

# THE LADDER

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER, 1971

\$1.25



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

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

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

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

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

ABILITY, AMBITION, TALENT –  
THESE ARE HUMAN QUALITIES.

THE LADDER, though written, edited, and circulated by volunteer labor, cannot survive without money. We Lesbians are perhaps more anxious than other women to make our views known. We wish we could blanket the country and the world with free copies. But stern reality tells us that, more important even than mass distribution, is the need to keep alive the only real Lesbian magazine in the world. Therefore THE LADDER will no longer be sold at newsstands. We will survive only if there are enough of you sufficiently concerned with the rights and the liberation of ALL women to spend \$7.50 a year to subscribe. (Sample copies are always available at \$1.25.)

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AUGUST/SEPTEMBER, 1971

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"Gumdrop Flowers and Marilyn" photo by June M. Smith (page 29)

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## Thank you for asking

Response to our two last requests for help has been enormous. Many women who felt they could not supply any of the things asked for have asked how they might help with THE LADDER.

Through the good help of a Boston D.O.B. woman and a Denver woman active in women's liberation there, we have a mailing or handout sheet which describes us very well. This is suitable for giving out at meetings or for posting on bulletin boards. We would like volunteers who live near colleges and universities or women's liberation groups to post this for us on the bulletin board. This can be done, of course, in the case of institutions, without any permission whatever; simply stick the things up. Libraries and student unions of all schools have bulletin boards with ready access to the public. If you could do this for us, write to us and tell us how many you can use. There are other places where this could be handed out as a handbill, and we leave this to your fertile imaginations.

We are in need of good short fiction. Very bluntly, we do not like to run less than top quality fiction, and until we get a substantial supply of usable short stories we won't be able to run many. We know there are writers out there, but getting to them is something else again. If you know anyone who writes who isn't aware of us . . . make us all happy and put us in touch. We realize that some women might be willing to write but not under their own names; this is no problem, pseudonyms are welcome. We need to know who you are, but no one else does.

Recently we have been told by some women that due to personal situations they are unable to keep their copies of THE LADDER. Some have said they have no one to give THE LADDER to and they do not like to discard it. Please DO NOT discard your copies . . . If you have a situation which precludes your keeping your copies, send them back to us with a short note saying that you want to donate them for sample issues and the like. This magazine is very expensive to produce, and this would be a blessing to us. We would prefer you keep your copies, but if the choice is the wastebasket and us . . . send it back and let us use it in the common fight for our rights.

One important comment. If all of you could share with the LADDER women the

Editorial By GENE DAMON

mail we receive day in and day out, expressing delight and joy on finding us from women who have felt isolated from the world and hopelessly so, you would more easily understand our determination to continue publishing THE LADDER. Our only reward is knowing that for each issue safely published, we will reach a few women who will find in our pages their hope for future freedom and happiness, or even more altruistically, their hope for the future lives of women like themselves who might, in a better world, not have to suffer their pains.

Give us your ideas. That helps us too. Tell us what pleases and does not please you. We are together, THE LADDER lives and progresses, or dies, because of you, and us.

*(After this Editorial was written and typed, we also received help from a woman in the Washington, D.C. area and another in far away Nova Scotia in preparing material to use in publicizing and promoting THE LADDER. In every case the work and the cost was absorbed by the helpers. We are properly grateful.)*



IT WINKS, IT COOS, WETS ITS  
PANTS, AND... FOR \$1.50 EXTRA,  
GOES THROUGH MENOPAUSE

## The Undefeatable Force Revisited

By RITA LAPORTE

A year has elapsed since I wrote a short editorial for the August/September 1970 issue of THE LADDER, the issue that inaugurated THE LADDER's transition from a Lesbian rights to an all-women's rights magazine. In rereading that editorial I was struck by my statement that men's 'divide-and-conquer' tactics are on the way out. I have a pollyanna way of soaring off on the wings of optimism despite daily evidence that would lead any realistic, rational mind to expect an early end to human life. Whatever has happened to men's 'divide-and-conquer' tactics, what I have picked up in a year of intensive reading of women's liberation literature is that women themselves have taken over their own division. Hundreds of small groups proclaim that only they have the answer and all the rest of us women must do as they say or be cast out in disgrace. But, true to my unquenchable idealism, I am not discouraged. I have simply altered my timetable to allow room for this current phase of getting it all out in the open.

I will set down what I consider to be some of the divisive ideas expressed in the women's liberation literature of the past few years. One of the most harmful, in my opinion, is what I call political theology, i.e., the idea that society must first undergo some kind of Marxist Revolution, led by men enamoured of power and an outmoded European male ideology, before we women can hope for first class citizenship. There are today Lesbian groups who actually believe that totalitarian dictatorships (China, Cuba, the USSR) welcome Lesbians and homosexuals. As long as these Lesbians live on dreamy faith rather than fact, there is no sense in attempting to disillusion them. While I deplore the fact that so many women are hoodwinked into leftist politics first, women's rights and liberation second, I am encouraged that more and more women are leaving such male dominated groups or skipping them altogether. For my own peace of mind I do not consider these Politicos — these women still under the spell of leftist males — as feminists of any kind.

This raises the question of what is a feminist, what is a women's liberationist. There seems to be no consensus here and I do not expect one in the near future, but I have my own definition: a woman who knows that female oppression is universal

and fundamental and that none of the myriad other oppressions and exploitations will be effectively eliminated until women liberate themselves and each other. Every human being alive today was born of a slave and learned at an alarmingly early age that she was an inferior creature or that he was a superior being. It is the fact that one learns this so early that has enabled humanity to blind itself to the oppression of over half the human race. It takes a black child a good deal longer to realize her oppression by virtue of her blackness and by that time her oppression by virtue of her sex is well buried in her unconscious. It is therefore not surprising that many minority women still see their race or color as their primary oppression and are standing behind their men. But these women are not feminists by my definition, however worthy their cause is in other respects.

Nor do I consider women who blame the System and think men equally oppressed to be feminists. These women are victims of fuzzy thinking. The System, after all, is the male power structure and consists of male people only. These women are afraid to label men the enemy. Perhaps they are not clear about the meaning of the word, enemy. During World War II we Americans had no doubt who was the enemy, the Germans and the Japanese. This never meant to any intelligent American that every single German and every single Japanese was evil incarnate, born of the Devil. Most were themselves victims of their respective male power structures. They became victims of their governments through apathy and ignorance. Nevertheless, most of us felt the need to label Germany and Japan the enemy and fight, rather than argue that these two countries were the victims of a world System, lay down our arms and let them overrun us. Women who cannot see that men are the enemy in the fight for the liberation of women must perforce turn aside from women's liberation and take up some other fight.

If we feminists are not careful, we can become involved in fights with minority women that will render us all impotent, to the delight of the male establishment. I recently came across a statement by Nina Harding, billed as a black feminist, and reported in PANDORA, a women's newspaper published in Seattle. To a question



about the advisability of separate black women's liberation groups [which seems most advisable to me], Ms. Harding said, "I find that white women have no humanity, sensitivity, integrity, commitment or moral fiber in their relationship with their own peer group let alone inter-group relationships with Third World women." This statement is a reminder that racism is not confined to whites. However much we may understand all forms of racism, women who are afflicted with it are not feminists according to my definition; they have not yet seen that underlying racism and all other forms of prejudice is the bedrock of society — the oppression of women by men. I loathe racism in anyone and do not entertain any sentimental notion that it is less heinous in black women than in white women. I do not subscribe to the notion that, as a white woman, I am to blame for the importation of slaves from Africa. That was white man's doing. What I would like to ask Ms. Harding is her feeling for her Lesbian sisters, black Lesbians. Would her black chauvinism override her heterosexual chauvinism?

Some of these heterosexual black women are attempting to take over the leadership of Third World women, while objecting vigorously against white women who, they say, are shoving aside minority women. A black woman who thinks only blacks should lead minority women because blacks are the largest minority are no better than white women who think leadership should devolve upon them as representing the majority race. This aping of male racist power struggles is gruesome. But there is a large segment of the female population, one at least as numerous as all minority women put together, that cuts across all racial and class distinctions, that knows oppression not only from men, but from most women as well, that can make a mockery of this dangerous divisiveness among heterosexual racial and ethnic "feminists." These are the country's Lesbians, those women who "infiltrate" every other female group, who are themselves at least as diversified as all heterosexual women taken together, but who, unlike heterosexual women, suffer an additional oppression by virtue of their Lesbianism. This creates a sisterhood among all Lesbians that is not available to heterosexual women. It is this Lesbian leavening sprinkled throughout the female population that will bring together all women. Heterosexuality is not a unifying principle. And

women who wish to exclude Lesbians from liberation are not feminists.

But even among women whom I would call feminists, there is much divisiveness. We are frightened by diversity and lose sight of the fact that all we have in common is our oppression as women and that is all we should want to have in common, other than our humanity. The feminist dream is of a society of expanding choice of lifestyles for all women, which will bring in its train an expansion of choice for men. Too many bona fide feminists cling to conformity, in this case conformity to what happens to be their peer group. Some women decide that all forms of leadership are bad, apparently on the theory that leadership is a purely male phenomenon and that everything male is bad, and so they must hate any woman who appears to them to take some form of leadership. Groups who prefer to operate without overt leaders, who wish to try to function without anyone in charge of anything, should be free to do so, but should not condemn another group that has decided on some kind of structure. Another form of peer pressure that helps to alienate many women is the compulsive pressure to LOVE every woman. The more women endeavor to force conformity, the more they strengthen centrifugal forces, ending ultimately in hatred of their fellow feminists. Why on earth must I love all women in order to work for their and my justice? Or, why must those who think promiscuity enlightened, condemn my preference for monogamy and sexual fidelity? Or, why must women bent on careers ridicule women who want only home and family?

I will continue to believe that there need be no divisiveness between feminists, between the single and the married, between the poor and the middle class, between young and old, between career women and the home and motherhood types, between those who favor monogamy and those who favor promiscuity, between prostitutes and those who give it away, because I believe that women can rise above such irrelevant divisions. I have to believe this because I believe they can rise above the most difficult division of all — that between Lesbians and heterosexual women.

A real beginning has been made here. But much more must be accomplished in the years to come. We Lesbians are still up against a great wall of prejudice on the part even of women who scream "sexist" at men. It is not inconceivable that we Lesbian

feminists will become so fed up with the heterosexual women's movement that we will simply desert it and watch it collapse as did the 19th century feminist movement. Where would Betty Friedan's NOW be without the closet Lesbians who gave it much of its initial impetus? Where would all the professional women's groups be without us? Some of us feminist Lesbians are well aware of the fact that, without us, heterosexual women are doomed to remain the slaves of men till the end of time. We are also aware that without the help of heterosexual women we are doomed to lead our hidden lives, but we are NOT doomed to slavery. We will still have our half a loaf while heterosexual women have none. It can get very difficult at times for the Lesbian feminist to keep faith with her less liberated heterosexual sisters. These so-called heterosexual feminists, these women who stop short of permitting any women (other than perhaps nuns) to be emotionally free of men, are at best only partial feminists. My feelings range from fury to hilarity when these "innocents" speak proudly of great women of history and great feminists of the past whom we Lesbians know to be part of our history, our Lesbian history. Her-story is more often



NOW YOU GO TO SCHOOL AND STUDY REAL HARD AND SOMEDAY ALL THIS WILL BE YOURS.

Lesbian than heterosexual.

I titled my editorial of a year ago THE UNDEFEATABLE FORCE. Society's ignorant cruelty causes many individual Lesbians to fall by the wayside, but, taken all together Lesbians are an undefeatable force, something I cannot say about heterosexual women. In this past year, however, the seeds have been sown for the coming together of Lesbians and heterosexual women and those of us who are real feminists will see to it that the seeds grow.

## Mother Said Someone Called Here

By MICKIE BURNS

... when I get out, I am going to Denver with the guys for about a week before I come home. After you left at Christmas, things got pretty interesting with Mother. She kept trying to trap me into a long discussion about you. I cut things short as possible. . . . Mainly she was trying to indoctrinate me to her way of thinking. I think I handled it very well. It's kinda hard to explain everything in a letter. I will just have to talk about it later. Write soon and let me know how your new enlarger works. . . . (letter from my brother)

That Saturday night was right after Christmas, the last of nineteen-seventy. I entered a small velvet and neon establishment sequestered in a business section of Manhattan that had been deserted since 6 o'clock. I was feeling good and looking great and knew it and deserved to know it. We all of us deserve once every so often a feeling of complete well-being, and that night it was my turn and therefore not an occasion for envy or for conceit. I greeted

those who were my pals in the place, ordered a double whisky, ignored an old lover, played the juke-box, and flashed my rings and cuffs in a final whisk of self-satisfaction. Betty came over through the crowd and sat herself down in a tawdry, gaudy, clattering, chattering, peroxided (ultimately splendid) heap. Clearly a product of, but unspoiled by, Hunter College. It was good to be back in town.

A few days later, on a more utilitarian evening, I was reflecting upon a pleasant but somewhat obscure incident that had occurred while I had been home for Christmas. I put down the coffee mug into which I had been focusing and asked the long-distance operator if there were a listing for a Miss Joanna Kirkpatrick in Louisville, Kentucky. There was. A cryptic but quite agreeable conversation followed. It seemed that this Miss Kirkpatrick had gone to college in our mutual home town, but after graduation had spent a more Bohemian



couple of years in a large city out West and had seen sights and had a story to tell. Short of money and something of a starved artist, Miss Kirkpatrick had accepted a teaching position and had returned to the home town. Only one month ago Miss Kirkpatrick had once again left home — this time for Louisville, where she was presently employed as an apprentice trainer on a horse farm. She supplemented her scanty income by selling her drawings and paintings of horses. In turn, I reported very little about myself except that I was steadily and contentedly employed. I did attempt to exchange passwords, a primitive, even corny procedure, with Miss Kirkpatrick. "Whenever I fly home there is a stop-over in Louisville; I usually get a taxi and go to the X; it is an interesting bar in a way. Have you ever been there?" No, Miss Kirkpatrick had not. "Well, have you ever been to the Y in Evansville, perhaps?" "Do they have interesting places in Evansville?" Miss Kirkpatrick inquired. "In a way." We talked at length from our separate and distant cities and agreed to write each other. We did not.

Mother is crafty. I saw at once that it was going to be necessary for me to "handle" her, a family public relations function at which I have been adept since Mother's hysterectomy when I was thirteen. It is only fair, because after all it is usually I who upset her. You see, I have not done what my brother has not done as yet either but can be counted on to do when his time comes, namely "settle down." Actually I have many of the accoutrements of the settled-down condition: life insurance, annuities, gas and electricity bills. But I have not married and one cannot be unmarried and settled down at the same time: it is a contradiction in terms. According to Mother, I have been living vaguely in a distant city for some years, and before that, obscurely away at college, and even before that, uncertainly at home where by the senior year of high school I had failed to "blossom out" properly. By the time I left for college, Mother had already come to bite her lower lip whenever she began to brag about my virginity to other girls' mothers. Virginity is a precise and certain quantity in a young girl's character. (It is non-existent in a young man's.) A fraction too little (the back seat and not the front seat of a parked auto or as according to other local customs) and the poor girl will

be the town whore or at least a hippie and never marry anybody worth having. An infinitesimal quantity too much virginity means being an old maid who will never marry anybody worth having either. Most shocking of all is the young girl who escapes that degrading old game altogether. She is the one who wears the proud but paradoxical stigmata of both virginity and sensuality. She is the one who has her cake and eats it too. Only with horror may a mother reconcile her daughter's smug flat stomach with that same daughter's wicked eyes. Therefore my Mother makes somewhat pitiful attempts to justify or to excuse to the neighbors or to her God the existence of a daughter who is two years out of school and husbandless. Therefore I do not often write home — and when I do, I always lie. For at least six years the only factual information my parents have had about me is that I am alive.

Yes, Mother definitely *was* pouting. I had just gotten off the plane and had unpacked and suddenly, instead of talking to my brother and my father and me in the living room, she went off by herself to the den to address Christmas cards. My brother and father ignore her little rebellions, but she knows just how to "get to" me. Father and brother grew quiet in the living room, safely awaiting the results of my diplomatic mission to the den. I knew what was bothering her this time. My letter. I was an ass to send it so near Christmas or to send it at all. Oh hell. Then of course my brother had just clued me in that he had phoned up drunk saying he was going to be a day late getting in. Mother is a Southern Baptist and a teetotaler. Just the same, the truer cause of mother's exile in the den had to be me. My brother never does anything so askance from the norm that it would jeopardize Christmas.

"Madness," a friend had suggested, "to go a thousand miles bearing expensive gifts and all that plane fare and fretting for weeks beforehand and then spend all your vacation time being interrogated by your mother." "When you grow up in Obensburg, you go home for Christmas," I had answered. After complimenting Mother on her Christmas card selection, conversation toppled; and I saw Mother wasn't about to be her usual jolly ruddy self and was not going to capitulate, not on my first night home.

The next morning I made more serious efforts. I dreaded getting up and going into

the kitchen where I knew my mother would be staring grimly into her coffee; but if the rest of the family were going to get their breakfast, I knew I had to get it over with. It was my fault. Fool! Why did I have to make a big deal and write that letter? I put on the negligee Mother gave me as a birthday present that she thinks I look so sweet in and washed my face and put on makeup and walked in. "Good morning, Mother." Now what am I going to say? "Oh, the floors look so shiny, Mother. I have never seen them look so shiny." The only time my Mother ever gets compli-

mented for her housekeeping is when somebody wants something from her pretty bad. "Oh, it's the new colored girl, Nettie, she's just a jewel." (All right, Mother, if I have to mess up the "colored girl's" fifty-year-old raw knees in order to talk to you, Mother, you can see I am doing it.) My mother is quite proud of having a "colored girl" or two. She was once a sharecropper's daughter accustomed to such niceties as picking worms off tobacco leaves. After she left school, Mother worked in a factory in Obensburg where she saved her money and put herself through beauty school. She



avoided dying her hair or smoking or drinking so she wouldn't look like a factory girl or a beautician. She worked hard and kept herself pure. When she was twenty-six she owned two beauty salons of her own and married the town "catch" — a handsome, well-educated, well-to-do young bachelor who insisted she never work again. While she was making money as a beautician, she sent home dresses to her sisters on the farm for their high school proms and bought her mother a dining-room "suite" and a set of real china so the family wouldn't have to stand up when they ate and drink out of jelly jars. My mother had a high school home economics teacher who made fun of the fact that Mother could not afford material to bring to class and brought flour sacking instead. We have quantities of information about each other; therefore we are a family.

I kept up through breakfast with what I hoped would be a few more unloaded pleasantries. Usually I began with queries like, "What do you hear from old Mrs. Baines?" Mother did not play my game fairly. To such a colloquial query she tended to make some universal response: "Well, her children don't come to see her much any more," accompanied by a pitiful but proud shrug, "Well, she's just going to have to get hard to things, like some other folks." Mother is quite dextrous with significant observations. My mother had been a spunky girl. I can see traces of it still. She was once the proprietress of beauty salons, but more recently of ovarian squalor.

Early in November I had received a letter from Mother saying, "You never seem to write us, we could drop dead and you don't seem to care to know." I did not want my parents to think I did not write because I did not love them. I wrote a reply. In it, I told them that I thought we could be better friends if they would first accept three things about me. I apologized to them for not being able to alter myself on any of these matters: That I would never marry, that I detested the idea of pregnancy, and finally, that I had never had sexual relations with a man and did not intend to do so. I concluded by asking again for their affection and requesting that my privacy be respected. Mother has a troublesome habit of going through my drawers and wallet and interrogating doormen about me when she comes to visit me in New York. This habit is in keeping with her religious beliefs. The Baptist religion main-

tains that privacy conceals only sin, and in consistency with this philosophy, no doors in our house in Obensburg are locked and no mail is sacred. I had considered strengthening the suggestion of my letter by adding that I had never been out on a date since the last time Mother had sent me to some Younger Women's Club Dance or other, but I thought better of that. The letter was a hint and my parents elected not to comprehend it. They telephoned me in New York after they had received the letter and said, "You have been working too hard. Don't worry, the right man will come along some day who will love you as we do. Remember, dear, nobody loves you like your own parents." However, the privacy invasion reference hit home with Mother; and although she did not go into her grievances over that little accusation on the telephone, she did not omit to "straighten me out" on calling her a "detective" when she "got me home."

My brother blundered into the breakfast room. "Hiya, Ma," he said affably, and Mother beamed at him in excessively blatant contrast to the expression with which I had been greeted. My brother started teasing and horsing around with her: picking her up and putting her on his knee and bouncing her up and down as a child. Inadvertently he knocked into her breast a little. Mother grabbed at herself. "Be careful — you'll break my tumor." (I have been suffering from the threat of Mother's female cancers for years. Mother is in blooming health.) My brother said, "Whaddya mean, your tumor?" Mother answered ever so vaguely as from Calvary, "Oh, it's just a little *thaannng* I got." The "Old Rugged Cross" scene again. Dammit, Mother, you have gone too far this time. That's close to an outright lie. Usually when I hurt your feelings you just threaten to get cancer of the breast. I said nothing. After breakfast I just followed Mother into the living room where she intended to brood over another cup of coffee. All the other housewives in our town drink secretly. They have "water" glasses on the right hand corner of their sinks in the kitchen which they rinse out immediately afterward. The younger housewives, the girls my brother and I went to high school with, now have the added amusement of wife-swapping. My mother's religion and the fact that she is "artistic" and has lots of flower arranging hobbies has rescued her from some of these more popular forms of atrophy. The wife-swapping vogue, incidentally, is beginning

to cause me some grave personal concern. The availability of old high school girlfriends, particularly the married ones, is not providing my handsome and sexually satiated brother with sufficient marital motivation. It is my selfish wish that he will commence his reproductive activities immediately upon discharge from the armed services, thereby diverting Mother's attention from her daughter to her grandchildren.

Once we were in the living room, I again had difficulty engaging Mother in conversation and in restoring, through this means, her chuckling good spirits. There are two topics of conversation that never fail to excite the ladies of Obensburg. I had so far exhausted my store of other trivia without securing Mother's interest. Now I must bring myself to discuss one of the two remaining topics, both of which I find distasteful because they are sadistic. I was even less attracted by (1) "Lower Intestinal Gothic Distress" than I was by (2) "The Histories of Obensburg's Unwed Mothers in This Century." Knowing no other way to restore the serenity of our Christmas reunion, I began by asking Mother whatever happened to Sharon Miles — knowing damn well what happened to Sharon Miles. I was being quite the verbal whore that morning, trifling with the reputation of some poor female wretch who had to be sent off to (In the Year of Our Lord 1970) a "home" in Louisville where she is not permitted to stay out past 10:30 P.M. To prevent her from getting pregnant again, no doubt. It wasn't long until Mother was in full swing again and we were once more a happy family gathered together for Christmas.

One of Mother's more recent moral fables has as a heroine, one of Mother's own relatives: It seems cousin Mattie, whose mother is my mother's sister Nila, has recently delivered her fifth child. After the birth Aunt Nila received an anonymous letter saying, "Congratulations, Grandma, you have just had another grandchild by another father." Apparently cousin Mattie was involved in really quite a tacky extra-marital arrangement this time. I responded to this quaint anecdote with what I hoped would be an appropriate, "Gee, that's a terrible thing to happen to a mother, Mother." Mother decided to remember, at this point, that she was supposed to be pouting at me. She quickly resumed the martyr expression, "Well, I've had anonymous telephone calls, too." I dropped it,

ignored it, and galloped and offered up another prospective unwed mother for our conversational delectation. Perhaps I should switch to bowels. Again Mother forgot that she wasn't supposed to be enjoying talking to me. Later I thought it over. My mother doesn't lie altogether and something has happened to cause her to make a statement like that. Someone has called. I was dead sure she didn't mean the call had been about my brother. I had been gone a long time but Obensburg has a long memory for eccentric behavior.

A few days later we were wrapping Christmas gifts and Mother said, "Oh, yes, I forgot to tell you Joanna Kirkpatrick called here Thanksgiving."

"She thought you might have come home for Thanksgiving, and I told her you wouldn't be home until Christmas. She was in your art class at senior high, wasn't she? Was she your year? She said she had been living out West and had been a 'starving artist' and had to come back to Obensburg to live at home again for a while. She said she had been teaching out at County High and had run into Gail and she got to wondering whatever became of you. Well, I just don't know a think about her but I guess her people are all right. They go over to the big Baptist church over near where Margaret Fogel lives."

I began hastily rummaging about in the past. Joanna Kirkpatrick, Gail, and high school six years ago. Seven years ago?

Mother went on, "She sounded nice enough on the phone. You know she said to me, 'Of all the people I went to high school with, I wondered what happened to your daughter most.'" Mother is sometimes, occasionally, rarely, proud that I am one of Obensburg's most astonishing-looking excitements, but more often it would be easier on her if she could have traded me in for someone a little less dark, a little less tall — a nice girl with long brown hair who likes to bake pies, perhaps. Someone who would just fit in for a change.

"Oh, have you seen Gail anywhere lately, Mother? How's she doing?" Mother allowed she had run into Gail in the grocery only just last week or so and she had seemed fine then. I said, "Well, I don't think I will try bothering to call her. She knows I will probably be home and she can call me if she wants." Mother became sympathetic as in my old high school and junior high school days when I knew Gail. She had liked Gail and had felt sorry for her



but she had not liked the way Gail always tried to gouge me and demean me in order to emphasize her own social importance. We had been "best-friends" since the seventh grade and had parted bitterly in our senior year of high school. I had seen her briefly on a few of my subsequent visits back to town. She was now divorced and recovering from a severe mental illness. I had never met her husband. She met him in Nashville after I left town. Gail had apparently gotten well enough to student teach at County High, where she presumably had the opportunity to discuss me with Joanna Kirkpatrick. I wondered what Gail, in vengeance or in madness, might have told Joanna. It could only have been a hint, something that would not implicate herself. Gail had been driven by her social-climbing physician father to make good — to make perfect grades. She failed miserably. She

was only salutorian. Later she flunked out of Vanderbilt and had to endure the humiliation of going back to the small religious college in Obensburg, getting her degree somewhere in between her divorce and psychotic episodes in which she claimed to be God. At a distance, I illuminated her failures by being, on occasion, her intellectual superior and by finishing college without a visible hitch. When I think of Gail now, I do not think of us as looking as we do now; but I do think of what children we must have been then. Fifteen years old or fourteen. Me a tall dark looming creature looking down in awkward "popcorn" bobby socks at her — a dumpy-figured little termagant who was always in a temper but who said such clever things. I remember standing in that over-heated hallway at our (always adjoining) lockers with the radiators hissing — for years and years.



We had an old and complicated relationship even then. Life has gone well for me of late and I have no time for old misunderstandings.

But Joanna Kirkpatrick was another matter altogether. I had no one at all I cared to call up from high school days and for the most part was grateful when Mother excused me from these stiff little encounters. For the past several years, whenever I go home to Obensburg, I stay in the house, or go to the country with my father, or go for long drives with my brother. I had never been close friends with Joanna, mainly because Gail dictated who would and who would not be permitted in our clique, and I never liked to annoy Gail — nor did any of the rest of our group, because we all knew that Gail was not from a very happy family and therefore we permitted her eccentricities and suffered our indignities and let her think she was our leader. Gail did not seem to feel Joanna was from a prominent enough family, nor did Gail feel Joanna possessed a sufficiently remarkable intelligence. Joanna was (for Gail's information) from as respectable antecedents as any of the rest of us in that small town with one movie house and strong rural connections. Gail's own mother had grown up in worse circumstances than my own in a tarpaper shack near Rumsy, Kentucky (a fact that Gail's mother didn't like to be reminded of when she became "Dr. and Mrs. Yarbourn."). Gail, with her dumpy body and overbearing personality could do little to glorify the family name as the town debutante. That's why she damn well had to make straight A's. "Dr. and Mrs. Yarbourn" ran the kind of household that even when we very naive and very young kids went there after school, we preferred next time to go to somebody else's house. Joanna had a more casual, less desperate intelligence than Gail, and an affectionate family.

My most intimate encounter with Joanna occurred during our senior year of high school when we were both in the formidable-bosomed and petty-hearted Mrs. C. Overhurst's art class together. Mrs. C. Overhurst-of-the-bulldog-chest's artistic claims rested upon her ability at painting roses on china and at needlepoint. We were also given to understand Mrs. O had a lot of social wallop in our mothers' garden clubs. I had been, in years past, Mrs. C. Overhurst's pet due to an exacting and precise skill at drawing. I drew roses quite superior to those of even Mrs. Overhurst. Indeed she

sometimes displayed them as her own. During my last year I had come to thoroughly hate being her pet, and decided to become her "enfant terrible". One day I was given the trusted assignment of making football posters, which I executed to the bald school principal's and Mrs. Overhurst's horror. On the posterboard I had created violent abstract messes with the date, place, and time of the game attached almost as an afterthought in the form of a tiny type-written paragraph which was attached to the already virulent painting by means of a lavish wad of Bazooka bubble gum. Such instances of scintillating wit had always made Gail treasure me as a member of her clique and closest chum. On the day of the football poster scandal, Gail made a great point of accompanying the "enfant terrible" all over school. After that I made F's in art, and Joanna became Mrs. Overhurst's favorite. During most of the senior year, Mrs. Overhurst put me to work on some kind of simple manual labor task where I could do no damage, like building Southern Mansion columns for the prom. I was not even trusted with the glitter that had to be put on after they were painted. A young man in our class with a telling facility for glitter and net did that.

The redoubtable Mrs. C. Overhurst tried very hard to promote a rivalry between me and Joanna. This purported rivalry occasioned the only conversation I ever had with Joanna that I recall vividly enough to remember that something important was said between us two and to remember how she looked as she spoke. The boys in our class would not have considered Joanna Kirkpatrick attractive. She was short and square-built rather than fat and wore narrow black cat-eye glass frames that obscured many of her expressions. She was plodding of speech and deliberate of mind. Her seriousness made one glad when her mouth began to crook up on one corner with a bit of sarcasm. In such a tone, she addressed me about our embarrassing relations with Mrs. Overhurst and our alleged rivalry. The outcome was that Joanna reassured me that she did not want to impinge upon my number one position and was sorry to have succeeded me. I was touched that she would be so self-effacing and told her to forget it, that it was high time another prima donna took over anyway. I said I admired her drawings, and we ended by agreeing to continue friendly relations, in spite of our teacher's childish ambition



that we be at each other's throats. I noticed her hair matched the black plastic of her eyeglass frames. Her skin was very white. We never became close friends. Graduation came. But any memory of Joanna I have is pleasant.

I told her, "I am sorry I couldn't get in touch with you when I was home Christmas. Mother told me you called Thanksgiving, so I called your house and your mother said you might not be able to come home for Christmas; and she said you had moved to Louisville, so I asked for your address there." I was really rattling on in explanation, "Mother said you had met Gail when you were teaching at County High." "No," she said, "I haven't seen Gail in quite a while. I didn't know she ever taught at County." "Well, yes — at least Mother seemed to have the idea that . . ." "Maybe I should not push the point. 'Have you been able to sell many paintings in Louisville?'" "Well, not bad; you know how they are around here over horse pictures." "Yes, in Louisville and Lexington, there're horses on every Shetland sweater and all over every gift shop." "Sure are. Anyway, with my job on the horse farm, it's not a bad living."

I had taken my brother aside and said, "Hey, when you were home Thanksgiving, did you hear Mother say anything about

you or me — probably me if I know Mother's tricks — getting any anonymous telephone calls? Have you ever heard Mother or Father say anything about my getting anonymous telephone calls?" "Well, Sis," he said, "there was that Joanna Kirkpatrick. She called here Thanksgiving." "Yeah, I know about that. Mother told me about her; but I mean *anonymous* calls. Or did Joanna supposedly have anything — you know — did I get an anonymous call and Mother think it might have also been from her or something? It's confusing; you know Mother — she all of a sudden one day started hinting around about cousin Mattie's new baby and Aunt Nila getting an anonymous letter, and then she started some funny business about me getting anonymous telephone calls." "Hey, yeah," he said, "somebody did call here for you when I was home Thanksgiving, and I wasn't paying much attention. I was watching TV, but Mother and Daddy went into the dining room and were whispering about it. They didn't say who it was, I guess."

"Of all the people she went to high school with, she was most curious about whatever happened to you," Mother had said. I had composed my face into an expression appropriate to the mild experience of hearing from an old acquaintance of the female sex.

## The Threat of Women

By LENNOX STRONG

A very small paperback original publishing company in New York City, Pinnacle Books, has issued a 95c novel, *THE FEMINISTS*, by Parley J. Cooper, with a 1971 copyright. On the cover we read "They rule the world, and top dog is bitch!"

Reading *THE FEMINISTS* with a background of reading science fiction, there is no way to imagine what the reader reaction would be without such a background. Due to the women's liberation movement in this country, no publisher would care to bill such "headline" material as science fiction, but it was not always this way.

In 1958, Charles Eric Maine, a minor science fiction writer, had his *WORLD WITHOUT MEN* published by Ace Books as a 35c paperback original. It has 190 pages while *THE FEMINISTS* has only 188 for its 95c . . . a measure of the increase in cost

in paperbacks. The stories, while very different, are very much the same. They are about how men feel about women; they are about the threat of women.

*WORLD WITHOUT MEN* is set 5000 years in the future, when all men have died out and all women are naturally Lesbians. Birth is by parthenogenesis, which always (very conveniently) produces same sex offspring. There is no war, no violent crime, no pollution, very few problems indeed, in a well-run and orderly universe. But Mr. Maine, who described *WORLD WITHOUT MEN* as the book he most enjoyed writing, lets his feelings be known right off when he describes the offices of the administration building as "effeminate," not feminine, but effeminate. As his plot unfolds, Mr. Maine writes himself into a couple of corners . . . how to make a clearly better world seem

worse, so he drags in secret computer control. It seems that this perfection of happiness and plenty was done by a nasty computer, not those helpless hapless women after all. An evil machine has made this wonderful world. Now the thing that is wrong with this world is that there are no men and even though 5000 years have past since the last man died, and even though everyone is happy, Mr. Maine has a handful of the women (in complete defiance of any known laws of heredity or environment) begin to yearn for a man. All this though NONE of them have seen a man nor so much as HEARD about them. In the end, this group artificially creates a man and as the book ends . . . "the explosion flung one of the windows of the room inwards in a cascade of glass splinters . . . there was something wrong with the sky . . . the deepening purple of approaching night was aflame with a livid orange stain . . . 'It has started', she told herself fearfully. All because of one male child. This is the end of all things . . . But a voice in the darkness of her mind whispered, 'This is only the beginning' . . ." Thus we are left with the way in which a man solves things . . . blow up the world.

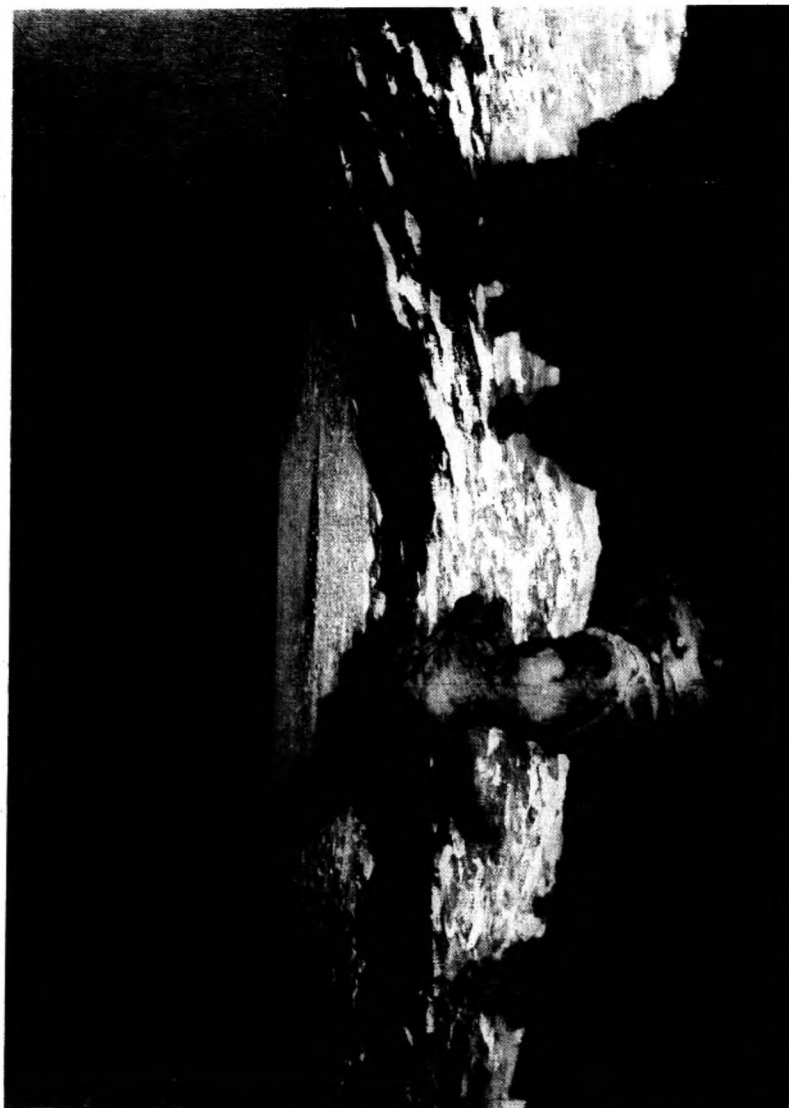
Other males have also used the theme of all female worlds. They see them as very evil, of course, and the worlds always fall to some kind of male influence in the end. One such (many cuts above the two books *THE FEMINISTS* and *WORLD WITHOUT MEN*) is John Wyndham's classic, *CONSIDER HER WAYS*, N.Y., Ballantine, 1956. In this, the threat of sexuality is avoided by creating a world based loosely on the ant or bee structure, with workers, queens, etc. Mr. Wyndham uses the device of having a female narrator accidentally visit this world . . . and awake from the visit as from a nightmare. But even so, Mr. Wyndham is unable to get away from the impression left with the reader of a very happy world, except perhaps for the mothers (queens).

*THE FEMINISTS* is very up to date; instead of 5000 years away, we are only to 1992. Mr. Cooper is not nearly so good a writer as Mr. Maine or Mr. Wyndham, so we have to overlook some pretty bad plotting. His all female run world still has males, but they have lost all political power because the feminists have taken over. How they managed this is never discussed. But despite even the most prejudiced predictions to the contrary,\* this female run world is very like

a male run world only worse. Armed guards march around the streets (most of the lovingly told violence in this book concerns crushing their skulls and the popping sound as they are variously splattered, punched, crushed, shot, chopped, etc.) and there is a brave band of men who live in the city sewer system with their own loyal group of groupies. Conditions above ground are considerably better than below ground so there is some puzzlement as to why the women are below ground with the men, but this is never explained either. In fairness (why are women always fair?) it should be mentioned that no action is taken in this novel that could be considered to be based on logical thought processes. One of the major activities of the underground crew is to blow up food trains coming into the city . . . this allows a lot of skull cracking of female train guards. And, wouldn't you know it, when they go out at night on dangerous scouting expeditions, guess which members of the underground are "up front" . . . sure enough, the chicks. In the end the men overtake the government because the powerful mayor of New York City discovers that the most wanted leader of the underground is her long lost son . . . so when the crowds are about to tear him to pieces, yup, she throws herself between him and the crowd . . . he escapes, and as the female taxi driver explains to him as they drive away, "When she had to face the choice the mayor discovered she possessed the major feminine weakness . . . before she was a Feminist, she was a mother".

(\*Philip Wylie, whose hatred of women is hardly a secret, in his novel *THE DISAPPEARANCE*, N.Y., Rinehart, 1951, documents a divided world where the men are shown in an all male society and women are shown in an all female society. In the male society, holocausts and wars and violence and crime are the total activity . . . in the female society most problems in terms of social problems are solved at once and all wars stop, etc.)

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Winslow Homer. *A Summer Night*. 1890. 29½"x40". Collection National Museum of Modern Art, Paris.

## Journeys in Art

By JEAN LOUISE

### The Independent Women of Winslow Homer

A rather dandified image of Winslow Homer and Albert W. Kelsey<sup>1</sup> taken in Paris in 1867 prefaces the 1958 Homer catalogue published by The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Homer is actually and (perhaps symbolically) seated upon a pedestal while Kelsey with clasped hands leans against Homer's shoulder. Although not shown, the photograph is stated to be inscribed by Kelsey, "Damon and Pythias". Damon and Pythias were two young men in Roman mythology who so loved each other that when Pythias wished to return to his home for the last time before being executed for plotting against Dionysius I, Damon offered his own life as a pledge that Pythias would return to face his sentence. At the last moment before the time set, Pythias returned as he had promised. Dionysius was so impressed by Pythias' return and the love between these two men, he pardoned them both.

The photograph is in many ways a revelation in regard to Homer's personal life and adds greatly to the understanding of his art. One of his most dominant themes is that of companionship, a kind of silent, heroic and enduring bond between two people (always of the same sex), who trust in each other's continued existence so completely that speech or any other overt form of communication is no longer necessary. Whether it is two peasant women working side by side in a field, two elegant ladies

strolling the beach in the moonlight, two men on a hunting trip or two fishermen battling a storm at sea, never a word is spoken. And, although this theme of silent understanding between friends of the same sex is repeated over and over, only once does Homer allow it to blossom into sensual love.

*A Summer Night*, painted in 1890, is the only "romantic" painting of Homer's career. The story ascribed to this work is that the artist was watching the sea from his studio at Prouts Neck, Maine, one night and suddenly noticed a number of people on the rocks below. As he watched, two women disengaged themselves from the group and danced on his lawn. The scene so affected Homer that he rose the next morning and painted the scene from memory adding only a porch for better composition and as a light source. In looking at this work it is important to remember that the dancers were not inspired by any sort of music excepting the sounds of the sea, the intimacy of the night and their feelings for one another.

The Homer sea is a constantly changing personality but its temperament is always relatable to the mood of the figures played against it. In *A Summer Night*, the sea, like the dancers, is sensuous and free; the moonlight glitters lusciously upon the waves and this sensuousness is echoed by the embrace of the figures, the tenderness



Winslow Homer. *The New Novel*. 1877. 9½"x20½". Museum of Fine Arts, Springfield, Massachusetts, The Horace P. Wright Collection.



Winslow Homer. *Saved*. 1889. 16 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 27-5/8". The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1924.

in the gesture of their outstretched hands, the closed eyes of the woman facing us. In addition, the sea not only reflects the figures symbolically; in actuality, the couple is reflected on the water's surface at the left center edge and here the two women unite to form one whirling image. The figures on the rocks seem to face this reflection and are perhaps enchanted as the magic of the dancing reflection continues.

There is a strong feeling of independence projected by *A Summer Night*; the women are oblivious to the world and its conventions, demonstrating a kind of defiance which is characteristic of almost all the American women in Homer's work. Whether it is a farm girl, a woman on horseback, a fisherwoman, or ladies of fashionable country life, the females of his paintings are allowed a very great amount of physical freedom for art in America in those Victorian times. In fact, several of his paintings, especially those of women swimming, were thought a bit risqué for the amount of physical activity allowed the female sex.

Homer, who lived almost all of his adult life alone, was fascinated by a certain kind of self-sufficient, unaffected country woman and liked to paint her isolated against a landscape that was left just as independent and unidealized. In *Girl with a Pitchfork*, *Weary*, *The Bridal Path White Mountains* and *Inside the Bar*, this is especially true. The girl reclining in *The New Novel*, reproduced here, clothed in a very simple dress for the period, has the stubbornness of face, with cleft chin, straight nose and strong forehead usually reserved for portraits of boys. She is content to be alone entertaining herself with a new book; she is independent and self-involved and the foliage about her has this same kind of unconscious simplicity. It is possible after dwelling on this watercolor for a time to smell the grass, feel the warmth of sun on face and even to become half-consciously annoyed at the summer insects pestering about.

*The New Novel* and *A Summer Night* depict the strength of women with independent minds. In *Saved*, the final reproduction here, a very different kind of strength is examined, the fight of life against its destruction by the sea. *Saved* is a study of courage and heroism. The woman, who, as a symbol of weakness, is usually presented as the dead victim of such a powerful male symbol as the sea, is, in this etching, not only victorious over that sea

but is rendered in a way which completely subordinates the male rescuer as well. In the original oil paintings upon which the print is based, the rescuer has a far more dominant role; his heavy boots are large in the foreground and almost control the rest of the painting.

In changing the domination of the work, Homer also changed the title from *The Life Line to Saved*. The new title not only confirms the woman's victory in the fact that she has survived but also encourages new religious connotations. The position of these two figures is exactly that of the *Pieta* where the dead Christ is draped across Mary's lap. In this case, it is a woman who plays the role of martyr but the same overtones of dignity through suffering are present. This etching is one of the few instances in art when a woman, like Christ, emerges as the conquering victim and for this reason, it is a very exceptional work.

In conclusion, it should be repeated that Homer firmly refuses in a majority of his works (except his book illustrations) to combine the sexes. There are only three major breaks from this rule: *Saved*, *The Undertow* and *The Wreck of the Atlantic*. In all three cases the paintings deal with life and death struggles with the sea in which men and women come together only in acts of heroism. There is an honesty in all this as Homer's personal life followed this same pattern. He lived in self-isolation for long periods of time and at other times visited only with a select group of male friends and with his brother. Homer has been accused of being dispassionate because his work



KEEP YOUR FAVORS, FELLA!



does not relate to heterosexuality but for those who understand the meaning of a deeper companionship between members of the same sex, Homer's paintings are deeply fulfilling and, in fact, the real passion of his work cannot be truly appreciated without this knowledge.

<sup>1</sup>Albert W. Kelsey, a Boston painter, was a life long friend and lived with Homer for a short time in Paris.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Sarah Whitworth,

who, as "Jean Louise" does this fine column for us, asks that anyone with any information regarding Lesbians in art send the information to her c/o Gene Damon at the Reno address. She is interested in seeing Lesbian and feminist art by women and is also interested in non-pornographic Lesbian art by male artists. Please send as much information as you have, such as NAME of artist, TITLE of painting or drawing, WHERE you saw it, everything that might make tracking the material down possible. Thank you.)

## Book Reviews

THE PRICE OF WOMEN, by David Allen, Jarrow Press, Inc., N.Y. 1971 (\$6.95, 206 pp)

I cannot review this book for I cannot force myself to read it. Instead, I will explain why I cannot read it. Under Acknowledgements Mr. Allen begins, "This book utilizes and synthesizes the work of many men." In the Introduction he admits "there is indeed something wrong . . . between the sexes" and the theme of the book is that "insofar as this is true the current feminist cry for reform has some legitimacy." (Italics mine). "What is needed is not more equality or greater freedom for the female, but more responsibility from her." That is (as I understand it), we women, who once "suffered injustice and had legitimate grievance — which was redressed" (Italics mine) should become more responsible slaves. We should run the plantation, the home, without bothering Massa.

By now I was seething, but pushed on into Chapter I. There I found, "the outcome of the first feminist revolt was that society acceded to women's demands . . ." SOCIETY ACCEDED TO WOMEN? What did that mean? It sounded to me rather like society consisted of men only. Two paragraphs down I read, "in the face of the new feminist demands for more equality, we want to know what the cost will be . . ." So there it is Ladies. Society, i.e., we males, must consider that, "if the cost is to be borne by men, the current disequilibrium will obviously be increased." Therefore, "we may want to consider other alternatives, . . . we may want to shift some of the existing costs to women, with no corresponding increase in benefits." I could go no further.

20

By HOPE THOMPSON

I do not give a damn what men think they should or should not give to women. The matter is quite out of their hands, for they are not dealing with the demands of minors, or horses, or dogs, but are being gently and not so gently bypassed by the majority of human beings. It is women who have the better claim to the use of "we" (above) in speaking of society, if for no other reason than that we are more numerous. So it is we who will have to teach the boys that neither sex alone can speak for society. What the conceited bastards plan for us in their all male preserves is irrelevant.

I was surprised at my reaction to the first few pages of this book and paused to take stock. There was something very familiar in this violent emotional response of mine. And then it all flooded in on me — my years of reading psychiatric claptrap about the mental disease known as Lesbianism. It was some six or seven years ago that I swore never to read another line about this "illness" and never to argue the point. From time to time I run into someone, usually male, who spouts the illness theory to me and I answer, "That's fine. You may think of me as a mental case if that pleases you," and I take my leave. These people, after all, have a need to think me sick. It is their way of holding their shabby little psyches together.

Anti-feminists, male or female, are of the same ilk as far as I am concerned. Just as I know that my Lesbianism is healthy for me, so too do I know that being a woman is as valid as being a man, and perhaps a wee bit more so since women are free of the juvenile notion that one sex is better than the other. I expect the sickness theory of

Lesbianism to live on well into the 21st century, and it would be unrealistic of me to expect the myth of male superiority to die any sooner. Ideas, whether true or false, are very long-lived. The other day I came across this: "The poor creatures do not wish to become men in order to be more perfect, but to have freedom and escape the bondage which men have imposed on them by their own authority." These are the words of Giuliano de' Medici, as reported by Count Baldassare Castiglione in his book, THE COURTIER, completed in 1516. They are in answer to a David Allen type who said, "man resembles Form and woman Substance; and, as Form is more perfect than Substance, man is superior to woman; . . . moreover all women want to be men, by a natural instinct which teaches them to seek their perfection." What is this but a 16th century version of Freud's penis envy? I will not engage with anti-feminists in a battle that is now at least 500 years old. I embrace dear old Giuliano de' Medici, but my concern is the women's movement, not what men think about it.

† † †

BEYOND FEMINISM, The Woman of Faith in Action, by Marilyn Brown Oden, Parthenon Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1971 (\$3.50, 112 pp).

This information is enough for this reviewer. It tells me that Marilyn is a very proper MRS who thinks that Christian women are finer than other women and that she has risen above feminism, a selfish, contentious, and deplorable stance. It also tells me that Lesbians will not be mentioned, even to be damned. But I did read the book — just to make sure.

In order to "stop short of" — what Mrs. Oden calls "beyond" — feminism, she first tells us that militant feminists advocate imitating males and she will have none of that. I have noted elsewhere that non-feminists think feminism is nothing more nor other than women aping men. I have no idea whence this misconception arises for it is not in the women's liberation literature. I can only conclude that women who fear freedom and autonomy must invent a false concept of feminism in order to damn it. Quoting from the foreword, "[Mrs. Oden] makes a clear and convincing case that a woman today . . . has both the freedom and the responsibility to carve out a new and creative life-style which builds on all the strengths of femininity . . ." Well, it

seems we already have our freedom (that is, if we are heterosexual); and we are permitted only one life-style ("we need a model for women", writes Mrs. Oden); and "femininity" is our strength. I think LADDER readers will get the picture.

Mrs. Oden tells us that feminism is self-actualization for women as an end in itself, but she goes "beyond" this for to her self-actualization is but "a means to effective self-giving." Much of the book simply restates the obvious, e.g., "we are victims of reality, and, paradoxically, we are also its creators." Her rehash and popularization of such thinkers as Eric Berne, Viktor Frankl, Erich Fromm, John Gardner, Rollo May, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Paul Tillich may impress the Ladies' Sodality, but it says little about the plight of women. Mrs. Oden wants women's career development to recognize our humanistic qualities and our importance as volunteer workers. Apparently men are not to be saddled with humanism and volunteerism. "She [the woman of faith] decides to follow the way of Christ — to live her life for others . . . Her giving of herself is her reward . . . She lives a sacrificial life . . . Being aware of her worth as a person . . . she decides to respond by giving herself away." There is nothing wrong with all this giving — I wonder only why women and not men are to follow Christ in this manner. Probably because, as Mrs. Oden says, "the role of wife and mother is basic." By now, nearing the end of the book, I had concluded that Mrs. Oden is the limp, sentimental, wishy-washy type of female Christian, the anti-thesis of my favorite, St. Teresa of Avila. I was then agreeably surprised to learn that she favors the repeal of abortion laws. "Abortion, tubal ligation, and vasectomy need to be seriously considered as options to the immorality of producing unplanned and unwanted additions to the masses of



humanity." Would she consider the option of Lesbian couples who do not want children? "She [the Christian feminist] understands the need for finding ways of relating to the . . . deviant . . . of her community." How sweet! This "deviant", Christian reviewer would like to reassure Mrs. Oden that Lesbians are no threat to women who freely choose heterosexual marital sacrifice as their life-style. Many life-styles, many models for women, is what feminism, even Christian feminism, is all about.

† † †

THE FEMALE EUNUCH by Germaine Greer, MacGibbon and Kee Limited, Great Britain 1970, and McGraw-Hill, N.Y. 1971 (\$6.95, 349 pp).

"Hopefully, this book is subversive. Hopefully, it will draw fire from all the articulate sections of the community," writes Ms. Greer in the Introduction. Though this book too is all about heterosexual women, as the title suggests — for there is nothing 'eunuchy' about Lesbians, it is heaps of fun for Lesbians. How any woman could honestly espouse heterosexuality after reading THE FEMALE EUNUCH is beyond me. But Ms. Greer purports to be heterosexual and I will review her book assuming her to be so. Since we Lesbians are working both sides of the street these days, some of us coming out openly as Lesbians and others taking a heterosexual stance in our efforts to educate the hapless heterosexual, I will not risk any guessing. But Ms. Greer makes the Perils of Pauline pale beside the Horrors of Heterosexuality. And the Lesbian reader cannot help but renew her thanks to God or Fate that she was spared the sufferings of "normality." So, while her book should indeed draw fire from the articulate sections of the *heterosexual* community, I find little to complain of. The book is well written and intelligent and shows a care for scholarship of the proper, not pedantic, kind. It has its moments of humor and is uniformly interesting. Highly recommended. I can touch on only a tiny fraction of the wealth of material covered.

Ms. Greer takes potshots at everyone in sight, at times getting herself painted into a corner with illogical criticisms of every sort of feminist activity. But, since her object is to make women think, — "if it [this book] is not ridiculed or reviled, it will have failed of its intention" — I should not be too harsh on her. I thank her for daring to anger

the Politicos. "To women disgusted with conventional political methods, whether constitutional or totalitarian or revolutionary," neither the NOW approach which attempts to fight discrimination by demand and competition nor the political consciousness approach which thinks the proper politics will usher in the better life, "can have much appeal." Ms. Greer urges that women begin by reassessing themselves. What is at first incomprehensible and then gives rise to a great belly laugh, (for this reviewer, at least) is how her whole expose of the heterosexual life-style points to the success of the Lesbian life-style and yet she remains chained to the heterosexual way. "At all events a clitoral orgasm with a full cunt is nicer than a clitoral orgasm with an empty one, as far as I can tell at least." (p 305). However that may be, and even Full Cunt Greer is not certain, let us see in her own words how high a price she is willing to pay for that engorged cunt.

The book is divided into five sections: Body, Soul, Love, Hate and Revolution. In a general way Ms. Greer follows the baby girl through to maturity and, though much of this is old hat, she makes it interesting all over again. "The Y-chromosome has a negative function: . . . it simply reduces the amount of femaleness which would result in the formation of a female fetus . . . the [male] fetus then inherits a number of weaknesses . . ." Later on Ms. Greer writes, "If the frontal lobes are to be considered as the seat of intelligence, [as men at first thought, till it turned out to their disadvantage] then it must also be pointed out that the frontal area of the brain is more developed in women." Ms. Greer is very careful to avoid any inference of female superiority, but, as the shameless female and Lesbian chauvinist that I am, I see no reason why I cannot take such facts as evidence for the possible superiority of women. Ms. Greer tells us that even bones are affected by the use made of one's muscles and that the adult female body is very much the result of post-natal activity, not heredity. In a chapter titled "Curves" she says, "They [her breasts] are not parts of a person but lures slung around her neck, to be kneaded and twisted like magic putty, or mumbled and mouthed like lolly ices." I learned something new about heterosexual women on page 30: "the anxiety about the bigness of the penis is only equaled by anxiety about the smallness of the cunt. No woman wants to find out that she has a

twat like a horse-collar." Is this because of that "full cunt" syndrome? Do heterosexual women fear that one penis won't fill it up? ". . . we still make love to organs and not people", a sad heterosexual state of affairs.

Ms. Greer explains the female eunuch as the female stereotype of today. "Her essential quality is castratedness . . . and *she must not have a sexual organ.*" I think her point is well taken — there is something asexual about the ideal Madison Avenue female, about those women who go to a lot of trouble to attract the male. Ms. Greer helped me solve a problem that has puzzled me off and on for years: Why is it that, for the most part, the women whom men gather round like moths to a flame are the very women I find most unattractive, vapid, silly? Because, being a lover of women and a fully sexual being myself, the female eunuch is repulsive to me. Ms. Greer explains the development of these strangely desexed females as resting upon age-old fear of the womb — the wicked womb, as she calls it and cunt-hatred on the part of men. Female sexuality is denied and in its place is substituted femininity or sexlessness. "What happens to the Jewish boy who never manages to escape the tyranny of his mother is exactly what happens to every girl whose upbringing is 'normal.' She is a female faggot." Ms. Greer herself admits to having had a lover at school, "a girl who was obliterated by puberty." She talks of "inseparable girls [who] are often fascinated by each other, deeply altruistic and cooperative, and often genuinely spiritual . . ." Yet, when her mother discovered a letter from her lover, "screaming that I was unnatural: to stem her flow, I repeated what I had read in the Sunday Supplements, that it was an adolescent homosexual phase, and I was through it anyway. I expiated that pusillanimous, lying betrayal of myself and my love for weeks. After such knowledge, what forgiveness?" If she indeed made a 'successful adjustment to heterosexuality' thereafter, she is to be commended upon her ability in warping her nature, like a tree that survives, bent and twisted after being half cut down.

The chapter titled *Womanpower* fits rather well, I thought, what the Lesbian reaches for. "Womanpower means the self-determination of women, and that means that all the baggage of paternalistic society will have to be thrown overboard. Woman must have room and scope to devise a

morality which does not disqualify her from excellence, and a psychology which does not condemn her to the status of a spiritual cripple." There must be a way for heterosexual women too, though Ms. Greer leaves their future nebulous and concludes with a quotation from Rainer Maria Rilke, *Letters to a Young Poet*: "The great renewal of the world will perhaps consist in this, that man and maid, freed from all false feeling and aversion, will seek each other not as opposites, but as brother and sister, as neighbors, and will come together as human beings." Unless we are all Lesbians and homosexuals, there is something either incestuous or asexual in this dream.

It is hard to say who fares worse at Ms. Greer's hands, men or heterosexual women. And, when she dares to use the word 'Lesbian' toward the end of the book in the chapter titled *Rebellion*, we fare about as well as mongoloids. I might have gotten furious had I not been so tickled at Ms. Greer's ignorance, feigned or real. "Much lesbianism . . . may be understood as revolt against the limitations of the female role . . . as well as rejection of the brutality and mechanicalness of male sexual passion." Heterosexuals do cling to that revolt idea, unable to imagine that one woman can love another above and beyond the spur of any negative emotions, love beyond anything heterosexuals seem capable of according to Ms. Greer. It seems to me too that rejection of male sexual brutality and mechanicalness is rather sensible. Elsewhere Ms. Greer puts the blame on heterosexual women for the less than perfect male/female art of sex. Despite male cunt-hatred, despite the male's conception of the penis as a weapon, heterosexual women should "embrace and stimulate the penis", they "must humanize the penis, take the steel out of it and make it flesh again." Ms. Greer, it seems to me, puts a very large burden upon heterosexual women, leaving nothing for men themselves to accomplish. Perhaps, like me, she is something of a female chauvinist and naturally expects little from the male.

But to get back to Greer on Lesbianism. "All forms of lesbianism involve an invention of an alternative way of life." An invention? This strikes me as an odd way of describing the freedom of Lesbians to be themselves and to love fully and humanly another person, without problems of weaponry and frigidity and orgasmic crises. Then Ms. Greer gets hung up on tribadism,



which she imagines to be "the principal lesbian mode of lovemaking." Maybe she knows something I don't. For 30 years I have wondered how that method is accomplished and have yet to meet a Lesbian who knows, though I do not doubt her existence. Ms. Greer gets upset over Anne Koedt's *The Myth of Vaginal Orgasm* and "wonders just whom Miss Koedt has gone to bed with." I might ask the same of Ms. Greer, for here is where she gets into the full cunt bit. I guess she does not know that what is important to Lesbians is love and not a fixation on what to do with one's vagina. After quoting Ms. Koedt on Lesbianism (a favorable view), she tells us that "sex is simply not a cohesive force." And I agree with her. Lesbians are no more in agreement with each other than any random sample of heterosexual women. But, if sexual orientation is not cohesive, why all this effort to get women and men together in heterosexual bliss? Then Ms. Greer speaks gratefully of Nancy Mann, who "attempts a new explanation of female failure to achieve orgasm, mostly on the grounds that we are not doing it right, that we are not turned on to the essential nature of the experience. [Remember, Ms. Greer has amply described its "essential nature" — brutal and mechanical]. Her conclusion is a hopeful one for women who really don't want to masturbate or learn *tribadism*." (Italics mine). Tribadism, anyone?

"It is true that her [the Lesbian's] inability to play the accepted role in society probably results from a failure of conditioning . . ." If the conditioning is all wrong in the first place, as THE FEMALE EUNUCH so ably proves, let us hope for more and more "failures." Ms. Greer is naive about Lesbianism. "Most women teachers are not married and do not have any very signifi-

cant intercourse with the opposite sex." No, if they are lucky, they can limit their public "intercourse" to an occasional appearance in the company of a butch male homosexual and otherwise dispense entirely with the opposite sex. Nor does she understand the neurotic cruelties that stem from the repressed Lesbianism of many women and the even worse cruelty of unrepressed Lesbians who denounce their Lesbian sisters in their immoral efforts to deflect suspicion from themselves . . . I suspect that Ms. Greer would not write about Lesbianism today as she did in her book. When she wrote the book women's liberation had not yet openly faced up to the issue of Lesbianism. The women's movement is moving so fast that all of us who write about it are apt to wish we could disown our words of the past.

"Men are tired of having all the responsibility for sex: it is time they were relieved of it. And I do not mean that large-scale lesbianism should be adopted . . . The cunt must come into its own." Well, it's all so heterosexual. And what would be wrong with large-scale Lesbianism? Men's liberation groups are getting around to discussing homosexuality. We may see an "increase" in homosexuality there, just as we are seeing an "increase" in Lesbianism in women's liberation groups. I put "increase" in quotations because it is not a true increase, only a peeling off of "successful" layers of heterosexual conditioning. Ms. Greer would like to see the "emphasis . . . replaced upon human sexuality" and so would I, but I care not whether that leads to more Lesbianism or better heterosexual relations or both. For me and for millions of Lesbians "the cunt long ago came into its own."



## Conflict of Identity

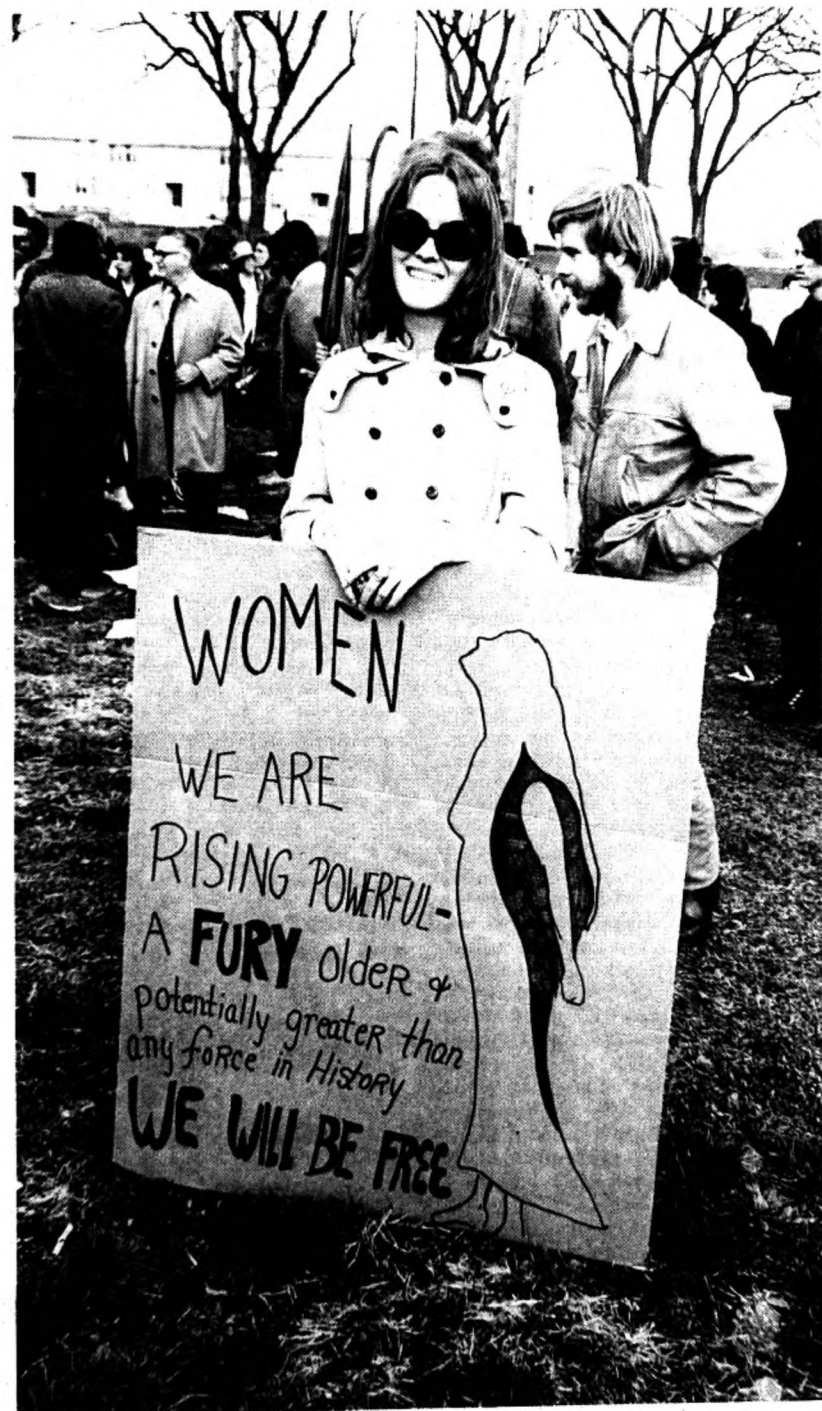
It came as a great surprise to me that Lesbians did not jump on the bandwagon of women's liberation or cry for joy that at long last here was a movement that was for and by women against the great oppressors of our society. True there are pockets of activists like the radical Lesbians, the gay women's liberation and others, but it is also true that these women are, for the most part, under thirty. Where are the great numbers of women who by reason of their experience you expected to be right on the front lines pitching? I couldn't accept age as

By KANE KELLEY

the hang-up since I belonged to an over-forty group and I felt I belonged to the movement before it was.

I soon found that my personal enthusiasm for women's liberation ruined every cocktail and dinner party to which I was invited. Even the mere mention of it was like waving a red flag. These women were as hostile as suburban housewives. Dismayed, I decided to explore the causes.

Most of my Lesbian friends are professional women. I have known them for years on a completely social basis. I suddenly





realized that I had seldom talked politics or social issues with these friends. Now, probing, I found they read little in this area and wished to discuss it even less. Sports, current fiction, theater, music, yes. So here was the first big block: they were indeed underdeveloped politically and, amazingly enough, had not read any of the literature of the women's liberation movement. They only knew by some emotional response that they were against it!

Many reasons can be advanced for their seeming lack of social consciousness. As women they were well aware that they were second-class citizens and as Lesbians they were something less. Could they get out and declare themselves for peace, motherhood, better schools, etc.? Who the hell would listen to them? So why get all hot over these issues? Besides, fear and insecurity about their own social roles had imbued them with a kind of Puritanism, a view of life that makes the past an authority over the present. A view too, that while they are gay and always will remain so, they have "bought" the system's brainwashing that such a life is "inferior" to the straight life.

Next, they have straddled two worlds successfully. They have made it in the system. The liberation thing might open up too many doors and in the process things are being mentioned that could be embarrassing to them as women who are sensitive to their "hidden" life. They thank God every day for their job security (?) and the image they have been able to maintain in the office. They've worked hard to prove that they can "relate" to men on the job. How could they join forces with a movement that the male-dominated establishment is already calling a bunch of dykes. They can only shiver in terror at the suggestion they are part of such a thing!

Another factor here, of course, is that in the process of achieving a certain position, they have patterned their power and success symbols after that of the system. Accordingly they are submissively conservative and imitate the "good" life of the straight society with almost slavish compulsion. In fact they work so hard at it that in many ways they are more establishment than the establishment.

It is difficult to talk rationally with these women because they are really in conflict with their own identity. What they need, of course, is to attend some Lesbian rap sessions where they can uncover the plastic layers of a false role and talk clearly

and honestly. They must rid themselves of this self-hate that has oppressed them too long in the name of a heterosexual culture which daily reminds them of its contempt for Lesbianism. They need to relate to those sisters, the radical Lesbians, in women's liberation who can help them over this hurdle. Otherwise as long as they maintain this image of themselves as something less than pleasing they will continue to seek identification and approval from their oppressors. They must learn to let their energies flow toward their sisters, not backwards to men for acceptance.

Once the Lesbian achieves this she will recognize how women have been systematically made into empty consumers, competing in fashions and material goods. She will see that the male supremacy upon which the nuclear family is based has been prescribing for her too in the area of clothes, jobs and class consciousness. It will be clear that it is as important to root out male domination as it is to root out racism. There will be no guilt, no submission, necessary when the system no longer sets up an "ideal" life style.

The Lesbian who faces this will find the simplest of reasons for women's liberation, namely, that men as a group oppress women as a group; therefore women must organize to confront male supremacy collectively. "Free Our Sisters, Free Ourselves" is what it's all about.



LET'S MEET AT YOUR CLOSET NEXT WEEK,  
SALLY. THERE'S MORE ROOM.



## Of Endings

By DOLORES KLAICH

They were quiet now, stretched before the fire.

"More brandy?" Julia asked.

Again they were quiet. When it happened it was Angela, the younger of the two, who hesitantly reached to caress Julia's breast. Unsure, Angela kept her eyes averted and for a quick moment the vulnerability of her action paralyzed her. Julia took her hand, they rose and together they walked. Was it awkward, Angela thought, somehow dreadfully awkward, walking the living room hand in hand? When they reached the bedroom they came together violently.

Later, Angela asked, "And John?"

"He'll be away all week."

"And then?"

"-----"

"Julia..."

"Yes?"

\* \* \*

They had met at a dinner party the preceding week. Angela had been brought by a young man, a friend of the host. Julia and John had arrived late, making their

usual well-remarked entrance. Not that they intentionally made such entrances, far from it, but the two of them, quietly handsome, complete somehow, never failed to cause comment: No two people should look so good together; They are an extraordinary couple. That their twelve-year-old marriage had long since come to a standstill was acknowledged by no one. Nor did John and Julia dwell on the fact. They knew that it existed, they talked of it from time to time, but in the end they ignored it.

When Julia was introduced to Angela, her eyes lingered on her a moment too long. After dinner she came to sit with her; they talked easily, softly. Later, at home, John said to his wife: "She looks very much like you, you know. The hair, the eyes, something about the shoulders..."

It was a simple matter of looking in the phone directory. *I'm going to do some galleries Saturday. I wonder if you'd care to come along?* They met at the Magritte show, then went on to an exhibition of Felicien Rops etchings. The devastating erotic elements held them for the better part of an hour. They kept returning to a small book-plate version of *La Dame au Cochon*, looked at it silently, then looked at one another in wonder. That they both had the same unspoken reaction to the small etching seemed in some way to turn their separate worlds upside down. On leaving the gallery, Julia bought the etching.

Outside, it was snowing. They walked to the park where they watched the seals, going on to the Plaza to warm up with mulled wine. Later, *If you're free... please come to dinner. John is away.* They shopped at the neighborhood Gristede's, went to the cheese store, to Colette's, picked up some wine. They laughed at their numerous bundles, their by now red noses, their disheveled hair. Angela bought some anemones.

\* \* \*

"I'd best check the fire," Julia said now, climbing from bed.

"Bring back some cigarettes, will you?" Angela called after her.

When Julia returned, having put on a blue velvet robe, Angela reached to stroke it. Julia leaned over her and stared at her. "John was right, you know. We do look alike."

"Nonsense," Angela said, reaching to touch her hair. "You're quite beautiful."

"And you?"

"Oh, me."

"Yes, you. Come on, get up, come on." She wrapped her in part of her robe and they walked to the closet mirror. "Look—"

Julia hugged her. "So solemn," she said, smiling. "I think it's splendid. Here, stand right next to me, here, shoulder to shoulder." They stared into the mirror and Angela began to laugh. "It's incredible," she said. "Look at us."

They spent the rest of the week together. Angela went to her office; she worked and she worked well. When she arrived at Julia's, always with a bouquet of anemones, the fire was already going. In the mornings when she returned to her apartment for a change of clothes the quiet she found made her do what she had come for quickly, without thought.

They dined in every evening. Twice they bundled up in pants and boots and fur coats and went to a neighborhood movie, sitting in the balcony, smoking, touching, watching the film.

One of the evenings after the movie Julia suggested a bar she had heard of. It was not a success. The drinks were overpriced, the place smelled of disinfectant and the couples, well, the couples looked sad somehow, nervous, and when they danced they did so without grace. No, Julia thought, a bar scene really has nothing to do with it.

The evening before John's return they were again lying before the fire.

"Well?" Angela said.  
Julia bent to kiss her. "That, my love, is an excellent question."

Angela shrugged and pitched her voice theatrically low, "Well, nothing much we can do about it, is there?"

They laughed, clowning a bit, and grew silent. It was the quiet that preceded their lovemaking.

But Angela sat up and looked at Julia. "It's serious, isn't it?"

"Yes."  
"A beginning, really."  
"An ending too, you know."  
"How do you explain it?"  
"Falling in love?"  
"Us, I mean."  
"Us falling in love?"  
"Julia . . ."  
"Let's not."  
"And that bar?"  
"It means nothing."  
"Julia . . ."  
"Slowly, darling," she said, bringing

Angela to her. "Not now. Not yet."

The next evening it was John who spoke first. Julia came to kneel on the sofa beside him. "John, she's marvelous."

He smiled and kissed her hair. She touched his hand.

"It has happened, hasn't it?" she said.  
"So it certainly seems."  
"You'll like her very much."  
"I don't doubt it."

"We tried that bar around the corner."  
"Oh?"

"Depressing."  
"I'm sure."

"She's coming for dinner tonight. I want you to meet her."

"Good."  
"I didn't fuss."

"How are we with wine?"  
"I've seen to it."

"Good," John said and then got up and walked toward the bedroom. "I'll unpack a few things. I should be able to find a place easily, don't you think?"

"Actually," Julia said, walking to him, "I . . . I called a few agencies today. You do want the East Side, don't you?"

"Oh yes, I suppose so. It's going to be strange, looking."

"Do you want me to go with you?"

"No, no, not necessary." He surveyed the apartment. "All this furniture," he said, "So many things. That's the hell of it, isn't it?"

Julia put her arms around his waist and hugged him tightly. "It has been good in its time, hasn't it?"

He kissed her hair. "I envy you falling in love again, you know. How good that is."



HAVE YOU SEEN DR. ERIK ERIKSON?

"Do you remember how we used to visit the seals?"

"They're still there, are they?"  
"Oh yes. God knows if they're the same ones — but it seems so."

"Good weather for seals," he said, again kissing her hair, then letting her go.

In the bedroom John saw the Félicien Rops etching that Julia had had framed: a heavy-thighed woman, blindfolded, dressed only in a large hat, long gloves and black net stockings, is led by a pig on a leash. In the air, winged cherubs, holding their heads, are scurrying.

He called out to Julia: "Is the Rops show still on this week?"

She called back from the kitchen: "Yes, it just opened."

## Poetry

To Carol

By Martha Shelley

When her voice crosses the Mojave,  
passes through huge black cables  
buried under the Father of Waters,  
leaps across the Alleghenies  
to me in Manhattan,  
in the sad-ass end of February:  
It's like she wasn't gone.

It's speed and acid in a way no solo trip could be;  
dormant privet hedges swell  
and stretch their twigs in lightning angles,  
traffic signals flash a secret pattern,  
hinting of rhythms I scarcely imagine:  
Brainpaths of a manic city.

And I run down the morning streets,  
no money to fly but I run West  
as far as Second Avenue.

(Dolores Klaich is 34 and is Associate Editor of TRANSATLANTIC REVIEW. Born in Cleveland, Ohio and educated at Western Reserve University, she has been a newspaper reporter, magazine reporter (for LIFE MAGAZINE, etc.) and as a free-lance non-fiction writer has had scores of articles published. She has ghost-written two books and is now working on a project which will result in a book we hope to review in these pages someday. This is her second short story to be published, the first appeared in TRANSATLANTIC REVIEW.)



I loathed myself  
for doing it,  
wanted desperately  
to wait  
but couldn't face  
waiting perhaps in vain,  
didn't want to make  
a scene  
when I see you  
out of pure  
frustration.

I tranquilized  
my passion,  
so far gone  
from mental games  
with high-charged  
words,  
it went to sleep  
in thirty seconds.

One tightly curled hair  
clung to my finger,  
tucked itself  
under the edge of a nail  
to surprise me  
turning a page  
of poetry  
half an hour  
after my isolated  
assignment.

My hand, heedful of etiquette,  
paragraph for Lovers, long-estranged,  
covers your breast politely,  
interweaves my palm's nerve ends  
with each woolen strand of your sweater.  
Hesitant, not wanting to offend,  
I gently press soft flesh,  
communicating friendship,  
a calumet between two palefaced  
women warriors, come together  
after four months' wake of moons,  
one hundred twenty chaste, bored beddings,  
so many nights, so much delight,  
wasted on ungrateful pride.

The Bobsey twins  
incestuous —  
hermaphroditic beast, four legs, one mouth —  
rolling, squealing on the couch,  
mock passion raking my eyes  
as if your play were real,  
me with itching hands in pockets,  
aching for my share,  
not daring to rock  
our leaky rubber raft, the "Maybe."

A plot afoot, a vodka bottle  
given me to suckle,  
a sentimental, soulful tinkle  
from the piano;  
predictably, I exit to the kitchen,  
sob into the frigidaire;  
when you appear on cue (brava!)  
femme fatale and ingenue forget their lines,  
find themselves in an agonized embrace,  
confessing love and guilt,  
flowering with forgiveness.

What histrionics we cowards need  
to let another see us in humility.

Out of regard for the piano player's  
feelings, you lead me to a private,  
curtained room. We hear him play  
a few bars, no more, sound-proofed  
as we are by pounding blood,  
loose flowing hair, tongues in ears,  
pillows, pants, sheets, a tangle  
of clothes and covers all finally  
torn from the bed  
and you are beautiful, my ghost,  
my lovely apparition, my unreal love,  
come real to me at last.

Manners forgotten, polished silver-  
finger bowl-upbringing gone,  
thrown to the floor along with muddy boots,  
I'm a ravenous, noisy guest  
at a feast of delicate sensation;  
you've lost the pungency of my mind's  
last hesitation; you transcend  
the taste of flowers.  
Absence has given me a gourmet's palate  
and a gourmand's appetite;  
no time to savor when I cannot get enough;  
in my haste I nearly bite my tongue —  
a curious hunger that takes me further  
from satiation with each swallow.  
You come and come, finally cry,  
half-laughing, for compassion.

Wiping the corners of a bruised, untidy mouth,  
I remind myself we again have many seasons,  
many linen-covered beds.  
I am young and hungry, but you have enough.  
I will be fed.

Driving towards the city  
on a Sunday night  
back to your wakeful husband,  
my one-way ticket home,  
your hand warm milk in mine,  
a primal comfort I kiss,  
for it's soon to go  
the way the other went.

You make a wrong turn —  
Eros-inspired accident —  
and a wandering hour is stolen  
from his watch, his bed.  
We spend the extra seconds  
on our fingers,  
each pulse a portion  
of shared treasury,  
buying our way out of  
this hard, diminishing return.

ANNE ZIMOVA

## Still Life: Drinking Tea

Graveyards, minds. Ghosts play shadowy  
hide-and-seek behind weedy headstones.  
Peeking out behind our eyes, waving misty  
handkerchiefs, talismans that disappear  
with a wink in the jostle of a crowded aisle.

Example: an interior person drinks from the same  
cup her outside face does, some nights, only  
tissues swallow. We sat, three sightless  
monkeys, benched in a jangling neon room;  
still I could softly remember (between our  
frequent sips and smiles) fog's early morning,  
once, when we sat outside. Then I said no,  
and stared hard at the mist. (But a qualified  
no, since sooner that month I'd wanted to die.)  
Now — perhaps I'd say yes, but there's only  
bright plastic sky. Your friend laughs, playing  
catch with your sleeve: let her rest safe in her  
yes, in whatever tongue; fog time has gone by.

Graveyards; headstones. Minds invent ghosts  
to lurk as shadows in our eyes. We all look  
at one another, but those weeds are what we  
will not see. Fog behind each glass is safer: blink,  
and quickly lid it over; touch it only with the inner eye.

Patricia Hanen



I.

I knew it would end  
with you as it began  
nothing said  
my mouth at my mother's breast  
child half asleep

I held you too holy  
I held the image of you  
too close behind the mirror glass

from where you stared out at me  
lips held too tight for fear  
a little girls voice would cry out  
in too much anger

I held you behind a gilt frame  
it wasn't you in that faded picture

still I lie  
I lie idle  
and fall along the edges  
of a love

II.

hand and foot by candlelight  
my foot beats out  
moth wings at the flame  
your hands in this

fingers flicker as they juggle  
lightly blood red shafts  
on blue black shadows

why do I celebrate this pain  
I sing a song of sadness

your fine bones flicker  
with the thin cry of blue veins  
burnt by moth wings

as in a mirror  
your breath lay along the pulse  
that beat at my throat

you out your finger on it  
I sing a song of madness

what rests in the hollowness  
but sharp moth feet  
while I cry out in laughter

too much silk  
too many bruised petals  
enough of these tongues

still I lie while the teeth  
attached to the ends of your fingers  
bite my bones  
beat at the flame  
drum up the march over my skin

and the red foot lightly  
steals into the shadow of the wings

its all  
already seen  
like lines of a play  
I've acted in before

III.

slyly slyly  
I knew it would end here  
I must steal away

dark winged eyebrows  
dark feathered eyes  
the mouth moth like stealing  
down the throat frayed dark  
and tense for flight

already seen

I was young then flying  
a hundred miles an hour out of the egg

I broke out not even knowing  
you wanted me

a pythoness wants  
a bird in her belly

its all so old now  
everything here is old

I knew it would end fade away  
lines lose their sharpness  
too delicate to handle

already seen the moth wings  
have beaten out the flame  
in the mirror

F. ELLEN ISAACS

# Female Sexual Alienation

By LINDA PHELPS

In the last few years, the so-called sexual revolution has turned sour. The end of inhibition and the release of sexual energies which have so often been documented as the innovation of the revolutionary culture are now beginning to be seen as just another fraud. After the gang-rapes at Altamont and Seattle, after the demands raised at People's Park for "Free Land, Free Dope, Free Women", after the analyses of (male) rock culture, women are beginning to realize that nothing new has happened at all. What we have is simply a new, more sophisticated (and thus more insidious) version of male sexual culture. Sexual freedom has meant more opportunity for men, not a new kind of experience for women. And it has been precisely our own experience as women which has been decisive in developing the Women's Liberation critique of the sexual revolution. The generation of women who only a few years ago saw themselves as the vanguard of the new sex, now suddenly find themselves plagued with all the problems of their grandmothers — loss of interest in sex, hatred of sex, disgust with self. This turn-about happened very fast and I think it happened because we opened ourselves up in consciousness-raising and a lot of bad feeling we thought we'd gotten rid of floated to the top. It has been good to get these feelings out and look at them. But can we *explain* them, can we understand what has happened to us in the last five years?

I would like to suggest that we can understand the destruction of female sexuality if we conceptualize it as a special case of alienation, understood as a political phenomenon. If alienation is the destruction of self which ultimately leads to schizophrenia, the widespread alienation of females from their own sexuality is a kind of rampant mental illness at the base of our experience which we must recognize for what it is.

Alienation is a much used and little explained term. Put simply, it refers to the disintegration of our very selves and personalities which occurs when we are powerless. The opposite of powerlessness is self-actualization; and the healthy, self-actualizing human being is one who moves through the world as an autonomous source of action. As Ernest Becker put it in an important essay on alienation<sup>1</sup>:

People break down when they aren't 'doing' — when the world around them does not reflect the active involvement of their own creative powers . . . Alienated man is man separated from involvement with and responsibility for the effective use of his *self-powers*.

What is more difficult to understand is precisely *how* alienation comes about in certain individuals. Becker suggests three ways: (1) Alienation occurs along the dimension of time. As children we learn certain patterns of behavior which bring us approval. As we grow older, however, we must constantly adapt to new situations. If our early childhood training has been too rigid, we are unable to make the necessary adjustments and become increasingly unable to handle our experiences. (2) Alienation also occurs in terms of the roles we play. This problem affects both men and women, but we are particularly familiar with the female version. Not only are females confined to a few narrow roles, but they are also subject to contradictory messages about the roles they do play. Motherhood, for example, is viewed as a sacred task, but mothers are not taken seriously when they act outside their kitchens and homes. (3) The third dimension of alienation is more complex: breakdown of self occurs when the gap between thought and action, theory and practice, mind and body becomes too great. The classic and extreme example of this form of alienation is the schizophrenic, living totally in a thought world of his own creation with no relation to reality.

This three-dimensional model of alienation is complex but I think it can help us understand our own experience with sex. What I am about to say about female sexuality as schizophrenic will make more sense, however, if I digress for a moment to describe some attributes of schizophrenia. This extreme form of alienation, you will recall, is produced by a split between mind and body. Such an odd condition is possible in human beings as opposed to animals because we are self-conscious beings. We have an 'inner self' of reflection and thought but our body is part of the world 'out there' of experience and material objects. This mind-body dualism is at the base of human power — our ability to

reflect upon and then act upon the material world. Such power becomes destructive — as in schizophrenia — when the mind turns in on itself and never tests its perceptions in concrete reality.

It is in grappling with the outside world, in testing the powers of thought and emotion that the individual becomes a full, self-actualized person. In this self-directed behavior, we test ourselves, make contact with reality and gain control over ourselves and our environment. And the more positive and successful experiences we build up, the more secure we are as whole persons. This is the mechanism by which we become liberated; the reverse process is alienation.

In this reverse process, the schizophrenic fails to develop the necessary unity between mind and body, takes refuge in a world of symbols, and thereby forfeits experience. In other words, a schizophrenic is someone who becomes accustomed to relating to symbol-objects rather than person-objects and in doing so loses all self-powers.

I would argue that as females we are sexually schizophrenic, relating not to ourselves as self-directed persons, not to our partners as sexual objects of our desire, but to a false world of symbols and fantasy. This fantasy world of sex which veils our experience is the world of sex as seen through male eyes. It is a world whose eroticism is defined in terms of female powerlessness, dependency, and submission. It is the world of sado-masochistic sex. If you don't know what I mean by sado-masochism, think of the erotic themes of all the novels, comic books, movies, jokes, cartoons, and songs you've ever experienced. The major sexual theme which appears over and over again is the drama of conquest and submission: the male takes the initiative and the female waits, waits in a thousand variations on a single theme — eagerly, coyly, shyly, angrily, and at the outer edge of pornography and fantasy, is taken against her will. Usually it is more subtle. The female stands in awe of the hero's abilities, his powers; she is willing when he takes the initiative, guides her by the elbow, puts his arm around her waist, manoeuvres her into the bedroom. What is it that makes such descriptions arousing? Not a mere run-down of anatomy but the tension in the social situation as male advances on female, whether she is willing or not.

Such submission is acceptable in our culture if the man is superior, and this leads

to the search for the man who is smarter, taller, more self-confident — someone to look up to and thus worthy of giving into.

In each of our lives, there was a first man for whom we were prepared like lambs for the slaughter. My fantasy of him was a composite of Prince Valiant, Gary Cooper, and my father. Trained in submission, in silence, I awaited him through a series of *adolescent boy-friends who were not masterful enough to fit the dream* . . . because I would not really graduate to the estate of womanhood until I had been taken by a strong man.<sup>2</sup>

Trained in submission women instinctively look for the strong man who will continue the loving benevolence of the father. That this pattern of sexual relations is our society's model is confirmed by psychologist Abraham Maslow. In a study of sexual behavior,<sup>3</sup> Maslow reported that women who find a partner more dominant than they usually make the best sexual adjustment. On the other hand, a very sexually active woman in his study failed to reach orgasm with several male partners because she considered them weaker than herself and thus could not "give in to them". Thus, 'normal' sexual adjustment occurs in our society when the male plays the dominant role.

If we come to view male-dominated sexual relations as by definition healthy sex, the mechanism of this learning process is the bombardment of sexual fantasy that we experience long before we experience sex itself. Sexual images of conquest and submission pervade our imagination from an early age and lay the basis for how we will later look upon and experience sex. Through the television set and the storybook, we live out in imagination society's definition of sex and love. Rapunzel waits in her tower years in hopes of the young prince who will free her body from its imprisonment. Sleeping Beauty's desires slumber until they are awakened and fulfilled by the kiss of the young prince. These fairy tale princesses are not unusual. There are few women, no matter how intelligent, no matter how dedicated to the pursuit of a goal, who will not finally be conquered — and like it. And if they are not conquered, it is understood that no man desired them anyway.

By experiencing such sexual fantasies at an early age, we become alienated along Becker's first dimension of time. Locked

early into a set of fantasy images which define female sexual roles as passive, women are constantly denying feelings which don't fit the cultural definitions. And so all pervasive is the male bias of our culture that we seldom notice that the fantasies we take in, the images that describe to us how to act, are *male* fantasies about females. In a male world, female sex is from the beginning unable to get a clear picture of itself.

And from the beginning, women experience Becker's second dimension of alienation: the role of woman as sexual being is subject to contradictory evaluations by society. Young girls quickly become attuned to society's ambivalent view of their sexuality. Women come to see themselves as synonymous with sex yet female sexuality is seen as valid only under certain conditions such as marriage. Even as such narrow restrictions break down in more permissive ages like our own and the limits of female sexuality expand, we still run up against those limits at the point where a female can be labelled promiscuous. And women who initiate and direct sexual activity on a regular basis find that they have gone beyond the limits of the possible and are termed castrating. Male sexual desires, on the other hand, are affirmed throughout and are associated with prowess, power, and man(self)hood.

As females, then, we relate to symbol-objects rather than person-objects. Like the schizophrenic, we are alienated from our own experience and from our own self-powers of initiation. This form of alienation has to do with sex in a very direct way because women do not often take the initiative in relation to men.

Schizophrenic passivity is a direct reflex of the abrogation of one's powers in the face of the object . . . If you relate to an object under your own initiatory powers, then it becomes an object which enriches your own nature. If you lack initiatory powers over the object, it takes on a different value, for it then becomes an individual which crowds your own nature . . . A girl really comes to exist as a feminine sex object for the adolescent only as he learns to exercise active courtship powers in relation to her.<sup>4</sup>

If women become objects of sexual desire for men in the social process of male-initiated relationships, how does the

male become an object of sexual desire for the female? It is not clear, in fact, that the male body *per se* is deemed erotic by women, certainly not in the same way that the female body is for men. In fact, since women are bombarded with the same sex stimuli of the female body as is a man, females often respond in a narcissistic way to their own body and what is being *done* to it rather than projecting sexual desire out onto the male. The female is taught to be the object of sexual desires rather than to be a self-directed sexual being oriented toward another; she is taught to be adored rather than adoring. Is it surprising then that so many women find the male body ugly, that so many women see the drama of sex in what is done to them?

Two things happen to women's sexual lives. Many women have no sexual fantasies at all (since there is little male sexual imagery available in this culture). Masters and Johnson found that many women who could not focus on sexual imagery had difficulty having orgasm. The good doctors have tried to encourage sexual fantasy (by reading arousing material!) to enable these women to experience orgasm.

Females that do have fantasies often have the same sado-masochistic fantasies that men do. As Shulamith Firestone points out in *The Dialectic of Sex*,

Cultural distortion of sexuality also explains how female sexuality gets twisted in narcissism: women make love to themselves vicariously through the man rather than directly making love to him.<sup>5</sup>

In these fantasy episodes, the female does not always play the masochistic role. The female who is focusing on sexual imagery can take the part either of the male, the female, or an onlooker, but in any case eroticism is still dealing in female powerlessness.

How do women tolerate a situation in which men control and define the experience of sex? I believe we solve our problem in the same way the schizophrenic does. A woman's sexuality is experienced in symbolic terms at the expense of active physical involvement. Sex is represented to her by society in symbolic messages of passivity and conquest. Like the symbolic world of the schizophrenic, a woman's fantasy life — her desire to be taken, overpowered, mastered — allows her to play the passive role and perhaps even to enjoy it *if she fully accepts the world as defined by men*.

Caught between the demands of a male-dominated society and the demands of our own self-definition, we survive by fully accepting the masochistic symbol-world given to us by male society at the expense of our own experience. In fact, our physical experience has been denied and distorted for so long that most of us aren't even aware of the sacrifice we have made. We are only uneasy that all is not well.

Yet ultimately in the lives of those women for whom fantasy and reality become too far apart, a crisis occurs. The mechanism of crisis in some cases may be merely the demystification of the male through years of marriage. It is hard to keep in tact fantasies of male power when confronted with the reality of a pot-bellied, lethargic husband. Such a crisis may result either in a transfer of fantasy to a new male or in a loss of interest in sex altogether. For women in Women's Liberation the whole fragile structure of fantasy and power often falls along with the myth of male supremacy. Males are subject to the same fantasies of conquest, yet their fantasy life is an expression of their own active powers (albeit also in a false way) and does not separate them from their own experience.

Women, then, are alienated from their sexuality along several dimensions. From an early age, we are alienated from ourselves as sexual beings by a male society's ambivalent definition of our sexuality: we are sexy but we are pure; we are insatiable but we are frigid; we have beautiful bodies but we must shave and anoint them. We are also alienated because we are separated from our own experience by the prevailing male cultural definition of sex — the male fantasy of active man and passive woman. From an early age, our sexual impulses are trained to turn back onto ourselves in the narcissistic counterpart of the male fantasy world. In social relations with men, we are alienated from ourselves as initiating, self-directed persons. Some women hold all these contradictory parts together; most women, I suspect, have given up on sex, whether or not they have informed their husbands and lovers.

Calling into question our traditional female role has meant calling into question more and more layers of our experience. With this questioning has come the discovery that there is not much left that is valid in male-female relations as we have known them. Kate Millett showed us in *Sexual Politics* that fascism — the relations

of dominance and submission that begin with sex and extend throughout our society — is at the very core of our cultural experience. So it is with little joy and much sadness that we peel back the layers of our consciousness and see our sexual experience for what it really is. And it is also with much sadness that we admit that there is no easy answer. It is too easy to say that we have been merely the victims of male power plays. The sado-masochistic content of sex is in the heads of women too. As long as female powerlessness is the unspoken underlying reality of sexual relations, women will want to be conquered. As long as our cultural vision is the projection of solely male experience, women will not be able to understand even their own alienation.

To say this is to suggest some ways out of our cultural and sexual alienation. Yet it is also too easy to blithely assume, as we often do, that all this sexual distortion is going to be easily changed in some new culture in the future. We have pushed beyond the economic revolution and the cultural revolution to come face to face with the real sexual revolution and we are not sure what we have left in the way of hope and affirmation.

Perhaps the most courageous and in the long run the most positive statement we can make is to acknowledge the pain we feel now and perhaps irreparable damage that we have sustained. But saying this is not totally to despair. Sometimes it is necessary to touch rock bottom before we can find the strength to push up for air.

*(Linda Phelps is a member of the Kansas City, Missouri Women's Liberation Group. Her educational background includes graduate study in both sociology and history. Her early pamphlets, "Mirror, Mirror, On The Wall" and "What Is The Difference: Women's Rights and Women's Liberation?" are in wide circulation.)*

#### FOOTNOTES

1. Ernest Becker "Mills' Social Psychology and the Great Historical Convergence on the Problem of Alienation" in Irving Horowitz, *The New Sociology, Essays in Social Science and Social Theory in Honor of C. Wright Mills* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 108-133.
2. *Motherlode*, Vol. 1, no. 1, p. 1.
3. A. H. Maslow, "Self-Esteem (Dominance-Feeling) and Sexuality in Women" in Hendrik M. Ruitenbeek,

*Psychoanalysis and Female Sexuality* (New Haven, Conn., College and University Press, 1966), p. 161-197.

4. Becker, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

5. Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex* (New York, William Morrow, 1970), p. 178.

*(Editor's Note: Though seldom as well*

## Cross Currents

WARNING: Now that THE LADDER is becoming widely known, we are suffering the usual co-opting that seems to happen to any individual, organization or publication that achieves some recognition. No person connected with THE LADDER wrote this letter, but someone used our name and obviously intentionally. We do not much object to some of the letter, but those who know us know we would not use some of the phrases in this letter under any circumstances. (This appeared coast to coast during mid-April, 1971).

Dear Ann Landers: I am glad to see you are printing some decent information on homosexuality. I am pleased, too, that you are publishing sensible letters from homosexuals. As a lesbian I can tell you there are plenty of kooks in our segment of society, as in others. Whenever you separate people into groups you are bound to get some nuts. This goes for lawyers, doctors, teachers, homosexuals, creeps, poets, Women's Lib. — yes, even newspaper columnists.

The principal desire of lesbians is to be accepted as human beings, to be allowed to hold jobs, to be paid commensurate with their abilities, and to be left alone by straight people who view them as freaks. You can't believe some of the questions I have been asked by supposedly intelligent people. For example, a man I work with (he knows about my relationship with another woman who is employed by our firm) recently asked, "Which one of you is the guy?" Such misconceptions make by blood boil.

Your are doing a great deal to lift the veil of ignorance, Ann, and I hope you will continue to do so. —THE LADDER

Dear Ladder: I'll continue to try. Thank you for writing.

*articulated, this view of hopelessness in male/female relationships is frequently implied in all women's liberation media. We feel there are alternatives clearly available to this view, and we specifically invite readers to respond in depth to this article.)*

TIME MAGAZINE, January 11, 1971.

The behavior section of this issue contains a fascinating look at the male attitude toward women. We received this late, but recommend you look it up at the nearest library. It's worth the trip.

PREGNANT BY GOD?? OR ELSE IN IRELAND: March, 1971. The Irish Senate refused to consider a bill introduced by Senator Mary Bourke Robinson to repeal the 1935 ban on the import, sale or advertisement of contraceptives. A group of women outside chanted "We shall not conceive". Obviously the legislature says otherwise, but the women vow they will continue protesting until contraceptives are legalized. The hierarchy (read MALE) of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland has vowed it will stop the protesting. One wonders how — by keeping them pregnant 9 months of the year and barefoot the other three?

1200 WOMEN AT N.Y. CONFERENCE: March 6, 7, 1971, New York City, Special to THE LADDER: The New York Women's Strike Coalition sponsored this two-day meeting, hosted by Barnard and Columbia Women's Liberation. Women from schools and colleges in New York State and all over New England attended. 87-year-old Florence Luscomb (this worthy woman lives in a commune) opened the session with a reminiscent and humorous speech. Included was comment on Dr. Anna Howard Shaw, who on being introduced once by a man as "a woman with the brains of a man" asked to "see the man whose brains I've got". 35 workshops were set up, and after the opening talks the women broke into groups for the various sessions. The best-attended workshops were on Lesbianism, on living with a man, and on alternatives to the family. The abortion workshop was also well attended. An all women's dance was held with the New Haven Women's Liberation Band. Highlight



speaker on Saturday was Kate Millett, author of *SEXUAL POLITICS* and a founding member of Columbia's Women's Liberation. Millett's talk stayed right with her usual subject, the repressive sex roles. "Nobody except the women's movement has begun to be honest about how sick sexuality is in this society, and we are only beginning to understand how desperate, how brutal a thing sex has been in the past. Our very notion of the erotic is deeply suspect on every side. Even our language of love abounds in a diction more military than amorous. It is loaded with terms like 'surrender'." Some of the costs of the conference were defrayed by selling a perfect duplicate of the most expensive perfume in the world, "Joy", which retails for \$64 an ounce. The women cooked up their imitation "Joy" and sold it for \$3 a bottle — it cost them about 50 cents a bottle to make it. That should tell you something about cosmetics.

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**DEPARTMENT OF IMPOSSIBLE IRRI-TATION:** Did you know that in some 13 or so states you have to register to vote by marital status? You must sign Mrs. if you are Mrs. and Miss if you Miss and if you sign Ms. your vote doesn't count. Did you know that in most places you have to pay more to go to the JOHN if you are a female (and note where you are going to) than if you are a male. In Mansfield, England, this was recently stopped by the local women's liberation group bringing pressure to bear on the city council. Did you know that the Air Force demands from each female applicant four photos — but none from the male applicants. DO you KNOW what they had the almighty gall to say they were looking for? They are looking for a "healthy, personable appearance". Marvelous!

**UNEQUAL WORK LAWS SLOWLY BEING DECLARED ILLEGAL:** Dayton, Ohio, March 27, 1971. Two women, both employees of subsidiaries of General

Motors, have successfully caused the removal of several sections from a law that has been used to discriminate against women in employment. This is just one example, as similar actions are being taken all over the U.S. Some fear that this will mean the employers will brutalize women in some other manner. We feel that any woman who will not take brutalizing will not have to.

**SUITS FILED — MOSTLY IN WAGE DISPUTES OR JOB OPPORTUNITIES DENIED.** March, April, May and June, 1971. About one in four clippings received covers women from coast to coast filing suit to obtain their rights on the job. All social levels are included. A little less than two years ago all we heard from officials was that women would not bother to sue. They are bothering on a mass basis now. Keep it up, Sisters.

**TOO MANY INSTANCES TO TALK ABOUT, AGAIN!** We have received so many comments on changes in women's pay scales that we cannot list them all. Some dozens of companies, large and small, are being forced to revise their inequities, though not on a grand scale. The biggest of this batch was the April announcement by *SAFEMART STORES, INC.*, which employs 97,000 people, that they would eliminate the pay scale differences between male and female workers on May 2, 1971. This will mean a pay hike of between 5 and 50 cents an hour for thousands of women coast to coast.

**800 WOMEN AT BOSTON:** March 27-28, 1971. Over 800 women attended the first New England Congress to Unite Women. Florence Luscomb was among the opening session speakers along with Florynce Kennedy, Jane Pollack of NOW, etc. Conference was sponsored by the New England Women's Coalition, which includes NOW, Black and Third World Women's Alliance, Boston DOB, YWCA, etc. Marilyn Levin, writing in *THE MILITANT*, said "Highlights of the workshops included the Gay Women's workshop . . ."

**ZEE, DETROIT FREE PRESS,** March 28, 1971. By the time you read this the movie *ZEE* with Susannah York and Elizabeth Taylor may be in general release. It is supposed to deal with Lesbianism. We wish we could be more excited, but having seen Hollywood's efforts to date in the area, we feel mild dismay instead. Do you suppose Susannah York won't be cast as a moron married to a sadist as in *THE KILLING OF*

*SISTER GEORGE?* We hope so.

**THE NEW YORK TIMES RIPS OFF N.Y. DOB:** In "The Disciples of Sappho, Updated", Judy Klemesrud wrote a run-of-the-mill destructive and generally vicious (and untrue) article about the N.Y. Chapter of DOB. This appeared in the *New York Times MAGAZINE*, March 28, 1971 (and on the editorial desk 10 times). As far as we know the only newspaper or magazine to comment on the situation was the underground socialist rag, *MILITANT* (April 16, 1971).

**DR. CARL MCINTIRE:** March 29, 1971. A group of male homosexuals and Lesbians picketed Dr. McIntire's church in Philadelphia. Dr. McIntire (who is seemingly for everything that is bad and nothing that is good) told them he loved them but homosexuality "is a sin".

**SONS OF THUNDER GALLOP AGAIN:** *TIME MAGAZINE*, March 29, 1971. A militant group of male Catholics are out to see to it that women have babies whether they want to or not; more specifically, to keep the abortion laws on the books. The men wear red berets and khaki shirts. They need a color advisor.

**FIFTY WOMEN DEMONSTRATE TO END POLICE HARASSMENT OF PROSTITUTES:** New York City, March 30, 1971. 50 members of The Feminists peacefully demonstrated for several hours in front of the 54th Street police station to protest the unusually brutal harassment prostitutes and alleged prostitutes in the area have been receiving.

**THE WOMAN ACTIVIST:** This is "An Action Bulletin For Women's Rights" published monthly from 2310 Barbour Road, Falls Church, Va. 22043. Cost is \$5.00 for an individual (other rates also available). Contains news of the fight for the equal rights amendment, and other pertinent legislation.

**WELL SERVED: WOMEN IN TENNIS:** April, 1971. After a lot of temper raising by women's liberation, there is a pro tennis tournament and tour for women with substantial prize monies. Billie Jean King may become the first female athlete to win \$100,000. An April Las Vegas tournament had a total purse of \$30,000 with \$9,000 for the winner. Nothing like male tournaments of course, but a vast improvement.

**MOVING TO CEYLON? SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE,** April 3, 1971. An article on the condition of women in Ceylon by a writer identified only as "S.

speaker on Saturday was Kate Millett, author of *SEXUAL POLITICS* and a founding member of Columbia's Women's Liberation. Millett's talk stayed right with her usual subject, the repressive sex roles. "Nobody except the women's movement has begun to be honest about how sick sexuality is in this society, and we are only beginning to understand how desperate, how brutal a thing sex has been in the past. Our very notion of the erotic is deeply suspect on every side. Even our language of love abounds in a diction more military than amorous. It is loaded with terms like 'surrender'." Some of the costs of the conference were defrayed by selling a perfect duplicate of the most expensive perfume in the world, "Joy", which retails for \$64 an ounce. The women cooked up their imitation "Joy" and sold it for \$3 a bottle - it cost them about 50 cents a bottle to make it. That should tell you something about cosmetics.

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**TENNIS FIRST, NOW BOWLING:** *WALL STREET JOURNAL*, March 23, 1971. Women bowlers are fighting to join the professional all-male bowling circuit. Dotty Fothergill was denied membership in the all-male Professional Bowler's Association, and this started the suit. Her argument is logical - PBA pays better than all-female tours.

**HEARINGS IN THE HOUSE ON EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT:** March 24, 1971. Hearings opened in the House with the usual proponents and opponents. Both Bella Abzug and Martha Griffiths testified for the amendment. Senator Sam Ervin was in there fighting again. He is obviously a woman-hater of unbelievable proportions. Women are continually being accused of hating men, but no one says anything about men like Senator Ervin, whose personal bias could conceivably keep women enchained several more years.

**DEPARTMENT OF IMPOSSIBLE IRRITATION:** Did you know that in some 13 or so states you have to register to vote by marital status? You must sign Mrs. if you are Mrs. and Miss if you Miss and if you sign Ms. your vote doesn't count. Did you know that in most places you have to pay more to go to the JOHN if you are a female (and note where you are going to) than if you are a male. In Mansfield, England, this was recently stopped by the local women's liberation group bringing pressure to bear on the city council. Did you know that the Air Force demands from each female applicant four photos - but none from the male applicants. DO you KNOW what they had the almighty gall to say they were looking for? They are looking for a "healthy, personable appearance". Marvelous!

**UNEQUAL WORK LAWS SLOWLY BEING DECLARED ILLEGAL:** Dayton, Ohio, March 27, 1971. Two women, both employees of subsidiaries of General

Motors, have successfully caused the removal of several sections from a law that has been used to discriminate against women in employment. This is just one example, as similar actions are being taken all over the U.S. Some fear that this will mean the employers will brutalize women in some other manner. We feel that any woman who will not take brutalizing will not have to.

**SUITS FILED - MOSTLY IN WAGE DISPUTES OR JOB OPPORTUNITIES DENIED.** March, April, May and June, 1971. About one in four clippings received covers women from coast to coast filing suit to obtain their rights on the job. All social levels are included. A little less than two years ago all we heard from officials was that women would not bother to sue. They are bothering on a mass basis now. Keep it up, Sisters.

**TOO MANY INSTANCES TO TALK ABOUT, AGAIN!** We have received so many comments on changes in women's pay scales that we cannot list them all. Some dozens of companies, large and small, are being forced to revise their inequities, though not on a grand scale. The biggest of this batch was the April announcement by *SAFEWAY STORES, INC.*, which employs 97,000 people, that they would eliminate the pay scale differences between male and female workers on May 2, 1971. This will mean a pay hike of between 5 and 50 cents an hour for thousands of women coast to coast.

**800 WOMEN AT BOSTON:** March 27-28, 1971. Over 800 women attended the first New England Congress to Unite Women. Florence Luscomb was among the opening session speakers along with Florynce Kennedy, Jane Pollack of NOW, etc. Conference was sponsored by the New England Women's Coalition, which includes NOW, Black and Third World Women's Alliance, Boston DOB, YWCA, etc. Marilyn Levin, writing in *THE MILITANT*, said "Highlights of the workshops included the Gay Women's workshop . . ."

**ZEE, DETROIT FREE PRESS,** March 28, 1971. By the time you read this the movie ZEE with Susannah York and Elizabeth Taylor may be in general release. It is supposed to deal with Lesbianism. We wish we could be more excited, but having seen Hollywood's efforts to date in the area, we feel mild dismay instead. Do you suppose Susannah York won't be cast as a moron married to a sadist as in *THE KILLING OF*

*SISTER GEORGE?* We hope so.

**THE NEW YORK TIMES RIPS OFF N.Y. DOB:** In "The Disciples of Sappho, Updated", Judy Klemesrud wrote a run-of-the-mill destructive and generally vicious (and untrue) article about the N.Y. Chapter of DOB. This appeared in the New York Times *MAGAZINE*, March 28, 1971 (and on the editorial desk 10 times). As far as we know the only newspaper or magazine to comment on the situation was the underground socialist rag, *MILITANT* (April 16, 1971).

**DR. CARL McINTIRE:** March 29, 1971. A group of male homosexuals and Lesbians picketed Dr. McIntire's church in Philadelphia. Dr. McIntire (who is seemingly for everything that is bad and nothing that is good) told them he loved them but homosexuality "is a sin".

**SONS OF THUNDER GALLOP AGAIN:** *TIME MAGAZINE*, March 29, 1971. A militant group of male Catholics are out to see to it that women have babies whether they want to or not; more specifically, to keep the abortion laws on the books. The men wear red berets and khaki shirts. They need a color advisor.

**FIFTY WOMEN DEMONSTRATE TO END POLICE HARASSMENT OF PROSTITUTES:** New York City, March 30, 1971. 50 members of The Feminists peacefully demonstrated for several hours in front of the 54th Street police station to protest the unusually brutal harassment prostitutes and alleged prostitutes in the area have been receiving.

**THE WOMAN ACTIVIST:** This is "An Action Bulletin For Women's Rights" published monthly from 2310 Barbour Road, Falls Church, Va. 22043. Cost is \$5.00 for an individual (other rates also available). Contains news of the fight for the equal rights amendment, and other pertinent legislation.

**WELL SERVED: WOMEN IN TENNIS:** April, 1971. After a lot of temper raising by women's liberation, there is a pro tennis tournament and tour for women with substantial prize monies. Billie Jean King may become the first female athlete to win \$100,000. An April Las Vegas tournament had a total purse of \$30,000 with \$9,000 for the winner. Nothing like male tournaments of course, but a vast improvement.

**MOVING TO CEYLON? SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE,** April 3, 1971. An article on the condition of women in Ceylon by a writer identified only as "S.



Thiagarajah" would indicate (assuming it is true) that women are possibly more fortunate there than any other known area of the world. They may well be in control for the most part. It seems unlikely, and we suspect it is a pipe dream, but pleasant reading.

**WE ALWAYS HURT THE HANDIEST VICTIM: WOMEN'S STRIKE COALITION,** April 4, 1971, New York City. Governor Rockefeller cut Medicaid payments for abortions, and the Women's Strike Coalition protested it on April 8 at his office. The stupidity of this particular cut is well explained in their news release: "Women who are poor enough to require Medicaid will probably also be on welfare. A baby born to these women will . . . cost the state far more than the cost of an abortion."

**NIXON IS AGAINST ABORTION (THIS IS NEWS?)** April, 1971. Since every paper in the nation carried this, we only comment to indelibly record.

**MAJOR WOMEN'S COLLEGES REMAIN SEGREGATED. NEWSWEEK,** April 5, 1971. Although Vassar, Bennington and Sarah Lawrence have gone co-ed, most of the major women's colleges have remained for women only. These include Smith College, Mills in California, Stephens in Missouri, Bryn Mawr, and the four prominent Virginia schools: Hollins, Mary Baldwin, Randolph-Macon and Sweetbriar.

**JACK BAKER IS PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA STUDENT ASSOCIATION:** April, 1971. Seven or so women sent us this announcement. Jack Baker is an admitted homosexual, a law student, and is suing to be allowed to marry his lover, James M. McConnell, a librarian. Jack and James have had quite a bit of national publicity. We were pleased that 3 of the 7 women sending us notices of this victory for Jack (he polled 2,766 votes and his closest competition had 1,873) commented "NEXT TIME A LESBIAN?"

**LAYOFF WOMEN FIRST:** Albany, N.Y., April 8, 1971. If State Government Officials start laying off State employees, women will be the first to go in most cases. In fact, a woman with 30 years on the job could be laid off before a man with 4 months experience, if he happens to be a veteran.

**JILL JOHNSTON: VILLAGE VOICE.** During March Jill finished up her "Lois Lane Is A Lesbian" series (mentioned in the last issue of THE LADDER). She went on to examine female sexuality in print in

"Ecce The Sapphic Swimmer" on April 8, 1971, for the first time telling specific truth on the subject. It is about time someone exploded the myths about orgasms and the penis. Then on April 15, she described a visit with the local TV media in N.Y.C. which will surely be familiar to all of you who have been "used" on the air and the TV screen.

**LIVES SAVED:** April 13, 1971, New York City. City Health Services Administrator Gordon Chase announced that from July 1, 1970 through (apparently) March 31, 1971, 97,881 legal abortions have been performed in N.Y.C. In France on April 20, 1971, contraceptives went on sale for the first time. Slowly the world is changing.

**343 PROMINENT WOMEN IN FRANCE:** Newsweek, April 19, 1971. The women signed a statement to the effect they each had had at least one (illegal) abortion. In a country where this is a capital offense, that's some confession. Of interest too is the fact that women of equal prominence in this country probably would not sign such a statement and remain in their positions. Interesting.

**MORE AND MORE LESBIAN MARRIAGES:** New York City, April 19, 1971. An article in the NEW YORK POST about the Church of the Beloved Disciple (which later promised to get that church and its minister, Father Robert Clement, in trouble with state law) describes the marriage ceremony (called "Holy Union") of two black Lesbians. The article also comments that this marriage was the 20th such in the last 9 months. (Metropolitan Community Church branches all over the West Coast have been performing such marriages for well over a year.)

**INTERNAL REVENUE MAY GET THEM YET:** New York, Los Angeles, other locations, April, 1971. Many Lesbian couples and male homosexual couples are filing joint returns, according to various articles from around the country. So far the reason that they get away with it (supposedly) is that the computer cannot pick up two male or two female names (we can think of families where this would be damned hard anyway). So far no one has contested it in the courts, but those who have been doing this legally (there are ways to do it) for many years are apparently successful.

**A REFORM WE LABEL NEEDED BUT TYPICALLY ARROGANT:** Washington, April 15, 1971. Rep. Edward I. Kock, an

unmarried New Yorker, has sponsored a bill which will possibly end the inequities in taxation between single persons and married couples. The arrogance we find in it is that this bill is being described in terms of its BENEFIT to the bachelors of the land — no accounting made for the fact that women work in shit jobs, are paid lesser wages and work harder and are still taxed to death. Other house sponsors include unmarried Republican Barry Goldwater, Jr. of California and liberal Democrat Robert Drinan of Massachusetts. The latter is a Roman Catholic priest.

**THE ARMY IS GOING TO ALLOW MOTHERHOOD:** April 25, 1971. The Army is going to allow its female officers and enlisted women to have children if they are married. Unmarried women who get pregnant still get axed unless they have abortions or give up the child for adoption. The Air Force adopted this same general policy in March, 1971, and the Navy is expected to follow suit. One WAC officer commented: "I would think most women who want to have children would prefer to leave the Army". We tend to agree with her.

**A WOMAN'S PLACE IS IN THE HOUSE:** The Fresh Woman In Congress, Bella Abzug. Detroit Free Press, April 25, 1971. Writing about Bella Abzug's first four months as a "fresh(wo)man" congress-(wo)man, Eileen Foley lists her deeds to date. She believes women should be leaders and the top jobs in her office are filled by women. She opposes the war and draft and carefully tacks on anti-sex discrimination amendments to every federally-assisted program that passes her desk. She has started a national newsletter called "National Constituency for Bella Abzug" and it's available from 1829 Phelps Place, N.W., Washington, D.C. Clearly, a woman's place is in the House (and the Senate and everywhere else where power is and can be wielded).

**ERA PASSES FIRST HURDLE IN HOUSE:** Washington, D.C., April 30, 1971. A House subcommittee has approved the ERA again this year and it's gone to Cellar's cellar for holding for 3 weeks. Before you read this it will almost surely get out of full committee and onto the floor and pass, again, as it did last year. After that THE SENATE.

**ALL WOMEN ARE LESBIANS EXCEPT THOSE THAT DON'T KNOW IT: A DIALOGUE?** New York City, April 30, 1971. Nearly every paper in the U.S. and most major news magazines have reported

the evening event wherein Jill Johnston, Jacqueline Ceballos of NOW, Diana Trilling and Germaine Greer (see review of her book elsewhere in this issue) took on Norman Mailer in a dialogue. NEW YORK POST reporter Helen Dudar sums it up neatly by saying it was a "jolly pandemonium". Jill, after cleverly announcing to the very mixed audience that all women are Lesbians, occupied the stage only long enough to irritate Mailer. She was then greeted by two friends from the audience who joined her on stage for a well-reported event; they all left shortly thereafter. Germaine is said to have best told Mailer off; with the support of the balcony (where the women who could not afford the main floor sat), the women won the evening. (Editor's Note: May we point out that Simone de Beauvoir MANY years ago in SECOND SEX said the same thing — that all women are naturally Lesbian).

**SEXUAL BEHAVIOR:** April, 1971. We received so many copies of an article from this issue purportedly on Lesbians that we issue this warning. If everything in this magazine is to be along the lines of this initial issue, skip it. Some of the material included is a marvelous lesson in the old adage that "figures don't lie, but liars do figure".

**PHILADELPHIA MAGAZINE:** April, 1971. Well-known reporter and now editor, Nancy Love, of this most prestigious "city" magazine, included a good article "Chicken-ing Out On Women's Lib" in this issue. Despite that HORRIBLE title, this is good honest public consciousness examining.

**GLAMOUR MAGAZINE,** April, 1971. In an editorial dripping with ill-concealed venom, GLAMOUR asks "shouldn't we separate the women from the girls". The editorial goes on to explain that Lesbians are little girls who haven't grown up properly, and therefore they have (among other failings) no sense of community. We would wonder, therefore, why such a disproportionate number of women of accomplishment have been Lesbians. Quite obviously 1/3 of the population isn't Lesbian? The editorial expresses its belief that the gays (appendages to "their males") belong in gay liberation.

**THE FEMINIST PRESS,** 5504 Greenspring Ave., Baltimore, Maryland 21209, is asking for money to get its publishing program started. First planned are 50-75 page biographical pamphlets on famous women. One problem we foresee is that



they are using some women about whom much is already available. Otherwise the idea is good and might work if they can launch it.

**HARASSMENT DOESN'T STOP . . .**  
**EVER:** May 1, 1971, **SPECIAL TO THE LADDER.** N.Y. DOB was holding a fund-raising dance on this date when the local policeman entered the premises and attempted to enter the offices. Local officers refused to be intimidated, and drove him away. They also called the local precinct promising to fight any trumped-up charges in court. Two hours later 3 summonses were served on DOB officers. By now charges have been dropped. They always are, but the harassment goes on and on and on.

**WOMAN LEFT TO DIE AT HOSPITAL DOOR:** Kirkwood, Mo., May 8, 1971. St. Joseph Hospital has been suspended from membership in the St. Louis County emergency care program because a woman who had been stabbed 8 times, beaten and robbed, was refused emergency treatment. The emergency room staff used as excuse the fact that they "believed" hospital policy was to refuse treatment to any woman who "might have been raped". As it happened, Ms. Jacquelin Price was not raped, though her assailant had attempted such an assault. She was left for 30 minutes on a stretcher without treatment before she was taken to St. Louis County Hospital. She remains in serious condition.

**WHOSE FUTURE??** Washington, D.C., May 13, 1971. A large group of upper-middle-class white males (representing obviously the whole world) and calling themselves the World Future Society (they decide what the world is to be like in the future) were decidedly kept from the purpose of their meeting by a take-over by Wilma Scott Heide of NOW. The male reaction from the audience was to yell they were being drowned in "noise" and "fuck you" and other adult responses to serious speech.

**TWO DIFFERENT VIEWS OF MOTHER'S LIBERATION ON THE SAME DAY,** May 14, 1971: Rep. Bella Abzug, together with Rep. Shirley Chisholm, announced the introduction of a bill in Congress calling for 23 billion over a three-year period for day-care nurseries. Ms. Abzug was speaking before the first national conference on equal pay and promotion for women sponsored by the Urban Research Corp. Also on May 14, 1971, the

Social Security-Welfare Reform Bill was approved by the House Ways and Means Committee. This contains one slight provision for working mothers allowing them to deduct for child care with a total family income of up to \$12,000 a year. Presently the limit is \$6,000. Thus a family where the husband makes nearly \$6,000 a year and there are 3 or 4 children, the wife cannot work even at the slave labor wages paid to women to supplement the income without the family losing the total cost of child care, which is astronomical if it is minimally adequate.

**LOIS H. STAIR TO HEAD UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH:** Rochester, N.Y., May 17, 1971. For the first time a woman has been chosen to head the annual assembly of the 3.1 million-member church. She was elected from a field of four candidates and she was the first woman candidate for the office since 1963. Ms. Stair is not a minister, which adds to the honor since usually a minister fills the position.

**WOMEN FIGHTING FOR THEIR RIGHTS IN EDUCATION FIELD:** NEWSWEEK, May 17, 1971. In the Education section a four-page article covering battles from coast to coast in the "placid" Halls of Academe for women's rights. Worth looking up and reading.

**MORE WOMEN GENERALS:** WASHINGTON STAR, May 19, 1971. Brig. Gen. Elizabeth P. Hoisington is retiring as head of the Women's Army Corps; she is to be replaced by Col. Mildred C. Bailey, who will, of course, be promoted to the rank of General. Brig. General Anna Mae M. Hays is retiring as head of the Army Nurse Corps and will be replaced by Col. Lillian Dunlap, who will also be elevated to one-star rank.

**MOM AND P COLLECTIVE,** 3015 Mackland, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106. A group of Lesbians at this collective (together with some straight sisters) are planning to do a non-commercial book to be called "A Gay Reader". They are asking for help from Lesbians who are into women's liberation.

**NEXT ISSUE WE WILL REPORT ON THE WOMEN'S LIBERATION AND LESBIAN MEETING PLANNED FOR THE LOS ANGELES AREA OVER THE WEEK-END OF JUNE 25, 26 and 27, 1971.** Billed as GAY WOMEN'S WEST COAST CONFERENCE, their handbills specify women only and STRAIGHT SISTERS WELCOME. Sponsoring groups are L.A. DOB,

Gay Women's Service Center and Lesbian Feminists of Los Angeles.

**FIRST WOMEN SKY MARSHALS; DO WOMEN GET ATHLETIC SCHOLARSHIPS? FIRST MIDWIFE GOES ON DUTY; EXPLORERS GO CO-ED; WOMAN MECHANIC LIBERATES AUTO SHOP; GIRLS ADDED TO RELAY CARNIVAL FOR THE FIRST TIME; WAF WEARS 12 HATS IN TACTICAL UNIT; WOMAN IN COMMAND; COUNTY GIRLS ALLOWED TO JOIN TEAMS; GIRL PAGES ALLOWED TO CARRY U.S. FLAG; PRIESTHOOD SOUGHT BY WIDOW (age 76); and SOAP BOX DERBY TO ACCEPT GIRLS.** Now those are simply headlines from articles sent to us during April, May and June, 1971. We will see many more of them before you read this, but along with these which range from the ridiculous to the sublime, were some very serious appointments and a serious afterthought. The Mayor of Hartford, Conn., Ann Uccello, was named by Transportation Secretary, John Volpe, to head the Office of Consumer Affairs. Barbara Hackman Franklin, on leave from her job as Asst. V.P. and head of government relations at the First National City Bank of N.Y.C., has been appointed a staff assistant to Nixon, assigned to bring more qualified women into top government jobs. The city of Oklahoma City elected a woman, Patience Sewell Latting to be its Mayor, thus making itself

the largest U.S. city to do such a thing. And a small but excellent college in Detroit (Shaw College) has named a woman, Dr. Dawn E. Francis, a distinguished chemist, as its academic dean — which may be a first for women.

Now there are some key words in the opening headlines of this commentary. Note "accept", "allowed" (twice) and "added" — to our conditional humanity — we are accepted or allowed — or added to the real world. But in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, in April, 1971, an added and allowed woman, Catherine M. "Kate" Webb, United Press International bureau manager in Phnom Penh, was reported missing after being caught in an area that was overrun by Communist troops. It really doesn't matter in a man-made war what kind of troops were overrunning or what they were running over. What matters is that people die, including some women like Kate Webb, age 28, of Christchurch, New Zealand. Miss Webb, incidentally, had been a combat correspondent early in the Vietnam War for two years.

*(Editor's Note: We debated re-writing this segment of CROSS CURRENTS when we learned, on May 1, 1971, that Kate Webb is alive and well and has been released from captivity, but decided that the points still remain valid.)*

OH, GURU, YOU'VE GOT  
TO HELP ME GET MY  
HEAD TOGETHER...

THIS STEINEM CHICK WAS  
RAPPIN' ABOUT SEXUAL  
OPPRESSION. LIKE IT'S  
GONNA BE A WHOLE  
NEW BAGMAN. OH, WOW!  
GREAT GURU, WHAT  
DO YOU THINK OF HER?

NICE LEGS.



# Life Blood

By ELLEN GOLD

They had created an atmosphere about themselves that hid the cramped clutter of the apartment. It was a small place, but the ceiling was high and sometimes when they were home at night, the East River's breezes billowed the deep red drapes in the room, bringing with them through the wide window a city smell that made them wild to be outdoors and near the water. Naomi tried to keep the household needs behind an oriental screen, ornate with reds and golds. Sayre had hung more red drapery across the small hall between the big room and the bathroom that served as a kitchen.

Usually when they were home the couch was opened to their bed and they would be there drinking wine, looking from their books to the mantlepiece draped with a purple cloth above the fireplace, now bricked in. The moon could follow the breeze inside their window, falling from the sky across a thin strip of Riverside Park and finally onto their toes if the lights were off. Sometimes they found themselves making love at the foot of the bed to catch the light on each others' bodies as they moved in chase of each other.

Sayre was imposing. She would come in from the fresh spring city streets still in her only coat, a big brown fake fur. The bright colors of her dresses and scarves emphasized the breadth and height of her body. Her decisive movements, her careless walk, made her a giant to Naomi in daylight. When they walked through the park Sayre seemed to be bounding, leading, protecting. She was a surprise to Naomi each time they threw off their street clothes and their leanness met.

And it was Sayre who insisted they have their wine in delicate stemmed glasses. She took the responsibility of pouring for them from the gallon jugs Naomi's smaller hands could lift but not control. It was Sayre who had put fine embroidery on their bargain store pillow cases, and who chose Naomi's new flowing clothes, often white or pale yellow, sheer, with the lines of Greek togas. Naomi wondered if she had brought anything to the apartment at all besides her small body and worshipping mind, both to be cared for by this force she found more powerful than freedom. Sayre even patched the worn spots of her dungarees for her



with crazy quilt materials, carpeting pieces — even that last vestige of Naomi's street life was ornamented by her saint, as she called Sayre.

Down in the bars where they sometimes went Naomi preferred to stay at their table while Sayre, in white pants usually on those occasions, with shirts of bright orange or some homemade print, danced until she had to stop and save her energies for Naomi. Sometimes Naomi danced with a quiet gayboy or one of Sayre's old lovers. They would tell Sayre that Naomi was an elf, or a child, and they envied her, but Sayre would protest that Naomi was simply her strength, her life blood and certainly no child. Then they would sit close together and watch the people look for one another, often resting with them when discouraged.

That would be on a Saturday night, or a Friday, and the next morning Naomi would pull Sayre from their bed to go to the park. There they saw old people and children and some grass, some trees and finally the river. Naomi liked to buy cheese and French bread on the way and with a couple of cokes they would have their breakfast, shivering a little, by the river.

They talked, yes. They worked, too. They listened to records and planned to go to Paris. They set violets over the mantlepiece. They saw art films and sometimes

stood in the opera watching the people around them. Most of their energies were invested in the apartment and in the bars. The darkness, the drinking, the physical were what held them until one day Sayre went to Paris, leaving a note that she had to find her mind. She thought it had preceded her there. She said she wanted to see the pale flowers of Paris surrounded by the city's passionate colors. She said she did not know why she could not take Naomi, but that it was better.

Naomi tore the drapes down from the kitchen and rolled herself in them, rocking in pain on the bed until she could stand the color around her no more. Turning to face the white sheets she found their embroidered pillow cases. She pulled a jug of wine onto the bed with her and laid it sideways to her lips. She tasted Sayre's mouth and felt the wet wine staining the sheet red beneath her.



## Lesbiana

By GENE DAMON

*[Special Note: Promises and Apologies. After this column was completed, typed, the whole issue finished and in the hands of production, it was pointed out to me that it's really not a "Lesbiana" column at all. I'd already more or less mentioned this (see later in the column) with some explanation. The point is that next issue the whole column (which will be much longer) is devoted to the last several new Lesbian novels . . . and there are a lot of them including some very major studies. So until then, forgive me. Long time readers know I'd rather review Lesbian literature than edit this magazine . . . so my heart's in the right place, readers, at least.]*

We start off with a good fun book and one that ought to be useful as well, WOMEN'S SONGBOOK, compiled by Judith Busch and Laura X, available from Judy Busch, Oral Herstory Library, 2325 Oak Street, Berkeley, California 94708, for \$1 per copy plus postage . . . book rate postage is 14 cents and first class is 65



cents. The book contains 23 songs, drawings, photos, and a chord chart. One of the songs is a Chinese song dating from 718 B.C., but most are contemporary. Testing them out in true fashion, Gene Damon and Lee Stuart spent part of a Sunday playing and (hopefully) singing them . . . some of them are quite delightful; some of them aren't. All are fun. WE DON'T NEED THE MEN by Malvina Reynolds is especially delightful, and the full page photograph of her is excellent as well. Well worth buying at the ridiculously low price. The back cover, featuring one of Sarah Teasdale's "Songs for Myself," is not to be missed.

The 27 bound volumes of the unprinted diaries of Virginia Woolf are now a part of the Berg Collection of English and American Literature at the New York Public Library. Ms. Woolf kept her diary for 26 years . . . the last entry was dated four days before she walked into the sea in 1941 for a very final swim. Hopefully someday they will be edited and printed . . . by a woman.

Athenium Books includes a novel based on the 1917 suffragist movement in its spring books for children. They mark it for the 10-14 year group. We hope it has no stereotyped ending, but trust one of the collectives working with children's literature will check it out. Title is NEVER JAM, TODAY, and author is Carole Bolton.

Jill Johnston, the VILLAGE VOICE columnist we talk about in these pages all the time, has a collection out, MARMA-



LADE ME, N.Y., Dutton, 1971. The book includes selected columns from 1960 through 1970 . . . and shows the radical change in Jill's tone as she came toward the point of coming out into the open and announcing her Lesbianism. Readers who have been reading her only a short time (less than four years) as I have will be surprised to find she is a serious art critic in the sense that she has quite thoroughly covered the many facets of art in the broadest sense and has done it very well. Her style isn't easy reading, and she cannot be read for hours at a time, but the collection is very very worth your time and energy. If there is anything lacking, it is a "straight" (pun intended) biographical sketch to pull it together; but with patience, the growth from enfant terrible to adult woman can be followed along with a Jill's eye view of the art forms of the world. Whether you agree with her or not, she is to be read and thought about, at length and at leisure. We need her abrasive stance, if only to be reminded that sustained politeness and tolerance stretch thin and wear out the nerves. MARMALADE ME is a bad title for a book that has none of the so-so qualities of marmalade. A friend has suggested that "this is the way everything is" would have been a better title. I am inclined to agree. Recommended.

A pamphlet is out from the Feminists on Children's Media, P.O. Box 4315, Grand Central Station, New York, N.Y. 10017. The title is "Miss Muffet Must Go." It costs 25 cents and a stamped self-addressed legal-sized envelope. We have not seen it and cannot comment beyond the fact that it will obviously direct you away from bad books for children and towards good ones. I remind those of you who do not see an end to sexism and discrimination in our lifetimes that if we could raise ONE generation of children without these things in their behavior patterns, the problem would probably solve itself.

There is such a proliferation of women's newspapers, many of them making the fatal error of reprinting familiar material over and over again, that we have stopped mentioning them. We simply don't have the space. However, there are a few new women's journals coming out and some of them need talking about. One is a very modest low-keyed little magazine, THE WOMAN'S JOURNAL. Volume One, Number One was dated March, 1971. It comes from the Valley Women's Center, 200 Main

Street, Northampton, Mass. 01060. They don't show a price on it. Contents aren't remarkable . . . but the approach, quiet and in good taste, is.

Boston DOB has a magazine which was formerly called MAIDEN VOYAGE and is now called FOCUS. Despite the poor name choice, it is a good small magazine, with increasingly less obsession with Lesbians alone and more knowledge that indeed, all women must stand together. Their Volume 2, Number 4 issue, March, 1971, marks their change to women's liberation interests, though the cover still states it is a "journal for gay women." Not so, and rightly so. Cost is \$5 per year and address is Box 221, Prudential Center Station, Boston, Mass. 02199.

Sometimes people write to us and complain we don't review them. We review interesting magazines when we get copies. If you want to be reviewed, make sure we see your material . . . otherwise, no complaint.

The above reminds us to reiterate again. If you read and enjoy THE LADDER, and you know anyone who might but who does not see us, you are cheating them if you don't tell them about us . . . and you are cheating us, 'cause we might have to stop publishing . . . and you are cheating yourself, because if we aren't around, who will do our work on your behalf?

WOMEN'S STUDY COURSES are big news around the country. Many of these courses began with materials from the WOMEN'S HISTORY LIBRARY (also called WOMEN'S HISTORY RESEARCH CENTER) at 2325 Oak Street, Berkeley, California 94708. You can obtain a continuing CATALOG of the materials used, course outlines and various term papers available for \$12 from the WOMEN'S HISTORY LIBRARY. A few rather strong words of praise need to be heaped on the head of Laura X and a few friends who have kept this historical project going since International Women's Day, 1969. TAKE the time to write to this address, asking about whatever interests you in the women's liberation field or whatever would help you with your work. Do include a stamped self-addressed envelope and do make your request as concise and to the point as possible. This library, center, whatever you want to call it, is housed in Laura X's home and is a tax-exempt, non-profit labor of love. It is the only unsupported (by the enemy) women's library in the coun-

try . . . give it something even if you don't NEED ANYTHING from it . . . even a spare buck would help. Like all women they are terribly poor. This is a personal recommendation . . . they have helped me, helped THE LADDER . . . now let's support them. O-k? And while doing it, accord them the same patience and kindness you accord us, for few do the labor and many benefit. This has always been the way of the world, but it's time women changed all that. We can . . . there are enough of us.

Long time LADDER readers will recall mention in times past of the first known Lesbian novel in American literature, ORMOND, OR THE SECRET WITNESS, which was published in 1799. But what we did not know, and you may also not have known, is that Charles Brockden Brown also did a rather strong polemic on the rights of women. This is ALCUIN, called a novel but in reality a very political piece of work. ALCUIN came out in 1798 . . . or rather, the first half of it came out. The printer refused to print the second half, being disturbed by the implications of women's rights. Not until 1815 was this second half published (and it is literally unknown); and now, at long last, we have ALCUIN, the whole work, published clearly as a labor of love by a small publishing firm, Grossman (N.Y.), 1971. There is no doubt that this is must reading for anyone in the women's liberation, women's rights movement. We fear too few will read it . . . and this is sad. The blurb makes an interesting error . . . a humorously chauvinistic one at that. They call it "the first sustained and earnest argument for women's rights in the United States, also the first complete edition of the first published work of America's first professional writer." Not so, as a recent issue of EVERYWOMAN pointed out . . . America's first professional writer was a woman, Sarah Wentworth Morton, who published a novel on January 22, 1789 . . . well before Mr. Charles Brockden Brown.

MOVING OUT is a "journal" from Wayne Women's Liberation (Wayne State University, 331 University Center Bldg., Detroit, Michigan 48202). The first issue of the planned 3-times-a-year publication was March, 1971. Contents in Number One are very very uneven, but beyond that some of it is very good. Poems by Pamela Shriman give the only indication that yes, indeed, there might even be a stray Lesbian or two

loose in the Detroit area. It is, actually, in the area of poetry that the journal best succeeds, with fine material by LADDER artist and writer Adele A. Chatelin, Nancy Hennes, the above mentioned Ms. Shriman, Judy Ansuini and several other promising poets. No cost is listed for this . . . but write and ask, it's worth it . . . and if it grows, it should be supported.

Low-keyed and marvelous, "A Reprieve," by Frank Tuohy, in his collection FINGERS IN THE DOOR, N.Y., Scribner's, 1970, treats of a brother in a hospital and a visit from his sister. He is a homosexual (he doesn't know it); she is a Lesbian (she knows it) . . . and he is old and dying (they both know that). Also, he doesn't get along with her or her friend . . . and they don't like living together. How Mr. Tuohy charts their lives . . . well, read this one.

With the possible exception of the magazine APIRA (whose insistently heterosexual tone will be irritating to most adult women), there are few women's liberation magazines or journals of high quality. However, the magazine THE SECOND WAVE, with the first issue, Spring, 1971, just out (as this is written), promises to be an intelligent addition to women's liberation material. It deals very well with articles, less so with news, moderately well with poetry . . . and it has some excellent special features. First issue has a hard hitting article by Martha Shelley, "Lesbians in the Women's Liberation Movement," which also has something to say about the generally inept way ALL women are being treated as they go hopefully (and sometimes timidly) towards women's liberation groups. Their address is P.O. Box 303, Kenmore Square Station, Boston, Mass. 02215. Cost is \$3 a year; plans are to issue 4 each year.

A juvenile title, marked for the 12-14 year old group, MASKS, by Jay Bennett, Watts, 1971, is clearly a minor Lesbian title. The tie-in between the narrator/author, Anna, and the mysterious Jennifer, is confused with the same sort of psychological split personality nonsense that marks the marvelous Shirley Jackson Lesbian classic, HANGSAMAN, and the book, subtitled "A Love Story," is much for the same audience. It is hard to imagine it for the ordinary 12-14 year old . . . but then, it is not directed to the ordinary. This one, being intended (?) for the young, is given a cursory establishment ending . . . but it's a milestone in juvenile literature. Remember



ber how bored you were with books you were allowed to read at 12?

Ah, QUEEN ANNE is being visited again . . . this time by author David Green, N.Y., Scribner's, 1971. Yet another version of the triangular love affair between Anne, the powerful, beautiful and ambitious Sarah Churchill, and the "mean" chambermaid, Abigail Hill . . . the latter was undoubtedly doing a good deal of laughing up her sleeve. Too bad history hasn't left anything to tell us how SHE felt about it all. (The November, 1964, issue of THE LADDER has a long article on the love affair between Anne and Sarah.)

(For the readers who pointed out to us that the New York TIMES has proclaimed Willa Cather a Lesbian: Yes, 'tis true, and we knew it all the time; just haven't had time to work on the subject. And for the reader who asked if either Vern Niven or Lennox Strong would be kind enough to write about her for us, the answer is no. But there will be a biographical article on Cather in a future issue.)

We are working on a list of famous Lesbians, a sort of Lesbian "herstory" to borrow the phrase used by various west coast feminist groups (notably Varda One of EVERYWOMAN and Laura X of WOMEN'S PAGE). We are prompted by two things . . . we are tired of being "left out" of such listings on the one hand and even more irritated when a woman is listed as ostensibly heterosexual. When you see what a proud heritage we do have historically, you'll get the point. The list will run in a future issue (or issues), and we welcome suggestions from readers. No living persons will be included, of course, and no one for whom only "Intuitional" proofs exist.

Much comment critically and otherwise on the new movie, THE CONFORMIST, which is based on Alberto Moravia's novel of the same name . . . the faithful will recall that it has a very substantial Lesbian sub-plot which has, apparently, been carried over in the movie. Genet of NEW YORKER commented favorably about the movie in her regular feature, "Letter from Paris," March 13, 1971, and the March 31 issue of the same magazine carried a more or less rave review.

Victoria Vidal and Patricia Horan's play, GOD BLESS GOD, SHE NEEDS IT, was recently tried out in the New Haven area. It is rumored to be on the way to Broadway. The musical (Ms. Vidal is the composer, Ms.

Horan the author/lyricist) is about a Presidential election and a women's revolution that stops it. Talent runs in families . . . Vicki Vidal is Gore's cousin.

Two movies by women . . . WANDA, starring and directed by Barbara Loden, and A NEW LEAF, starring and partially directed by Elaine May, are around just now. Haven't seen either, but will, and you probably should too.

A new "helper" provides this about ARFIVE, new novel by A.B. Guthrie, Jr., Boston, Houghton-Mifflin, 1970: Conflict of Eastern Victorianism and the turn of the century west is an atypical "western" novel. This is a good picture of life in a small western town at that time. The Lesbian element is provided by a school teacher, Miss Carson, who arranges for a young Indian girl to enroll in the local school. She then provides a home for the girl. "Observed" in a compromising position with the girl by the local peeping tom and confronted with the information, she sends the girl back to the reservation and commits suicide. Very sympathetic view presented of the teacher, but the trite "leave them dead or dying" bit is from a Lesbiana of another time. Mr. Guthrie was obviously getting on the "Lesbian bandwagon" to add spice to his book.

Future reviews will include a new biography of Gertrude Stein which more clearly details her personal life than any prior work, a new find from the classics, and a review of Donn Teal's THE GAY MILITANTS, which clearly shows the reasons women are deserting gay liberation for women's liberation in droves.

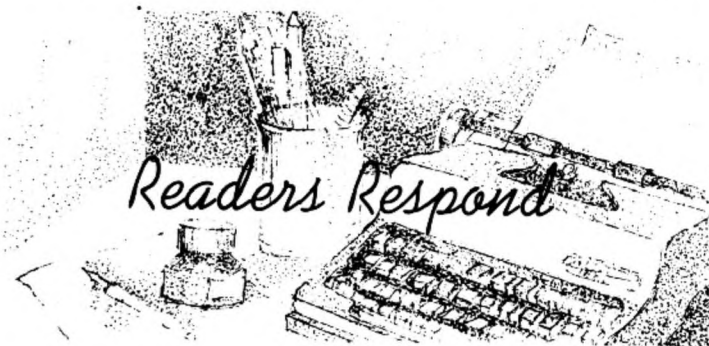
IMPORTANT NOTE: The very very rare classic Gertrude Stein major Lesbian novel, THINGS AS THEY ARE, which was first titled (by her) QUOD ERAT DEMONSTRANDUM, has been reprinted in FERNHURST, Q.E.D., AND OTHER EARLY WRITINGS, N.Y., Liveright, 1971. Cost is \$7.50, which seems high but isn't, not for a book that includes a novel now selling at \$25 (if you can find a copy, and you very definitely cannot). The history of THINGS AS THEY ARE, from its writing date of 1903 to its initial publication in 1950 by a small private press in Vermont, is a monument to the history of how great works get kept out of circulation through fear. Great as Gertrude Stein was, she did not dare publish so explicit a proof of her own Lesbianism in her lifetime.

The increasing problem of having time

to review books for this column has been partially solved by the addition of two qualified "helpers", both librarians and both book women and LADDER supporters. One has provided the following: WE DANCE AND SING, by Richard Dougherty, Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday, 1971, is a fictionalized biography of the Malloy family, an ex-show business couple, down on their luck and talent, who settle in the husband's hometown in Western New York in the early part of this century. Among the townfolk is a Lesbian couple. One character

in the book points out that the Lesbians "have the best marriage, no competition". In the context of the novel this is true. A sympathetic portrait, since left to themselves the Lesbians are never a part of the town's numerous copulative scandals. Readable novel, and libraries will have this for the most part.

In addition to previously mentioned items coming in the next issue, we will have some 10 or more new Lesbian titles to report on . . . all received too late or simply not handled in time, for this issue.



Dear Gene:

I have a rotten self image - due to many factors; (1) family . . . ugh! (2) The "Academy", mainly. At the Academy (in Philadelphia) instructors (all male and VERY chauvinistic, except one female instructor who was stuck teaching a very dull cast drawing class, although she is one of the best painters in the East) used to kick in (literally) paintings done by students whose work they did not like. We - female students - were told to leave the art field and have babies instead, since that IS the function of Woman, etc., blah, blah, blah. You know, women can't paint because we lack a basic "something". Of course, I never said WHAT . . . balls, I presume. I got this attitude every day. There was the class of 100 students where one instructor butchered a student's ego (and self-image) in front of everyone . . . especially the women got it. I completed the four year course in two years . . . thank God! . . . and left. Since then, I have had crisis after crisis of self doubt. Then there was a Psychiatric case-worker who lived across the hall from us. He was gay and very ashamed of it and he scared me out of my mind until I began thinking that everything I painted was a phallic symbol or vaginal teeth. I

destroyed seventeen paintings in an instant of self hate. Alas. But, listen: you cannot imagine how much THE LADDER helped me. I mean, I really began thinking about how every concept in art (EVERY concept) has been created by the male, and now is the time for new concepts to be discovered . . . so I can say, "fuck you" to all the little male chauvinistic ghosts who have followed me from the Academy.

Adele A. Chatelin  
Detroit, Michigan

Dear Gene,

I just wanted you to know how very much I appreciated your letter. It really gave me a feeling of closeness for all of our sisters fighting, in various ways, for our freedom as women and individuals. I am more convinced than ever that we especially need to deal with the Lesbian issue. Since the report on our first attempt at presenting an educational meeting on Lesbianism appeared in our newsletter, adding that we were going to re-group and plan a new one, we have gotten many calls and also women stopping by the office to say they are interested and wanting to participate in working on it.

I very much like, in THE LADDER,

those sections devoted to women's creative endeavors. I like to write myself and have done poems, articles, etc. but always considered myself "not very good." In fact, though I loved "putting things together," I was always afraid to even try out for a school newspaper. Now that I've become involved with women's liberation, I've thrown myself into working on our newsletter and I love it.

I will subscribe to THE LADDER and also order back issues, as soon as I set aside the money. It was exciting to see the coverage given Women's Movement activities and the support shown for them. I hope we are able to give and share as equally within the Women's Movement . . . Within very politically-oriented groups such as ours, there is often a real and tragic lack of enjoyable relaxing and personal contacts, free of all the business, work, and political pressure.

Our meeting should be interesting as we'll have several women from our local W.L.M. who are sympathetic toward and interested in Lesbianism but basically "straight" by experience and several Lesbians who are very unpolitical and not part of any women's group (they saw the newsletter and asked to come). It's funny when you feel emotionally Lesbian yet have no physical experience, and we all feel awkward and adolescent, like we have to grow up all over again. I'm sure we can all learn a lot from each other. I only wish my best friend (we've loved each other four years but can't figure out how to confront the "physical" aspect of it - so we have avoided it) was here to participate (She's in the States - it's a complicated story, we both live with men). I know I will never fully forgive this society for depriving me (at least temporarily) of my freedom, potentials, and choices without even letting me know they were *there* at all. This is Woman's biggest oppression - that she is brainwashed into believing she has no oppression - not only that she has no freedom of choice, but that there are no other choices (or if there are, the others are negative reaction to the one central choice we all are born to "make" and live).

I'll keep you informed of how the educational meetings progress and any papers or literature that comes out of it. Thanks again for your encouragement and the opportunity to tell somebody my own feelings about some of the issues. For a long time, I was afraid to admit to *anyone* that I

could love another woman in a deep overwhelming and permanent way. It seemed so odd. I think there are *more* of us who felt that (and hid or suppressed it) than anyone has guessed. Now that we are getting together, maybe we can share our fears, dreams, and future.

Best of luck on your magazine! It's really great. When I read it, I felt like crying because it was so *proud* - women *should* be proud of what they are and can be.

A Canadian Sister

Dear Gene Damon:

I hope the married sister doesn't need the prestige of a Kate Millett to be accepted. After reading Ms. McCormick's article in the February/March, 1971, issue, I'm a little confused. I am not an Ethel Kennedy fan either, but I wonder if Ms. McCormick thought to really look beyond the Mr. Kennedy hair-do or the idle vacant stare, and take a count as to how many of these women might really be her sister in heart and soul, need and desire, to give and to accept. The blank stare might just be the question "How the hell did I get myself into this, and how do I get out"? No answer, just silence.

Considering the religious upbringing most women over 30 years of age today had, it would be very interesting if an honest count could be taken to discover the true sexuality of the over-30 suburban wife and mother.

D.W.

Small Midwestern Town

April 14, 1971

Dear Gene Damon,

The Library Administration Division of the American Library Association recently conducted a salary survey among ALA members in all types of libraries. A report of that survey is in the April Issue of AMERICAN LIBRARIES.

Of those librarians responding to the survey, 2778 were men and 9030 were women. With a ration of more than three to one in the profession, some might expect women to command the better salaries. Not so. The average salary for a man with a Ph.D. was listed as \$19,649. The average salary for a woman with the same degree is only \$15,492. This same difference held true down the scale through those people holding less than a Master's degree.

It is ridiculous to think that a field so dominated by women would tolerate this.

One can only hope that those ALA members who work so diligently for the rights of various minority groups will see fit to labor for equal rights of the women within their own organization.

Jan Watson  
Denver, Colorado

Dear Gene,

I read the letter from L.F. in the April/May 1971 issue of the Ladder and I would like to mention a song I think has "implications" also. It is in the Country Music style. The title is "Help Me Make It Through the Night" recorded by Sammi Smith. It is a 45 RPM on "Mega" label. I think many would enjoy it very much.

B.W.  
Elmhurst, N.Y.

Dear Gene Damon,

There are two rock groups which all women who read THE LADDER will want to be aware of. The first is one which comes from the West Coast and has been together about five years. It is called "Joy of Cooking" and consists of two women who sing and play instruments, write the music and lyrics, and do the arrangements. On the record they are backed up by three men; their significance is obvious just in the fact that the men *back them up*. The women, Terry Garthwaite and Toni Brown, are basically the group and all its dynamic energy comes from them. Listening to their two voices is not only an incredibly beautiful music experience, but also a message to all of us about how good women can be together. They intertwine, give each other room, and generally accomplish things musically that I would expect only to hear silently in making love with a woman. If that is not enough of a recommendation, I would like to add that their appeal transcends that of rock music. Women who regularly do not listen to rock have raved about the recording. Buy it, listen to it, love it. They sing to all of us. It is on a Capitol label, and the album bears the same title as the group.

The second group does not have an album and may never have one because their audience, as well as their mission, is derived from Women's Liberation. The New Haven Women's Liberation Rock Band is worth at least one hundred male groups. They begin their sets and most numbers with raps from the members of the group on their purpose and reason for existence.

That is, of course, to be a voice of the women's liberation movement. They feel that rock music is male dominated and male oriented. They cite examples like the Rolling Stones' "Under My Thumb" as the rock that is being played today. They are all too accurate in their analysis of rock. Their lyrics are concerned with women and their songs range from militance to gentle dancing music. I know of no time when they have failed to turn on an audience more than any other group I have ever seen. Everyone dances. If you are in the north or middle eastern part of the country, go to see them or bring them into your city. They are an experience we can all appreciate and are, hopefully, just the beginning of a trend in all music.

L.F.  
New York

(Editor's Note: Liberation News Service has been circulating an article about the New Haven Women's Liberation Rock Band which includes their request for songs from women. Their address is New Haven Women's Liberation Rock Band, 1504 Boulevard, New Haven, Conn. 06511. Also like to add our recommendation concerning JOY OF COOKING which is really something special. This is one album you'll keep forever.)

Dear Gene,

I have not written to you in a very long time. Not since before the last N.A.C.H.O. meeting. You made it quite clear that the entire idea of male-female co-op efforts in the Gay Movement turned you off. At that time, I am afraid I suffered from a familiar disease combination: Idealism-Naivete. But it is amazing, Gene, how quickly reality makes itself obvious. A Radicalesbians group has formed in Buffalo. I have been involved in it almost from its inception and have learned the real meaning of Consciousness-Raising. The sense of community, the sense of real and honest love among women, is an experience I never imagined could exist. It has truly been a personal revelation in the most profound sense of the word.

It has also laid a heavy trip on my personal life. My lover - a male-identified woman - and I, are parting company after almost five years. It is a great tragedy, particularly for her, since she feels that she has done nothing "wrong". But I can no longer relate to someone who thinks



women are second, silly, subservient and cannot achieve real closeness like "guys" or even like "butches". It is not a matter of relating to transvestism (clothes neither make the man nor the woman), it is rather a matter of mental and emotional transsexuality which gives me the feeling that there is a man in the house — and that's not where it's at!! Up until very recently I thought I was part of the movement predominantly to help my brothers that I saw being harassed on the streets . . . but no longer. It's my issue; my sisters; my flesh and guts that are being stepped on, and it's a different scene. A woman who feels profoundly the need for communication with womanhood, both her own and others', cannot be expected to tolerate a dichotomous situation. It can only lead to mutual disgust.

Therefore, revelation has caused expansion, self-identity, communion, and sadness. Hopefully it will benefit us all. If she stays with the Movement, maybe it can happen to her. I pray for it.

But on a happier note, the Radicalesbians group has been a beautiful experience. Some of us are thinking of starting a Women's Band (I play electric 12-string now), and possibly a women's boutique — things by women for women, with the proceeds going to the rent and the Movement.

I have not left the group I belonged to before this change in my attitude. But through that kind of facility, I do a great deal of public speaking — colleges, radio, T.V. — for women, gay women in particular. People ask about women, lesbians. Men cannot answer those questions (even though they often presume to do so!!) I feel a duty, along with some other sisters, to maintain that communication and make use of that inroad and facility. I am also starting male-female dialogue on a small scale for the purpose of providing speakers who have an understanding of each other, all the aspects of sexuality, and the Movement in all its forms.

But priorities have certainly been re-evaluated since I wrote to you last. Robin Morgan, Shulamith Firestone, the published and the unpublished women who feel the import of their womanhood have made a profound change; an emerging consciousness. I wish I had known these things when I last wrote to you.

"FOR SISTERHOOD"  
BUFFALO, N.Y.

(Editor's Note: N.A.C.H.O. is the North American Conference of Homophile Organizations — a primarily male homosexual affiliation. Lesbians are moving out of male homosexual groups much as heterosexual women deserted "Movement" groups to form Women's Liberation.)

# FUCK YOU, "BROTHERS!" or YET ANOTHER WOMAN LEAVES THE GAY LIBERATION MOVEMENT By NANCY TUCKER

All right guys, gentlemen, "brothers" . . . I am leaving at last. I'm not going home to my kitchen to sulk. And I'm not going out to misspend what's left of my youth in the bars. (Why should I? They're male oriented, too.) I'm just leaving.

Leaving because this organization and this movement offer me nothing. Why should I be interested in homosexual rights — they're based on (male) homosexual problems: entrapment, police harassment, blackmail, tea room assignations, venereal diseases. Christ, I can't relate to that kind of shit; it has no meaning whatsoever for me.

I'm leaving because I'm disgusted. I can't relate to people (read that men) who need people (read that fetish objects). Snow queens, dinge queens, chicken queens, muscle queens, queen queens . . . the list goes on and on. Pick your favorite, or add your own to the list. I see this fetish thing in every male homosexual I know. I don't see it in women. Thank God WE see people as people, not as objects.

I'm leaving because I'm tired of coping with massive male egos, egos which cannot comprehend how anyone could want to have nothing to do with a male-dominated movement. If you cannot understand why I wish to withdraw, then my "liberated" brother, you are part of the problem.

Everywhere I turn, my senses are bombarded with the most appalling of crudenesses. I'm sick of watching skag drags parading up and down, prancing and dancing in their "finery" and mocking me and my sex with every step. I'm tired of hearing somebody referred to as "Miss" when he's done a no-no: "Miss Terry, well she's always late." "Miss Chuck, she can't seem to get herself together." "Hush your

(Continued on Page 54)

## Leisure Books, Inc.

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NORTH HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA 91606  
(213) 980-4480

1 March 1971

Gene Damon, Editor  
The Ladder  
Box 5025  
Washington Station  
Reno, Nevada 89503

Dear Gene:

As a second thought to your query as to why we will not be publishing novels with lesbian themes, our editorial attitude is pretty representative of all the major paperback and hardcover publishers' thinking nowadays.

There does not seem to be an active, genuine, buying interest unless the material is sensational or lurid — something most responsible publishers prefer to avoid.

If your subscribers wish to see more fiction available at paperback prices, I have to fall back upon the old cliché that action speaks louder than words. First, all of your subscribers who are interested in this type of material should write to the various publishers and ask to see more of it; and if the publishers comply, then they (the subscribers) should actively back up the publishing investment by getting out to buy the books themselves.

It may help you to know that it costs a publisher roughly \$10,000.00 to publish a book, with an average printing of about 75,000 copies of each title. That means that 75,000 people should buy the book — not lend it to friends, or borrow a copy, since that only cuts down sales. If you will forgive my crude language, inform your subscribers to put their money where their mouths are...or a suitable paraphrase will do.

But you'll first have to show publishers that there really is a buying market for this type of material or it may well be another ten years before publishers decide to "test" this market again. Based upon the information you provide to your subscribers, even your own magazine is having trouble obtaining sufficient subscribers to exist...can you blame publishers for being reluctant?

Sincerely,

*Yvonne MacManus*  
Yvonne MacManus  
Editor-in-Chief

YK:ag



mouth, Miss Cade."

Crap! The incredibly blatant sexism of the GLF could be told in many volumes.

I'm tired of being called "girl". I ceased being a "girl" several years ago. I am on my own now, I support myself, and I conduct myself in an adult manner — I deserve to be called a woman, and I have many more claims on that title than many of you do to the appellation "man".

I can't even withdraw into homophile literature without being offended. Naked "studs" on every page. And those ads! "Wanted — triple amputee for photo exchange." "Want cauc. male, over 8 inches, for Greek pleasures." "Black stud needed as master for willing white slave." And on and on, *ad nauseam*. The ads abound with fetishism. Whatever happened to *people*, huh?

IS IT ANY WONDER WHY THERE HAVE BEEN SO FEW WOMEN IN THE MOVEMENT? AND WHY THE NUMBERS OF WOMEN ARE PLUMMETING?

Oh, but in our Washington, D.C. GLF there have been women. Yes, there have, and they've gone, too. How many can you count who have attended more than two or three meetings? (Not that I really expect you to be able to do it . . . Why should you be expected to remember mere women? After all, if you can't go to bed with them, they're of no use whatsoever.)

There aren't even women at the dances. BUT THE FACT IS THAT THERE ARE MORE LESBIANS THAN HOMOSEXUALS.

You faggots, and I use that word with every ounce of malice I possess, could care

less about women. And you will suffer for it.

Every time you put down a woman, you drive the knife just that much deeper into your own gut. You are committing suicide by your depreciation of the opposite sex.

Isn't the worst thing that can be said about a man is that "He's acting just like a woman." Don't you all strive to rid yourselves of effeminacy, for it's wrong to seem like a woman. Woman is *not* nigger, gentlemen, but as long as you continue to believe it is so, you rip open your own bellies.

Gay Liberation will never succeed until Women's Liberation succeeds. Your fate hinges on that of women, like it or not. Male homosexuals will not be equal until women are equal.

And the wars which so many of you so violently (notice that word) oppose will not cease until such time as women, the lovers of peace, have an effective voice in the governments of the world.

Liberation? Gay Liberation? Liberate yourselves, my friends. For myself, I don't need you or it.

*(Nancy Tucker has been the Washington, D.C. area correspondent for the L.A. ADVOCATE . . . and active in the gay movement for many years. Like most women she is deserting the homophile movement because of its uselessness to Lesbians. Nancy has long been a "friend" to THE LADDER, and we are happy to run this "farewell".)*

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## THE LADDER IS BEING INDEXED

All of its completed fifteen years of life will be recorded in a detailed index to make the many facets of its life fully available. We have a competent indexing force working on this now, but we need at least one and probably two women who are excellent typists to volunteer to do the final typing before printing. Complete detailed instructions will be provided by the professional indexer who is heading this project. Please contact Gene Damon right away if you would be able to help with this work.

## 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.

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