Whether one is struck by the humor of sexual politics, or only by the contorted lengths to which men have gone to justify the oppression of women, one cannot avoid feeling how ominous it all is. Perhaps the horror into which patriarchy has led us can be defeated only by a cosmic laugh that shakes us all back into sanity.

The origins of patriarchy are shrouded in guesswork. Perhaps the discovery of paternity coupled with the human (as well as animal) propensity to accumulate property and the female's short and very pregnant life conspired to bring it about. Ms. Millett defines patriarchy as the domination by all males of all females and a similar domination by older males of younger. The three components of patriarchy are: status, the political component; role, the sociological component; and temperament, the psychological component. In various ways, these are all rooted in nature or biology, or so our male thinkers would have it. Views of patriarchy are examined in: the theory of Engels, the "wisdoms" of myth, conclusions from male notions of female sexuality, and the effluvia of some 19th century poets and novelists, among them Tennyson, Swinburne, and Wilde and representing revolutionary, chivalrous, and fantasy aspects.

The section on the counterrevolution takes a good, no-nonsense look at the Nazis and Soviets, at Freud and his female dupes (Helene Deutsch and Marie Bonaparte — excellent examples of women who find joining the enemy the way to status), Erik Erikson and how he thinks to soothe women's ruffled feathers over Freud's blunt penis envy with "chivalrous" hokum about women's "inner space" — replacing women's eternal and tragic loss of a penis with her eternal and glorious possession of a womb, and finally with a discussion of modern functionalism, that pseudo-objectivism underlying the social sciences that insidiously move from what is (description) to what should be (prescription). These thinkers of the counterrevolution, these brave and ingenious researchers into the TRUTH, are what I cannot help but call "ball-thinkers."

SEXUAL POLITICS is so good, so thorough, so much a must reading for all of us in the sexual revolution, no matter how conservative or radical our stand, that I feel a bit of a traitor in saying I find errors of overstatement and a crucial omission.

"Psychosexually . . . there is no differentiation between the sexes at birth. Psychosexual personality is therefore postnatal and learned." (p. 30). Ms. Millett gives some muddy heterosexual evidence for this statement in studies of gender identification, but the evidence falls far short of proof. We simply do not know whether and to what extent there may be already existing personality potentialities in the newborn. Babies do not behave alike, even at birth. Recent work of Konrad Lorenz on the possible biological inheritance of behavior patterns in animals speaks against the theory that all is learned. "For the sexes are inherently in everything alike, save reproductive systems, secondary sexual characteristics, orgasmic capacity, and genetic and morphological structure." (p. 93). This is an awfully big "save" and may well cancel out the first part of the sentence. We had better withhold judgment until a good deal more evidence is in. I hate to see Ms. Millett fall into the method of mere assertion, that method that ultimately destroys any argument and that she so well exposes when used by others.

What Ms. Millett treats us to is a view of all humanity seen through male myopia. Without having to say so in so many words, she makes it clear that a wider vision is necessary — the vision of the female to correct the monumental blind spots of the male. This is an enormous improvement, but hardly enough for the Lesbian reader. Ms. Millett's cultural milieu is still limited, limited this time by a larger circle labelled "heterosexual." A truly human view is not possible without incorporating the corrections afforded by the insights of the Lesbian.

Patriarchy is not possible without a total insistence on a heterosexual life style. The two go hand in hand. Each male must own and subdue at least one female. The homosexual is something of a problem, for, as Ms. Millett points out, he is a deserter in the war of the sexes. But as such he is still a part of the army, though forced to live out his life in hiding and always risking being caught and executed. The Lesbian is no part of this patriarchal-heterosexual scheme. She has never been a part of it and is, for that reason, the ultimate key to the destruction of that scheme. Ms. Millett follows the time honored expedient of omitting altogether or glossing over as unimportant, the stubborn phenomenon of Lesbianism. "A sexual revolution would require, perhaps first of

all, an end of traditional sexual inhibitions and taboos: homosexuality [which she elsewhere defines in accordance with usage as meaning male only], 'illegitimacy,' pre- and extra-marital sexuality." (p. 62). Like Queen Victoria and later the Soviets, when they decided to legislate against homosexuality, SEXUAL POLITICS passes over in silence what heterosexual patriarchy finds most terrifying of all: women who cannot be bullied in the politics of the bedroom. Sexual freedom means nothing if it does not include, along with the variously qualified noes of heterosexual women, the unqualified no of Lesbians.

The excellence of SEXUAL POLITICS

## GEMSTONES:

### A LOOK AT SOME MINOR WORKS OF DJUNA BARNES

By CAROL LYNK

The novel NIGHTWOOD is, of course, the most brilliant of Djuna Barnes' Lesbian works. Yet here and there throughout all the literary gems she has produced we can find more sapphires, if you will excuse the pun, shining. Some are unpolished in subject matter and we know only by feeling the cut of the jewel its nature. There are, though, several bright pieces she has offered the casual miner for the taking.

A NIGHT AMONG THE HORSES (N.Y.: Horace Liveright, 1929) is a collection of short stories and poems. Two of the poems and two of the stories are of unquestionable interest here.

"Lullaby" is not one of Miss Barnes' best poems. It is awkwardly constructed, beginning with a pattern of meaning, but never establishing it enough to please the reader's expectations. Its rhyme is forced with no constant rhythm to carry it. It is a welcome poem, nevertheless, because it is unusually forthright. Miss Barnes' forte is a forbidding obscurity. Here one knows what she is saying immediately. She tells us of her youth as a tomboy, her closeness to animals, and her dependence upon her mother. We see all three of these elements repeatedly in her other work. In NIGHTWOOD, for instance, what is Robin, if not a tomboy stained with adulthood? Nora is introduced with her dog as an integral part of her. And Miss Barnes asks in NIGHTWOOD: "Love of woman for woman, what insane passion for unmitigated anguish and motherhood brought that into the

is not betrayed by its occasional overstatements, by the weakness of its presentation of female sexuality (still today in the hands of male researchers to whom women all too readily listen, Ms. Millett included), and its lack of discussion of what women mean by "sexual freedom." Its excellence lies in its bringing together all that has led up to the 1970's and in thus clearing the way for further thinking in the years ahead. Even the omission of Lesbianism, the total acceptance of which is fundamental to a radical and successful women's movement, is not a fault for by its very omission it becomes glaringly present.

mind?" In the poem she draws a clear picture of the three above-mentioned characteristics and their relation to her adult self when she replaces the dog she slept with as a child with a girl "that lies on my arm". She replaces the need for her mother to protect her from harm with thoughts of self-inflicted hurt, and her camaraderie with boys in her youth with her loneliness. One could go deeply into this poem as a summation of Miss Barnes' work and life, into its significance in a study of the Lesbian as conceived by that writer; but there are other pieces to be mentioned.

Another poem in the same collection is dedicated "To the memory of Mary Pyne" and is called "Six Songs of Khalidine". Many of Miss Barnes' poems deal with sorrow over a woman who has died (e.g. "The Flowering Corpse" from this collection; "To the Dead Favorite of LIU CH'EN" from DIAL magazine, April, 1920; "Crystals" from THE NEW REPUBLIC, June 20, 1923). "Six Songs" may be the only poem on this subject which indicates definitely that the woman mourned may have been a lover. Miss Barnes writes: "It is not gentleness but mad despair / That sets us kissing mouths, O Khalidine, / Your mouth and mine." She calls her Khalidine "my little love", and asks of the woman in the earth: "... has not the mountain's base / Here trembled long ago unto the cry / 'I love you, ah, I love you!'" The poem itself, besides telling us more of Miss Barnes, is a beautiful thing, full of strong emotions powerfully expressed. Its rhythm

is regular and easy and the poem is filled with skillful rhyming. Miss Barnes' ability as a poet is proven here.

"The Dove" is a strange one-act play included in *A NIGHT AMONG THE HORSES*. It deals with two sisters and a young girl, the Dove, who lives with the sisters. The Dove resembles Miss Barnes' deceased lady love characters physically, and Robin of *NIGHTWOOD* in personality. The three live in an apartment filled with unused swords and guns which symbolize their inaction. The sisters play with the thought of death by violence as some sort of consummation of their loveless lives. The Dove is their awaited lover, but will not play her part until she uses a weapon on them. The reader swims in the sexual inferences of the play's action and awaits a resolution of the almost-plot in much the same way as she would the happy ending of a more conventional love story. As always, Miss Barnes packs the work with magically involving emotional turmoil. It is brief, yet tells the story of years. It is violent, yet a love story. It is sexual, even erotic, yet painfully pure in spirit. It should be performed.

Even stranger is the short story in this collection called "A Little Girl Tells a Story to a Lady", also in *SELECTED WORKS OF DJUNA BARNES* (N.Y.: Farrar, Straus &

Cudahy, 1962) with the title changed to "Cassation". Again a young girl goes to live with an older woman. Miss Barnes gives us, in this story, a picture of Sapphic love in the sense that it resembles what our male-oriented civilization knows as Platonic love. The older woman is teacher and lover, sharing her view of life with the younger; finally seeming to prepare the younger for life without the teacher. The story's importance is *just that relationship*. We do not often see in literature women sharing the same realms of intellect with men. That the writer should be a modern woman, still embracing the high ideals of a culture in many ways superior to ours, perhaps suggests a quality about ourselves of which we can be proud.

These four examples are only the more obvious of many of Djuna Barnes' short works which this reader has unearthed. There is more work scattered through old magazines possibly forgotten even by Miss Barnes, who now lives in enforced solitude in New York. Her most recent appearance in print, after a lapse of many years, was in the December 27, 1969 issue of *THE NEW YORKER* magazine. It is the poem of an aged woman fighting death. Barnes-worshippers await more beauty from the fight.

## By Jules Feiffer



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## Personal File : Your Friends By MARGARET FULTON

Some of my best friends are straight. In fact, with the exception of my beloved, only one of my friends is not straight. This means that almost all of these friendships reached a point at which, if the friendship were to grow and deepen, the friend had to be informed of the true nature of the relationship between Ann and me.

Since I met Ann when I was in college, my friends there were the first to know about how we felt about each other . . . after we ourselves figured it out. My best friend and roommate at school was Jennifer. I have always had a secret desire to be tall and rangy (I'm 5'4"), and Jennifer was tall and rangy — perhaps that is what first drew me to her. She had a well-earned reputation as a kook. A natural actress, she had a knack for making people believe the most incredible tall tales, and she enjoyed playing eccentric roles. She was also an extremely intelligent and perceptive young woman, however. Perhaps one of the many 'Jennifer-stories' will illustrate this.

Jennifer was invited for a drive by one of the local young men who patronized the bar most-frequented by the students of our women's college. The ride ended up at another bar, this one in the black ghetto. Jennifer's companion was well known in the bar, but as the only other white and a stranger, Jennifer realized that she was probably going to cause unnecessary tensions among the other patrons. She decided, therefore, to be French for the evening. She could easily affect a French accent, and by doing so she was an immediate hit. Several men, who would probably have regarded her with some distrust if they knew she was a white American, asked her to dance and then joined her and her escort at their table. The talk covered a variety of subjects, and Jennifer realized even more than before that, as a foreigner, she was in a position to learn things that it would have been difficult if not impossible for her to learn in her ordinary guise. One of the men at the table asked her how she liked America. She replied that she loved it, so much so that she had been reading about American history and the constitution, etc. Several of the black men expressed some disagreement and discussion ensued. By the end of the evening, Jennifer knew something of the black man's feelings about his country, and the men present had come to the conclu-

sion, to their expressed surprise, that with all its flaws, America was an OK sort of place to live.

For all her cool, however, Jennifer still carried with her considerable remnants of her puritanical upbringing, and I approached telling her about Ann with considerable trepidation. Even if she wasn't shocked and/or disgusted, I feared that she might well feel uneasy about continuing to share a suite with me. It was a sunny winter afternoon when I finally summoned my nerve. She was brushing her hair in her room and I was sitting on the bed in my room, watching her through the short connecting passageway. I got up and went to the passage, leaned against the wall farthest from her, and cleared my throat.

"Jennifer . . ."

"Hmmm?" absent-mindedly.

"I love Ann," very softly.

"Yeah. I know you do," again absently, but with a small added note of puzzlement.

"No, you don't understand. I really love her."

For the first time, she looked at me, obviously still unaware of what I was trying to say.

"You know, the way you love someone that you want to marry."

Comprehension came. If with it came any shock or distaste, she hid it well.

"Have you done anything about it?"

"What?"

"Anything beyond telling each other that you love each other . . . any of the usual things that go along with loving someone."

"Yes."

A moment of consideration, then a grin, "Thank God. If you hadn't, I'd be really worried that you were abnormal."

Jennifer and I are still friends.

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Telling Jennifer, and getting the reaction from her that I did, made telling other people somewhat easier. Allen was the boy-next-door (actually he lived around the corner). We walked to school together all through grammar school, built forts together, went down the railroad tracks to pick raspberries. It was in the raspberry patch, when we were both ten, that Allen explained the facts of life to me. Just explained, no demonstrations, because we thought of sex as another strange thing that



grown-ups did. When I was in my freshman year at college I decided that I wanted to know what sex was all about, and Allen seemed a likely candidate for instructor, so I wrote to him. The next time I went home for a vacation, Allen called for a date and my education began. Our sexual relationship continued sporadically throughout that school year. It was mutually pleasurable physically, but no more than that. Allen and I had grown apart during our high school days, and we really had little in common. He had flunked out of college, because he had more interest in booze and broads than in books, and he was violently anti-intellectual, perhaps to prove to himself that he had chosen to leave school. We stopped seeing each other when I went off to camp in June, and when I came home in August, I met Ann.

Two years later Ann and I parted — with many tears, and supposedly for our mutual benefit. That Christmas Allen came home on leave from the Air Force. I could hardly believe my eyes. He had always been tall, and had potentially good looks. Now, thanks to the rigorous training he had received as a paramedic, he was broad-shouldered and narrow-hipped, and smoothly muscled. And thanks to the self-confidence that passing the numerous selective tests in the Air Force program had given him, he was beautiful. This time around we were friends as well as, in the physical sense, lovers. I told him about Ann, and he said he had experimented with homosexuality, but he hadn't liked it. He said he was sorry that things had not worked out for me, and he meant it. Despite the fact that neither of us was in love with the other, our mutual affection and need might have led us to serious commitments, but the Air Force saved us by sending him to Germany.

Allen left in March, and in July, Ann called and asked me to visit her. I flew to Boston, where she was in graduate school, with many conflicting emotions and no clear idea of what I was doing. By the end of the weekend I knew exactly what I was doing. A lucky series of events allowed me to put off graduate school for a year without too much static from my friends and relations, and at the end of the summer I moved in with Ann. My letters to Allen became newsy and stilted, and I was unable to respond to his elaborations on a motorcycle trip through Europe that we had half-seriously planned to take after his

discharge from the armed forces.

About a year after I had moved in with Ann, and only shortly before I was due to leave for the West Coast and graduate school, I went home to visit my parents. Allen was home on leave. For the first couple of days that I was there, although we saw each other often, we really said little to each other. I began to think that our former closeness was a short-lived product of loneliness. But one evening he took me to see *Romeo and Juliet*. We arrived at the theatre quite a bit early, and Allen suggested that we stay in the car and talk instead of going right in. He began to talk about himself — how he had changed since I'd last seen him, what he now felt he wanted out of life, and how much it bothered him that we seemed to be wearing masks for each other now that we hadn't been wearing before. I agreed about the masks and decided to contribute my part to shedding them.

"Do you remember my telling you that I was involved with a girl a couple of years ago?"

He nodded.

"Well, we've gotten back together. I live with her in Boston; she's the reason I'm living in Boston this year instead of going to graduate school, or living at home."

He nodded again, "I thought maybe that was so, but I couldn't ask you, you know. I just had to wait and hope that you would tell me . . . that you'd trust me enough to tell me."

"I wanted to tell you before, but it didn't seem to be the kind of thing to write in a letter, and then when I saw you again I wasn't sure I knew you."

"I know. You don't really know me, you couldn't. And I don't know you, but I want to know you. And I want you to know me, too."

"The most important thing to know about me is that I'm very much in love with Ann, I'm happier with her than I have ever been, and I plan to spend the rest of my life with her . . . after a year or so of separation while I go to school."

"If you're happy, I'm happy for you." He leaned over and kissed me on the cheek and we got out of the car and went to the movie.

When my vacation was over, Allen drove me back to Boston and spent several very pleasant days with Ann and me before he had to leave for his new base.

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Jill and I had been friends at Girl Scout Camp. When we were fourteen we had a crush on the same counsellor. When we were fifteen we were both in the Counsellor-In-Training unit and were rather close. After that summer we exchanged Christmas cards for six years, but no more. Then the year that I was not seeing Ann, my senior year at college, Jill called me while I was home for Thanksgiving and asked me why the hell I didn't come to visit her and her husband. I couldn't think of any good reasons why not, so I went. The only thing that may be better than finding a new friend, is rediscovering an old friend. Six years are a long time when they fall between fifteen and twenty-one, but with Jill and me they represented a period of parallel evolution. We discovered that we had read and liked the same books, favored the same music and had developed very similar outlooks on the world. She told me about her first love, whom she had lost because of religious differences and resultant parental disapproval, and she told me about Sam, her husband, who wasn't first love but was the perfect mate for her. I told her about Ann, but because I was a little unsure of Jill, and because I thought it was all over anyway, I referred to Ann as "he."

I met Sam and agreed with Jill's appraisal of him. He was easy-going and soft spoken — a good balance for Jill's ebullience. Throughout that year I saw a lot of them — going home more often than I generally did. When I moved to Boston, I didn't see Jill for several months — not until I came home for a few days at Christmas. If I had been tempted to tell Jill about Ann before, I was much more so now that Ann was no longer in the past but very much present. As we sat in her living room, talking about what each of us was doing, I weighed the pro and con of telling her and decided for the pro.

So I said, "Remember that guy I told you about?"

"Yes."

"Well, it wasn't a guy, it was a girl. It is a girl. The same girl. I'm living with her now and . . . well, I'm very happy, and I just wanted you to know the whole truth."

"Why didn't you tell me before? Didn't you trust me?"

I mumbled something about 'you never could tell how people would react', 'why upset people unnecessarily about past history', and other inanities. Despite my foolish fears, there was no reticence or uneasi-

ness on Jill's part because of my confession. She wanted to know all about Ann. Her comparisons of aspects of my relationship to Ann to aspects of hers to Sam led me to be more open and frank about things than I had yet been with anyone other than Jennifer. Jill hasn't met Ann yet, but I'm sure she'll like her when she does.

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Finally, allow me to talk about Dr. Simons. Talking about Dr. Simons is something I do rather often, because next to Ann he is the single most important influence in my life so far. When I went to college I thought that I would probably major in English or History, and with an eye to the latter I enrolled in Dr. Simons' introductory Greek class. In a little while I forgot about English and History and steeped myself in the glory of Classical Greek. Dr. Simons bore a more than passing resemblance to Neanderthal man, but when he started talking about Greek he was beautiful. His love for his subject was infectious and I caught a severe case of it. Dr. Simons was not a man you felt neutral about. You either worshipped him or hated him. My freshman year I worshipped him. My sophomore year he was on leave to do research in the Aegean. My junior year I hated him, at least for a little while. But as he forced me to work beyond what I thought was my ability, and as I found out that I *could* do the work he demanded, I began to respect him. By the end of the year I was back in the ranks of worshippers. When he asked me to be his student assistant, I was overwhelmed with pride and with fear that I wouldn't live up to his faith in me.

So senior year I was his assistant. Ann and I had parted in September of that year, and I threw myself into my work, complaining all the while that it was only in fiction that throwing yourself into your work did any good. But being around Dr. Simons did a lot of good. He demanded a great deal of me both in class and in my assistantship, but he was always enormously pleased when I gave him what he asked for. I started to know him as a person and my respect for him grew, even as he was fostering my own self-respect.

I'd never met his wife, although I'd seen her and knew her to be lovely and quite a bit younger than he. She would occasionally call him at the office, and when he spoke to her the affection in his voice was so apparent as to make me embarrassed about



being in the room. When the end of the year came and the major project I had been working on for him was not quite finished, he asked me to move into his house for a couple of weeks after graduation, to finish it up. Again happy but fearful, I accepted. Fearful, because it's one thing to know someone in academic surroundings and quite another to know him in his home, and because his wife was an unknown quantity.

My fears, as usual, were groundless. Dr. Simons' wife was as charming and intelligent as he. A pianist, she spent hours each day practicing or giving lessons. Dr. Simons clearly regarded her profession as equally as important as his own. He would no sooner have asked her to type something for him than she would have asked him to stand and turn pages for her; and yet each of them had an active and informed interest in the other's work. In short, their relationship, at least to this observer, was ideal. If one can feel part of a family after two weeks with them, I did.

I had had several opportunities to tell Dr. Simons about Ann. Once, when I first started working for him, he mentioned that the trouble with his assistant of the year before was that she was so "goddamned normal". And I thought, well there's an opening if I ever heard one . . . but I let it hang. And when he met my father, who expressed concern that my academic career would lead me away from marriage and child-bearing, Dr. Simons told him not to worry because I had my "feet on the ground" and whatever I decided to do would be right. And I thought, there now, you could tell him . . . but I didn't. Instead when something said recalled something about Ann, I spoke of a "young man in Boston".

When I put off graduate school for a year, Dr. Simons was disappointed, and again I mentioned the "young man". He wrote to me advising caution, but assuring me that he recognized that love was more important than academics, and that he would respect whatever decision I made. By this time I was feeling pretty crummy about deceiving him and denying Ann.

A few months after I moved to Boston, an opportunity arose to visit the Simons, and I discussed the situation with Ann. She advised calling him and telling him the facts. So I called him and said that there was a ride available to his area of the world and would he be able to see me this coming weekend. He was delighted and urged the

visit. I told him I'd call him when I got to town and hung up. Then I beat my head against the wall for a while, paced the room and cursed myself for three bloody kinds of a coward. Ann, sitting quietly on the sofa reading, suggested I call him back. I did.

"Dr. Simons?"

"Yes?"

"It's me again, Margaret. I just thought I ought to tell you that there'll be someone with me. Uh . . . the girl I'm living with."

"Oh, fine, fine. Girl? I thought there was a young man."

"Uh . . . no . . . there was never a young man . . ."

"Oh . . . Margaret, is there something you want to tell me?"

"No," and I hung up.

Now I was feeling infantile as well as cowardly, and I beat my head harder than before. Ann got off the couch and came over to me and held me close.

"Darling, call him back."

"I can't. I've already called him twice."

"Three times lucky. Call him and tell him. You know you won't sleep until you do."

"You're right, of course."

"Of course. I don't know why the hell I'm urging you to tell someone I never met some very private facts about me, but I am, so do it . . . Now."

And I did.

"Hello, Dr. Simons, I . . ."

"Thank God, you called back, sweetheart. I was just lying here, thinking . . ."

"Well then you've probably figured it out. All the time I was talking about that young man, I was really talking about Ann . . . I wanted to tell you, but I couldn't."

"Well I'm really honored that you did, sweetheart. Margaret, do you think this is a permanent thing?"

"Yes. I'm as sure of it as I can be of anything. I love her very much, and I want you to meet her."

"And I want to meet her. Elaine and I will look forward to seeing you both this weekend."

"O.K. Listen, I'm sorry about all this nonsense."

"Forget it. Sleep well."

"Goodnight."

That weekend we did see them. Mostly we saw Dr. Simons, because Mrs. Simons had to go to a lesson. Ann and Dr. Simons found each other to be kindred spirits, and I just sat back and watched them appreciate each other.

I am proud to know the four people sketched here, among others that I won't bore you by describing. Their acceptance of Ann and me is immensely important to me, as, I think my trust in them is important to them. And that's what it's all about, isn't it? Acceptance and trust.

(Editor's Note: There was a strong

desire on the editor's part to change the word "straight" used in this article to heterosexual or some other word without the loaded connotations. However, there is, apparently, no other synonym for heterosexual, even in such modern works as THE RANDOM HOUSE DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE, 1967.)

# DANCE LESSON

By THE CLASS WORKSHOP

On Friday, April 3, 1970, the women of Gay Liberation Front held the first All-Women's Dance. Previous to this there had been other "GLF" dances, but these were not well attended by women. The response to this first All-Women's Dance was in fact excellent. At peak there were somewhere near 250 women dancing together. The atmosphere was warm and close and for the first time publicly, those of us from Women's Liberation who attended realized a fuller, more expanded meaning of what we have been referring to in the Women's Movement as "Sisterhood."

Those who came to the dance from WL foresaw that other WL members would attend. We were all quite surprised to see one another. From this spontaneous public support voiced by the presence of several WL groups it was evident that a recognition of sisterhood with all women was ready to be lived and dealt with in the Women's Movement.

Although several WL groups were represented, in comparison to the membership in the Women's Liberation Movement and in regard to the number of women in total who attended the dance, WL participation was in the minority. And where were our other sisters? Why hadn't they attended?

Coincidentally or otherwise, nearly all the women in the "Class Workshop" attended the dance. (The "Class Workshop" was initiated by members of "The New Feminists" to study the problems of "Class" in the Women's Movement — represented in the workshop are Chips & Scraps, The Feminists, Redstockings, a Secretaries' group and WITCH). At the dance we who came from the workshop were aware that a turning point in the Women's Movement was implicit in the dance. We were excited to talk about its significance and did so the

following night at the "Class Workshop" meeting. We decided to write a public statement of our responses to the dance. Both those of us who went and those who did not wrote about our feelings toward the dance. Here are our responses:

## DIDN'T GO

A dance has connotations of all the normal (oppressive) ins and outs of male/female sexual relationships. Dancing is sexual. This is what I thought about when I heard of the women's dance, sponsored by GLF women. Our group decided to go. Friday was a bad day at work, worse than usual, and I didn't feel like doing anything. We met at 8:00 at a sister's place to discuss the dance. Whether we'd go or not. A liberal discussion of Lesbianism. (Some of us had had "experiences with women" — I when I was 12 — but this made no difference.) Since being in WLM my relationships with women have been "political" — a new group of women friends in the last ten months. Friendships grew out of this slowly. I had made up my mind not to go, not because I am dedicated to having emotional/sexual experiences only with men but out of fear of breaking down this political, nearly formal relationship with my sisters and sisters I would meet; I talked at the meeting with the idea of being persuaded. I had already made up my mind not to go. A sister suggested we go, to have fun. She went. I didn't go because I'm afraid of my feelings for women. It is not that simple. I know men hate women, hate me — I am afraid of them; men have said they love me and it didn't always feel so bad, maybe because I told myself (they told me) it feels good. I am afraid of making love with women (this is where the idea of lesbianism takes me), I am afraid of my body; to think of going to the women's

dance made me think of all these things — the fears are laterally spread across my mind, like the idea of climbing up something high when I know I am afraid of heights — I am the object of the lover, object of the fall. Afraid of the repetition of these roles. Afraid of dancing with sisters because it means "sexual." It's quite a list of abstractions — it's pretty much what I imagine that scares me. I went home because "I'm exhausted" and watched the television.

#### DID GO

Lesbianism is the supreme insult and threat to the male.

It insults him because it implies that you prefer another woman to him. He is indignant at the fact that you would compare him to a "mere woman," that you would actually consider a woman his equal.

Sexually you are stripping him of his age-old prerogative — he is not your only source of love and affection. You have a choice and implicit in that choice is that your needs and pleasure are equal to or have priority over his. This is the reason the "lesbians" (and let's keep in mind that the word lesbian is a male supremacist distinction which artificially defines love among women as purely sexual) are ridiculed and persecuted in our male supremacist, bourgeois society. This is the reason that the oppressor has called the Women's Liberation Movement "a bunch of lesbians."

All of us must recognize the political significance of what is called by men "lesbianism." We cannot afford to push aside this issue because of cultural biases or fear. Let's face the truth: the greatest threat to men is solidarity among women, and "lesbianism" epitomizes this solidarity.

Let us also remember that our political views are expressed in our everyday actions. They reveal both how we think and feel about ourselves and our sisters. Whom do we in fact prefer to be with, to work and plan with, to play and dance with?

#### DID GO

The Wednesday before the "GLF Dance," I made a public declaration in my Women's Liberation group that I would no longer relate to men in any kind of emotional relationship. Men, I said, had infected us and the world with the disease of "Heterosexuality." I had concluded that the only potentially "healthy" emotional relationships that could take place were with other women.

Once before during my trip through Women's Liberation, I had come to believe that relationships with other women had to be a part of Women's Liberation. I call this my bisexual stage. The short affair I had ended not entirely as I would have liked to. The problems that opened up I wasn't able to deal with to my satisfaction. It's different now and I see more what I think has to happen relating to other women, the single, most important thing being to transform whatever "Male-Heterosexual" orientations we have in ourselves.

At the same time I declared myself a potential lover of women. I announced I would attend the "GLF Dance" and asked if there was anyone else who wanted to go. One other member in the group said she would attend.

Most of the other members objected to the idea of a "dance." I also objected to the formal aspect of a dance, which I had associated with "heterosexual" relationships. But in spite of the label, I saw the possibility of having an experience that would counter the limited "dance" definition, and that was that there would be present "only" women in a social context of "wanting" to relate to women, as opposed to relating through men.

What I experienced at the dance was the sense of reopened emotional feeling without restriction, for women. When I danced close to another woman the feeling of her body flooded me with emotion. Thinking about this afterward, I was aware of how much feeling for each other we do have, yet are told not to express, and how this must really stultify our personal relations. For me the dance was my first public step in affirming total sisterhood.

#### DID GO

The All-Women's Dance was an expansion of space for use by women in both a literal and psychological sense. It aroused in me an incipient sense of possession and freedom men feel everywhere else. For once I felt relatively inconspicuous and able to achieve the detachment necessary for freedom in action rather than the compulsive involvement women are usually made to feel. The dance impressed everyone on Women's Liberation so well that this opening space will not be lost but will be fought for as our right.

On a more subjective level I was moved but experienced no great upheaval. It was not anything like a religious conversion. The idea of women loving each other just

became more palpable and natural to me. I don't know how and I don't know when, but I'm just open.

#### DID GO

I guess I'm naive but I had expected Women's Liberation to be better represented at the women's dance. I mean, we have an all-women's movement; we have all-women's meetings; we had an all-women's mixed media show at the AU a month or so ago — it didn't seem to me like such a big step to go to an all-women's dance. But apparently it is. When I suggested going to people in my small group, I was greeted in some cases with shock, but mostly with rationalizations: "Lesbians are always putting down heterosexual feminists" was one of the more thoughtful ones; mostly it was, "I don't like to dance," or "I'm too tired." Well, it's no surprise that lesbians put us down — the movement has so far been pretty carefully anti-lesbian, so what's in it for them? It's also no surprise that many women don't like to dance or think they don't — a dance with men is a parade, a cattle auction, a drag.

Dancing with women is something else again. It was one of the most beautiful experiences of my life — a total high. And it turns out that it *was* a big step. Because I am learning to love women, and the dance was a first step.

#### DID GO

In WL I have developed a closeness with women and found that I enjoy having women friends. Yet I always felt a fear of expressing my feelings in a physical way by hugging or touching. The fears had lessened as the warmth and love I feel for other women have deepened. When I heard about the dance I felt that it was a chance to express my feelings openly. The dance was exciting to me because of the warm feelings I received from the women there, many of whom I had never met before. The women were open and expressed their affection to each other freely. I also felt a sense of belonging since the women here also loved other women and showed it. I felt that I had broken out of an old shell and could relax and enjoy myself at a dance, which I had never been able to do before.

#### DIDN'T GO

I was standing by the wall — lined up with the other chickens — all waiting to be picked out by the Almighty BOY who would choose YOU and give you some reason for feeling you had a right to live.

That is the one memory I have of the



By W.B. EDMONDS

only dance I ever went to. That was thirteen years ago, but the vision remains and it stinks.

Anything that calls itself a "dance" still brings forth this same repulsion. I automatically transferred the feeling to the "All-Women's Dance." I discredited women by thinking we would take on the values of the other sex.

I'm not against the wall anymore. I apologize to my comrades and to myself. The oppressor already knows that if we unite we will have the strength to win. They therefore do everything in their power to keep us in an antagonistic relation to each other. Lesbianism is a division among us that they are particularly careful to maintain. They have imposed social and legal penalties against it so as to make us afraid to love other women. They are aware that if they can keep us from loving and respecting each other they have robbed us of our greatest strength. The dance signifies a turning point in the Women's Movement, for we are beginning to recognize in a basic way what "Solidarity" really means.

(Reprinted with permission from RAT. Originally entitled WOMEN'S LIBERATION.)



# Cross Currents

**KARATE NO MEDIA JOKE:** Coast-to-coast coverage: June, July and August 1970. Many areas of the country have available low-cost or free training in self-defense for women, and more and more women are taking advantage of these courses. Rapes and assaults, frequently with vicious mutilation and death as the end result, are increasing nationally and particularly in our larger cities. Beverly Koch, writing in *SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE*, July 27, 1970, about the Stanford University course in self defense for women, covers the basics and points out the serious need for this sort of training to begin in high school, when "the heaviest socialization of women takes place . . . they get the idea they can't defend themselves."

**BITE THE HAND THAT FEELS YOU:** New York City: June 20, 1970. Sixty young women from a New York women's liberation group held an "ogle-in" on June 9th at a construction site on the corner of Park Avenue and 57th Street. They ogled men, whistled at them, and made the sort of comments about the men that men at such job sites customarily make at all passing women, whether fresh from the cradle or ready to tumble into the grave. "It seemed," said my reporter, "to make the men very, very nervous . . ."

**WOMEN'S LIBERATION CANDIDATE WINS IN NEW YORK:** UP: June 25, 1970. Bella Abzug, 49-year-old lawyer, trounced incumbent Leonard Farberstein, 67, for the Democratic Congressional nomination in New York's 19th Congressional District. The 19th is heavily Democratic, so that primary victory is tantamount to election. She will be running in November against Harry Farber, a Republican-Liberal candidate.

**LONG-HAIRED HARD HATS:** Wallace, Idaho: June and July 1970. This summer a group of women from 18 to 25 are earning their summer educational money working as a "slash crew" for logging camps. They make \$2.22 an hour minimum and are, obviously, in it for the money. Everyone, including the men on the logging crews, is pleased with the arrangement, all having had severe doubts at first. Slow process, this education bit.

**LUTHERANS VOTE ORDINATION OF WOMEN:** WASHINGTON POST: July 1970. At the biennial assembly of the

Lutheran Church in America in Minneapolis, the delegates voted for the first time to allow ordination of women as ministers. The Missouri Synod of the Lutheran Church (second largest Lutheran body) felt this move would imperil Lutheran unity. Women were recently granted the vote in the Missouri Synod at church legislative sessions, but Rev. Dr. J.A.O. Preus of the Missouri Synod pointed out that since Eve was formed from Adam's rib, women have a lower place of distinction in the creation (does one laugh or cry here?).

**KANSAS CITY WOMEN'S LIBERATION:** July 1970. The Kansas City group, divided into some nine separate areas of interest, has common quarters at the ECSTATIC UMBRELLA, 3800 McGee, Kansas City, Missouri 64111. This address supersedes any you may have seen in either group or national media in recent months; the former address is not valid. They issued their first newsletter in July — short but literate, and not outstandingly noisy. Good.

**MORE ON APIRA:** WASHINGTON POST (July 1970): A small article buried in the "woman" section, unsigned (and, unfortunately, on my copy not dated) and headed, "It's No Cosmopolitan" gives a good review to the new literary periodical, APIRA. However, it is not the "first" such, just the second: we won in that race by some 14 years. No hard feelings, however — very happy to see APIRA around.

**MORE CHURCHES CATCHING UP TO THE WORLD:** July 1970. At the 1970 General Assembly of the Unitarian-Universalist Church, a number of statements were made concerning homosexuals and bisexuals. Among these, item number four: there are Unitarian-Universalists, clergy and laity, who are homosexuals and bisexuals. (No kidding!) The assembly made the basic resolutions supporting an end to all discrimination against homosexuals in employment or anywhere else and the usual consensual adult recommendations. Unlike other church bodies reported previously in this column, they add no trailers — no if's, and's or conditions. We are grateful, only wish the hard rock groups (and I do not mean music) would follow suit.

**CHI CHENG OF TAIWAN, SUPER GIRL:** CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR: July 1, 1970. Watch for this name, as this 26-year-old seems destined to become one of the greatest athletes of all time — not women's athletes: athletes. Chi Cheng is a runner and is said to be destined to star at

the next Olympic Games.

**OF THIS PURE BUT IRREGULAR PASSION:** VILLAGE VOICE: July 2, 1970. Jill Johnston, who has made her Lesbianism patently clear to all but the most obtuse in past VILLAGE VOICE columns on the dance of life, now publicly states the fact for us in this column. Unfortunately, she also introduces a conglomeration of theoretical philosophy that will confuse anyone who is not thoroughly familiar with Lesbian literature. More unfortunately, she includes a public attack on a famous — and rightly so — woman in women's liberation whose personal reputation for kindness and compassion is nationally known. Inexcusable bad manners, Jill, no matter what excuse you might give. Tacked to the end of this column is a lengthy look at Colette's magnificent *THE PURE AND THE IMPURE* and the even more important study of the celebrated *LADIES OF LLANGOLLEN*, including a wonderful excerpt from the celebrated diary of Lady Eleanor Butler. Recommended reading, with a lot of "eye" editing as you go along.

**NUN POLICEWOMAN ELEANOR NEIDWICK:** BARSTOW, CALIFORNIA DESERT DISPATCH: July 7, 1970. Eleanor Niedwick is a nun and a policewoman in Washington, D.C. She is 25, and she is happy with her work. She is a member of the Order of the Daughters of Wisdom, founded to work with the poor. There are about 5,000 today, and they work as nurses, teachers and social workers . . . and policewomen now.

**THE RIGHT TO MARRY IN PUBLIC AND NOT IN PRIVATE PLACES . . . OPENLY . . .** *SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE*: July 7, 1970. In what must be the most unusual editorial this not-unusually liberal newspaper has ever done, entitled "A New Look at Homosexual Marriage," we find the following: "Marriage is the public announcement of a civil contract between two people showing binding intent to share their lives. It is also a personal contract, showing intent to share their mental and emotional resources. Members of the heterosexual majority derive great security, pride and social acceptance from this "rendering public" of an honest social commitment in the eyes of 'God and Man.' It would seem only in keeping with the times that consideration be given to allowing the homosexual minority the same rights to this sense of fulfillment." (It has been known for years

that many a sympathetic minister, often gay, would privately marry male couples or Lesbian couples. It is also being done publicly but without legal sanction in churches such as METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH in Los Angeles. The time has come, however, to make it possible for two men, two women, or whatever, to marry and take advantage of the many institutions designed to benefit couples in our society if they wish to do so.)

**TRACY KNIGHT AND MARJORIE RUTH JONES:** COURIER-JOURNAL: July 9, 1970. This Louisville, Kentucky paper reports that Jefferson County Attorney J. Bruce Miller has ordered that a marriage license not be issued to these two women. They had applied for a marriage license because they felt they had, as a Lesbian couple, the right to the same legal rights and tax benefits that heterosexual couples have. Their attorney, Stuart Lyon, concluded that they would not fight the case to win their rights.

**MORE TRACY KNIGHT AND MARJORIE RUTH JONES:** COURIER-JOURNAL: July 11, 1970. Jefferson Circuit Court was asked on July 10, 1970 to force County Clerk James P. Hallahan to issue a marriage license to these two Louisville women. Stuart Lyon, attorney for the Lesbian couple, said the women had reconsidered their previous decision to not force the issue in court. Mr. Lyon and David Kaplan, his law partner, argued in the action filed: "Concurrent mores, customs and practices do not indicate a public policy which is contrary to the marriage between parties of the same sex. The consenting parties to this marriage are taking no action detrimental to the interest of any other party or parties, nor will their marriage do injury or violence to the person or property of any other party or parties." Tracy Knight is 25; Marjorie Jones is 39.

**LABOR OF A DIFFERENT SORT:** Burlington, Iowa: July 19, 1970. Charlotte Bixenman, 29, has become a card-carrying member of a construction and general laborer's union local. She is believed to be one of the first women members of such a group.

**MELBOURNE SUNDAY OBSERVER:** July 19, 1970. Australia is many years behind even the U.S. as far as liberal views on sex orientation. It is gratifying to find this newspaper (and from its size we would guess this is a Sunday supplement sort of publication that belongs with some regular



published newspaper) producing a relatively calm and not too stupid look at a series of Lesbians. They do cite (but do not identify) some survey that found out of 123 Lesbians, one in four wished to be heterosexual. This seems impossible, based on various studies that have appeared in the U.S. and years of dealing in this field, but this was a British study and possibly there are differences. Not good, not really bad — encouraging only because it is something that could not have appeared a short while back.

**WOMEN'S JOB FIGHT BEGINS:** KANSAS CITY STAR: July 20, 1970. The U.S. government went to court for the first time to fight for equal employment rights for women since discrimination against women was banned by the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Suit was filed against Libbey-Owens-Ford, Inc., and United Glass and Ceramic Workers of North America, AFL-CIO and its local No. 9. The Justice Department said women workers in the company's Toledo, Ohio plants were discriminated against. The department said Libbey-Owens-Ford hires women production workers in only one of its five Toledo plants, assigns them to less desirable and lower-paying jobs with the least opportunity for advancement, and subjects women to a higher frequency of layoffs. The union is being cited because union management contracts deprive female employees of an equal opportunity to compete with their male contemporaries for the more desirable, better-paying jobs. Lib-

bey-Owens-Ford employs 206 women and 5,200 men in its Toledo area plants.

**MENS LIBERATION???** NEWSWEEK: July 20, 1970 reports on men's liberation groups openly wishing to act as "Gents' Auxiliary" to women's liberation. They naturally include the fact that many homosexual men are included but also cite the many who are not. Boston, Berkeley, San Francisco and New York are said to have groups.

**SMALL CONSENSUS:** WASHINGTON POST: July 25, 1970. Forty women attended a coordination meeting with Representative Edith Green (D. Oregon) on unifying efforts to end discrimination against women. Elizabeth Boyer, representing Women's Equity Action League (WEAL), spoke of her group as the far right but added that they were most willing to go through establishment processes to gain their goals. She also said that some "men were referring to women's liberation as the 'Women's Mafia Movement' — charming. Most of the groups attending were, in fact, the most right wing (establishment-oriented) groups.

**DR. EDGAR F. BERMAN SEXIST EXTRAORDINARY:** WASHINGTON POST: July 29, 1970. Nancy L. Ross, reporting in the Post on Dr. Berman, who frankly feels that women are extremely inferior to men and is happy to say so in as many ways possible in public as can be managed, doesn't betray in her article a shred of loathing for the man. It will be amusing,

though, to see if his views damage his career in the future. If not, then it is safe to say that his views are held by the majority of men, and if this is so, then there isn't room on this planet for both sexes. Dr. Berman on women:

- 1) Referring to Patsy Mink's request that he be fired for sexist views, publicly stated on the grounds that if he held similar views (i.e., congenital physical and mental inferiority) on negroes, he would not be allowed to hold public office, Dr. Berman said your "feline ploy of equating my dissent with racial prejudice certainly does not reflect even male congressional standards of debate." He called Mrs. Mink's letter (to Humphrey asking that Dr. Berman be fired) "a typical example of an ordinarily controlled woman under the raging hormonal imbalance of the periodic lunar cycle — thus proving the point against which you rail."
- 2) "In fact," he wrote, "the same glandular secretions producing the reactions which you say do not exist, endow most 'real women' with their most endearing and genteel charms . . ."
- 3) "Genes are our fates and hormones our masters. You can't break with instinct. Living on a farm, I find we are not too far removed from the animals. You only have to watch a sow suckle her young and the boar wander off to realize we live more by our reflexes than our intellect."

The events that began the furor over Dr. Berman actually took place on April 30, 1970, when the Democrats' Committee on National Priorities was meeting. Dr. Berman recalled for Nancy L. Ross that they were discussing "vital issues like Vietnam and the Middle East, and Patsy Mink brought up women's rights." Dr. Berman challenged Mrs. Mink, saying that "women's physiological and psychological characteristics, especially the menstrual cycle and menopause, limit their potential for leadership." A number of Washington area physicians have stated there simply is not scientific or medical basis for this supposition, including Dr. Thomas Wilson, gynecologist at George Washington University.

When asked her views of her husband's behavior and statements, his wife Phoebe, who is a Baltimore real estate broker and the owner-publisher of a small newspaper,

asked not to become embroiled and added, "I am not a very interesting person anyway."

**THE SPOKESWOMAN:** This is a new news service from the Urban Research Corporation, 5464 South Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60615. Cost is \$6 per year for a neatly printed, stapled news sheet covering major national events concerned with all aspects of women's liberation (more accurately, with women's rights). Editor Susan Davis is doing a good job, and if you want to know what is happening that will affect your future, this is a good over-all look. Example of its usefulness can be seen by this: I have been getting and reading PUBLISHER'S WEEKLY for fifteen years of my life, but I hardly ever look at the children's book section of this periodical. But in the July 30, 1970 SPOKESWOMAN (Vol. I, No. 3) I found an announcement that sent me scurrying to the July 13, 1970 PUBLISHER'S WEEKLY. Thirty-eight book publishers (children's books) were queried by PUBLISHER'S WEEKLY about the effect women's liberation was having on their editorial considerations. Sixteen said the current movement was not affecting their editorial decisions; sixteen said it definitely was, and many of these cited titles. The other six gave less specific answers. Several publishers said they were issuing books reflecting the new surge of interest in the rights of women. And most interesting of all, publishing house Crowell, which launched a WOMEN IN AMERICA series in 1969, has scheduled a book on the life of Rachel Carson called SEA AND SKY, and for 1971, TO THE BARRICADES: THE ANARCHIST LIFE OF EMMA GOLDMAN. (See "My God It Happened to Me Too" in August/September 1970 issue of The LADDER.)

**GLADYS GUY:** Seattle, July 31, 1970. The first woman to hold the job of area director for the Labor Department's wage and hour division, Gladys Guy, was appointed to that post for the Washington, Alaska and Northern Idaho area on July 30, 1970. Previously she was a Nevada field examiner for the Veteran's Administration, a job causing her to cover seventeen counties and 11,000 square miles of sagebrush. Speaking about sex discrimination, she said, "The law has provided us with a good basis, but it's women's responsibility to complain about sex discrimination when it happens to them. I think someday we'll see complete equality but it won't be very soon."



CANDI MCGONAGLE

The best we can hope for now is full enforcement of the equal pay law."

**FEDERAL CONTRACTS TO SET JOB EQUALITY FOR WOMEN:** NEW YORK TIMES: July 31, 1970. Secretary of Labor James D. Hodgson announced that the government would set employment goals for women in some federal contract work to eliminate discrimination because of sex. He explained this was to "achieve equal employment opportunity for women among government contractors by applying the concept of goals and timetables." This is apparently to be similar to the Philadelphia Plan which was used to establish quotas for racial minorities in federal construction contracts totaling \$500,000 or more.

**THE JOB SCENE: JULY AND AUGUST 1970:** Clippings from coast to coast show that women are doing many jobs that have previously been considered male territory only. **THE MOTHER TRUCKERS**, a New York City based furniture and equipment moving firm, is owned and operated by a woman and staffed primarily with women. Early in July, six women successfully scaled 20,320-foot Mount McKinley in Alaska. Possibly the most publicized breakthrough was that accomplished by the five female aquanauts who lived underwater for two weeks near St. John, Virgin Islands. Their two-week stay was part of a seven-month program called Tektite II, involving a total of seventeen underwater research missions. The majority of the women are already qualified scientists, and the rest are engaged in academic programs toward that end.

**BEACHHEAD REVIEW: LADIES HOME JOURNAL:** August 1970: Six months ago a group of feminists installed themselves in LADIES HOME JOURNAL offices, demanding the resignation of the editor, and a few other things. In return for vacating the premises, LHJ gave the group eight pages of a "future" issue. Finally in August 1970, eight pages of basic women's liberation dogma appeared. Reading it from the viewpoint of having been reading the field for two or so years thoroughly, none of it seems new. For this magazine, this audience, however, it is very new, and the results should be excellent. We were amused to note The LADDER left off the list of publications, though interested in seeing that the New York City group RADICAL LESBIANS got listed under the organizations.

**END OF BERMAN, ALL POWER TO THE WOMEN:** WASHINGTON POST: August 1, 1970. Dr. Edgar F. Berman, whose sexist statements are reported at length elsewhere in this column, resigned his prestigious position on July 31, 1970 under pressure. When asked about his future position in the Democratic Party, he replied, "Zero." In the same interview Dr. Berman seemingly cut his throat even more deeply by reiterating his views on the emotional condition of women making them unfit for key positions. But to really reach the bottom of Dr. Berman's opinion of women, we quote: "The whole world seems to be uptight if they will take this as a question of principle . . . the National Priorities Committee was discussing problems such as the Middle East, Vietnam and the balance of payments when Mrs. Mink testified on women's rights. I think women's lib has its place, but not in that class." Goodbye, Dr. Berman.

TV GUIDE advertises itself as the magazine with the most circulation. We hope it is true, for the August 8, 1970 issue contains a short, basic article on women's liberation by Edith Efron. Quite rightly, she concentrates on the issues of concern connected with TV advertising, the portraying of women as mindless slobs . . . However, she also names most of the leading spokeswomen and cites their over-all dissatisfaction with media coverage, the distortions of statements in particular. We hope most of TV Guide's audience read it . . . we hope.

**FINAL ZAP TO DR. BERMAN:** WASHINGTON STAR: Sunday, August 9, 1970. The following letter appeared in LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

SIR: Dr. Edgar Berman's (top Democratic Party planner, who has resigned his party post after saying a woman shouldn't be President) hysterical terror of "raging storms by female hormones" illuminates a lot more about his own hormonal inadequacies than it does about human physiology. As an endocrinologist in good standing, I was startled to learn that ovarian hormones are toxic to brain cells. In Dr. Berman's physiological demonology these nasty little sex steroids poison the human brain and reduce it to a pitiful caricature of its potential competence.

This would make the human female one of evolution's sickest jokes; and for one mad moment I thought that the good doctor was recommending universal castration of female infants to preclude the

further debasement of humanity's greatest treasure — its rational brain.

In all fairness, though, I think this overstates his solution to the problem. He only warns that if these irrational creatures are allowed to play responsible roles in our now perfect society, then we shall live to see a society riven by wars, famine, racism, inflation, pollution, panthers, student revolt and changing skirt lengths. This is a clarion call to all those humans who are genetic testicular hormone makers to unite to prevent the decline and fall.

Hormones are destiny, he pontificates, and then as a final sad irony he raises the spectre of a Bay of Pigs directed by a woman instead of by John F. Kennedy. Dr. Berman selected a curious example of hormonal health.

John Kennedy, whom I admired greatly, did not suffer from storms of female steroids, but it is well known that he did suffer from a deficiency of adrenal cortical steroids which are vital for normal responses to life stresses. He was treated with cortical hormones especially during periods of emergency. What price hormonal control of destiny then, Dr. Berman?

All of this clarifies to some degree why we Democrats lost the 1968 election. If Dr. Berman's (he formerly was personal physician to H.H.H.) political advice to Hubert Humphrey was as sound as his knowledge of medicine, the whole enterprise was doomed from the start.

Dr. Estelle R. Ramey  
Professor

Department of Physiology & Biophysics  
Georgetown University Medical School  
FROM FOURTEENTH TO NINETEENTH TO NOW, MERELY 102 YEARS: WASHINGTON, D.C., August 10, 1970. The House of Representatives, by a vote of 350 to 15, voted today to amend the constitution to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex. The 14th amendment, ratified in 1868, states clearly that no state shall deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the law. Some women thought that included them, but in 1872 when they tried to register to vote in the presidential election, they were rebuffed and the courts held that the states could make such a "REASONABLE" exception of the law. Fifty years later, the 19th amendment finally gave women the vote, after quite a fight. Today's vote is the first time the House has ever voted on the amendment which has been INTRODUCED



By CANDI MCGONAGLE

EVERY YEAR SINCE 1923. Even now, with such a large vote, fifteen men still felt they had some unspecified god-given right to hold women as slaves. Chief enemy — and a man we feel will not rest easily in his grave — is Representative Emanuel Celler, a Brooklyn Democrat who arrived in the House the same year the amendment did, 1923. The Judiciary Committee, over which Mr. Celler presided for 21 years, never held hearings on the amendment. It wasn't important enough to consider. Mr. Celler, in his last ditch battle to stop the passage, said, "There is no equality except in a cemetery," which presumably means women can look forward to equal rights when they die.

THESE MEN, ALONG WITH CELLER, VOTED TO KEEP YOU A SLAVE: Representative Thomas G. Abernethy of Mississippi, John D. Dingell of Michigan, Lucien N. Nedzi of Michigan, W.R. Poage of Texas and Jerome R. Waldie of California, all Democrats; and John W. Byrnes of Wisconsin, Glenn R. Davis of Wisconsin, David W. Dennis of Indiana, Earl F. Landgrebe of Indiana, Paul N. McCloskey, Jr. of California, William M. McCulloch of Ohio, John P. Saylor of Pennsylvania, John G. Schmitz of California, and Charles E. Wiggins of California, all Republicans.

MUCH MORE TO BE DONE: Now that the House has passed this essential act, the senate must pass the legislation by a two-thirds vote, which it has done twice in the past. Following that almost automatic step, each of 38 state legislatures must ratify it to put it into the constitution, and there is no time limit on the state action. So the battle is not yet won. (NOTE: Opposition has risen in the Senate. More news next issue.)

PROMINENT SUPPORT FOR SAME

SEX MARRIAGE FROM RITA E. HAUSER: St. Louis, August 10, 1970. Laws prohibiting marriage of two persons of the same sex are unconstitutional, Rita E. Hauser, New York lawyer and U.S. representative to the United Nations Human Rights Commission, stated today at the American Bar Association's panel on women's liberation and the constitution.

"Such a requirement," Mrs. Hauser said, "predicates reproduction as the legal consideration of marriage, and that view, I submit, is no longer reasonable or consistent with fact. Indeed, one can argue that limiting reproduction has become a social goal and I know of no better way of accomplishing that than marriage between the same sexes. I am not arguing this as a social policy; I am arguing that the right to marry, a right guaranteed by law, cannot be premised on sex distinctions which serve to deny equal protection of the law to all persons, whatever their tastes in life may be."

Mrs. Hauser went on to say that she feels men should not be compelled to support women to whom they are not married except where minor children are involved, and that women should be drafted on an equal basis with men.

DIRTY POLITICS ALWAYS WITH US: UPI, August 11, 1970. Representative Clement Zablocki, Democrat-Wisconsin, said today Vice President Spiro Agnew or another spokesman should state whether the Nixon administration endorses the statement of U.N. delegate Rita E. Hauser that marriages should be allowed for members of the same sex. In a floor speech, Zablocki said, "Mrs. Hauser's speech to me represents an example of the moral rot infecting the nation." He said "such nonsense" did not come from a radical but from a "responsible official" of the administration. Mrs. Hauser is the U.S. Representative to the United Nations Human Rights Commission.

RITA CHANGES HER TUNE A BIT: SINGING UNDER PRESSURE? WASHINGTON POST: August 13, 1970. Apparently alarmed at the responses to her statements at the American Bar Association's panel, with Representative Wayne Hays (D-Ohio) asking for her resignation (asserting that she was "promoting homosexuality and lesbianism") and the homosexual segment cheering her on, Mrs. Hauser attempted to repudiate those remarks. "I personally don't think it's desir-

able social policy at all to legalize marriage between members of the same sex," she said; "a very strong argument can be made" for such legalization if the Equal Rights Amendment becomes law, she emphasized. The UPI story reported in this column did not, of course, mention the Equal Rights Amendment discussion, and Mrs. Hauser felt her remarks were taken out of context, and actually she had made them facetiously. Confronted also by the report of White House press secretary Ronald Ziegler that President Nixon "does not support nor has he supported nor will he support marriages between the same sex," she attempted to clarify her statements by emphasizing again the ominous implications of the Equal Rights Amendment which primarily concerned her. In response to her repudiation of her statements, Hays said, "Maybe she'd better quit making silly arguments like that, even facetiously, in public."

WOMEN'S LIBERATION: August 26, 1970. PREPARATORY PARTY AND JILL JOHNSTON: August 10, 1970. At a party held to drum up funds for the August 26, 1970 women's strike, VILLAGE VOICE columnist Jill Johnston stripped to her underpants and went swimming in the pool. Various papers carried the story: The NEW YORK TIMES writer Charlotte Curtis gave such a confused and venomous accounting that it is hard to tell precisely what happened. AP write-up which appeared around the country seemed more to the point. Some 200 women attended the party at the home of Mrs. Robert Scull. The sponsors were Betty Friedan and Gloria Vanderbilt Cooper (the latter failed to show up, reportedly because her husband forbade it?). Representative Patsy Mink, heroine of the hour for having put Dr. Berman (see elsewhere in this column) out of a job and into hot water, spoke on the need for educating the public to the presence of sex discrimination. Journalist Gloria Steinem prophesied that the 1972 election campaign would concentrate heavily on women's liberation. During Miss Steinem's talk, Jill Johnston took her swim. She identified herself as a writer and a Lesbian and said her swim was in protest of those in the movement for women's liberation who don't like Lesbians. While not advocating unorthodox swims, this episode does dramatically illustrate the one major weakness in the women's liberation movement. Unlike any other "minority" group, women have

the power to literally take over the world tomorrow if they will band together to do so; all they have to do is accept all women. (A FULL REPORT ON THE EVENTS OF AUGUST 26, 1970, WOMEN'S LIBERATION DAY, WILL BE IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE LADDER. PRELIMINARY REPORTS FROM ON-THE-SCENE OBSERVERS IN BOTH WASHINGTON, D.C. AND NEW YORK CITY WOULD INDICATE THAT THE NATIONAL NEWS MEDIA DELIBERATELY PLAYED DOWN THE ENORMOUS NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN THESE TWO CITIES . . .)



## Poetry

### Afternoon Libation

icy sunlight  
drips on the sidewalk  
and I stand here waiting  
for the bus  
wondering  
did I ever have a life?  
has it always been  
like this?  
(three pills/day & I  
guarantee you'll never  
feel depressed)

last night  
I watched  
the stars in their  
vaguely Greek dance  
and  
I felt the old sorrow  
again  
will it go on  
like this?  
(last summer I thought  
I lived — yes, I lived  
once — once beside the  
blue-green waves of  
some then hysterical  
now calm sea)

alas that I did not die  
Ophelia  
(sheltered by  
my madness)

Kathleen McKinnon

### 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.

### To a Girl on a Swing

The sun breaks over her head  
Breaks out the banquet of an afternoon

Swing, little girl

Alone in the park  
Her shoes kick out a valley of dust  
beneath the swing.

The sun in a slow roll  
Stirs up the dust  
Traces a fine sweat on her face

Swing, all your afternoon.

Time enough to learn the ways of men  
Splayed-out hands  
Eyes like steel-tipped quarrels in the bow  
Cocked and aimed  
Time to learn the walk of a deer  
through the gantlet  
Of hunters on the street

If I could stay in the park with you  
And listen to the slow creak of the swing  
And the sparrow's song of victory  
And the silent orchestra of summer fire . . .

The click of a bolt in breech  
is our sunset  
Brings down the day  
Brings me to my feet

Go home.

The dust is down.  
A night breeze rides in the empty swing.

Martha Shelley



## Lovesong

"I loved you, Atthis, long ago, when my own  
girlhood was still all flowers, and you —  
you seemed to me a small, ungainly child."—Sappho

When snow lies heavy  
and I am old,  
will you recall  
half-filled ashtrays  
down the corridors  
and tavern rooms  
of your million homes?

Will you,  
being much older,  
remember the young girl  
who stood before you  
in midnight bars  
and plucked strings  
of an invisible lyre  
while awkwardly singing  
to you alone  
hymns of some special  
moonlight,  
submerging the evening  
in the water-fire of  
one personal mortality?

Perhaps you,  
being so very old,  
will forget the gifts she  
offered you?

Or will you recall  
fondly  
that she was just another  
awkward young girl, never  
having realized that  
she  
consecrated more than  
your cigarettes,  
your beers, and  
the minutes of your time  
with the godhood  
of her presence?

Kathleen McKinnon

## THE UNSHAME

Though you and I both know  
soon we'll be walking down  
the street holding hands,  
I must make you understand  
(please, take my hand)  
... they're staring at us.

I do not blush from shame.  
I only wish to be held tighter  
(yes, it's true we're gay.  
Turn our cheeks? One f.ing finger  
to you, Dearie, and you and you.)

But we'll hold hands in silence  
and walk on. I do not know  
what they said to turn-backs  
only that I kept steady pace  
with you, Love, at my side.

I love you. I do not lie.  
(Can't you tell by the smile  
on our faces? And by our hands  
and fingers that are entwined!)  
Our hands have grown together  
& understand the clutch of the other.

Paul Mariah

## AN INVITATION TO DANCE

There are those who do  
and there are those who talk  
about doing.

I ain't the latter.

But the Ladder

sideswiping the structure  
trying to balance  
the ball-going belle  
all-Jawjaed up  
ready to swing  
and be swung.

Let's blend simultaneously  
and counterpoint  
the stars, our nights,

beyond our being.

Come on, let's ball,  
commingle and let go —  
and dance

Inside one another.

Paul Mariah

## And Everyone . . .

"Plaisir d'amour ne dure qu'un moment; chagrin d'amour  
dure toute la vie."

I am the one  
whom all love  
one  
instant.

Once a dove  
now grey sparrowed  
stabbed  
by  
shyness

I met Lois —  
guitar-playing  
Lois  
(incidentally always  
wearing a blue windbreaker  
manager of the softball team  
jewelry-artist  
sign-painter  
gift-shop owner)  
Lois  
was intrigued  
by the silence  
I offered her  
only.

One one infinitely cool  
summer night  
Lois  
took me in her arms —  
next morning  
we were  
strangers.

Kathleen McKinnon

## HEAD START

Because I came out of the womb  
head first  
does not mean I got a  
head start  
on the world;  
for when my feet hit the ground,  
I found  
that pigeon-toes walk  
on each other:  
hence, no progress.  
The scars on my ankles  
are the only badges I have.

Paul Mariah

## SEPARATION

My soul goes astray  
in separation  
I am not I  
and I know  
you are not you

Something comes between:  
a sharp steel wedge,  
hammered hard  
clefts a log  
that was a tree

Anne Hayden

## POTTED PLANT

This new pale stalk  
of half-born leaf  
from this silent room  
tries to coax  
passion's mingled breath  
like ours that unfurled  
the jungle-full leaf  
below.

Anne Hayden

## OUT TO SEA

I only know the counting  
of moments  
until I can kiss you  
and feel you tight  
against my thigh  
and know that love's waters  
from our burdened love  
are mixed and are abundant

Anne Hayden

(Paul Mariah, poet, is editor of *MANROOT*,  
a San Francisco based poetry journal. His  
list of credits would fill two pages. A true  
liberationist, Paul is a supporter of *Women's  
Liberation*, *Gay Liberation*, *Lesbian Libera-  
tion*. Or, more properly, he loves free  
people.)

## SOME TIME

Some time I shall lie still and think of you.  
My scheme of nerves shall rest like a small town  
At night, beneath the moon, while up and down  
The byways move the servicers: those who  
Attend the sleepers' needs, yet scarcely stir  
The silence — thus, serene as darkened streets  
The thought of you will move. Till bell-tower greets  
The light, I'll hug the fireside warmth, and purr . . .

But not just now! Times Square on New Year's Eve  
Were some vast morgue compared to me tonight  
Seething with sentience, every exit tight  
With traffic mad for home yet cannot leave . . .

Some time I shall lie still and think of you,  
But not when hunger's charge has run me through.

Carol Wilde

## EARLY MORNING

When the sun was just up, and the air  
was sharp and as clear as crystal,  
I walked alone slowly, dejectedly,  
kicking the ground of my stubbornness.  
Leaves fell on me, but I did not feel them,  
I came to a dead log and kicked it away,  
and where it had been lay an object.  
I picked up the dead robin of my dreams,  
and remembered yesterday.

Lyn Collins

## INSPIRATION

"Some day," I said, out of that mauve-edged lull  
Left in the pulsing wake of passion spent,  
"Some day, my exquisite one, I'll write some lines  
That are worthy of you: delicate, powerful, warm —  
A play, it may be: wonder, come to life,  
And breaking in a strong pentameter . . ."

She turned her soft sweet body over against  
My bones. Her great dark eyes came open wide  
With black stars down in them; her nostrils flared  
A little, and from between those sculptured lips  
There came a whisper, sliding along my flesh,  
Thrust to the core of me, sudden and deep,  
By her loveliness, by her lifted breast:  
"And sell it?"

Carol Wilde

## EMPTINESS

I walked alone at daybreak  
along the beach,  
and came upon two seagulls  
resting at the water's edge.  
At my approach they flew  
away up into the sky.  
Watching them I  
reached for your hand,  
and clutched instead emptiness.

Lyn Collins

## QUESTION

As a child I walked  
cold streets of cement,  
The sunshine fell on others,  
and nothing touched me.  
When I was twelve  
my body changed and  
boys looked at it.  
A question arose in my mind.  
When I was thirteen  
Andrea kissed me in  
the girl's bathroom,  
and my question was answered.

Lyn Collins

## AN ENDING

She sat there, lost from me,  
belonging to no one but herself.  
Alone, as I knew myself to be  
I could see no reason for staying,  
So I got up, walked out,  
and shut the door of the house  
where I used to live.

Lyn Collins

## INSOMNIA

Kind sleep evades her in this midnight hour —  
Her heavy lids, rising and falling  
Like closing curtains, review again  
Kaleidoscopic closed circuit memories.

Cold cream lines the pores of a youthful face  
Where old age stood upon it hours ago  
To play a woman far beyond her years —  
A character not too unlike herself.

And the still-sprayed hair, sagely grey  
Like brittle hay in winter snow, marks off  
The pointed nose and full round lips  
Beneath the sleepless, vacant flickering eyes.

Her restless body shifts from left to right,  
Turning away with a questioning sigh  
To try to separate herself again —  
The actress from the acted — in her mind.

She turns once more, but sleep evades her still,  
And she will turn and turn until the dawn:  
Reviewing what she was and is to be,  
Deciding how to meet the coming day.

Robin Jordan

## REBUTTAL

No, Daddy, I'm not ashamed  
Of staying in her bed last night,  
Last week, last month — all the times  
You knew and never guessed.

Now I think my body quite complete:  
Woman's parts, a woman's heart,  
Blood as quick as any man's,  
And restless, as you are now.

Can you remember what it meant  
The first time you slept with your girl?  
Were you ashamed to be a man?  
Then why would you shame us?

For twenty years, her figure, dressed  
In tattered levis, mocassins,  
And ragged sweatshirt, stalked along  
Not knowing what it feared or sought.

Now our naked bodies stand  
Above the cluttered clothes we will  
Not wear again: Rejoice with us —  
We would not change things if we could.

Robin Jordan

my only name!

in the dark arms of  
this fragile night  
i cannot find you;  
the you that is me.  
yet deep within  
i see the real morning  
and in this lonely moment,  
i know what it was  
that made  
me in this shape.  
i reached out  
to touch every surface of life,  
defacing myself in the mirror  
but  
while in that terrible center,  
something  
spoke to me and said,  
"you are not alone."  
and the truth of  
this thought  
raised me from my death.

Georgette Morreaux

# LESBIANA

The discovery of Lesbian titles, especially those where no mention is made of the fact in reviews, is a chancy business. For many many years it was difficult because reviewers would take almost any out to avoid mentioning Lesbians or implying such might exist in a book. Now, with the recent "liberation" of our literature, it is old hat . . . and no one bothers.

But the search methods remain the same . . . read the reviews, beg people to tell you of things they find, and, best of all, watch for nuances in one book that let you know that sooner or later the author is likely to write in the field.

This worked out beautifully well for Gene Damon until she also became editor of THE LADDER, which cut down on reading time and made review reading a frantic and cursory matter. So, I apologize for missing what is surely one of the finer minor studies in recent years, Janice Elliott's ANGELS FALLING, N.Y., Alfred A. Knopf, 1969. And worse, I probably never would have found it if a kind reader in Columbus, Ohio, had not written to ask why there had not been a review in this column. It was chagrinning to run to my files and find the "watch" card made for Miss Elliott back in 1966 over her novel, THE GODMOTHER, which is not pertinent but which made me feel she would enter the field someday.

ANGELS FALLING is a family chronicle; novel with none of the flaws usually found in this very enjoyable and very popular genre. The mother of them all, Lily Garland, is dying, and the family gathers to watch and wait . . . and while they do, we hear all about it. Lily, born Lilian Candish in 1901, grows up to join the heroic ranks of the first feminists . . . to burn with the zeal to free women, and to fall under the spell of Maud Weatherby. Maud is a romantic opportunist and women's rights, the suffragette movement, just one of her roles in this book. But Lily is brought to Maud's side by the awkward and strangely beautiful Connie Garland, with whom she falls ardently and totally in love. Connie, in an anguished scene that surely must be implying more than the novelist cares to explicate, rejects Lily. Some time later, accidentally, Lily sees Connie kissed by the evil Maud Weatherby; and off she runs to the waiting arms of Connie's brother, weak and stupid Andrew Garland. The children of

By GENE DAMON

this pair are the vulture children around the dying bedside.

The downfall of all is timed to the death of Lily, on whom little blame should rest, unattractive though she becomes before the novel's end. Every character in this book is real and believed . . . alone enough credit to the novelist. Daughter Frances, seen earlier in the novel before Lily and Andrew, who actually began it all, is as classic an example of repressed Lesbianism as literature has to offer. Most will like best the early third of the book, but it's a good story and Miss Elliott is most talented. Looking further into her work, it seems she has written seven novels, only three of them out in this country or to come out here. Included is a new one, THE KINDLING, which will be watched. I'd be grateful if some kind English reader might check her earlier titles out for us, all published in England by Secker and Warburg as follows: CAVE WITH ECHOES, 1963; SOMNAMBULISTS, 1964; BUTTERCUP CHAIN, 1967; THE SINGING HEAD, 1968.

Reprints finally got checked out and so we have the very early Kingsley Amis 1961 novel, TAKE A GIRL LIKE YOU, out from Signet, 1970; Ernest Borneman's THE MAN WHO LOVED WOMEN, Signet, 1970; Susan Sontag's THE BENEFACTOR, Avon, 1970; and VERY surprisingly, a reissue of Ann Bannon's second novel in the famous series, I AM A WOMAN, Fawcett, 1970. For those of you who have NOT read Ann Bannon, don't deprive yourselves any longer. Her almost classic series of paperback Lesbian novels are collector's items these days.

There is something intensely shocking about reading "The Invisible Sorority" by Nancy Love in THE IMPROPER PHILADELPHIANS, N.Y., Weybright and Talley, 1970. This book is a collection of "in-depth" articles from PHILADELPHIA MAGAZINE, and the verso of the title page includes dates back to 1964 . . . which must not be far from the original publication date of this article . . . which refers to DRUM as if it existed, and to the possible beginnings of the short-lived Philadelphia chapter of Daughters of Bilitis some many years ago. The shock is two-sided — the relative reassurance that yes, indeed, still today, many Lesbians live bar-oriented lives (the milieu study begins with the inhabitants of a gay bar for women); and, on the

other hand, that there is little else in the article that remains true today, so some things must be better. Nancy Love, it must be mentioned, was uncommonly good in her work. At the time of writing, she could be considered unusually brave. There is the usual tendency to find the more unusual Lesbians and concentrate on them, but the handling is not unkind. For this reviewer there was some real shock in finding the distorted life story (seriously and erroneously changed) of a dear and close friend and long time LADDER contributor, Jody Shotwell. The disparity in the account of Jody's life (supposedly an interview and therefore presumed to be accurate) is serious enough to possibly cast doubts on the integrity of the reporter from this standpoint, but again, there is no question about the sympathy of the writer. It's hard to imagine who will buy this book, outside perhaps of the Philadelphia area. But for a nostalgic look at the way the world was some few four? five? six? years ago . . . o-k.

Celestine Ware has contributed an enormously important basic examination of WOMAN POWER: THE MOVEMENT FOR WOMEN'S LIBERATION, N.Y., Tower, 1970. Though I have faithfully followed the movement publications to an extent I suspect far surpasses the general reader interest, this book provided to me my first step-by-step look at exactly WHAT happened on a daily level in Boston, Chicago, New York, etc. . . . after Betty Friedan's NOW got the current resurgence of interest in the liberation of women off the ground. Celestine Ware, herself one of the founders of the organization known as THE NEW YORK RADICAL FEMINISTS, in Chapter One of this book outlines the entire history of the major "national" (in terms of publicity and media interest) groups, NONE of them older than 1967 . . . and all begun after NOW. However, NOW has literally nothing in common with the many other women's liberation groups. NOW is interested in shifting the present balance of power from totally MALE to equally male and female (which does seem the most reasonable, if it is possible to do — IF). The other groups, most of them NOT leftist (no matter what you read, they are primarily apolitical in terms of the male version of politics and they are not radical except in their own choice of nomenclature), want radical changes only in the ways in which women live in the world. Some want

changes that smack of socialism, but they are only nibbling at the edges (i.e. day care centers for children and like projects). A few of the groups reject males totally in the sense of rejecting anything unfit, but these are the exception rather than the rule. It is immediately clear that it takes less than 100 pages of a paperback book to see that each and every one of these groups is making identical mistakes to those made in the first 20 years of the Lesbian and homosexual rights movements. There are too many of them, they do not communicate well, they are not well formed, they are not only not well led but reject the idea of leadership entirely. Some seem to feel that "leaders" means men . . . for some reason women are equal but aren't allowed to be varied in the sense that some lead better than others. There is a "no-no" word, elitist, which they seem to want to avoid. It is, however, not possible to keep talent from shining, and Miss Ware is herself an excellent example . . . so from these pages come some powerful names, Ti-Grace Atkinson, Shulamith Firestone, Joreen Freeman, Naomi Weisstein, Pamela Allen, Ellen Willis, Ann Koedt, and on and on.

After documenting today's action, Celestine Ware goes on to cover black women, political possibilities, media treatment (bad, bad) and comparisons between the 19th century feminists and today's women's liberationists. In her 176 pages, including cursory bibliography and references, she manages to mention the word "homosexual" twice . . . the forbidden "Lesbian" never comes up . . .

Horizon Press, New York, has done the literate world an honorable and loving service by republishing Margaret Anderson's first two autobiographical titles and publishing her third portrait of her distinguished life . . . MY THIRTY YEARS' WAR, first published in 1930, THE FIERY FOUNTAINS, first published in 1951, and now THE STRANGE NECESSITY, 1970.

Faithful readers will recall that in the July, 1968, issue of THE LADDER I discussed the book, LADIES BOUNTIFUL, which was most reticent about the personal life of Miss Anderson and her most famous friend, Jane Heap, while heaping much praise on her head over the magnificent LITTLE REVIEW. Margaret Anderson founded and published, virtually alone, the most famous and most prestigious of all the little magazines. For fifteen years THE LITTLE REVIEW was the magazine that



carried the writers who mattered. There were others, but none before, during, or since *THE LITTLE REVIEW* have been quite as important to the over-all enormous field of literature. If Miss Anderson had been, had done, nothing else, she would be assured her crown of stars.

MY THIRTY YEARS' WAR is mostly about *THE LITTLE REVIEW* . . . and about the electric and fascinating Jane Heap, who was Margaret's constant companion and co-editor during most of these early years. Many of you will have already read this book, but it is more than worth reading again . . . and it is astonishing how very many of the distinguished writers she discovered are our "classic" contemporary authors today. *THE FIERY FOUNTAINS*, by prejudice of this reviewer her finest book, covers her love affair with Georgette Leblanc, which lasted from their meeting about 1920 until Georgette's death in 1941. *THE FIERY FOUNTAINS* is about that life together. For those of you who will write to ask if I did not know about this book before (in its original edition back in 1951) I answer happily that, yes, it was given to me as a gift by a book dealer many years ago . . . but it is not a whole book in a sense, and is, while being best, still left improperly illuminated until you reach her third, and possibly(?) last, volume, *THE STRANGE NECESSITY*. This, one immediately senses, is the real Margaret Anderson. She no longer possesses the very powers of prose that fascinate in her earlier books; but the passing of years, and the hardships of World War II and the things that have happened since, including the long wait for this magnificent publishing enterprise to happen, color her most recent autobiography.

So they are not separate . . . though it is undoubtedly true that when the first was written the second was not yet considered, and the first two were long done when the third was attempted. Name collectors will be happy, for most of the best of the best are included. Her friends were, are all the magic names in literature . . . and painting and music. Janet Flanner, *NEW YORKER*'s famous "Genet," contributes a very moving preface to the reissued *FIERY FOUNTAINS*, citing the reasons for its greatness, the magic of Georgette Leblanc with Margaret Anderson . . . a very special union.

*THE STRANGE NECESSITY* is full of loving flaws . . . much space given to the eccentricities and personal tastes of the

author, but when one is Margaret Anderson, one is allowed much space. It is also a necessary book, for it tells happily that Margaret was not doomed to be alone after the end of Jane Heap and the death of Georgette Leblanc. In June, 1942, eight months after the death of Georgette, aboard an ocean liner bound from France to New York, Margaret met Dorothy Caruso, widow of Enrico, and in very like story book fashion they lived together from then until Dorothy's death in 1955. Hovering about the edges of her life, always, is the enigmatic figure of her nurse-companion-housekeeper, Monique, who lived to be 92, dying in 1961. The memoirs stop in 1961 except for a "happy" preface note dated 1968 about finding a publisher. Since this is 1970, and this reviewer knows the books have been scheduled for well over a year before their final appearance, there is a gap . . . the years from 1961 until now. Perhaps they are recorded . . . perhaps not. We are lucky if they are and if they will someday appear.

Horizon Press, however, deserves the vote of thanks now . . . from us all. Don't miss reading about the world of Margaret Anderson. Few are privileged with her gifts . . . few bright enough to work to enjoy life as well as she has. The illustrations, by the way, are magnificent.

More Genevieve Taggard, from the same source as that cited last month, the poem "Monody in Monotone" from *LONG VIEW*, N.Y., Harper, 1942. It's as pertinent . . . or more properly variant, as any of hers.

Dell reissued its \$1.25 edition of *THE FEMININE MYSTIQUE* by Betty Friedan, no doubt in honor of the current flood of books on women's liberation, women's rights.

New movements, however old in terms of time, inspire new magazines, and women's liberation has inspired several. We have already covered *WOMEN, A JOURNAL OF LIBERATION*, a very ambitious not literary quarterly; *APHRA*, the magnificent literary quarterly; and *RADICAL THERAPIST*, which only somewhat covers this area. Another new one is *UP FROM UNDER* out of New York City, which is basic, down to earth, practical and sensible . . . and very interesting. They describe themselves as a "new magazine, by and about women." The publishing effort is done by an independent group of women in the general women's liberation movement.

Address is 339 Lafayette Street, New York, N.Y. 10012. The cost for five issues is \$2.50. No fiction, no frills . . . just articles about the nitty gritty of life.

ICONOGRAPHS, May Swenson's latest collection of poetry, N.Y., Scribner's, 1970, succeeds to the extent of its intentions, for it is frankly experimental even for the not easily classified Miss Swenson. The explanatory note in the rear of the book is literally necessary to fully see what she is doing. This makes me think that if it were wholly successful in its own right, the note need not have been added. That quibbling aside, there are some delightful moments for eye and heart. The marvelous Lesbian poem, "A Trellis for R," is included . . . along with some very special "views" of ordinary things: a visit to a James Bond movie in "The James Bond Movie" and immediately following the patiently bored "It Rains." Miss Swenson, one of our most prominent living poets, has mostly pleased her all time fans here, but it's an interesting collection.

Haunted by Emma Goldman (see *Cross Currents* this issue and "My God It Happened to Me Too!" in August/September, 1970 issue), the woman who was unceremoniously tossed out of the U.S. in 1917 and is now being described as "the greatest lady anarchist of them all," Beacon Press has issued a quality paperback reprint of *REBEL IN PARADISE: A BIOGRAPHY OF EMMA GOLDMAN*, for \$3.95. This very obscure biography was first issued in 1961 by University of Chicago Press. It is NOT a comment on the biography contents or the biographer, Richard Drinnon, to call it obscure. As most of you know, university press publications aren't likely to become best sellers, aren't likely to be much reviewed . . . and certainly, it's unthinkable that many of them sell. We are still planning an article on Miss Goldman for a future issue, but it is amusing to see everything from *TIME MAGAZINE* to the publishing houses rally round the flag, girls (apologies to Max Shulman!). But it is an election year, women; and it is said that 3,000,000 more women will vote in 1970 than men. With a little help from our friends, we could run the country.

GOOD LUCK, MISS WYCOFF, by noted dramatist William Inge, Boston, Atlantic-Little, Brown, 1970, is a disaster. This is sad, for Mr. Inge is a wonderful writer in his field, but he should not, apparently, have attempted a novel. Miss Wycoff of the title is of no interest here,

being an overdrawn and poorly understood Kansas school teacher. There is a brief bit of Lesbian interest in that two of her friends, the arts and crafts teacher and the physical education teacher (no, no, not those two again!!) are said to be lovers . . . they live together, and another teacher provides possibly the novel's only funny line, "they seem as happy as honeymooners." Typecasting is tiring. A reader recently pointed out that many of the Lesbians in fiction have grey eyes . . . even cited Jane Rule as having been guilty of giving grey eyes to her heroine in her earlier novel, *DESERT OF THE HEART*. Colored contacts, anyone?

Recently, in writing for a review copy of a Lesbian novel and indicating an interest in any material the publisher might be issuing that concerned women's liberation, I received a review copy of *BEYOND THE LOOKING GLASS*, by Kathrin Perutz, N.Y., Morrow, 1970. I did not expect to, but I found it more compelling than the novel I'd requested . . . found myself reading in fascination just what American women (and to some extent, American men) DO to "enhance" their attractiveness. Miss Perutz is a novelist . . . indeed, I've had the pleasure of reviewing two of her books, the fairly major Lesbian novel, *THE GARDEN*, 1962, and her minor male homosexual title, *A HOUSE ON THE SOUND*, 1964. It is said that most areas of factual writing can be done by hacks. As a hack I agree, but it is delightful to read non-fiction written by a good, imaginative and professional writer with a solid background in creative writing. The book is divided into sections on makeup, hair, remaking the form from a to z, diet in every sense of the word, models and celebrities, unisex as a style and life form, what it is like in a beauty retreat . . . etc. It becomes clear that the 17th and 18th century limericks on the composition of the bride (and, to be fair, sometimes the groom) are only too accurate today. There are some few women in this country who can avoid makeup and still function in the system and earn money, but very very few. If you are only a lipstick and powder slave to the world, and then only on the job . . . this is still a book to read. The torture, hideous beyond belief, to which human beings willingly and eagerly submit themselves for the pathetic returns has to be read in documented form to be comprehended . . . and even then you aren't really going

to believe it. Women who starve themselves nearly to death, sit up in bed to avoid wrinkling their complexion that already owes its existence to being scrubbed with pumice and similar abrasives . . . operations that, with the exception of anesthetics, rival the Dauchau experiments in terms of human suffering . . . this has to do with life, with love, with success?

FADEOUT, by Joseph Hansen, N.Y., Harper and Row, 1970, is a glorious "mainstream" debut for Mr. Hansen, who is very well known under a pseudonym. In the mystery writing world, having Joan Kahn of Harper's choose your book is a high honor, and FADEOUT richly deserved being chosen. Dave Brandstetter, recently deprived by death of his lifelong lover, Rod, is an insurance investigator looking into the death (?) or disappearance of Fox Olson, a johnny-come-lately folk singing radio personality success. The heart of the matter lies in the hearts of the characters, itself an unusual approach to mystery writing, where this much characterization is seldom em-

ployed and hardly ever with this degree of success. Out interest is in Dave's long time friend, Madge. Joseph Hansen handles Madge convincingly and even provides her with an ironic happy ending, though he deserves a swat on the wrist for his neat reversal of typecasting in having Dave the faithful, true and non-promiscuous lover of Rod for years and Madge the partner-changing type who has had perhaps 10 girls in 20 years. Good book, good mystery, highly recommended.

#### 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.

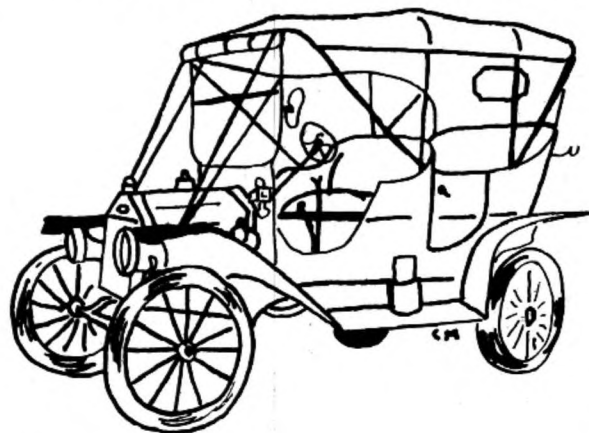
## You're Stepping on My Model T

By JANE ALDEN

We stayed in a small motel in Burlingame, California, that entire summer of 1947. I was eleven then and Very Tired of Moving. While my parents scoured the Bay Area in search of a two-bedroom ranch style they could almost afford, I sunbathed and read dozens of Nancy Drew mysteries. Then I got bored and became a knuckle-cracker. When my knuckles began drowning

out traffic on the Bayshore Highway, Dad decided that Something had to be done. He gave me a \$2.95 miniature Model T Ford hobby kit and told me to have fun building it.

The hobby kit contained three thinly sliced pieces of balsa wood, dye-marked for cutting, and an instruction sheet somewhat more complicated than Ford's original blueprint of the Model T. I soon doubled Dad's investment in my therapy, buying tubes of



CANDI McGONAGLE

glue, bottles of Mandarin Red and Glossy Black paint, sandpaper, and an X-acto knife set, with ten different blades. An open Samsonite suitcase, spread across a luggage bench, served as my work table.

Soon the Samsonite was pock-marked with glue droplets; but to my relief the framework of the Model T began to resemble the instruction diagrams, give or take a brace or two. I remedied the defects, for I was a perfectionist then; my miniature car would be the exact copy of the garish model on the cover of the hobby kit or else.

As I was applying nearly the last coat of gold trim, Mom read that a hobby show was going to be given at the neighborhood YMCA. We decided to enter my Model T in the miniature car contest and filled out the entry label "J. Alden, 11 Yrs.," rather than betray my feminine status to the judges. We were sure they'd be prejudiced in favor of "Y" members and Boy Scouts. Even then.

The final day of the contest, Mom and I threaded our way through the trousers and the tee-shirts and eventually found my Model T. A bright blue first prize ribbon was Scotch-taped to a badly torn fender. Headlamps dangled over the bent bumper,

and cotton stuffing billowed from gashes in the leather-covered seats. The terrible and inexplicable damage to my summer's work was so complete that Mom silently removed the blue ribbon and put the toy car in a trashcan as we walked back to the motel.

I refused to even look at the blue ribbon. Mom tucked it in her cosmetic case and later pasted it into one of her scrapbooks. Fortunately for my knuckles, school began a week later. We even managed to find a house, though it looked more quonset-hut than ranch style.

Last year my mother died. I visited her last and most Contemporary ranch house in Palo Alto and rummaged through her hoardings of a lifetime like a '49-er. Somehow, I came across that first prize blue ribbon from the YMCA, still a cheerful bright blue, though smelling of mold. Beside it in the scrapbook, my mother had written, "For merit or as an apology." I've sometimes wondered about that, too. Many prizes are for both.

(Jane Alden, biographer and short story writer, frequently contributes to the Ladder.)

## GOOD OLD GOLDEN RULE DAYS

By DIANA STERLING

*I couldn't have been less cut out for a class in cooking than I was, so it may be unusual to say that I signed up for cooking in my sophomore year in high school; but I say it, because I did. The class offered nothing but respite from one's academic pursuits. It was an unnecessary interlude in the business of school life. But when I found SHE had signed up for it, I joined the class.*

Previously she had been everywhere I looked except in any of my classes. And when I saw her in the corridors and coming out of the girls' gym I felt an unaccountable magnetism.

That semester we made everything in cooking class from tomato aspic to egg custard. And though it is said one learns by doing, I cannot say that I learned what I was doing. But it was at that time, even so, that I began to learn myself. There was the crazy joy of a knowledge I was on the puberty brink of. I consumed soft drinks by the barrel and loved the songs and dances it was time to love. And I had a dog with a



square face and a brother who taught it tricks. I went sleigh riding with our bunch in the ghostly winter world I had known all my life when that season came around. (The bunch being a pride of lions who were as acutely alive and as eager to be as was I.)

But, there was something. Even then. It got me down deep, where I lived. I wanted to sing the song other sinners sang—proper sinners and honorable. I did not know. What? What was an honorable sin? Chewing gum in church might fit the category if I



attended church and chewed gum in the sanctuary. But that was adolescent thinking and I don't think I relegated that much space to thinking it as I did to feeling it — which covered universes and included my class in cooking.

The first day in cooking class necessitated a seat next to HER which was accomplished by letting her choose her seat first and sitting down next to HER second. We shared the oven!

She had a dark and immaculate complexion with small beads of freckles at the cheekbones. Her eyes were infinite brown, the incredible eyes of Indians. She was Scotch-Irish and something else. I don't remember.

The room, abundant with stoves, was a kind of bastard classroom: a great bright room boasting a million mullioned windows. Each student had a small worktable where we kneaded and pounded and made the stuff for which we were graded. I never ate my own concoctions and no one else ever ate them either. I do not now remember how I was graded in that class or how I ever got rid of the results, waste being one of the sins.

Our teacher, Miss Moss, tall and greying, was at indeterminate middle age, which, to adolescence, because of a lack of congeniality and love for that generation, often looks the same on everyone that age, even as blacks often look alike to whites and whites to blacks. Her face was blotched red. The creases that developed at the neck were white like an albino tattoo, and the red blotches made her face look sore by contrast to the white tattoo of her neck lines.

She had the habit of pressing her five finger tips to that neck when she wanted to get a point across. And when she let go, there were five imprinted dots that lingered so long I was never able to get her point, having watched too intently those dots gradually move into invisibility. Miss Moss looked like Aunt Ethel, who raised me, and talked like Uncle Morton, who helped.

Standing tall at the head of the class with a recipe book splayed open at her stove, Miss Moss instructed the lot of us to use one half teaspoon salt or a half cup sugar or whatever else the recipe "called for," to work in union, and not deviate by a sprig of parsley. It baffled and frustrated me to come out with a glop unlike anything else in that class or anywhere else: an originality inevitably achieved without the slightest effort on my part or of anyone else. And believe it or not the finest dishes that came out of that group were *HERS*!

Once I got to class late, which put everything off and the whole room had to come to a standstill while I mixed the stuff for corn bread. I thought if it hadn't been for her I'd never have made it. *SHE*, being my oven partner, greased my pan and set the timer and did little odds and ends for me that had me aquiver while I beat the concoction that, I knew in advance, wouldn't come off even as *HERS* did.

One Saturday in late October when the light was a condensation of red and gold like mulched leaves pureed, liquefied and turned invisible for breathing, I felt red and gold in the infinite corners, and I biked eight miles into the country from where *SHE* was bussed in to school everyday. I

stopped at a small grocery store on the old county road to ask directions. A draft of cold air-conditioned air toted a blended smell of wooden mild crates and colored ink from Sunday comics piled onto each other in the racks and the metallic smell of stacked cans of tomato sauce and fruit cocktail. A gigantic cardboard female greeted me at the door with a cardboard coke in her cardboard hand.

The storekeeper had a purple face with puffy eyes flanking a bulbous pocked nose that moved when he talked — and he talked at length — delighted to give me directions, as a man is delighted who knows the answers. His delight could not, even so, exceed my own. At his direction I arrived at a stately large house that stood under a coat of blinding white paint. The green window frames held windows so dazzlingly brilliant they appeared about to explode. Three cars were in the drive and I turned around and pumped the eight miles back.

My next attempt to see *HER* out of school I had to go less than half that: to the county library. It was in the spring of the year when the water turns from stiff ice to soft wet again and the trees tingle with buds. She told me she would be there and she was. And though we did mostly what we went there for (a pretense at reading), we occasionally caught each other's eye. *Hers* were as beautiful a pair of eyes as I would've guessed all infinity to be in a glance. There was a richness in them, as one in love. Had they been edible, I think I'd have glutted myself to such a degree I'd have died of it in less than an hour. But I was not so fortunate. I could do nothing about the pain and I could not die, and it lingered on into the semester.

Just before summer vacation, Miss Moss said we were each to come with ingredients for a breakfast for two and a boy from woodshop. At Miss Moss's announcement, that unmanly class burst into applause. Damn! I was heartsick, first and foremost, because *SHE* would have to invite a boy and, second, because *I* would have to. (In the rich soil of adolescence, despair and ecstasy grow easy.)

I got the boy. He happened to be drinking at the water fountain ahead of me. He had greasy hair that looked to have been combed with a fork, and skinned elbows. He didn't seem overanxious at the invitation. Perhaps because I had not anxiously given it. But when food was mentioned, he accepted ravenously.

Next morning the class convened early, one reason being, I think: boys like to eat, and another being: girls like boys. It all fit in perfectly. Almost. I liked to eat, but I could not cook.

As a concession to our last day of school, Miss Moss let the choice of what to cook be ours individually, and being partners at the stove we had planned together. *SHE* and I. She, being the expert fried egg cooker in her family, decided on frying eggs, and I, being hung up on her, decided to fry eggs too, which promised positive disaster. But I couldn't be concerned about that. I was miserable.

I came with four eggs, four slices of bread, six strips of bacon and a peanut butter jar filled with coffee. I did not drink coffee then but it was during that period in life when the taboo of things, such as coffee, had so recently been lifted, they waxed big in importance.

That morning I felt I had made a serious mistake in signing up for that class in the first place when I saw *HER* with the boy she had invited. He had a case of acne which did not annoy me so much as the good looks that came through despite the problem. Perversely, as a means of revenge or something, I offered him my peanut butter jar while we waited for Miss Moss to take the roll, immediately upon which we set about making breakfast.

Skinned Elbows spied the light of his life at another stove and gravitated to it like a sappy moth to flame while *HER* boy came over to my side (it was that peanut butter jar) where I peeled the bacon from the bacon, which was nerve-racking because I had already got the eggs on, and they were bouncing and snapping and it didn't occur to me to turn the heat down under them because I was busy with bacon. *HER* boy, whose name I forget but for the sake of clarity I'll call him Rupert (a name I hate although he was nice enough when I got to thinking about it, which wasn't till I found out what I found out). Rupert said he could split the strips better than anyone, and when the bacon exchanged hands I noticed the skin was peeling at the periphery of his right thumbnail. As a child, I had been told by Aunt Ethel and Uncle Morton that this was a sign of having told a lie. I never believed it but when I saw it on Rupert my thinking took a different turn and, for a moment at least, I was convinced that kid was an inveterate liar. But the moment didn't last because there were other things

## 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

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to think about, like buttering the cold toast which had popped up minutes before. When finally I got the slices buttered, there were little islands of congealed butter left on each piece of toast which was not so offensive, I thought, as the black showing through around the islands.

Rupert had succeeded in dividing the bacon strips, I knew, because he was telling me by that time that I ought to get at the eggs and he would see to the toast for me, like scraping the backsides of each. I kept wondering why Rupert was fussing over me so much when SHE had been the one who had invited him to the breakfast. Had I been in his place, I'd have popped my buttons with joy. But he chose to ignore the honor by nosing around my part of the stove as I prepared for Skinned Elbows who was, as I said, off somewhere nosing at one of the other stoves at the back of the room. Rupert said as a way to put me at ease, I think, he wouldn't mind how the breakfast came out. Food was food and "It all goes to the same place on earth anyway." I did not much care for this philosophy and I tried particularly not to burn the bacon. Turning the eggs over, each yolk collapsed, sliding down along the pan like molten lava. I got a fork and worked yellow and white (both now more than half cooked) together. It looked like something my dog had eaten and brought up. And as I looked at it the bacon burned.

## Readers Respond

Dear Gene Damon:

I realize that any suggestion that a song is particularly relevant to Lesbian love is heavily biased by the wishful thinking of the Lesbian listener. But having admitted that, I nevertheless suggest that you consider Laura Nyro as a possibly relevant artist. I am thinking in particular of two songs on her album *ELI AND THE THIRTEENTH CONFESSION*, both written by and sung by Miss Nyro. The songs are "Timer" and "Emmie". The back of the album jacket for *ELI AND THE THIRTEENTH CONFESSION* is a rather beautiful silhouette photograph of Miss Nyro kissing an unidentified young woman on the forehead.

K.A., Los Angeles

Dear Ms. Damon:

I have wondered when you or one of

When I saw the breakfast SHE had made, I couldn't believe it. Hers came out just as mine! She had ruined her breakfast! Oh she must have been upset, his mooning over me instead of her. How could that boy make her do that? How could *any* boy? I was heartsick. Could I have been so wrong about that special magnetism between us?

That summer when her father received a government appointment, SHE moved with her parents to Washington, D.C. And three years later my aunt, who kept track of everyone in town, including those who had been gone for years referred to HER as that "awful creature."

"Awful?" I said.

"Lives with another woman who's like that too."

I was eighteen and I knew when my Aunt Ethel circumvented euphemisms what topic she was on.

"Oh, good lord, no," I said, and I must have sounded sick when I said it because Aunt Ethel took my hand gently and said:

"Never you mind. This town is rid of the likes of HER."

Too late. I knew those damned eggs of HERS were ruined not over being upset that *Rupert* might've felt anything for me but over what *I* might've felt for Rupert. I had not been wrong about the magnetism.

"Oh, lord, no," I repeated, and Aunt Ethel patted my hand.

THE LADDER'S writers would point out why the advertising media are so demeaning to women. Straight women can be forgiven their ignorance here, but surely not Lesbians. The "creative" side of the advertising business is under the stewardship of male homosexuals, than which no group has more contempt for women. "Cigarettes are like women . . ." expresses the gay male's opinion in a nutshell. The sophisticated homosexual enjoys occasionally escorting a female of the species and what better sets him off than one who is "thin and rich?" What better impresses the straight male who stubbornly refuses to grant full supremacy to the poor, downtrodden gay male who, after all, sports a penis too?

In his enormous self-pity the homosexual has a great need to look down upon some group of human beings. He cannot very well look down upon Blacks, for example, for many of them are as gay as he is. That leaves only women, people he has absolutely no use for, not even for sexual

relief. How satisfying it is therefore to be able to express his true feelings in a popular art form while making excessive amounts of money. Many homosexuals are truly gifted in the arts; none has any conception of what a woman is like. He sees her in caricature only and often enjoys imitating her at her most ridiculously "feminine." Playing at feminine frivolities can be fun when one is equipped with balls and is flirting with another man.

Why do heterosexual males go along with this sickening portrayal of women in advertising? It tickles their male supremacist egos and feeds those inner fantasies they dare not allow their women to suspect. How nice to let the gay male do this for them! Despite the loud cries to the contrary, there is a secret bond between homosexual and heterosexual males. To be sure, the homosexual ranks lowest in the male hierarchy, behind all other minority males. To him therefore falls this meanest of tasks in the male establishment, the blatant depiction of the male's unconscious and repressed contempt for the female. And he does it gladly for he is all too anxious to ingratiate himself with the ruling sex — his sex.

Perhaps I am wrong to think that Lesbians should know this. Lesbians are blinded by the fact that gay males are the only group who do not condemn them for their Lesbianism. In their humble gratitude for this acceptance they fail to see the contempt in which their homosexual "brothers" hold them by virtue of their being women.

M. de P.  
N.M.

Dear Gene Damon:

*The New Lesbian:*

*Now We Can Be Just Like Everybody Else*

"Even if it were somehow possible to escape all these public and visible affronts to the sense of delight and surprise, there is still the common-or-garden bore to contend with . . . The jargon-droppers waving about words like "viable," "feed-back" and "parameter," or those who groove excessively on a Now vocabulary of "rap," "uptight," "right on" and "f---." Rare indeed is the American who does not number among his near and dear someone who a) has just discovered the mystical virtue of analysis or Esalen or macrobiotic dieting b) cannot refrain from enlisting

friends on behalf of some intimate obsession, whether it be snowmobile racing, Australian wines, wife swapping or Zen."

—from the 7/13/70 (p. 31) "Time Essay"  
By Douglas Auchincloss

Growing up in the midwest always left me a bit starved for a little color, a little daring, a little originality, a little astonishment, most of which I contrived (being a clever little dyke) to supply for myself. Insipid indeed is the most vivid impression I have of back home. That dull people can be dangerous as well as unamusing I discovered later.

Back home they listen to Billy Graham a lot and I used to watch the people sitting there taking it all in and he told them a bunch of slogans like "Get with Jesus," and "This is a Great Country, God's Country," and "Keep your Nose to the Grindstone," and "Brush Twice a Day," and "If you have Jesus in your Heart you will find Salvation," which all the people watching and listening to Billy (except me) took to mean the two cars, the little sub-division ranch house, the dairy freeze business, the exchequerleader housewife, the 4 cute kids, and the early American furniture that they already had got. You know, not the kind of people to quibble about moral commitments in Southeast Asia.

Now I am not back home anymore forever. I am rather sitting in New York where people listen to the Black Panthers and the Chicago Seven and the Beatles a lot. And they are taking it all in and the Black Panthers and the Chicago Seven and the Beatles and Maharishi Yogi and the Young Lords and the Grateful Dead and the Hell's Angels tell them a bunch of slogans with heavy head messages like "Having a Meaningful Relationship with the Cosmos," and "Relating to the needs of the Black Community," and "Digging It" and "Being Beautiful" and "Together" and "Doing Your Thing," and they "Throw Out" a little encounter rap you see and a little New Left-ese and always refer to themselves as "workers" although real workers don't much want to be "liberated" and in fact wear hard hats and beat the shit out of anybody with long hair carrying on about Marx and things. It makes you feel kind of sorry for the peaceful violent overthrow kid trying to "Reach you on a Gut-Level." But that Guevara style hippie machismo just isn't making it with the real Brooklyn bulls. By the way and now there, my friends, is

one gigantic case of acute latency. Every lower east side flower boy has got a picture of Che Guevara on his wall with which he can have a non-threatening relationship, and groove on his rap and not be uptight. And in New York everybody enjoys everybody to "get their beautiful thing together" which means having a chick who bakes her own bread and having Paul MacGregor hair like everybody has already got if they're beautiful anyway.

What happened first you know the blacks figured out all these sort of penis symbol phrases like uptight and hung-up and these WASP kids have been "into" Freud and want to get "onto" this groovy new thing and they start coming down to the East Village absolutely screaming "Right On" everytime they look at you. And then the next thing you know the Indians at Alcatraz and the Israelis are getting with it and interjecting a few "Right On's" into their non-negotiable demands. Then there's Jane Fonda ego-tripping "from within" and Lenny Bernstein getting all power for the people. And Women's Lib starts having Right On's (I thought they might have been embarrassed to plagiarize so heavily from the male chauvinist organizations but they rap right on, right on.) And finally as you can see I was about ready to strangle and spit and behave in a most unbeautiful way and then oh my god the Gay Liberation Front every other word Right On. Look, just look what they have done to Sappho, subtle, imaginative, Sappho! Too Much, Oh Wow! Too Much!

"Thinking Back Lesbian

If i were to call upon the phoenix to recover my late ashes would i have come from the 'mysterious' island of Greece?

Far flung as time through space follows relativity must only be a wink in that lady's eye—  
The love of the arts was worth more to her than the sharpness of Diana's darts.

But i suppose we are all sisters of some nature of those reincarnation . . .  
But to them we are probably just incantation.

However, Sappho you must have been a 'Right On' woman."

—Sue Schneider  
(from GLF publication "Come Out!"  
vol. 1, no. 4; p. 11 June/July 1970)

First we had Vanessa Redgrave (who happily finds breast feeding more fulfilling than acting) as Isadora Duncan as the "Original Hippie." And Now, Baby, we've got a "relevant" Sappho.

Oh Hell, is nothing sacred before the hackneyfrying embrace of the now generation?

Nowadays in New York we have lots and lots of Lesbians who belong to the now generation and look just like any other hippie and who in fact rather seldom sleep with girls. I went to a DOB meeting the other night and there was this new style Lesbian from GLF who we can call Lois Hart who talked quite a lot and here is what she said and I quote exactly because I actually wrote it down, "We've got to find out where everybody's head is at, we've got to get our thing together and like wow really be beautiful and relate to each other and be real in a meaningful way."

I was struck with how deeply, or rather, how superficially her wisdom resembles Billy Graham's own back home lyric vapidly. At least the emptiness was all there.

At one time I preferred the company of other gay women to that tedious cunt-mentality I had associated with straight women. I once thought we each had gone our separate ways and when we met had reached rather varied conclusions, we each had an uncanny idea, an inspiration or two. I had slowly come to think of myself not as an "oppressed minority" but a member of an Amazon elite. Now I find Lesbians wearily parroting that fundamentalist groupie catechism — just like anybody else.

And before you say I am nasty because I belong to the over 30 establishment, let me advise you that I am quite under 25. Oh the mindless eclectic of my generation.

—P.B. Valkyrie

(Dedicated to "R.B. of New York" for her letter to the editor in the June/July '70 issue of THE LADDER.)

**CORRECTION:** The article, "The Woman-Identified Woman" run in the August/September, 1970 issue as by Rita Mae Brown was written by these women, in addition to Rita Brown: Cynthia Ellen, Ellen Bedoz, Lois Hart, March Hoffman, and Barbara XX.

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**PAPA COTTONTAIL**  
(King of the Bunnies)

Words and Melody  
By Winifred C. Gandy

The musical score is written for a vocal soloist and piano accompaniment. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into three systems, each with a key signature change indicated by a 'C' and a '7' (C7).

**System 1:** The vocal part begins with the lyrics "There Fire! Run! Run!" followed by "Goes Pa - pa Fire! Run! Run!". The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. The system ends with a C7 key signature change.

**System 2:** The vocal part continues with "I was af - ter head - ing" and "You know what Just wom - en But you're not head - ing". The piano accompaniment continues with a similar rhythmic pattern. The system ends with a C7 key signature change.

**System 3:** The vocal part concludes with "turned girls in - to king - dom built on the yip - ping" and "bun - nles and turned backs is now a - bout ang - ly wome". The piano accompaniment continues with a similar rhythmic pattern. The system ends with a C7 key signature change.

F  
 gold!  
 call!  
 sounds!

Oh --- oh --- oh --- oh!

Poor Pa - pa

Cot - ton - tall His world's get - tin' a

lit - tle cold. Oh --- oh his gold -- en

bun - nle W---O---r---l---d is get-tin' a lit-tle cold