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.

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Vignettes from
HELLO, BRIGHT BIRD, GOODBYE
I. "Seeds"

September, 1927
Blowing dandelion seeds from the swayed stoop of an abandoned shanty are two four-year-olds. She, with an aura of pearl hair and eyes more silver than gray and a lullaby voice, known among the social workers, as "Fairy", is Mina. He, with a lid of brown-thrasher hair and amber eyes and a chirping chuckle, known among the social workers as "Cherub", is Nicky.

He blows a seed onto her arm. She blows a seed onto his arm. She blows a seed to his cheek. He blows a seed to her cheek. His big brother and her big sister have gone to school. Their fathers have gone down into the coal mine. Her mother is at home tending a sick uncle. His mother is dusting the church.

He puffs a seed to her knee. She puffs one to his knee. She lifts her dress. He puffs one to her stomach. Yes. He lifts his shirt. She puffs one to his stomach. She glances towards the door... which he squeezes open. Indoors, they stand, displaying bellies, fair and smooth as two loaves of bread. His is fatter. Her belly button is round. It gazes. His is a wink.

She blows his a seed. He blows hers a seed... which spills to the edge of her pants. She eases the pants down a bit. He blows her a fluff. Her pelvis tastes it, stinging sweet as a lemon drop.

He eases his pants down. His pelvis likes the fluff, too. A wriggle urges her pants to her knees. A ditto wriggle: his pants obey. She feels herself pucker at the sight of him. "Yours is like a thumb," she says. "Look. It's hitch-hiking."

"Sure.
She blows a fluff onto his. Yes. He blows a fluff to hers.
A black pounce. Her mother is yanking, snatchting, spanking. "Wilhelmina! Nicholas!" - like a spider that jabs and stabs and bundles its prey into two paralyzed packages.

October:
"Does Daddy know?"
Her mother looks away.
"Please. Did you tell Daddy?"
"Maybe I did. Maybe I didn't."

"I'll never do it again."
"You'd better not."
"I know I won't. I can't."
"Bah!"
In and out, up and down, round and round, like a yo-yo in her mother's hand.

December:
In the kitchen beneath Mina's bedroom, Nicky's mother tells Mina's mother Nicky has been very sick. "His tonsils are full of poison and must be cut out in the hospital."

Tonsils? The thumb-thing in the throat? It will bleed.
By evening, she, too, is sick. Her mother, standing over her bed, making a witch-shadow on the wall, that mother, whose face is the color of buttermilk, whose eyes are big bruises, says, "You've been thinking nasty thoughts. It shows in your eyes. I can smell it on your breath."

February:
"Does Daddy know?"
Her mother shrugs.
"Please, please! Does my Daddy know?"
Her mother leaves the room.
Mina, who has always slept with her father, while Mamma and sister Dena share the unfolded davenport, hitches herself like a cocoon to the edge of the bed.

He doesn't tell her stories anymore. He coughs. He stinks. He snores.
She whispers, "Daddy? I can't sleep, Daddy."
He says, "Pray. Pray without ceasing."
He knows.

April:
Uncle Klaus has had D.T.'s again. He comes to the house right after Daddy has gone to work and Dena has gone to school. Mina has been sent to her room. Down in the kitchen, Mamma cries. Uncle Klaus cries, too. The house fills up with his odor: sour.

Then the washing machine chugs. He, staggering about in his father's clothes, pushes open her door. He grins, muses her hair, wrings it in his shakey hands. He shoves her to the bed, buzzes a hornet-finger at her skirt, which she squeezes shut with hands stronger than his.

After he has left the house, with a big bag of lunch under his coat, Mina says, "Mamma, Uncle Klaus tried to pull up my dress."
"When?"
"While you were washing his clothes."
"Are you making that up?"
"No. He came to my bed and pushed me down and—"
"Klaus is my brother. He's got no home but this."
"Will you tell Daddy?"
Silence.
"Shall I tell Daddy?"
"Don't you dare. She shakes her head."
"I can't put an old head on your shoulders."
Before the booze got Klaus, you wouldn't believe it but it's true, he was such a gentleman - so smart and strong and good-lookin'. Ha. Yer father couldn't hold a candle to him.

September:
Will you tell my teacher?
Silence.
"Please! Will you tell my teacher, Mamma?"
"I'll think about it."
"I'll be good."
"Let's hope so."
"Is it still on my breath?"
"At times."

All week, the worry lashes upon itself... On the terrible Tuesday, Mina arrives brittle at breakfast.

Dark Dena says, "Look: The Christmas-tree angel."
Daddy stares into his oatmeal.
Mamma huffs a kiss on top of Mina's head. "Yer breath," she whispers.
Mina starts to cry.
"Stop it!" Mamma says. "I'll be praying for you."

After Dena and Daddy have left, Mina says, "Is it still in my eyes?"
"Just a trace."
"I don't want to go to kindergarten."
"You have to. Else I go to jail."
"Will you pray hard?"
"You can be sure of that. As long as I live, you can be sure I'm praying for you."
"Oh, Mamma, thank you!"
"Now, go.
So she goes... The teacher, glancing across the thirty bobbing heads, sees the one pastel enter, alone, and glide to a chair in the far corner... a Sunday smile in the shadow, less like a girl than a trillium.

II. "Virago"

In the high school locker room, Willo stands on the scales, her breasts two timid touches against her slip, her face closed tightly as a lady's compact against the shrieking and the shrill scents of sweat and perfume, and the smell of a girl's body falling watersmooth over sharp scapulace.

"Eighty-four pounds. My God!" says a sweat-beaded stallion of a girl, cedar-colored, in a man's shirt taut at the shoulders, the stallion records the weight on the teacher's clipboard, clicks back her brief hair, elastically, and her indigo gaze narrows on the fairy-girl like shears.

On the woodland path, standing unaware on the Indian pipe, the big girl blocks the way. She shoars the zipper of her leather jacket up and down, slicks back that short hair, and says, "Hey, Willo, want me to carry your books?"
"No thanks.
The big girl picks up a gray rock and hurls it against a boulder. The rock drops, gashed, into halves, glowing salmon-pink. "I don't want to go home today. My parents are finishing their divorce," she says.

Willo looks away. When she looks back, the girl is staring at her, still blocking the path, like a hound holding up a thorned paw.

"Call me 'Pete,'" she says on the second
Willo, wanting her silence against the spurt of the other's monologue, and with a furtive glance at the back of Pete's head, bursts out, "Pete help a limping girl off the softball field, receives the cold coin with one blink that leaves her eyes for the rest of the day two colorless spots.

With cold hands and crisp smile, Willo lets him lead her onto the prom floor. He - track man, editor, class president - smells of toothpaste and hair oil, and being held this close to him is a lesson in male anatomy.

After a while, he says, "You are a Dresden doll."

Knowing now he is no poulte, she grows faint and has to be taken home.

On her bed, her flutterings huddle around the memory of Pete, like a convey of quail returned to safety.

From the gym teacher, with her warning ... to the preacher, with his "hmmmmm" ... to the Presbyterian minister, with his blush ... to the psychologist, with his ink blots ... to the social worker, with her suggestion of scholarships ... to the endocrinologist, with his: "It isn't even legal" ... they become searchlights plowing, repeatedly, the cloudloom ... back to the gym teacher, with her shrug ... to the surgeon, with his "No!" ... to the psychiatrist, with his fee ("Why don't you try Hollywood?") ... back to the social worker, with her smile and scholarships ... they become wanderers, prowling, octave by octave, this peripheral music until they are twenty, and in college. Pete, the Practical, dreary from drifting, needing a job, coaxes her what-the-hell swagger into a slightly softened stride, and becomes, for a season, ambighious.

With one rush up the rocks, she enters, stammering, the Accepted Idiom.

Across the campus bruised with hyacinths, Spring comes again, like a census-taker to record re-births, and Willo, responding with a cipher-smile, watches the fly on the warm window, wringing its hands.

III

"Twenty-One"

"This is no place for a Garbo," the WAVE recruiter had warned her.

Thus, without valence, Willo endures seventy-one barracks mates out of the factories of Ohio, out of the department stores of Pennsylvania, out of the offices of Brooklyn, out of the God-knows-what of West Virginia and Kentucky ... seventy-one patriots, uniformed like bars of soap, clack-their bargain-basement creeds; "Personally, I believe ... " They can't make you march during your monthly, can they?" ... "And then, I had to slap his face."

"A hut tew an' a hut four! Yet lep rot lep!" the commander - Lord - is an Old Salt version of Pete. "Yet lep rot lep. Git ommmmmm yet lep!"

"A shingle, Kiddo, is not just a style of haircut." ... "This is My Beloved?" states Maryland, fondling the rosary under her pillow, "Isn't that that dirty book?" ... "Don't 'Roger' me. ... "Go have the chaplain punch yer T.S. chin."

Pete's parent, ponderously picking a lipstick to match her scarlet slacks, says, "How sweet. Ask Willo up for the weekend."

Thus, each girl, in that kiss, has thrust an antenna into a baffling Othersness.

High on the school firescape they sit, Pete's hard gabardine thigh against Willo's gingham one: Pete's Girl Scout ring, sized down with string, is a humblebee on Willo's finger. Pete's thighs press so hard that Willo (praying: Oh, wait for me, Mr. Dreamman!) springs alive like starched orangy under a hot iron.

Kissing was their springtime. Lying together, whispering, sighing, in their elaborately web of wanting, other lips grow frantic for kissing ... and the ripe, burning bud, like an electric button, shoots summer into their luminous limbs, and beyond. More ... and more ... and more ... until they are afraid of so much genius.

The genius has its price: Pete, watching Willo hand an eraser to a boy across the aisle, is scalder with stud-salt. Willo, watching Pete help a limping girl off the softball field, receives the cold coin with one blink that leaves her eyes for the rest of the day two colorless spots.

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walk home from school, still showing the zipper up and down.

Willo consents, holding her silence against the spurts of the other's monologue, winning as she tramples again on the Indian pipe and kicks at a bracken fungus, which spatters like entrails.

On a rare warm day in November, when a last maroon leaf pangs against a too-blue sky... on a day when Winter should be sealing seeds away into the sleeping soil, Pete, still talking, talking, draws Willo's hair around them both, like a curtain, and kisses... It is as when a silk thread is slipped across flesh, there wells the red jewel of pain.

Wan with wonder, Willo confesses.

Her mother, with hair still thatched from a year in the state asylum, holding a Bible in her hand, keeps a goiterous gaze on the door, where she has laid ready a butcher knife and a bottle of ammonia.

Dena says, "You're lucky they don't burn witches anymore.

Her father, blinking out of skinny hunched shoulders like a worrybird, opening his Bible to the Book of Paul, says, "Surely, Little Sister, we are living in The Last Days.

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"A shingle, Kiddo, is not just a style of haircut. "This is My Beloved" states Maryland, fondling the rosary under her pillow, "Isn't that that dirty book?"

"Don't 'Roger' me."

"...Go have the chaplain punch yer T.S. chit."

Willo classifies them into ethnic groups, into somatic types, into Freudian stages, into regional idioms, into shades of Puritanism, into degrees of masculinity and femininity... like pinning a collection of insects, almost autistically, onto a board.

"A hut twan' a hut four!" Willo becomes a ballerina obeying Tchaikovsky.

At the U.S.O. "Blondie! Blondie!" honks through the jangle of the juke box.

"Terrific!" toot the seventy-one.

"Blondie! Hey, Blondie!"

Under her purr... under her fluff... the mascot restrains her claws. 

"A hut twan' a hut fore...

Wool gaze catches silk gesture... and clings. "A hut twan' a hut forre! Geeleeet ommmmmmm yet lepppppppp!"

Yet, daily, in mess hall, at calisthenics, at bed check, at dog watch, each salutes the other's magic with the averted eye.

Back to the U.S.O. this Saturday marathon through honk and hoot and glare.

"Sonmmmm因为 enchanntnd nt teeceevvving... you may seeee a straawaaaaannggerrrr acrossss a crowwwwwwded rooooom."

She yearns for a learned man, a protector, a friend... a professor, perhaps, or better, a psychiatrist, whose language of precision and surprise will dive into this deep waiting... But on and on, this jive box.

A summer of lectures and films and demonstrations and tests on "Nursing the Wounded" is just a grapevine swing into this sudden stuff in technicolor: One hundred and forty-six marines ("Don't push, Ladies," says Brooklyn, "there's enough for everyone.") with fresh scars like wads of pink gum and older scars like strands of stale gray gum... all of them prone on white sheets, awaiting backrubs from these peppermint-stick-girls. They look more like bashers of bacon than men.

In that corner, skin-grift cases resembling facski and pink balloons. A collage for you, Florence Nightingale.

"Just when it's my turn in surgery," says Pittsburgh, "they serve cranberries for lunch."

There is one intern of privileged profile and cadenced gait who yaks of baseball and Buicks and cheesecake and "these punks". He, too, calls her "Blondie"... and a soap opera doctor whose jargon kids sleekly onto the prosaically-grooved nurses...

Amputees looking and smelling like old saddle-stitched luggage. Yours, Clara Barton?

"I've found a pretty good way to get along," says Kentucky, "I just play like it's Halloween every day."

On the deck, written in luxurious script on a piece of paper, Willo finds a patchwork sonnet: "...No wonder the otters have covered their eyes... "Survival is a lullaby." Quickened by this purple feather, she traces it to a crow-nest creature so cadaverous that his Adam's apple looks like a beak. His onion-eyes awaiting her praise seem to lurch like a chameleon's.

Where was I when they passed out compassion? Come, Walt Whitman, comfort your buddy.

After two months of massaging bristly shoulders with bright blue alcohol, of toting, like a reverse-waitress, jugs of foaming urine and steaming pans of excrement... all the while watched with jungle-eyes, awaited with anaconda-arms... of being marionetted from one end of the ward to the other by that chorus: "Blondie! Blondie!

The Father, also marine, also emblazoned with a scar - his, a gorgeous flash from temple to jaw - is more of a Tyrone Power than a Walt Whitman.
I can't go back to a women's lib meeting even if he thinks I should. When we break up into small discussion groups, rapping about kids or housework or sex, everybody else says things like, "As a mother . . ." or "As a female rake . . ." or "As a lesbian . . ." I can't start out as anything. It's like being the only kid at camp without labels sewed in my underpants. I could say that, I guess, and nobody would mind, but it doesn't help me any. He's the only one I can talk to. I don't feel like it much, though, or, when I do, there isn't time. Maybe I only do when I know I can't. Like making love or thinking about it. I'd rather think about it. Not about the way it is. Nobody gets around to that. Everybody says, "Now let's really talk about sex," and pretty soon we're all talking about money or freedom or baby sitters. Well, the girl and warns her away from that beautiful devil, Plato.
She flutters around Zen.
"Butterfly!" he scolds.
---
Week after week. She still cannot believe.

"Haven't you ever heard about 'The Communion of Saints?'" he asks.
She shakes her head.
He tells her. It is midnight when he finishes.

"It's beautiful," she says. "Here, for now, with you, it seems true."

"Come next Friday," he says.
She does . . . and the next Friday . . . and the next . . .

He talks of other things: The Japanese.
He forgives them. ("They're such little guys.")

Twice she nearly tells him about Pete.
They laugh a lot.
One starlit night, at the end of their talk, he says, "I wonder, Willo, are you and I the only ones on this base who can sublimiate?"
I have another name for it, she thinks.
Kyrie Eleison.

(Editor's Note: Karen Snow has received two major Hopwood Awards.
Other vignettes from this novella have appeared in Michigan Quarterly Review and Generation.)

In the Basement of the House

By Jane Rule

with the deep voice did say laying girls was fun, but then someone else got off onto whether or not that was really male chauvinist stuff, and we were into politics. When Sharon said, "What's wrong with being an easy lay!?," it was just like when we talked about long term relationship: half an hour defining terms, and then somebody got onto her bastard gynecologist who wanted to know how many different guys screwed her and what color they were. I did find out what a cone biopsy was that night, but the next day I read an article in Redbook that made it a lot clearer.

Wanting me to go to women's lib is the same as wanting me to sleep around. It's like he's got this idea in his head about freedom. He's not comfortable with it unless I'm free, too. But he doesn't screw around . . . except with me, and he doesn't go to meetings to talk about it. I don't think he talks about it with anybody, except maybe with her. I don't know about that. Funny the things you just don't know, even living in the same house. Maybe it's just me, though, Maybe almost anyone else would know.

Sometimes I think I do learn something at those meetings. That night everyone was talking about the myth of vaginal orgasm and Masters and Johnson, I wondered if that was why I only really come when he's licking me. But I could come the other way, or it feels like I could. I just don't want to. I don't know why I don't. There's too much going on for him then. Or I really do think coming with him would make me pregnant, pill or not. I know that's not true, even if Norman Mailer believes it. Germaine Greer coming with a tall cunt is nicer. I don't know what all that stuff has to do with being liberated. But he does like screwing better than I do. It's harder for him, but he gets more out of it, as if he'd really accomplished something. Still, I can't see that it's his fault. I didn't like any of it at first. It was like getting used to Sarah's dirty diapers. Now I don't even take a bath afterwards. I like to sleep with his smell or my smell or whatever it is.

I worry about her, more than anything. I think I really like her better, but isn't it natural that I would? I can identify with her. I can imagine how she feels. But I don't know anything about how she feels. I thought I was going to throw up or faint or scream that time I walked into the kitchen afterwards. I like to sleep with his smell or my smell or whatever it is.

He sleeps like a human being, not like a dog, the way you and I. It's true, I have my head off the pillow at any sound in the night. It's not just because I sleep in the basement, all of their noises right on top of me. I slept that way a cope, too, in the attic. It's being the oldest or a girl.

"I've got this idea in my head about kids though. He really listens to them, a total . . ."

It really was funny when that woman said, "I dig raising kids. I really do. Only two things I miss: a good, long uninterrupted sleep and a good, long uninterrupted crap." Never had either to miss. Will I sometime? If I get through college, if I get a job, if I move out of this house?" The trouble with pets and husbands is that they never grow up and leave home."

When she says things like that, I do feel guilty, and I'm not sure why. Am I sorry for her? She's got a good job of her own, and, in the last couple of months, she got rid of the woman who was hanging around so much and is into a new kind of thing, somebody she's really friends with. I like to see them together, but, of course, I stay out of the way as much as I can. I am getting paid to watch the kids.

She's attractive. I didn't used to know what that meant. It isn't good-looking, though she is, that her hair particularly. It's good feeling, good vibes. I understand why people like to be around her. Sometimes I'd like to ask him straight questions, lawyer's questions, like, "Why don't you screw your wife?" Maybe he does. Maybe she doesn't want him to.

He's not attractive. One of those thin men with a watermelon pot, thin hair, thin mouth. Even his voice is thin. But that's not it. Nobody ever knows he's in the room. About his body is, His head is there all right, and people like his head. If she came into my room with a bunch of books for me, I'd know in a minute what she was there for.

She wouldn't even have to smile in a certain way or touch me. Maybe women have that and men just don't. Or he's different from other people. Nobody talks about being attractive at women's lib. I couldn't talk about it.

"Speaking as a baby sitter who lives in the basement and gets screwed by the boss . . ." and I'd have to say which one, not do, too. And he's gentle with them. She and I do more roughhousing with David than he does. So who's making a man of David? And she doesn't even want a man, and I like him because he's so gentle. When one of the kids is sick, he's better than either of us. He doesn't get up in the night, of course, but she says, "He sleeps like a human being, not like a dog, the way you and I. It's true, I have my head off the pillow at any sound in the night. It's not just because I sleep in the basement, all of their noises right on top of me. I slept that way a cope, too, in the attic. It's being the oldest or a girl."

This Jesuit, Father Vincent, meets her evenings in his office "for instruction". As he lights up his pipe, his hands tremble. She likes to think it is her emanations, but he explains: "That's my gift from Guam."

"All I really know about Catholicism", she says, "is that phrase: 'Kyrie Eleison!'"

"Tell me about it, this disbelief", he says.

She flits from Schopenhauer to Spinoza to Sartre.

He talks about Aristotle and Aquinas.
anything with him and just lie there, like
the first time, he says it's very passive, and
that's bad, but how do I know which things
he's taught me are okay and which aren't?
I could be really weird. If he doesn't know
his own wife is queer — and I don't think he
does — how would he know whether I was
or not? Maybe somebody else could tell in
a minute. I wouldn't show anyone else the
way I showed him how I did it to myself.
I didn't mind. He only wanted to see what I
liked, but somebody else might know from
that. She doesn't ever come on to me.
Wouldn't she if I were?

“Please, could somebody tell me, if my
landlady doesn't want to lay me, does that
prove I'm straight or just unattractive?”

Maybe she doesn't because of him.
Maybe she only likes people her own age.
There's no way I'm going to find out about
that at a meeting. There's no way I'm going
to find out. I don't want to know.

Nobody in that room ever comes out
and says they're scared to death they won't
get married or will marry some guy who
isn't really interested in them and is always
off screwing some kid in the basement.
Am I the only one who is? If I feel so sorry
for her, why doesn't he do it? She doesn't
seem to care. I'm scared of her. I don't
think she's going to shoot me. I make that
up to have something I can imagine to be
scared about. These last couple of months
she's been so happy she has a hard time
even getting irritated. What if she left him?
Do women ever just go off with each other?
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ATROCITIES AT HOME!
Who Speaks for Women?

By CLUE DENNIS

Are we in a dark age of brutal men with a terrible subterranean image that we cannot fully face or wish away? Every city in the country has almost daily headlines of girls and women brutally slain. New York City on an average day records eighty-eight rapes in a twenty-four hour period. The increase of these various forms of savagery should make someone ask the question. Not one senator, not one center for scientific research is asking. The only thing we do know is that the male of the species is attacking and killing at a much more alarming rate than even ten years ago. Again the question, why?

In a recent prison study only one percent of all women prisoners were in for a violent crime and that one percent had committed a crime as the result of aggravated assault or by reason of insanity.

The thought is mentally numbing: the fact that the boys and men we meet on the streets are all potential murderers. Newspapers constantly describe the man who wipes out his entire family as a quiet, church-going, good family man. We know that the XYY chromosomes do show up in some mad sadistic impulse? True, if all this we wait for them to reach prison to make our laws, preach our sermons, father the children. It is true a few academic theses have raised the question but these lie buried in academic dust. One A. Stephane in L' Univers Contestationaire has said, "The male is dominated by narcissism, self-admiration and intolerance. He, the male, expects and demands everything from woman whom he secretly wants desperately to destroy." Another, F.C. Malone, believes "All male children reject their mothers before they are three and their mothers unconsciously sensing this spend the rest of their lives working at getting accepted by them."

That the male propensity for violence has increased is attested to by a hardened sergeant in an army training center who has seen recruits over twenty years. He says those in the last ten years were the easiest to train. They didn't have to be "whipped" up into a mad frenzy to bayonet the dummies in the field. They seemed to love it! One indeed shudders to think what the Viet Nam veterans who are now stringing human ears on their gun belts will do for fun and games when they come home.

Atrocities, we are told, are committed by desperate men in a perverse quest for meaning. These are the same elements Jean Paul Sartre describes as inevitably genocidal. In the starkness of the violence and the dehumanization of women as the object of these crimes, we wonder who WILL speak for women. How long will society go along the path that says it is a sexual aberration of a FEW men, when daily statistics are mounting to show how much of a national emergency it really is? Will collective rage be effective or are we bound into a situation where a study or national research in depth into the causes would prove too psychologically disturbing to the whole male population? After all, we would be studying the male in all walks of life: the men who make our laws, preach our sermons, father the children.

It is true an honest commission under-

taking such a study of violence in the American male would shake the foundations of family, industry and the whole professional world of doctors and psychiatrists. They who tell US what is wrong with women!

Only women acting in concert and collective rage can save themselves. Can we forget so soon, the Boston strangler, the Chicago nurses, and the Zodiac killings? It is women who fear the streets at night, fear staying alone in their homes and even fear driving along lighted streets or roads. Women live in the shadow of male violence. How long would a herd of wild animals be allowed to run around cities loose, killing at will, before they would be hunted down and exterminated?

The first step is to demand a nationwide study at the highest level. Sisterhood is not powerful unless it can protect the life and liberty of its sisters.

Love, Beyond Men and Women...

By CAROL LYNK

Our poets cannot be taken from us. H.D. is called an Imagist, one woman in an otherwise all-male school of poets. Critics bind her in the category of Imagism and do not recognize that she worked with male parasites who gleaned whole reputations from the teachings of her talent. It was the peculiar imagination of H.D. which created or inspired the style of Imagism so avidly adopted by the male poets. H.D. does not "know that labels matter very much. One writes the kind of poetry one likes. Other people put labels on it. Imagism was something that was important for poets learning their craft early in this century." (Selected Poems). What continued to be important was the poetry of H.D. Her lack of concern with the ambition which spurs men was probably the quality which most permitted her growth when all else was set as an obstacle in the path of this woman who had genius.

The whole history and literary output of H.D. is as mysterious, yet as obvious as that of Sappho, the only other poet with whom we can compare H.D. We know H.D., like Sappho, was married and we see in her poetry and novels that she did love and live in the society of men. We also know that she had, again like Sappho, one child, and that H.D. and her daughter spent many years with another writer, a woman who called herself Bryher, to whom H.D. dedicated more than one volume of verse. Yet there is little in the poet's work to make it easy for the reader to know and understand the woman H.D. was.

The patterns of her life and verse somehow transcend common methods of reading the life of a poet in her poetry. The reason for this is that H.D. "...has a 'foot in two camps' a life in two different civilizations." (Collins, p. 155). The poet lived in the two worlds reflected in all her poetry and prose: ancient Greek civilization and the modern world. It was her everyday real application of the Grecian ideals which colored her acts, her way of life, with the transcendency we can only appreciate through witnessing in her writing the confusion and triumphs she experienced in her cross-cultural existence.

The Grecian ideals referred to here all dealt more specifically with the reverence for beauty which infused Greek thinking in the times of Sappho and Plato. Plato in his Symposium depicts the philosopher Socrates idealizing friendship between men and its ultimate perfection in the man teacher-boy student lover relationship. This
man is man and woman is woman." There is something in the way H.D. succeeds when she follows Lawrence's suggestion that she "stick with" women that offers us a feeling for our sex unequaled, again, since Sappho. She provokes us with the subtle imagery only a woman would know to use. As only a woman can know and properly care for the body of another woman, it feels right that the woman H.D. should be this adept at lyricizing her own sex.

To turn a feeling for women to poetry of genius took an exceptional person in a culture as alien as H.D.'s from the Greece of Sappho. "H.D.'s saturation with the spirit of Greek mythology . . . seems to be the inevitable development of a kind of temperament, to which genius has for once given articulation." (Collins, p. 156) There is both ecstatic beauty and precision of impression (another trademark of the Greek), in lines describing women as "... a purple shadow / on a marble vase. / Ah, love, / so her fair breasts will shine / with the faint shadow above." ("Along the Yellow Sand," Selected Poems). Or, "... and the flame / of the woman, tall like the cypress tree / that flames sudden and swift and free . . . " ("Toward the Pireaus," Heliadona).

Because H.D. was obviously involved in the Grecian ideals and their manifestation in her everyday life, she could easily step into the legendary cast of Greek literary characters and speak through them. This is a major reason for her obscurity. The reader unfamiliar with H.D. may come upon much boring talk by imaginary characters. When one realizes that H.D. did think in terms of two cultures always, or always in her writing, then it becomes clear that it is not H.D. putting words in the mouths of the ancients, but herself who is speaking. H.D. merely uses characters like Helen and others both named and nameless to demonstrate the universality of one person's, her own, responses to the world and to people around her.

One very obvious instance where H.D. has used reality to make real a myth is in the poem called "Pallas" in Selected Poems. The poem originally appeared in Hymen on a page facing H.D.'s dedication to Bryher and to her own daughter, Perpita. It had no title, but served as an introduction to that book whose long title poem, or narrative in verse, dealt with the marriage ceremony. The book was published in 1921, three years after H.D. had met Bryher and in a period of time when H.D. and her husband began the separation which led to their divorce years later. Bryher explains in her autobiography that H.D. was suffering the hardships of war greatly. The rich Bryher offered to take both H.D. and her daughter away from bomb-ravaged London. It was in 1921, that Bryher married the publisher Robert McAlmon in a "marriage de convenance" in order to escape her family's grip on her. (Ladies Bountifull, p. 173). She wished to be free "to travel." And that was exactly what the three, H.D., her daughter and Bryher, did until they settled on the Swiss lake which was to remain H.D.'s home until she died in 1961.

H.D., it would seem, wanted the poem "Pallas" to face her dedication to Bryher for various reasons. The first verse describes Bryher. It is in agreement with other descriptions of the eccentric lady writer. (Being Geniuses Together, Pp. 49-57, 60-67).

They said she was high and far and blind in her high pride, but now that my head is bowed in sorrow, I find she is most kind. This was the personality of Bryher. It also describes the situation of H.D., hurt by her husband (see novel Bid Me), violated by war (it was a nightmare which left deep impressions on her and on her poetry), and deprived of her sustenance of beauty and even physical necessities. The third verse of "Pallas" is an exclamation of what she would or did feel for Bryher.

Ah, could they know how violets throw strange fire, red and purple and gold; how they glow gold and purple and red where her feet tread. In The Walls Do Not Fall, a later book of H.D.'s poems which was dedicated to Bryher, we find H.D. and some companion, presumably Bryher, following a path to a spiritual life, threatened always by the sword, or the guns of war, and certain that their union, the pen, once a stylus, would triumph. Bryher opened the path with her person and her wealth for H.D. and herself to "tread" the "gold and purple and red" of their minds' journeys.

All this went into the making of the poem, yet, when it was titled, H.D. chose the name of a giant slain by Athena in the mythical war between the Olympians and the giants. This device merely disguised the fact that "Pallas" was a poem of thanks, a love poem, to Bryher. Years later readers cannot recognize it as such because her skill has taken it so far from its original esoteric purpose. Now the reader must suspect on first reading that it is simply one of those obtuse, literary-laden poems impenetrable to anyone but a scholar familiar with mythology and its intricacies. H.D. succeeded in throwing a protective veil between the reality from which she drew the poem and the reader's perception of that reality, by infusing it with myth.

Heliadona was published in 1925 after H.D. had some time to write her marriage out of her system. One of the poems in which she deals with her husband (they were not divorced until 1938) is "Toward the Pireaus." It approaches the man indirectly and exhibits the poet's tendency to turn mortals to gods even outside of literature. In section four of the poem she says: "If I had been a boy, / I would have worshipped your grace, / I would have flung worship / before your feet . . . " This is how H.D. came to love a man. He had for her the nobility of a Grecian hero and she herself could play the role of a worshipping boy. That she avoided accepting the role of a woman, an act that forced this further removal of herself from reality, becomes even more obvious in the fifth section of the same poem where H.D. asserts that it was not chastity that made me cold nor fear, only I knew that you, like myself, were sick of the puny race that crawls and quibbles and lisps of love and love and lovers and love's deceit. She had discovered that her attraction to the man was not a romantic or sexual one. It was something else: an avid embrace of a being who scorned the love rites of "normal" society, who accepted her and, as she wrote in part one of the poem, "set me apart from the rest of men." This was the only kind of relationship she, as many other women, could accept with a man. She feared that her husband "might break / my own lesser, yet somewhat fine-wrought, / fiery-tempered, delicate, over passionate steel." In other words, she feared for her personhood because it was encased in a woman. For his "hand / skilled to yield death blows" could disintegrate her by
forcing her to too much womanhood, or submission. When that possibility threatened, H.D. thought of her relationship with her husband in terms of the Greek adolescent with his male lover-teacher. It was, certainly, a defense mechanism with the stamp of a poet.

"Myrtle Bough" from the book Red Roses For Bronze, delves into H.D.'s thoughts about her variant predilection. Two men of the Platonic mold are the superficial subjects of the poem's beginning. They pledge love to each other:

let women fall beside us, and men frown, let us be soul and brother, having won the bit of wisdom of Love's bitterest greed.

Part two is a brusque change from the two men and their "Love, beyond men and women . . . " to Narcissus. It is as if H.D. addresses the men when she says, "And turn, / turn, / turn, / Narcissus," telling them that they have become in their love for each other, Narcissus.

In sections IV and V, H.D. continues her exploration of narcissism and homosexuality. She discovers in looking at another person and/or a reflection of herself, that love is only possible if you rouse your marble self and greet your live self, filled with fervor in my face.

From that point in her poem the poet casts aside any more allusions and speaks plainly to herself, or to her lover:

your mouth is my mouth and your throat, my throat . . .

It is an eye-opened moment of awakening, of awareness and of fulfillment wherein she recognizes her love for women, rooted, she suspects, in narcissism, as an emotion to be dealt with head-on, without fantasies of boys or gods or goddesses intervening between herself and her actions. Her poetry after Red Roses does not lose its Grecian tone, but integrates it better into her everyday life.

One final questioning of her own involvement with the Greek "temperament" which influenced so deeply both her feelings for women and her poetic style appeared in her last book, Helen In Egypt. Helen asks, "Is it death to stay in Egypt? / is it death to stay here, / in a trance, following a dream?" (Eidokon, Book 6, [7]). The idea of Greece and the idea of Egypt are the same for H.D. in this context, both are the "dream" she has always followed.

Ironically H.D. answered this question in a much earlier poem, "Epitaph." (Selected Poems). The second and last two verses are below:

so you may say. "Greek flower; Greek ecstacy reclains forever

one who died following intricate song's last measure.

Whatever the song, Helen's love song, H.D.'s poetry, or life itself, H.D. lived for the song which called her and that song was the one she sang to us in her poetry. There is much in the song to which a Lesbian reader can respond.

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were part of my therapy since he always remarked on my enunciation. "You sleep with however, perfected one English phrase with speak good English but he was a whiz at looking for me. My psychiatrist couldn't and if I didn't the campus guards went out ing to the university once a day persecute me to protect yourself, you ism when you are a Lesbian yourself? You with, "How dare you accuse me of Lesbianism when you are in it, I found some thing out that was sure to disquiet the administration of the university. Many of the ramshackle buildings in the black community were owned by city and university officials. The occupants paid double for gas and electricity. Water was drawn from a well. Two or three families were crowded into the building and there were many children. If rent was not paid on time, the landlord's lackeys removed the front door regardless of weather conditions. Most of the people had menial jobs at the university and were paid scratch. A few of us were preparing to write an article on our discovery for the student newspaper. It is more than likely that Lesbianism was the way for the university to throw me out and coverage for the student newspaper. It is more than possible that the word was never to be uttered. "After all, only groups. I didn't know anybody, so I couldn't get in touch with any of them. It was almost like prohibition days - you had to know somebody who knew somebody in those groups. I didn't know anybody, so I gritted my teeth and stuck it out with the golden girls. I sat at the general meetings and said nothing. Eventually a woman did talk to me. I questioned her on the Lesbian issue and she bluntly told me that the word Lesbian was never to be uttered. "After all, that is exactly what the press wants to say we are, a bunch of Lesbians." She then went on to patronizingly say, "What are you doing worrying about Lesbians, you must have lots of boyfriends." Okay, sister, have it your way. I kept silent for a few more months. Finally N.O.W. had what it have it your way. I kept silent for a few have it your way. I kept silent for a few had a hard on. All of this happened during exam period. One night I was busy cramming for a physics exam when a self-appointed contingent of physical education majors burst into my room. It was quite a shock since no one had been speaking to me since the beginning of this mess (two weeks' time). They didn't exactly speak to me. Frightened past reason, these wild-eyed women informed me that I existed if I wasn't a common bond, Nobody wants their queen. We stayed together until Calvin found someone to keep him, which didn't take long. If you are young, female and poor, New York City is worse than Dante's Inferno. You are walking game for all manner of sick hunters. Looking back on those days, I'm not surprised if my survival fell over the crowded auditorium. When I would try to sit in an empty seat, the student next to it would inform me that it was taken, that I should drop dead, that it was broken - plus a few I don't remember. I took my exam sitting on the floor and I know I got an A. I had a 99% average before the exam and the exam itself was easy. When the grades were reported, my average was 61%. No explanation, just 61%. One final note concerning my university experience: During my brief encounter with the civil rights movement and the white candy asses who were in it, I found something out that was sure to disquiet the administration of the university. Many of the ramshackle buildings in the black community were owned by city and university officials. The occupants paid double for gas and electricity. Water was drawn from a well. Two or three families were crowded into the building and there were many children. If rent was not paid on time, the landlord's lackeys removed the front door regardless of weather conditions. Most of the people had menial jobs at the university and were paid scratch. A few of us were preparing to write an article on our discovery for the student newspaper. It is more than likely that Lesbianism was the way for the university to throw me out and quash the issue. After all, who is going to listen to a Lesbian?

Southern hospitality does not apply if you are a Lesbian and if you dare to wink an eye at civil rights. I couldn't get a job. My scholarships were suspended so I couldn't go back to school. In other words, I couldn't go home again. I arrived in New York City after a long series of adventures. I felt as though I were in the hanging gardens of heaven. None now was an aban-
silent up until this meeting because I was unfamiliar with the organization, because I was born poor and remained poor and I was surrounded by privileged women who took food, housing and education for granted. Lastly, I did not want to jeopardize other Lesbians. By this time I had had a few months to review the political issues at stake and to come up with the firm conclusion that N.O.W. was, to make a long story short, full of shit. A woman’s movement is for women. Its actions and considerations should be for women not for what the white, rich, male heterosexual media finds acceptable. In other words, Lesbianism definitely was an important issue and should be out in the open. [Editor’s note: N.O.W. has adopted a national supportive position toward Lesbians and Lesbianism as of October, 1971. See The Ladder for December ’71/January ’72.]

I stood up and said something that went like this: “All I’ve heard about tonight and in the other meetings is women complaining about men, in one form or another. I want to know why you don’t speak about other women? Why you deliberately avoid Lesbianism and why you can’t see anything but men? I think Lesbians are ahead of you.” (At that time I believed the Lesbian politically superior to the heterosexual woman, and I still do although now I recognize there are such gaps as apolitical Lesbians and political heterosexuals.) What followed my short remarks resembled a mass coronary. One woman asked me and “confessed” to being a Lesbian then she was ashamed of her silences but their logic was, when in Rome do as the Romans do. They were very busy playing straight because they didn’t want to lose their positions in the leadership. They asked me not to reveal them. There were hints that I could have a place in the leadership if I would promise not to play the Lesbian card. That kind of buy-off is commonly known as being the “token nigger.” They got a real bargain with me. Not only was I a Lesbian, but I was poor, I was an orphan (adopted) without knowledge of my ethnic origins. At the time, I saw the co-option but I had nowhere else to go and it didn’t occur to me then to start a Lesbian movement. I became editor of New York N.O.W. newsletter. From that I moved up to being the administrative coordinator for the national organization, an appointed post. It sounds good if you care about titles but what it really means is that you collate, staple, and mail. Everything was fine as long as I did not bring up the Lesbian issue. After all, the issue was solved because I was in the power structure and I was a Lesbian. Being the token Lesbian, I also helped take the heat off the hidden Lesbians. It wasn’t right. I knew it wasn’t right but I couldn’t figure out how to fight it. I still couldn’t get in touch with the “radical” groups and when I mentioned my interest in these groups, a raising and the pro-woman line. Redstockings was not too pro-woman when it came to Lesbians. They could empathize with the prostitute, support the housewife, encourage the single woman to care for the mother, but they wouldn’t touch the Lesbian. The token Lesbian once more, I became more and more depressed. At least, I had enough insight to realize that this was not my personal problem. It was and still is the crucial political issue, the first step toward a coherent, all-woman ideology. But when there is just one person pushing an issue that looks like a young woman against the issue, she becomes a Cassandra of sorts.

Lesbianism is the issue that deals with women reacting positively to other women. All other issues deal with men and the society they have built to contain us. The real questions are why are women afraid of one another? Why does the straight woman throttle the Lesbian? Why do women keep insisting this is a bedroom issue and not a political issue, when in fact this issue is at the bottom of our self-image? If we cannot look at another woman and see a human being worth making a total commitment to politically, emotionally, physically — then where the hell are we? If we can’t find another woman worthy of our deepest emotions then can we find ourselves worthy of our own emotions or are all communal agreements reserved for men, those that benefit by our oppression? It is clear that men are not reserving their deepest commitments for women, otherwise we wouldn’t be raped, butchered on abortionists’ tables, jeered at in the public streets and denied basic human rights under a government that preaches equality. We are taunted in the streets, in the courts, in our homes as though we were nothing more than walking sperm receptacles. A few Redstockings tried to deal with these issues. They received no support from the other women. By this time I was too tired and too wise to spend much energy on the straight ladies. I left that field. The leadership was mostly casting its eyes about for someone to take on the burden of the newsletter, I decided to go down fighting. I put out the January 1970 issue of the newsletter with a blast at the leadership for its sexist, racist and class biased attitudes. Two other N.O.W. officers, fed up with the back room politicking and high powered prison guarding, helped with the issue and also publicly resigned their offices. The next move was to the Gay Liberation Front, a radical group for homosexuals which began in 1969-70. It supposedly is for men and women, I knew from my previous experience that I wouldn’t work with homosexual men again.
GAY AND STRAIGHT IN THE MOVEMENT

By CHRISTINE MIMICHL

When I first heard about Women's Liberation, I wouldn't have anything to do with it. Although I said I was liberated and didn't need that stuff, but inside I was afraid people would think I was a Lesbian if I associated with all those women. I had no way of knowing what other women were thinking because no one was even talking about Lesbianism. This silence drove me wild with frustration. I had had strong feelings for women all my life, and, although I had never slept with a woman, I had been sure for some time that I was gay. But Women's Liberation was publicly determined to prove that they weren't a bunch of dykes and privately unable to deal with such a threatening topic. As a woman who loved women, I remained isolated even in the movement.

Secrecy has always been a fact of life for most Lesbians. Some find a lover or enter "the gay world." While sharing their lives with each other, they are always dealing with the very real consequences of exposure of their life style. Others, like myself, are what I call "head gay." Because we have not related to women sexually, we lock a big part of our lives away from ourselves as well as from everybody else. Lesbians kind of double life is painful, but the choice isn't simple a decision between "coming out" with all its personal rewards versus remaining "straight" in order to avoid society's censure. I never came out because I never dared tell anyone my feelings, and the people from whom I hid my feelings most completely were the girls and women to whom I was attracted.

I remember having crushes on girls when I was in junior high school. Even then, before I knew the word "homosexual," the taboo on feelings for one's own sex was so strong that I never let anyone know that I cared for them. My feelings for girls were much too powerful for me to know how to deal with them. Boys were only friends to me, and, after puberty, boys aren't supposed to be friends anymore. The result of this was many years of isolation and loneliness. At school and at work I was outgoing and active, but I had few close friends. I always held back from relationships, running from people before I could be hurt by them. Most people, straight and gay, have some defenses, but society's taboo on homosexuality added to my own fears of rejection and made it almost impossible for me to relate honestly to anyone. However, I was always conscious of how much I wanted to communicate this one secret part of myself to others.

At the age of forty I fell in love. For the first time I imagined myself holding a woman, making love with her, spending a lifetime with her. As I look back, I'm sure she returned the feeling, but we were both in Peace Corps training and afraid to jeopardize our chances of being selected. She never said anything, and I never said anything. The saddest realization is that if only I had known how to break through those walls of isolation and fear, I would have
said, "I love you, and the Peace Corps can go to hell."
But I never did say "I love you." And it was a long time before I could even say out loud, "I love women." In women's groups, we talked about orgasms with a handful of people present, but discussions of Lesbianism never went beyond the mention of the word. Finally I got into a small consciousness-raising group where the women were unusually supportive. It wasn't easy, but I finally said, "I think I'm a Lesbian." Their reactions were mind-blowing! A married woman: "That doesn't seem like such an impossible proposition." Another married woman: "I've had feelings for women all my life, and I even had a kind of affair in high school." A single woman: "I am a Lesbian." (She had come out all of one week before.)

That night started a high which I've been on for over a year now. Soon after that meeting, some women came from New York to speak at a course on "Women and Our Bodies." They stayed overnight with me, and, for the first time in 29 years, I poured out those feelings boiling inside me to women who understood, who knew what I had been through. One woman shared my bed. After two hours of tossing and turning, I finally said to hell with all the walls and asked her to make love to me. I wasn't in love with her. In fact, I never saw her again, but I will always treasure that night as one of those magical interactions that can occur between women when they are mutually open and honest. My life has completely changed since my hidden self has become a part of the whole me. For the past year, I have been pushed around enough, and we don't need any more trips laid on us by anybody. What we do have to force is discussion and analysis of Lesbianism's meaning for ourselves and our movement. This has been a painful thing to talk about, but that very discomfort should be a signal that this issue is one which must be discussed. First, straight women have to learn to talk to gay women about Lesbianism. Your silence hurts and angers us. It hurts because we project into it society's reason for silence - condemnation. It angers us because we are your sisters. We are part of the women's movement, yet in your efforts to support particularly oppressed minorities of women, you have overlooked the ones you live and work with.

All of us, straight and gay, have to consider the personal implications of Lesbianism. We have to be able to talk about sexual feelings for each other, about some women's desire to have a "gay experience," and about gay women falling in love with straight women. We have to get over the hard parts and hangups so that straight and gay women can be friends, each able to talk about her own sexuality without feeling put down by the other. Ultimately, we have to reach the point where each of us accepts as a possibility for ourselves a sexual relationship with a woman we love.

In the women's movement as a whole, the impact of Lesbianism has been explosive. The resulting force is pushing us in two directions. Everywhere there is tension between gay and straight women. In some cities, there has been an open split between the groups. We are obviously in danger right now of becoming two movements, one for gay women and one for straight women. Worst yet, because Lesbians' total involvement with women gives them more time and energy to devote to the movement, the
women's movement might become all gay. This would be a disaster for everybody and we cannot allow it to happen.

The only way to prevent such a schism is to deal directly with Lesbianism and all its implications for ourselves and our movement. This has been happening to some degree already. The changes are not nearly fast enough, but, when we consider that in just two years the women's movement has gone from active rejection of Lesbians to formal support of Lesbianism as a life style, our progress has been phenomenal. It hasn't been easy for women to deal with friends who "come out" or the possibility that they themselves might be Lesbians. But women are struggling.

If we can keep going in this direction, then the impact of Lesbianism on the women's movement will be fantastic. Women are dealing with an issue so socially and personally threatening that, until recently, it couldn't even be mentioned openly. In rejecting the prohibition of Lesbianism, we are rejecting one of society's most strongly imposed taboos. If we can do this, we can do anything.

Extraneous things like blasting ADVOCATE (a male newspaper) for running sex fetishistic adds ... which, after all, hasn't anything to do with Lesbians and isn't of any interest to them at all. I agree with her on the subject, but I fail to see its relevance in a book about women. She spends a good deal of time begging for tasteful and quiet magazines and newspapers; but the few times she mentions THE LADDER, it is with the usual expected venom. She mentions past issues (meaning 10 years ago) with deserved scorn perhaps, but she has seen at least as late an issue as February, 1970, for she quotes from it ... yet she still implies (in one case by deliberate mistake) that THE LADDER is about where it was 8 to 10 years ago. She also passes on a bit of scorn toward all Lesbian organizations while praising the male-oriented groups, which is a bit much. We have the same reservations about her "fictionalized" portraits of supposedly real Lesbians that she knows on an intimate or friendly basis. The writer of this review quite possibly knows a couple of thousand Lesbians — and has yet to meet or even HEAR about the "types" of women that Ms. Aldrich apparently finds running rampant in the streets of New York City. There is the ever-present underlying tone of nasty condescension — the slightly "sick" sense of her presence in these homes, where she clearly feels superior to her "friends" in every way.

In closing Ms. Aldrich says: "Years ago, when I first began reporting on homosexual life as an insider, it used to anger me when homosexuals wrote anything mediocre (by my judgment) or irresponsible ... or exhibitionistic. Nor could I fathom any reason for homosexuals announcing publicly that they were homosexuals, wanting to marry each other, adopt children ... or any of it." Well, Ms. Aldrich, assuming you mean here "Lesbians" for your chosen word "homosexuals," we answer you thusly: We don't like books that portray Lesbians dishonestly and irresponsibly, nor do we like anything mediocre.

Long before we go to school and are assaulted by literature that tends to shape us into our "role" in life, when Dick gets all the action and Jane talks to dogs, cats and dolls, we first see "fairy tales" ... but they are all pretty sexist too. Now we have a "fairy tale" for the young Lesbian: SLEEPING BEAUTY: A Lesbian Fairy Tale, by Vicki, Atlanta, Georgia, Sojourner Truth Press, 1971. Their address is 432 Moreland Avenue N.E., Atlanta 30307, and the book is only 70c including postage and handling. Vicki has done a good job of rewriting the classic tale — and even if some errors in form creep in, it's very highly recommended. Illustrations are by Gall and calligraphy by Ginny, and the printing is better than almost any of the "little" presses now proliferating in the women's movement. Nice.

Iris Murdoch has always been one of my favorite writers, and we may well get a review of her new book, AN ACCIDENTAL MARRIAGE, Viking, 1971, into this column — but if not, it will be in the next one. It promises to be substantially Lesbian, which comes as no surprise to anyone who has read her work. Her younger sister, Norma Meacock, whose short stories have been reviewed in past issues of THE LADDER, has a novel out, THINKING GIRL, N.Y., Dial, 1972. I had really wished to be able to say something good about it, if only because of her sister. Then I remembered I also have sisters and you probably do too, and we aren't anything alike at all. THINKING GIRL is remarkable only in that its heroine doesn't think at all, as far as I could tell. She is a Lesbian, she knows she is a Lesbian, she is even happy about it — but before it is out, she has slept with half the unattractive males of England and married one you wouldn't believe if I described him. So much for that. She can, grudgingly admitted, write rather well. We hope she grows up soon and begins using her skills.

The subtle charm the English are famous for is reflected in LATE IN THE AFTERNOON, by Lettice Cooper, London, Gall &; Inglis, 1971, wherein not too recently widowed Sybil Fairfard discovers just why she has been so inordinately fond of her former daughter-in-law. Quiet, slow moving, pleasant reading with unusually sharply drawn characterizations.

The Fall-Winter, 1971/72, issue of "The Little Magazine" calls itself "Special Double Women's Issue" and editorially pleads for forgiveness for having ignored women in the past. They are to be forgiven, provided they mend their ways, if only for this issue, which is well worth the $1.25 price tag. Good fiction is represented by only one short story, "51/2" by Judith McCombs, a parody on the raising of young women in our society. There is a so-so interview with Denise Leverto - you can skip it - and the rest of the magazine is poetry, most of it good and some of it marvelous. The usual knowns are here, Marge Piercey and Joyce Carol Oates; but don't miss Miriam Palmer's two poems, "Getting Into Focus" and "A More Perfect Union."

Wonderful to be able to include a must book and one that will be popular with most readers. Those of you who have been reading in this field for years will feel a sense of déjà vu at the title, but ODD GIRL OUT, by Elizabeth Jane Howard, N.Y., Viking, 1971, is in no way like Ann Bannon's 1957 novel, ODD GIRL OUT, except in the ending. Into the insular and upper-class world of Anne and Edmund comes the forlorn waif, Arabella, the titular "odd girl." Anne and Edmund, though loving, are not in love; and with usual male arrogance, Edmund quickly seduces Ara-
bella, who responds without commitment. When Edmund goes on a trip, it is immediately apparent to Anne and Arabella that they are in love. Their affair is treated graphically, erotically... and in very good taste. Edmund's inevitable return triggers the denouement. Very highly recommended.

Isabel Miller's 1969 sentimental must novel, A PLACE FOR US, has been issued by McGraw-Hill in February, 1972, with the title changed to ATTENTION AND SARAH. If you have missed this, don't go on depriving yourself - it's major Lesbian and one of the best ever issued.

The first issue of THE FURIES, a Lesbian/Feminist Monthly, is highly recommended. If the quality of this first issue is maintained, this is a newspaper most of you will want to subscribe to. Available for $9 per year from Box 8843, S.E. Station, Washington, D.C. 20003. They show no sample rate, but a single issue cost of 50c, so you can probably get a sample for about 50c to cover cost plus postage.

There is an ever increasing number of small women's presses in the country. The latest, Violet Press, P.O. Box 398, New York, N.Y. 10009, offers LOOKING AT WOMEN, poems by Fran Winate, Violet Press, 1971. Cost is 50c plus postage (be generous, make it 75c - there is no margin on publications like this). LOOKING AT WOMEN is uncommonly good... strictly a Lesbian collection.

Alta, whose name is becoming a household word, has a collection, POEMS AND PROSE, put out by KNOW, Inc., P.O. Box 10197, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15232. This is a purple bound paperback, printed on laven­
dar paper, very attractive but practically impossible to read. Most of the poetry has been in other collections of Alta's work. Cost not listed in book... but it cannot be too high.

A group called Friends of Malatesta, Box 72, Bidwell Station, Buffalo, N.Y. 14222, has a book (very modest paperback) called A SELECTION OF WOMEN'S POETRY. Copyright isn't listed and neither is the cost... but again, this has to be 50c or under. Contents are uneven, though some very well known women are included: Marge Piercy and Martha Shelley, for example.

Diana Press, 1854 Wyoming Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009, has issued REFLECTIONS, a very well done collection of poetry from the technical printing and editing standpoint (good graphics, well spaced, good margins, good paper) containing good and well known poets mixed with lesser works. It is only somewhat feminist, since the primary function of the collection seems to be political and leftist.

One collection everyone reading this column will want, hopefully, is EDWARD THE DYKE and other poems, by Judy Grahn. Cost is $1.25 and you can get it from Judy by writing to 1018 Valencia Street, San Francisco, California 94110. We have mentioned the marvelous satire "The Psychoanalysis of Edward the Dyke" in these pages; and long time readers will recall we carried a selection of Judy's poetry in THE LADDER some years ago. Judy writes that she is a "slow" worker, and this book contains virtually her entire body of work. Don't miss this; it's more than worth the $1.25. Include postage - remember there is no profit margin on privately printed ma­terial.

In the last column we mentioned a good story from REDBOOK, but we now have a more amazing event to report. The December, 1971, issue of COSMOPOLITAN contains a very major Lesbian short story, "Love and Friendship," by Edith Konecky. (A reader clipped and sent this to us... thank you.)

Another new Lesbian newspaper is LAVENDER WOMAN, from 7621 Sagi­naw, Chicago, Illinois 60649. Volume One, Number One is dated November, 1971 - and that's all we have seen so far. Contents are uneven, but it's a much better than average beginning. Cost is 25c for this first issue. No subscription rates are shown... write to them and ask.

Colin Spencer has written a good many books with Lesbian characters, and some of them we have been able to recommend. His latest, PANIC, London, Secker and War­burg, is quite a substantial study; but it is a very poor novel, hanging coincidence and sensationalism together apparently without regard for the suffering reader. This one is to be ignored, even when it comes out over here, as it inevitably will.

Taking a page from the WHOLE EARTH CATALOG, a women's group in New Hampshire has issued Volume 1 of THE WHOLE WOMAN CATALOG (Fall, 1971). Contents are primarily a listing of the many women's publications and groups all over the country, and it is useful for this reason. Address is P.O. Box 1171, Ports­mouth, New Hampshire 03801. No cost is listed; write for information.

[Rita Laporte contributes the following]

WOMAN'S ESTATE by Juliet Mitchell, Pantheon, 182 pp, $5.95, is another Marxist ideology book, an attempt to fit heterosexual women's liberation into 19th century male thought. For those who are already believers, this book succeeds, as any book would that puts Marxist ideology front and center. Mitchell examines England, some western European countries, and the United States with respect to the student movement, the black movement, and women's liberation. Remember, in Marxism, the establishment of the Socialist State takes precedence over the rights of any group or person. But Mitchell feels that women do count, heterosexual ones, that it is. The most pervasive ideology of them all, heterosexual ideology, is never even noticed by Marxists, let alone considered oppressive. It is time these ideology buffs idealized about heterosexual chauvinism. Mitchell poses as being terribly well informed about the United States (she is English, though born in Australia). This country, she tells us, is the cradle of imperialism, apparently forgetting that Empire upon which the sun never set and against which we had a little war of liberation back in 1776. Female Marxists are the coldest, most heartless writers I have read in connection with women's liberation and Mitchell is no exception. In her zeal for ideology she drains life of all warmth and humanity. We are all pawns in a theoretical superstructure - no, we Lesbians do not even rate that much existence. But then, we do not in real life Marxism either - vide the USSR, Cuba, and China.

TANGLED HAIR

A REVIEW BY ELSA GIDLOW

The publication in 1971 by Purdue University of TANGLED HAIR: selected Tanka from Midaregami, by Akiko Yosano, a Japanese woman born in 1878, reminds us again for how long women worldwide have been struggling to be recognized as persons. These beautiful translations from the Japa­nese by Sanford Goldstein and Seishi Shatani reveal a woman passionately at variance with the restrictions of her day, courageously asserting personal, artistic and sexual freedom, expressing her sensual affirmations in poetry and in her life. This in nineteenth century Japan when she could be (and as a young woman was) locked into her bedroom at night by her father and forbidden to go out at any time unless accompanied by a relative or attendant.

One can only guess at the strength it required under such circumstances to assert and win independence and as poet break with tradition to inject life into an art form dying of rigidity and cliche.

Into her twenties before she escaped family dominance, Akiko lived a heterosex­ual life as wife and mother; but the bio­graphical notes prefacing the poetry suggest some degree of variance. She had a devoted friendship with another woman, Tomiko Yamakawa, also a poet, lasting until the latter's death at twenty-nine years of age. The man who became Akiko's husband, a po­et of lesser talent than herself named Tekkan Yosano, also loved Tomiko throughout her life. The biographical ma­terial contains this curious line: "Both girls loved each other, and both wanted to share Tekkan." Tomiko was forced into a family­arranged marriage with a businessman. HAV­ing informed Akiko of its imminent, we are told: "That night Tomiko and Akiko slept in one bed." Tomiko became a widow two years later when her husband died of tuberculosis. The notes lay considerable emphasis on the jealousy Akiko was be­lieved to have felt because of Tekkan's continuing devotion to Tomiko after his marriage to Akiko - a union apparently not even rate that much existence. But then, we do not in real life Marxism either - vide the USSR, Cuba, and China.
1971 was a very good year in many ways, with 51 titles outside of the plethora of paperback trips that we no longer even give statistical space to. Forty-five of these were hardback books and the others quality paperbacks. A few of these titles, primarily English books, haven't yet been reviewed. It takes up to 6 months to get a book from England, so there is a long delay between my hearing of these titles and being able to bring them to you. Thus, some 6-8 hard­back titles that I've long among the counted 51 haven't yet appeared in the regular column. Those of you who have been reading THE LADDER since at least the April/May, 1971, issue have seen the year's titles, so we are going to only list some especially fine books. If you would like more complete information, we invite you to purchase back copies of THE LADDER. The better novels include THE BIRD OF PARADISE, by Lily Powell, N.Y., Knopf, 1971: Jane Rule's AGAINST THE SEASON, N.Y., McCalls, 1971; Joan Hagerty's DAUGHTERS OF THE MOON, Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill, 1971; and possibly Monique Wittig's LES GUERIL­LERES, N.Y., Viking, 1971, though the last named is difficult reading and is basically about women's liberation. Monica Dicken's THE END OF THE LINE, Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday, 1969, 1970, a carryover from an earlier year, is also highly recommended — we were just late in finding and reporting it.


Biography fans were rewarded by the appearance of CARRINGTON, edited by David Garnett, N.Y., Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971, yet another chapter in the book of the Bloomsbury group. Elizabeth Mavor's delightful THE LADIES OF LLANGOLLEN, London, Michael Joseph, 1971, is the long needed study of a rather fabulous pair of Lesbians in our "herstory"; and Richard Bridgeman's GERTRUDE STEIN IN PIECES, N.Y., Oxford University Press, 1970, more or less diminishes lesser studies of Ms. Stein, though it is hardly the final word.

There has been so much Lesbian poetry published in the past year that we hardly believe it. Anyway, here are the major overt and most recommended of the lot: Elsie Gidlow's MOODS OF EROS, Druid Heights Press, 1970; Harriette Frances' SAPPHO '71, San Francisco, Donahue/Arlington, 1971; WATCH OUT BROTHER, I'M HERE, by Heather, Berkeley, Calif., Shame­less Hussy Press, 1971; and Rita Mae Brown's THE HAND THAT CRADLES THE ROCK, N.Y., New York University Press, 1971. Less major, less overt, but very literary and very necessary to all completists is Phyllis Webb's SELECTED POEMS, 1954-1965, Vancouver, B.C., Talonbooks, 1971. We have to mention Lynn Lonidier's marvelous THE FEMALE ROCK, San Francisco, Donahue/Arlington, 1971, is the long needed study of a rather fabulous pair of Lesbians in our "herstory"; and generally increased public interest.

Statistic nuts may be interested in knowing that you have to go back to 1967's total of 46 hardbacks to find a year with a higher count. On the other hand, there is no question that much more material by and about Lesbians is available now than at any time in the past, what with the constant coverage in most women's liberation media and generally increased public interest. Cut-off date for this count was November 15, 1971 — and we are already seeing signs that indicate 1972 will be a much bigger year.
Wendy, age 9, of the Kauchema Community

Then I will.

Then I will.

Elise, age 7, of the Kauchema Community

A river to hear
A person to play with
A poem to read
A mountain to look at
Is all I need

Editor’s Note: Kauchema Community consists of adults of both sexes and children. An intentional Christian community living and growing together. We are happy to share their creative growth with all of you.
flesh is grass
you are my private meadow
free to blow and grow and take root where you will
I close the gate around myself
and rest my cheek upon your fragileness
a prisoner to what I can’t confine
bound because I chose to call you mine
while winds I won’t control
carry love’s seed
through fences out of my reach
your flesh is grass
one season’s all I need of love
and nature understands

Susan Staff

I’ve been deceived
by groups of letters clumped
and clotted on bold pages
by accents, tones and dialects
and phrases trite or obsolete
by epitaphs and eulogies
mocking with insincerity
by groups of letters clumped
I’ve been deceived

Susan Staff

A SENSE OF PRIORITIES IN ELMHURST

What’s the matter with you.
Why are you behaving like that.
I just lost my best friend, Mother.
Well, stop that crying.
Why are you crying like that.
Crying like that over some girlfriend.
I must say:
You always have been peculiar.
Stop that at once.
But Mother,
She’s my lover.
I always thought there was
Something about that girl I didn’t like.
You mean to tell me,
You have kissed her on the
Mouth.
Oh, many times, Mother.
Well this has got to stop.
Well you had better stop this.
Running around with freaks.
I’ll bet you haven’t cleaned
Your apartment in weeks.

Susan Staff

save me with silence
your “no” can defy gravity
I won’t ask the question
and if my private war becomes an issue
don’t enlist.
be that silent majority
omnipresent
unsuspecting.
and if I fall —
though it is by your roadside,
pass by me at a distance.
it’s my own conquest
save me with silence
I am the aggressor
Let me be the only casualty.

Susan Staff

The House by the Sea
by
Ann Sheldon

In England over the endless sea
(I dream, my darling, for you and me:
Tomorrow if not today)
There stands in Devon by the sea,
In the gentle airs of the West Country,
A house that is tall and grey,
An old grey house beside the sea,
And there two ladies live merrily,
Most merrily and gay.
Two willows near and a great oak tree
Trace starlight patterns of fantasy,
And spring in the breeze by day.
These ladies go walking by the sea,
Their hair in the wind blows light and free,
And their lips are kissed by the spray.
And they stroll in the lane and follow the bee,
They lie in the grass beneath a tree,
And they sing as they wander away.
At dusk they turn to the house by the sea,
Lightly and gaily trot home to tea,
They carry a bright bouquet.
And they stop at the church quite faithfully
And sweetly together they bend the knee —
Oh it’s thanks they give as they pray!
Sometimes they dress most prettily
And go up to London Town to see
New frocks and friends and a play.
And twice Oxford town, to thee:
First for the joyful ecstasy
Of the dreaming spires and the may;
And then in soft winter dusk to be
In cold empty streets without a key
Yet never alone or astray.
Then home to the tall grey house by the sea
To sit close by the fire and read poetry
As long as the night will stay.
Just so in England right merrily
These ladies so lightly live and, see!
Hands linked as they go there way.
One lady, my darling, looks like thee;
The other lady, dear one, is me —
And to dream can be to pray.
I love the rain
for the memories it brings back
with each tree-shaking gust
that rattles around the windows
and the eaves of the house.
I remember these sounds
and your steps
clicking on the kitchen tile,
thudding on the rugs.
I will nest here.
Nuzzling the damp.
Twining fingers in down.
Pillowed in musk-moss.
I crawl into the branch-bed
An unfamiliar place is this;
CYPRESS TREE WORLD
Bark softens to my touch.


SCULPTING YOU FROM MEMORY
Excess flesh
Slides down palms,
Pulses homeworkward.

Small thumbs lift your forehead;
Sturdy cliff,
Carnival lights
Blink below.

Middle fingers stroke temples;
Down cheekbones,
Jawbone frames
Locked smile.

Pliable, moist
Flesh responds;
Lips purse, open.

I cast you in bronze.

Jane Chambers 1970

WOMAN
I am caught up in her;
A child at seaside play
Lifted by the tidal wave.

I am possessed by her;
Jesus' eyes in a painting
Follow you.

She wraps me in her belly
From
Across the room.

Jane Chambers 1970

THE CAT AND THE KING

She had been up this morning at four o'clock, and had crept out through the gate, almost guiltily, and off across the fields for a long walk. There might be nothing wrong in taking a walk at four o'clock in the morning; perhaps no one would have stayed her in her flight through the college gates, munching her bit of crackers and cheese, had they known. But no one knew. She had carefully not inquired . . .

She had had her walk with the freshness of the spring luring her on, up Redmond Hill, down the slope by Boardman's and along home by the road, gathering from the bushes on either side the great masses of trailing vines that draped her head and shoulders and hung swaying from her arms. It had been a wonderful walk — pulling the vines from the bushes, shaking the dew from the clustering blossoms and drenching herself in freshness.

The blossoms were a faint, greenish white and, with her green-and-white-striped skirt and white blouse as she stood in the gateway looking in on the college halls, the flowers and the twisting stalks of leaves twined about her and framing her in, she might have been in the spirit of the outdoor world peeping shyly in at the halls of learning, curious, wistful and tiptoe for flight.

She stood a moment gazing up at the great masses of brick and stone that made up her college world. The side of the buildings nearest the lodge gate was in shadow and the vines and the dull red of the bricks seemed to hold for her something mysterious and strange. She went slowly up the brick walk, holding in check a sudden longing to turn back, to flee once more to the fields and the little brook that ran gurgling by Boardman's and make a day of it, out in the free world.

It was mysterious and wonderful — this college where her name was enrolled: "Flora Bailey, 1920." But there was something overpowering about it. The great walls that looked so gracious in the fresh morning light had a way of shutting one in, of hampering and binding the movements of freshmen. There were so many things one must and must not do within the gracious walls! Her eye glanced up to a tower of South Parker, high up to a window where silken curtains hung in even folds, and a sigh escaped her lips. One must not make friends with seniors, for instance, except by invitation — and a senior was very high up!

The curtains parted a little. The girl's eyes glanced quickly. A firm hand pushed back the curtains and a figure stood between them looking out on the morning. The lifted head bore a mass of reddish hair gathered carelessly, and the light that fell on the tallest peaks and gables of the college touched it with gold. To the freshman, gazing from her walk, it was as if a goddess, high-enshrined and touched by the rising sun, stood revealed. She gave a gasp of pleasure.

It had been a glorious walk out in the dew and sunrise, and now Annette Osier was gazing from her tower window — not on the girl on the college walk, to be sure, but on the world of wonder.

She looked up adoringly at the figure in the tower of South Parker. And the girl high in the window turned a little and looked down. There was no one in sight — only the quiet light of morning on the campus and the wind rippling shadowy waves in the ivy leaves on brick walls. A little rippling wave seemed to run from the walk to the high tower window, and with a gesture of happiness the girl on the walk turned toward the entrance of Gordon Hall. Her pulses sang as she went, her step danced a little, hurrying up the stairs and along the corridor to her room. She opened the door quickly.

Across the room by the window, her room-mate, surrounded by books, was taking notes, dipping in here and there with alert pencil. She looked up in swift surprise. "Why, where have you — Oh, how lovely!" Her eye caught the green-and-white blossoms and she sprang up. "Here — I'll get the pitcher!"

She brought a pitcher from the bedroom, and Flora placed the vines in water, standing back to survey them. They trailed down over the window sill and onto the seat below. She touched them with quick fingers. "That will do. We'll arrange them after breakfast."

Her companion had gone back to her task of scooping up notes with flying pencil. She suspended it a minute and looked up. "Do you remember Bainnuter?"

"Bainnuter?" repeated Flora. "I don't seem to remember — was he on the Yale
team?"

Her room mate stared. Then she chuckled. "He's ancient history, Flora dear! Early Egyptian. I was wondering if Doxey would ask us about him. Do you suppose he will?"

Flora wheeled. She regarded her with startled eyes. "History exam! This morning!" she gasped. "I forgot — oh, I forgot!"

She seized her books from the table, hunting out a stub of pencil in haste. "I hate 'em all — everybody that's had any history done about 'em. I hate 'em!" she said savagely.

"Why, I thought you liked history! You did splendidly in the February exam. You're such a clever thing! I wish I were!"

She sighed deeply and returned to her scooping and dredging.

The roommate's name was Aspasia — Aspasia Elton. That was another of the perplexing things about college, living night and day with a girl named Aspasia. It made life topsy-turvy. No one at home had names out of history books.

Aspasia glanced at her casually. "Better cram on Rameses II," she said kindly. "They say he's dippy on Rameses!"

The room was quiet. No sound came from the corridors or from the rooms above or below.

The two girls turned leaves and crammed notes. Now and then one of them sighed. Sounds began to come from the corridor — hurried feet in slippers, and splashings and calls from the bathrooms, and bits of conversation floating over transoms.

Flora closed her book with a little shrug. She put a pencil carefully in the place. "Doxey gave me warning last week," she said.

Aspasia looked up. "What a shame!"

"No-o. It's all right. I knew I wasn't doing anything; only I hoped he didn't know. I thought the February exam had fooled him — maybe."

"Anyway, you don't need to worry. Your February mark will carry you through."

"Yes; but it won't put me on the team. That's all I care about, all I've ever cared about," she said slowly.

Aspasia nodded. It was sympathetic and vague. "Well — you can live if you don't make the team. Other folks do."

"I can't!" said Flora.

Her roommate looked at her reflectively. "It's Annette Osier," she announced. "Just because she's captain, you want —"

Flora's face was scarlet. "I don't care if it is!" she murmured.

"Be a sport, Flora! You can't have a crush on a senior—"

"It is not a crush!" said Flora vehemently. "I just want to know Annette because she's the kind of girl I like. And if I get on the team, she'll notice me; she'll have to notice me! There isn't any other way to get to know a senior, is there?" she demanded.

"You're too aspiring," said Aspasia. She gathered up her books and notes. "Come on to breakfast. There's the bell."

"I'm not going to breakfast," said Flora firmly. "I've got to study."

Her roommate reappeared from the bedroom. "You're a weak, sentimental freshman!" she remarked casually.

"I am not sentimental! I want to know Annette Osier because she's a great, glorious creature! So, there! Let be teasing, Aspasia."

"Let be teasing! I must save that for Professor Goodwin. Funny English! Did you get it from your grandmother, honey? He'll be sure to ask the 'source', you know."

"Go along!" said Flora crossly.

She was left alone, and there was only the sunlight falling on the green-and-white vines in the window and traveling to the scattered books on the table. She looked at them a minute; then her arms dropped to the table with a little gesture of defeat, and her face dropped to her arms . . .

A bumblebee hummed in the window and went away.

It may have been the blossoms.

She lifted her face and looked at them balefully. If only she had known enough to get up at four o'clock to study instead of going off for that miserable walk! And suddenly the sunrise as it came over Redmond Hill flashed back to her; it brought the song of a bird that trilled softly out of the woods.

Her face seemed to listen to the fluting call. Then it grew thoughtful. If there were some way, some legitimate way, of attracting the attention of a senior! Annette liked the things she liked. Often she watched her setting off alone over the hill that led to the fields. And because she was a freshman she might not hurry after her and say: "Come on for a walk with me!" . . . And suddenly she looked at it. Why not? Why not go to her, this very morning, lay the case before her and ask her to go for a walk? Why not?
... The history exam might as well be cut; she was bound to flunk anyway! She pushed the books aside with a look of distaste. She would do it — and do it now!

There was a sound in the hall. She picked up her book and opened it swiftly to Rameses II. The door swung open on Aspasia, one elbow holding careful guard over a glass of milk and two large slices of bread and butter.

Flora sprang up. “You dear!”

Aspasia set the milk on the table and turned, a little breathless. “What do you think? Annette Oser has sprained her ankle! They’re taking her up to the infirmary now!”

And Flora looked at her with a foolish, half-startled smile. “Now isn’t that a stupid thing to do!” she said slowly. “How long do you suppose she will have to stay in the infirmary?”

“Oh — ages!” said Aspasia carelessly. “A sprained ankle isn’t a thing you get over in a day, you know. She’ll be there weeks maybe.”

And Flora looked down at Rameses II. “How stupid!” she said to him softly.

It had seemed so simple this morning to go to Annette. And now she might have been a thousand miles away, for any chance there was of getting at her.

The history examinations came and went in a maze of gloom. She had flunked of course. She did not care particularly about the flunking, but it was embarrassing to meet Professor Dockery on the campus next day; and she made a little skillful detour to evade him — only to see him coming toward her along the path by the elms.

He stopped as she came up and looked down at her consideringly. “You wrote a good paper yesterday; a very good paper indeed!”

“I did!” cried Flora.

“I shall withdraw my opposition to your being on the team,” he said kindly.

Flora gazed at him mutely. “Now isn’t that a shame!” she said swiftly. And she hurried on to the fields, leaving him to extract what sense he could from the wail.

She tramped far that afternoon. A new bird lured her on; and she found a curious hummocky nest on the ground, with a breakfast of shining roots spread out before it. She went down on her knees — a field mouse probably — or a mole perhaps. She wished there were someone to share it with — the delicately lined dome that her fingers explored and the shining roots at the door... Her thoughts traveled rebelliously to the infirmary — “weeks perhaps,” Aspasia said.

When she came in from her walk she went directly to the library and asked for medical books. The librarian bent a keen, spectator-like inquiry on her.

“I want them for fiction purposes,” explained Flora, “for local color.”

But when the musty books were laid before her, she had a period of depression. She attacked them in a little gust of discouragement, selecting the most modern-looking one with colored plates and diagrams and opening it at random. The charts and plates held her. Next to outdoors could there be anything more fascinating and mysterious than the human body? Why had no one ever told her about these things!

She looked down curiously at her own hand resting on the book. It seemed to her a new hand, one that she had never seen before. The network of blue veins fascinated her; they were little branching trees or the delicate veining of leaves. She had not guessed people were like that, as wonderful as trees! like trees really, with all those branches of muscles and nerves and veins.

Perhaps they were trees once.

Her mind dreamed on happily. She knew how it felt to be a tree, swaying in the wind with the rain on your leaves. Perhaps she was a tree once, and grew on a hillside, and the squirrels ran up and down and nibbled at branches. She gave a little chuckling laugh in the silence of the library, and the librarian looked over reprovingly from her platform.

Flora made a gesture of apology and plunged again into her search. But it had changed now from seeking to dallying enjoyment. Why had no one told her? And she read on till the librarian touched her on the shoulder and she looked up, blinking.

“The bell has rung,” said the librarian reprovingly.

“Oh-h!” breathed Flora. “Yes; I want them again, please!” And she hurried off blithely.

It was only as she was making ready for dinner that it occurred to her she had not found what she started out to seek.

But in the evening, in the library again, she came on it. She had almost given up her search and was only looking idly at the oldest of the brown books when her eye fell on “The Curious Case of Prudence Small.”

She began to read. And as she read her cheeks glowed and her eyes danced. She looked speculatively at the librarian. The librarian was a small woman, and there were only two other girls in the room. Better wait. She shook her head. She would never have the courage if she waited! She opened the book again to “The Curious Case of Prudence Small” and read the details once more — and looked up.

The green-shaded reading lights in the dim room made little ghostly circles about the two girls bending over their books; and the librarian, mounted on her platform, seemed like some priestess of knowledge waiting for mystic rites to begin. Flora fixed her eye on her and stood up. The librarian went on counting out cards. Flora scraped her chair a little on the floor; and then, as no one paid attention, she gave it a shove that upset it with a clatter and brought the spectated glance full upon her and a look of annoyance from the girls across the room.

Flora lifted her arms slowly. She gave a long, low moan and subsided gently to the floor.

There was a flurry of green-shaded lights, a glimpse of the librarian’s startled face; then the sound of running feet, and the two girls were bending over a rigid figure and lifting it from the floor.

Five minutes later, in the consulting room of the infirmary, the college physician, summoned from a comfortable game of whist, bent above the rigid figure.

Flora’s eyes rested trustfully on the physician’s face. She had recovered consciousness almost as soon as they had deposited her on the infirmary couch. Five minutes the book said; she judged it must be about five minutes — and she opened her eyes and gazed pensively at the perturbed faces that surrounded her.

The physician dismissed them all with a curt gesture. She brought a basin of water, with a bit of ice tinkling in it, and began to bathe the girl’s forehead with swift, sopping strokes.

“I fell,” murmured Flora dreamily.

Doctor Worcester nodded. “You will have a good-sized lump, I’m afraid.” She went on sopping with skillful strokes.

Flora’s eyes closed meekly. She felt a little thankful for the bump. She had never seen Doctor Worcester before, near to, and there was something in the face bent over her that made her wonder how “The Curious Case of Prudence Small” would come out. “There!” The doctor put aside the basin. “I don’t think it will be discolored now. How do you feel?” She was looking down at her critically.

Flora’s face flushed. She recalled hastily how she felt — and stretched out her arms and rubbed them a little. “I feel better,” she said slowly, “only there is a little buzzing in the top of my head, and the soles of my feet are slightly paralyzed, I think.”

She said it neatly and glibly and lay with closed eyes, waiting for what might happen.

The doctor’s swift eyes studied the passive countenance. “I think we will keep you here tonight,” she said quietly.

She touched a bell and gave directions to the nurse. Her fingers rested lightly on Flora’s wrist. “We will put her in the ward,” she said, “next to Miss Oser.” She started and glanced sharply downward at the wrist under her fingers, and then at the girl’s placid face.

She held the wrist a minute and dropped it slowly, her eyes on the face. “I shall look in again before I go to bed. She may need a quieting draft to make her sleep.”

From her desk on her platform, the librarian peered over at the doctor, who was standing looking down the green-shaded, quiet room.

“Tell me just what happened,” the doctor said briskly.

And while the librarian recounted the meager details of the story, the doctor’s thoughtful face surveyed the vacant room and the table where the brown books lay. “It might have been studied too soon after eating — don’t you think?” inquired the librarian helpfully.

“I don’t think anything,” said the doctor. “I’m puzzled.” She walked across to the table and picked up one of the books.

“What was she reading?” she asked.

The librarian flushed. “She said she wanted them for fiction purposes; English A, I suppose, don’t you?” she recalled hastily. She was looking at a page that had fallen open in her hand, perhaps because an energetic elbow had held it pressed back for half an hour. “The patient said, on inquiry, that her head was...”

Flora’s face was a picture of distress.

She shut the book with a laugh. “I’ll take this along with me. No, I don’t think it’s serious — a case of nerves maybe.”

Her face wore a thoughtful look as she
gave directions to the night nurse in the infirmary and looked over charts. She did not go to the ward, and she left no directions for a sleeping draft for the new patient.

The nurse wondered afterward if the doctor could have forgotten. But there was no sign of restlessness in the ward when she went in a little later. The new patient was asleep. There was only one other patient in the ward, a senior who had sprained her ankle a few days ago. She had been asleep when the new patient was brought in. The nurse stepped very softly and passed out of the shaded ward, drawing the door to behind her.

Flora opened her eyes. Through the chink of door a light burned dimly. And through the open window beside her the moonlight streamed in. The infirmary was at the top of the building, and she could look down on the sleeping world off at the great clouds drifting and swinging against a blue-black sky. She turned her head a little. The senior was asleep, one hand tucked under her cheek, the reddish hair gathered into a quaint cap; the moonlight, touching the quiet face, made it seem like a child's. Flora gazed with devoted happy eyes. The little pricks of conscience that had stirred in her under the doctor's eye emerged above the bedclothes and stood upright. As she gathered it about her shoulders, a lock of the reddish hair escaped from her cap and fell across it. She made a royal picture for watching eyes.

She tucked in the escaped lock with half-apologetic fingers. "Stupid, to wear a cap! But my hair tangles so!"

"I like it," said Flora promptly. "I think it looks — quaint!"

"Thank you!" said the senior. She turned a smiling glance. A little look of surprise touched it. "Why, you're the wood nymph — green and white!" she exclaimed. "I saw you the other morning, didn't I, coming in, before breakfast?"

"I'd been for a walk," said Flora. "You were a little bit of all outdoors!"

The senior laughed. She stretched her arms in a restful gesture and looked about the sun-filled room. "Glorious day, isn't it? Perfect — for the game!" she glanced at the book. "Go on, please."

"A mole's nest?" The senior paused...
nest, Annette’s laughing exit and her own tragic grief.

But a little smile touched the words as she ended, “And that’s all,” she said.

“You’re not looking at it sentimentally anymore,” said the doctor practically.

The face flushed. “I wasn’t sentimentally, swiftly, “not exactly sentimental, I guess. Only it’s hard sometimes to tell. Your feelings get mixed up so.”

She glanced inquiringly at the doctor, who nodded with amused face. “That is one of the discoveries of science,” she replied. Flora looked at it. She shook her head.

“You’re not making fun of me?” she inquired timidly.

“Not in the least!” said the doctor.

“Anyway – that’s the way it was. I wanted to know her. She’s so beautiful! Don’t you think she’s beautiful?”

“Yes,” said the doctor gravely.

Flora nodded. “And she likes walks, the way I do. But it was the mole’s nest. Maybe it was a field mouse,” she said reflectively.

“Anyway, I wanted to show it to her. It was so wonderful!” She sighed softly. “It seemed as if I couldn’t stand it not to have her see it. And I was lonely, looking at it all alone! You see it’s all mixed up.” She looked appealingly at the doctor.

“I see,” said the doctor.

“The little roots were shiny and laid out for breakfast, as if somebody was coming back in a minute. And it was all still around, and the light in the sky just growing pink. It almost hurts you when things are like that. You can’t help being lonely.” She had forgotten the doctor and the infirmary. She seemed to see only the shining roots and the little nest on the ground. “I guess it’s because it’s like me, inside,” she was saying softly, “the way I am inside – all little branches and bones and shining things.”

The doctor leaned forward to catch the words. Perhaps she asked a question or two. Her steady eyes watched the girl’s face as the story went on – the discovery of the charts and diagrams, and the swift response and delight in them.

The doctor sat quite. This was the sort of thing one sometimes came on, once in an age! And the child had supposed she was playing a prank – getting to know a senior! And the books she opened were life! The doctor had watched girls come and go, reaching out to choose some nothing. And now and then it seemed to her a gentle hand reached down and touched the chosen nothing and it became shining, a crystal ball holding life in its roundness.

The doctor was a scientist. To her also the human body was mysterious and wonderful, and often she seemed to gaze the edge of truth and catch a glimpse of the unity that binds life in one. She looked at the girl, who had finished speaking and was lying back watching the sky and the clouds moving in it. “Which of your studies do you like best?” she asked gently.

The girl turned. “I hate ’em all,” swiftly.

“History’s worst, I think – studying about Rameses II and mummy things!” She threw out her hands. “It’s wicked – when there’s all outdoors and all the beautiful things inside of us!”

She had spread both hands across her chest, as if to cover as much territory as possible; and to the doctor there was something almost tragic in the gesture. Her eyes dwelt on the small figure – the disheveled hair and round eyes and reddened lids.

“You’d like to study biology, I suppose,” she said reflectively.

“Everything that’s alive,” said Flora promptly.

“Perhaps you’d better have your breakfast now – and keep alive yourself.”

And Flora ate it, propped against the pillows, the brown book lying on the foot of the bed. Now and then she cast a swift, resentful look at the book. But she was hungry and the marmalade was good and it was a wonderful day.

And then she glanced at the window and remembered suddenly the game that she had said she wasn’t going to play, the game that she had given her patients for a student with me to help and look on. Sometimes she experimented a little herself.

“Oh!” It was a sigh of pure joy.

“It’s usually a senior of course. In fact, I have a senior now.” She was watching the glowing face. “Annette Osler is helping me this year.”

Flora’s face flushed; then the joy in it laughed out. “I don’t deserve that, do I?” she said softly.

The telephone sounded in the next room and the doctor left her a moment. When she returned she glanced at her with a little smile. “Do you think you are feeling well enough to get up?”

The girl sat up with a swift glance of hope.

The doctor nodded. “It’s from the team. Someone has given out; they are calling for the next reserve. I thought of you – she looked teasingly and dubiously. Then she smiled. “Well, go along! And remember you’re to come to me Saturday.”

She went toward the door. She turned and looked back. “I forgot. You are to report at once to the captain – in her room.”

Ten minutes later, in the morning of clouds and wind, a small figure in knickerbockers and blouse, with hair in a braid down its back, was scudding along the walk that led to South Parker. The braid of hair was tied with green-and-white ribbon and it swung gayly behind as the figure scuded on.

(THE CAT AND THE KING first appeared in the LADIES’ HOME JOURNAL in October, 1919. Although the world keeps changing, obviously human emotions do not.)

Wildflower Woman

By SUSAN STAFF

I stumbled over her. Well, nearly. Hardly a minute from the freeway where I planned to leave the car idling and let who would find me sleeping the final sleep, I crashed into my domain.

I was thinking, of course. Every system of my computerized body is programmed to motion. Changing Tracy’s diapers, packing Kevin’s jelly sandwich, posting Rob at the train station – I’ve been committed to motion for so long that I have out-programmed myself.

Unable to sit still long enough for prescription drugs or monoxide gas to stop the motion, I fled from the car and ran blindly over the edge of the freeway until she stopped me.

She was conspicuous because she sat motionless offering no pseudo smile in response to my “excuse me”. My voice rang clearly over the edge of the freeway until it was a field mouse,” she said reflectively.

She glanced inquiringly at the doctor, who nodded with amused face. “That is one

“We have a student with me to help and look on. Sometimes she experiments a little herself.”

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September dry clung to her brown denim thighs. She had spread her wool plaid jacket tablecloth-like and set it with a profusion of lake cress, unhatched milkweed pods and samplings of daisies and berries too common to identify. Some were back yard weeds – the kind Kevin carried in – that find their way into juice glass vases and go wilted into the disposal after he has gone to bed.

“You must be a biologist.” I rambled, despairsing that I couldn’t lure her into the comfortable abyss of conversation. The lake lapped noisily among the stones snickering at my embarrassment. Grass rattled about my feet. Birds screamed at me. Wind whispered inaudible criticisms from the dark trees boxing the meadow into the lake. She didn’t notice.

“Bring me a bit of that candy root, please.” She didn’t raise her head. I looked about babbling my apology for standing in my embarrassment. Grass rattled about my feet. Birds screamed at me. Wind whispered inaudible criticisms from the dark trees boxing the meadow into the lake. She didn’t notice.

“Bring me a bit of that candy root, please.” She didn’t raise her head. I looked about babbling my apology for standing in the middle of the meadow. She didn’t notice.

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CHANGING YOUR ADDRESS?

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

Front and rear. Pills in purse, monoxide cop-out flowing freely from the exhaust pipe, I traced the route from Tracy's nursery school to Kevin's bus stop, the pharmacy, dry cleaners, supernmart.

Two years thifting dish-washer, television, Kevin's road racer noise, and the sound of dinner cooking too slowly, I watched her vanishing at the lake rim. Mental nosegays of wild candy root more delicate than crystals took me gently through dinner. Feathery and feminine, I felt awkward remembering her plain face and even gaze.

Odd that I who nursed and nourished nature inside me did not possess her tenderness for living things. I always crashed through thickets and trampled wild flowers. Tangled by talking and tarnished with tasks - taking out, changing, picking up and carrying in, I had overlooked tenderness as subtly as I lost her image passing the rim of the lake that fall morning.

Montreal (this is a strongly Catholic and conservative city and that is an amazing turnout) and front-page publicity was the rule rather than the exception. Good for our Northern sisters.

DO YOU BELIEVE THIS? New York, December, 1971. A Roman Catholic law professor has had himself appointed guardian of the unborn fetuses of New York City in an effort to force women to have children whether they want them or not. So far the courts are backing him as much as assisting him, but if you ever wondered just how sexist the human male is, think about this development.

SHIRLEY WHEELER FIGHTING FOR HER LIFE: Daytona Beach, Florida, December 4, 1971. 23-year-old Shirley Wheeler is still fighting being sent to jail following her conviction for having an abortion.

MORE ON SESAME STREET: Jane Bergman of the New York Times (January 2, 1972) wrote a stinging indictment of the viciously sexist program, Sesame Street, which is being force fed to virtually every young male and female child in the country. The damage that the image of women (or rather, the almost total lack of women as other than mothers or housewives or children pretending to be either mothers and/or housewives) on this program does to the already luckless female child seems likely to be extensive. Do we have to tolerate this?

WE'RE OUT OF THE CLOSET: Chicago Daily News, January 7, 1972. More and more of the young, whose innocence cannot be jeopardized by their statements, are making public acknowledgements of their Lesbianism. Susan Kahn and Linda Shear, co-editors of Lavendar...
WOMEN, a Chicago Lesbian paper, were interviewed by Patricia Moore. Very positive material showing the wisdom of Lesbians sticking with women's liberation and not with gay liberation is included in the interview.

MOTHERS WORKING TO END SEXIST EDUCATION: New York City, January 8, 1972. Mothers whose children attend Woodward School in Brooklyn have formed a group called the Sex Roles Committee to try to keep their children from being educated into traditional sexist roles.

BLACK WOMEN MEET: Chicago, January 9, 1972. Over 200 black women from all over the country met for a two-day symposium to discuss their differences from the overall women's liberation movement. Emphasis was placed on the fact that middle class black women tended to overlook the more numerous lower class black women in much the same way that many middle class white women tend to ignore both blacks and lower class white women.

New York, January 30, 1972. This day saw the forming of the Coalition of 100 Black Women, though actually more than 200 women belong to the group. Intention is to gain political leverage, and, since Representative Shirley Chisholm is a leader in the group, they might just get it done.

H.E.W. REPORT SURPRISING: January 12, 1972. The Department of Health, Education and Welfare, surprisingly, prepared a report on the status of American women and indicted itself as being rampant-ly biased. Sadly, it reports that from college campuses to doctors' offices, discrimination against women exists in virtually every aspect of life. We know this, and we do not need it proved...we need it stopped.

AMERICAN TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH IN TROUBLE: The nation's largest single employer, with over one million employees, is under attack from the government over its sexist (and racist) policies, and is also being attacked by many of its female employees. We do not know the outcome, but the noise in the press is surely helping.

WHAT PRICE WHORING? VILLAGE VOICE, January 13, 1972. Writer Susan Brownmiller, one of the organizers of a New York City "Womans Conference on Prostitution" which ended in a brou-ha-ha discussed and rediscussed in VILLAGE VOICE and other newspapers, provided the following: "Prostitution is as old as slavery. Prostitution is Man's rental of Woman's body. The victim is the woman. The victim is all women. If one man can buy a woman's body, then it is presumed that all women are for sale. What is Sex? Sex is something that men want from me and are willing to pay for. What price whoring? Fifteen years ago I learned that with my youth, my looks and a good crying act, I could command $150 on the sex-flesh market, the body commodity exchange. Top dollar for a half hour of my time and a serviceable vagina. ABC, NBC, NEWSWEEK or the VILLAGE VOICE never paid me as much. It is no accident that the best paid women in America today are not corporation executives, baseball players, or 'elitist writers' but a handful of movie stars, models and high-priced white call girls. Replaceable, interchangeable objects of sex. Next year's broken toys."

BERNICE GERA MAY YET WIN: Albany, N.Y., January 14, 1972. The New York State Court of Appeals has ruled that the Professional Baseball League (of New York/Pennsylvania) has practiced illegal discrimination in refusing to employ Bernice Gera as an umpire. This case has been going on since 1967. The decision definitely opens the doors to women in this previously all-male field.

NOT MANY BOOKS FOR GIRLS: LIBRARY JOURNAL, January 15, 1972, has a good article, "Reducing the Miss Muffet Syndrome", on the paucity of books for girls that present girls and women in other than idiot roles. A fairly good bibliography is included for librarians and others charged with supplying good books to younger women.

SOME BAD-ASSED DYKE: VILLAGE VOICE, January 20, 1972. That marvelous heading could come only from the pen of Jill Johnston, though it is, in this case, not too relevant to the column which concerns a quickie course in Emily Dickinson, some Sylvia Plath, a bit of Nina Simone, and if you haven't started reading Jill Johnston you should. (The January 13, 1972, column, "Stamp Out Clitoral Imperialism", is worth a look too.)

CHILDREN NOT NECESSARILY AWARDED TO MOTHERS: TIME, January 31, 1972, reports that anywhere from 8% to 25% of custody cases now are ending with children being awarded to fathers. This is a substantial change from the not so long ago practice of awarding children automatically to the mother regardless of financial or other circumstances.
NATALIE CLIFFORD BARNEY IS DEAD: Paris, February 3, 1972. 94-year-old Natalie Clifford Barney, American expatriate, died at her home in Paris. Her death marks the end of the literary circle she established in the early 1900's in her 18th-century pavilion on the Rue Jacob. Famous as the lover of poet Renee Vivien, painter Romaine Brooks and other equally famous women in the arts more than as an artist, Ms. Barney did publish a book of poetry, essays, a novel and some reminiscences. Only one of her works has been translated into English (her poetry) and this is unobtainable or so expensive as to be out of reach. A later issue of THE LADDER will contain a biographical article about Barney and her circle.

WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON YOUTH DISAVOWED BY ADMINISTRATION: In April, 1971, in Estes Park, Colorado, a group of young men and women met to discuss their political views. In January, 1972, the U.S. Printing Office published the report of this meeting, but there was little or no publicity because embarrassed administration officials had disavowed the results. Among other things, the group felt "all social sexual oppression of homosexuals and Lesbians must end".

BURIED IN FALSE SIGNATURES: WOMEN IN ART: A January, 1972, article by Jacquin Sanders of Newsweek Features appeared in several newspapers. Evidence is increasing showing that many paintings attributed to various male artists were the work of lesser-known women artists (lesser known only by virtue of their sex and not their talent, as proven by the attributions themselves). The most outstanding example is the evidence that many so-called "Tintoretto's" are probably not by Jacopo Tintoretto, the father, but by his daughter, Marietta.

SAN FRANCISCO DAUGHTERS OF BILITIS SURVEY: January, 1972. A study of women, done by women, is now being conducted by the San Francisco D.O.B. with the financial assistance of N.O.W. (National Organization for Women). If you are willing to be part of this research, write to: Dr. Ruth McGuire, 1005 Market Street, Room 208, San Francisco, Calif., 94103. You will receive a pro-questionnaire designed to examine women's attitudes toward Lesbians and you will be asked for your opinions on the validity of the questions. These questions will then go into creating a final questionnaire designed to start with, and then she had to be argued about by the male celibates of the Roman Catholic Church for a long time before they decided that a 'little error had been made and she was really a saint and not a sinner (except for that old original sin). Now comes a male Oxford University Professor, one P.E. Kenyon, who has assured us of something else that worries males and the Roman Catholic Church quite a bit . . . . namely, he has relieved us of the uncomfortable suspicion that Joan might possibly have been a Lesbian. What he says is: "The warrior Saint's predilection for men's clothes was for protection when she was with troops and in male company." He goes on to say: "Despite the French heroine's transvestism, physical prowess and apparent 'masculine' drive (sic), there is no very convincing evidence in her history of overt Lesbianism." He does concede that Joan had a girl-friend Haviette, but "their habit of sleeping together was a common custom at the time". Is that so?

ORDINATION OR SUBORDINATION: Special to THE LADDER. "Historically," so writes Faith Rituale, an Episcopalian seminarian working toward priesthood, "the Catholic, Orthodox, and Anglican Churches have always welcomed women's money and housewifely back-breaking chores around the Church but have never put a woman in an equitable light, although Jesus Christ did. The recent ordination of two matronly-type Anglican women in November, 1971, in Hong Kong is not really a break-through but rather a perpetuation of the type of woman men will "allow near" the altar and the priesthood. The first woman ordained to the Anglican priesthood in 1944 was divested of her priestly authority before she ever had the opportunity to exercise it, having been ordained to minister to the incarcerated in a war-time concentration camp in Hong Kong. Throughout history there have been Christian women priests, generally transvestites, although their history is obscure. The 'Church' is the last vestige of male chauvinism and for the misogynist male to surrender his cassock and alb (for servant-like vestments) to a woman is a crushing blow to their 'mythical masculinity'. On the U.S. scene, Episcopalian women preparing for ordination have banded together into an organization appropriately called "The Episcopal Women's Caucus" which maintains instantaneous communication with its membership and potential members, issuing a newsletter and holding national and regional meetings. If there is any hope for the Episcopal Church, it must come through equal opportunity for all members or die.

HOT PANTS SI, LONG PANTS NO: Washington, D.C., January 1972. House of Representatives rules forbid women employees to wear long pants but not hot pants. Major reason cited being that the Representatives like to look at legs. Whose representatives?

WOMEN'S LIBERATION OR INSURANCE: One of the blessings of liberation now being prematurely visited on young "single" women is increased automobile insurance. Note that we get the disadvantages but not the advantages. Articles on this particular subject appeared in newspapers from both coasts during January, 1972.

MALE SCIENTIST URGES "LET WOMEN RULE THE WORLD": Dr. Peter A. Corning of the Institute of Behavioral Genetics at the University of Colorado, argues that women would be much better suited to handle the world, and put an end to war and other similar male goodies.

COMPUTER CHAUVINIST PIG: Stanford University has a computer that talks to men, but will not talk to women. Of course, male programmers decided this particular bit of foolishness. Excuses? Well, women "have a different way of speaking". Yes,
yes, they do, and a different way of everything else. Praise be!

UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST SEARCH: The Unitarian-Universalist Gay Caucus is looking for U/U Lesbians all over the U.S. East of the Rockies contact Julie Lee, P.O. Box 62, Fanwood, N.J. 07023. West of the Rockies contact Rev. Richard Nash, 3338 Adrita Street, Los Angeles, Calif. 90065.

DR. ESTELLE RAMEY URGES WOMEN "TAKE OVER THRONE": Stop being the "power behind the throne" and take it over altogether, says Georgetown University Medical School gland specialist. Dr. Ramey, it will be recalled, became nationally prominent when she made an ass out of a prominent male doctor over his assertions that women were biologically unsuited to some employment. Since that time Dr. Ramey has been on a national speaking circuit, working for increased political power for women.

GLADYS DIAZ REFUSES A PRIZE: Chilean Woman journalist, Gladys Diaz, refused the $500 Helena Rubenstein Foundation award saying that the cosmetics industry "exploits" women and she doesn't wish to be associated with it. Considering what $500 in U.S. dollars can buy in Chile, this was a considerable refusal.

F.E.M. ANGLE: CHICAGO SUN TIMES (Feature). A number of clippings from this small column have been sent to us. Each day they run a letter showing some minor bit of sexist treatment of women. Some of them are so blatant we wonder how the women can tolerate the incidents.

WOMEN AT ANNAPOlis: As this is being written, there is much publicity surrounding the possibility of two women being appointed to Annapolis despite the hostility of Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Elmo Zumwalt. Both women are qualified, and their sponsors, Michigan Congressman Jack McDonald and New York Senator Jacob Javits are pushing the issue.

WOMEN TOP STUDENTS: Columbia University Law School class of 1973 contains 368 students, and of these 46 are women. The three top students in the class are into women's liberation. Accordingly, PROUD WOMAN will be a 12 page bi-monthly newspaper dealing with Lesbian and women's liberation material. Cost has been raised to $5 a year, regular mail, $6.50 airmail.

LET'S GET TOGETHER — A newsletter for women temporary employees who work for agencies. The newsletter will be made up from letters from temporary employees citing fact cases of injustice which cannot be legally proved. Write us a letter. We will wait on response before making this a subscription item, but the first copy will be 35c. Address: Winifred Gandy, 2425 Riverside Place, Los Angeles, California 90039.

SEVEN OUT OF EIGHT: February, 1972 Sapporo, Japan. It took 12 men to win the Silver medal for hockey for the United States. While they were doing this, six U.S. women were winning seven other medals (one greedy girl won two of them) at the Winter Olympic Games.

Two hundred plus attend Lesbian conference: YELLOW SPRINGS, OHIO, February 11-13, 1972. Yellow Springs is a small Ohio town more or less centered around Antioch College. In this unlikely middle western setting over 200 Lesbians met to work on some of the problems of Lesbian liberation. Women from all over the midwest and both coasts were represented and while we have no formal report, informal reports would indicate a successful and enjoyable meeting. A second conference is tentatively scheduled for the weekend of May 21, 1972 at Ohio State in Columbus, Ohio.

ROBIN MORGAN SPEAKING VARIOUS AREAS: Kansas City, Missouri, February 16, 1972. Robin Morgan spoke at University of Missouri-Kansas City on this day, enabling THE LADDER editor to hear her for the first time. Indeed, to hear any prominent spokeswoman for women's liberation. Any notion any of you may have about being too "into" the movement, perhaps too blase to enjoy a basic talk on the things we all know too well about our oppression, might be happily surprised to forget that idea and go and hear Robin (and others who tour and talk) if you get the chance.

PRACTICAL SELF-DEFENSE

(BARE HANDS, NO GIMMICKS)

We offer these protective measures with the knowledge that in every city in the U.S., every day . . . hundreds of women are assaulted, robbed, raped. This won't solve all the problems but it might help if a few of us learned a little about caring for our safety without help.

To prevent trouble:

1. have a good dead bolt lock on your door.
2. when out at night alone hold your head up, stay alert. If you walk with your head down, unaware, you look like a good victim.

If attacked:

1. don't hit the man in the chest or arms because there is too much muscle there.
2. don't try to pull your arm loose if he grabs it because he's stronger and you would be wasting time, instead attack. If you surprise him with a blow you may get a chance to free yourself and run. Don't try to fight.

Blows:

1. chop with the edge of hand (keep hand taunt).
2. Clapping both your hands over his ears at the same time (practice by cupping your hands over someone's ears - allow no space for air. This creates a vacuum when you hit and causes brain damage or kills.) Be careful practicing this, don't actually make contact because a slight hit even on one ear can cause damage.
3. Hit him on the back between shoulder blades with both hands in a rabbit punch. This stagers the heart.
4. Kick in the groin.
5. If grabbed from behind, look back and locate his foot, stomp down hard on top breaking bones in his foot. (Don't stomp wildly - look).
6. If he grabs you around the neck, grab his wrist with one hand to capture it and with your other hand take one of his small fingers and bend it backward, breaking it.

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Dear Ms. Damon:

I maintain that some women now claiming to be Lesbians are, in fact, not, and I have divided these pseudos into four groups: Elitist and snobbish as this sounds, the types are readily recognizable.

The first group are the Masochists. Certainly, Lesbians can be masochists too, but these people are non-Lesbian masochists who say they are Lesbians because they’ve discovered that that’s the easiest, fastest, and most rewarding way to get kicked in the teeth. These women were previously content to shock and alienate family and friends in heterosexual ways, but as homosexuality gained publicity (or as their supply of family and friends ran out), they found that they had to lead gay movements in order to get their gratification most directly and intensely. It is these (usually uninformed and zealous) creatures who make such statements as “Lesbians always think about sex because society forces them,” or “Yes, most Lesbians are sick” (except of course I and thou).

The next group are the Rebels. These women are rebelling against authority, daddy, or whatever, and have found that calling themselves Lesbians is the easiest, fastest, and most rewarding way to get kicked in the teeth. These people enjoy being in the front lines because there they can offend best, and it is these very women who state that Lesbianism “would be no fun if it were legal.”

A third group is the Radical-Chic. When black was in vogue, they kinked their hair; when hippie was in vogue, they didn’t bathe; now that gay is in vogue, they sleep with women. As soon as another Cause comes along, they’ll be straight again, ever after to claim that they’re bisexual and incidentally leaving some true Lesbian behind wondering where she went wrong.

The last group are the Experimenters, sometimes confused with the Radical-Chics. Now that free love (heterosexual) and drugs are old hat, the latest kick is gay, and the Experimenters are willing to use any convenient (and lonely) Lesbian along the way. Usually these women maintain that they are bisexual, but they see this as no obstacle when speaking for the entire Lesbian movement, and can be heard saying, along with the Radical-Chics, that “many Lesbians are bisexual,” which is a monstrous contradiction in terms.

For reasons that should be apparent, women from many of these groups now find themselves in the forefront of the Gay Lib movement. I resent these women speaking for me! They have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo: the Masochist to keep being shit on; the Rebel to have something to flaunt; the Radical-Chic to have a Cause; and the Experimenter to have a ready supply of new kicks. Overly or covertly they are undermining my cause; they are holding me back; they are sullying my love as much as any straight man’s leer. I don’t need you, sisters. Please, for your sake and for mine, get out.

(Editor’s Note: Most authentic and concerned Lesbians have left Gay Lib for women’s and Lesbians’ liberation groups.)

Dear Gene Damon:

Perhaps there does seem to be a preponderance of married women belatedly claiming interest in Lesbianism. If the letter from Julie Lee of New Jersey (the Ladder Oct/Nov 1971) is representative of the thinking of many of your readers, however, it might be well to take issue with it. First, I suggest that D.W., of the small midwestern town, and the many others like her hope to find understanding, not pity. Second, I contend that they probably had an alternative rather than a choice. Alternative implies a necessity to choose one and reject another possibility, while choice suggests the opportunity or privilege of choosing freely. No one under pressure from whatever source is in a position to choose freely. Finally Julie Lee, whatever else she may have forfeited, still has her self-esteem. Women like D.W. are already filled with the opportunity or privilege of choosing freely.

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