

EVE'S RIB



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EDITOR'S NOTE

Eve's Rib is a new concept in the long history of literary magazines at Barnard College. This year, 1986, marks its birthdate, but its roots go back to 1903 when Barnard's first literary magazine, the *Barnard Bear*, was published. In following years the magazine changed its name and format many times. Between 1966-1969, however, publication ceased because students devoted their energies to the political activities on campus. In 1969, the magazine surfaced with the title *Emanon* and included Mary Gordon and Ntozake Shange as contributors. Following *Emanon*, the *Barnard Literary Magazine* continued publication for the next 12 years.

Eve's Rib marks what we think is an important phase in the history of Barnard's literary publications. Claiming our commitment to feminism, we formed *Eve's Rib* as a magazine with a specific political and artistic purpose. Adding artwork, criticism and interviews to the more standard prose and poetry of the past issues, we have tried to create in our first issue a magazine which raises questions and offers new possibilities for expression. It is our hope that we become more conscious readers, that we think about the verbal and visual images with which we are inundated every day, and, especially, that we open ourselves up to new artistic forms.

You will find in this issue a piece written collectively by the editors entitled "Dreampiece." This collection of our dreams evolved out of our enthusiasm as the magazine took shape and offers, we hope, a way of expanding traditional literary forms.

As editors we believe that no one of us, alone or in a group, can speak for feminism or women as such. We welcome and wish to expand the diversity that results from each author's and artist's specific sexual, ethnic, political and social context. As editors we take no editorial stance. All views expressed in *Eve's Rib* represent the opinion of the individual authors or artists.

*Eve's Rib is dedicated to
our devoted wives
without whom this publication
would not have been possible*



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Eve's Rib, the feminist arts journal of Barnard College, is published annually. We accept submissions from students, faculty and alumnae of Barnard/Columbia, as well as from artists and writers not affiliated with the University. We welcome submissions that are not sexist, racist, homophobic or otherwise discriminatory. Submissions can be sent to: Eve's Rib, McIntosh Center, Barnard College, 606 West 120th Street, New York, New York, 10027. Eve's Rib reserves the right to reprint any material which appears in this journal. All other rights revert to the authors or artists.



Kenneth Ashworth
untitled
photograph, 8" x 10"

LOVE AND GRIEF

*"She had a madness in her for betrayal
She looked for it in every room of the house."*

Louise Bogan, "The Flume"

Perhaps you don't believe in wilderness
for women, perhaps it is all French gardens
with their terrible symmetry and grace.
But there is a fierceness, this madness as you say,
where we scale the mountains of our hearts
driven by the same need and fear of control
that drives men up cliff faces with fury.
What is this power you have to describe
pain in such beautiful detail?
Perhaps a careful map of grief is what we need.
I find myself reading your words repeatedly,
sometimes in pleasure, others as punishment.
There is anger here I begin to understand.
Anger at our mothers, with ourselves.
We would find betrayal somewhere,
beneath the floorboards, in the pocket.
We would seek the loss rather than be found.

Nancy Kricorian

ALFRED BENDIXEN'S *HAUNTED WOMEN* CAROL S. CANCRO

Barnard Assistant Professor of English Alfred Bendixen's *Haunted Women: The Best Supernatural Tales by American Women Writers** supplements a strong American tradition both of ghost stories and first-rate women's literature. Bendixen focuses on the late 19th and early 20th centuries, highlighting the work of such well-established writers as Kate Chopin, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Edith Wharton, but also featuring stories by more or less unknown writers (Harriet Prescott Spofford and Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, among others). He maintains that the highly commercial form of the supernatural tale allowed these women to explore the dynamics of bad marriage, repression, motherhood, and sexuality in a time when direct examinations of such issues by women would have been dismissed and unread. His thesis is borne out in these subtle, efficient and incisive early feminist texts.

The writers anthologized in *Haunted Women* were all too aware to portray their women simply as the unwitting victims of oppressive men; rather, their central figures are victims of an oppressive time. They often find themselves torn between two grossly inadequate choices, most memorably in Madelene Yale Wynne's "The Little Room." The little room, a special girlhood playroom with a seashell, books, a chair covered with India chintz from an old sea captain, and other such objects that suggest the expansiveness, adventure, and potential love in the world, quickly becomes a shallow china closet after the girls have grown and married. Generations of women are forced to confront not only the social necessity of leaving the little room to become wives and mothers but also the terror of the orderly, empty plates, which promise a comfortable yet predictable and ultimately unfulfilling married life.

Several of the writers in *Haunted Women* explore how women are stunted by their unfulfilling relationships with men. Edith Wharton reveals in her early, highly autobiographical story, "The Fullness of Life," how a woman with extraordinary unrealized creative potential can eternally compromise herself. Her central character, a nameless suicide, rejects satisfaction and damns herself to the grotesque existence of simultaneously debasing and being adored by her husband. Similarly, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, in her clever short work, "The True Story of Guenever," depicts a degenerate Guenever as fantasizing about Launcelot, who promises romantic fulfillment, but ultimately staying with Arthur, who adores her and keeps her comfy and respectable. By depicting Guenever as the ultimate frustrated bourgeois housewife rather than a fallen innocent, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps comically subverts the characterizations of women in a literary tradition dominated by men.

Perhaps the most ambitious questioning of great male authors' portrayals of women is Gertrude Atherton's "The Bell in the Fog," described by Bendixen as a feminist rewriting of "The Turn of the Screw." Atherton's central character, the famous American writer Ralph Orth, adores a little girl who bears a startling resemblance to a portrait in his picture gallery. When he shows her the picture, she tells him that she has seen it:

"Did you know there was another picture behind?" she asked.

"No," replied Orth, turning cold. "How did you know it?"

"One day I touched a spring in the frame, and this picture came forward. Shall I show you?"

"Yes!" And crossing curiosity and the involuntary shrinking from impending phenomena was a sensation of aesthetic disgust that he should be treated to a secret spring. (Emphasis added)

The second portrait reveals a brilliant, arrogant, sensual young woman. Atherton suggests that Henry James, most famous for his complex psychological portraiture of the American girl, oversimplified his female characters because of his inability to stomach even the sources of their sexuality. She forces us to consider the impossibility of a man's ever entirely understanding a woman's experience, implying that women must write about women if women's consciousness is to be understood.

The authors in *Haunted Women* embrace the exploration of women's perspectives as a vocation, and devote themselves to their task with the zeal and ardor of true revolutionaries. Mary E. Wilkins Freeman suggests the discipline of these authors by adding a feminist twist to the Puritan work ethic in her story "Luella Miller," in which the embodiment of evil is a woman who never does a thing for herself. Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper," the best-known sto-

ry in the collection, reveals the dangers of a woman's misunderstood and repressed creativity. Her nameless central woman is a convalescent whose husband and doctor are convinced that writing and reading are responsible for her pathology. As a result of her isolation in a converted nursery with barred windows, she is reduced to a mad caricature of the infantile woman, the most terrifying figure to these committed feminists.

Perhaps the most enjoyable part of reading these and the other eight stories in *Haunted Women* is recognizing that the editor himself is a legitimate feminist. He neither apologizes for men nor couches his argument in cryptic, pseudophilosophical language or the endless slogans that have mired so much feminist criticism. He writes a clear and simple introduction to the book as well as a short prefatory note to each author's work, making this book accessible to those who are not students of literature. Bendixen is clearly interested in having attention paid to these works, most of which have been out of print for the last fifty years or more. He sees them, quite correctly, as equivalent to the great supernatural works of Poe, Hawthorne, Irving, Melville, and James. Through *Haunted Women*, readers gain an understanding of not only the birth of feminism, but also these women's rightful and unjustly denied place in their literary tradition.

**Haunted Women* was printed in 1985 by Frederick Ungar Publishing Co. and may be purchased for \$14.95 at select Columbia-area and women's bookstores.



Joanne Mariner
untitled
photograph, 5" x 7"

BARBARA KRUGER INTERVIEW

MARIANNE PUGATCH

Barbara Kruger is an artist living in New York City. She attended Parsons School of Design and then worked at Conde Nast. She began exhibiting her work in the early 1970s at such galleries as the Artist Space and the Annina Nosei Gallery. Her work has also been exhibited at museums in the United States and Europe. Barbara Kruger employs a "post-modernist strategy" frequently used by other young artists today such as Sherrie Levine, Cindy Sherman and Jenny Holtzer. This strategy is to appropriate and recombine words and images from such disparate sources as popular media images, art history films, and fairy tales. A lot of Kruger's work plays with the visual and linguistic signs traditionally depicting women in order to examine and deconstruct cultural images of power. Kruger's work consists of large photo pieces with text superimposed on them. She has recently begun to use the lenticular process in her work, in which two images are simultaneously occupying the same space but can only be viewed one at a time, depending on where the viewer stands. Lenticular images are common; you can see them on pins or crackerjack prizes where a small plastic image shifts depending on how you hold it. The following interview was conducted on Sunday, March 2, 1986, at Lanciani's over a breakfast of eggs and coffee.

MP: Did you go to art school?

BK: My parents didn't have any money and I have no inheritance, the results of which are that I went to college for one year. I got a scholarship and I went to Syracuse University which was a horrible disgusting school. But they supposedly had a good art department. It was terrible, as usual, full of tenured teachers who were bitter failures (laughs). I was the only person on my dormitory floor who didn't have facial surgery, didn't have a nose job, or a chin job, or an ear job, didn't wear Pappagallo's, or Capezio's. It was a real class problem for me there. Even though I did very well there, I couldn't possibly stay—I felt like a Martian. Then, I came back here and I went to Parsons School of Design for a year, and of course that was terrible too 'cause most institutions are not exactly unproblematic power structures. There were a lot of problems there. But I went there for a year. One of my teachers was Diane Arbus, the photographer. Diane was a very troubled woman, but she was the first female role model I ever had that didn't wash the kitchen floor twelve times a day. And she paid for it. You know through her suicide. It was ridiculous. Terrible, yeah. I was out of school by the time I was nineteen. I went there for a year.

MP: How old are you now?

BK: I'm 41.

MP: You don't look it.



courtesy of Annina Nosei Gallery

BK: Really? Well, I think people who, women who, anyone, any human being who's fortunate enough to do work that they love, or at least like, I mean like that's one billionth of the world population, I think anyone who can reap those pleasures is going to show it. So anyway, I was out of school very young.

MP: Did working for Conde Nast influence your work?

BK: Absolutely. It's the biggest influence on my work. Without a doubt. When I left Parsons I had to get a job. I hadn't studied graphic design, but, I put together a graphic design portfolio, and I got hired at Conde Nast, as a designer in the Art Department. Soon afterwards, I was pretty much designing the whole book. I was really young and I was really into being Art Director of the World, or something like that (laughs). But that didn't last too long.

MP: So, why did you decide to leave?

BK: After a while it just gets very repetitive and rote—it just gets so tiresome after a while. It was the kind of company that just didn't pay very well at all—it was a snob mechanism that you should pay them to work there because they were Conde

Nast and *Vogue* and *Mademoiselle*. However, I should imagine that during the 30's and 40's and 50's, when colleges first started churning out generations of young women, all of a sudden, who had degrees—whether they were degrees in literature or whatever—there was simply no place for these women on the job market. Conde Nast was one place for these women on the job market. Conde Nast was one of the companies which functioned as a refuge for this employment force that could be put nowhere. These were people with degrees—Bachelors and Masters degrees—who could find no employment, so they would be typists or secretaries and get promoted to managers. So, in that way, the company was a real cachet of female intelligence and professionalism, for a while. The unfortunate part is that all that intelligence had to be projected into vehicles for color advertising, which is all that magazines are. The thinking was so limited and stilted and still is.

MP: What does Conde Nast represent today?

BK: It definitely has a different place in the hierarchy of employment now than it did thirty years ago. Those magazines still have a large circulation and they still need people writing for them. For a lot of people it's a plum job, just because it's prestige and they don't want to do anything more ambitious than that. I also should say that I think that journalism can be a very important form. Journalism's important because it has the capability of reaching a lot of people, which interests me. I think that, if possible, it would be great to do really thoughtful pieces for magazines like *Mademoiselle* and *Glamour*, which reach so many young women. The editorial policy of the magazine is shaped by S. I. Newhouse so what gets published and what doesn't is a reflection of his position, his power and his politics. But, I'm not putting down journalism. In my own writing for *Art Forum*, I try to write accessibly so that I can reach people. I think that most journalists are really thoughtless, adjectival climbers who just want to be hand made into stars, so they can hitch their wagons. They're like groupies. Now I'm talking about art and leisure journalists. When it comes to really tough global journalism, I think we could use as many critical and intelligent reporters as possible, but they're usually never going to get hired. I mean the *Times* just lets go of anyone who's really vital. Coburn gets fired from the *Voice*—all of those things happen.

MP: Could you give a Kruger reading of "You are seduced by the sex appeal of the inorganic"?

BK: I really can't—you know, 'cause I really see the works as being open readings made up of elementary words. I would hate to think that there were any singular readings of the works. So, I can't say, "This is what this piece meant to me." I can't do that.

MP: "I will not become what I mean to you."

BK: Right (laughs).

MP: You use pronouns in your work. What is their sig-

nificance?

BK: A frequent question that I get is, "Who's the you?" Right, "Who's the you?" And, I always say, there is no particular you; that the pronouns are used as shifters, and that they're used in somehow addressing the viewer as forthrightly as possible, and hoping to also create some kind of active spectator. If it's a 'you' and you don't want to be the 'you', you can decline the address and be that third party, or that 'other', shall we say.

MP: In the essay, "Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture," Shelly Ortner talks about man as representing culture, and Woman as the arbiter between nature and culture. So for me, when I saw your piece, "We won't play nature to your culture" I read it as a feminist statement, a statement that said, "Well, we're not going to be your arbiters."

BK: Right, yeah. Basically, all my work, whether it's writing or pictures, are feminist statements. But, I don't consider myself a feminist artist. I don't like to think that there's an art which is a feminist art—because I think that it ghettoizes. What's important to me is to be effective and to make changes and not have an investment in things the way they are. To make a change, you have to dodge people's desire to categorize you, and to decide which discourse you're in and which discourse you're not in. Also, in terms of the notion of feminism, I think that feminism is a plural—feminisms, and that there's no singular way to be a feminist. And that's why I think that people speak about feminist, especially in the media, as a singular way—this is a feminist and this is not a feminist—there are just as many ways of thinking and disagreements and agreements in terms of feminisms as there are in anything else. It's, I think, the plurality, or the ability to tolerate differences and disputes which should make feminisms different than intolerant, univocal, conventional male address.

MP: When you were interviewed in the *Voice* this fall, you said that you would not consider yourself, or that you don't want to consider yourself a great artist.

BK: I feel that the notion of greatness is one that could use a tremendous amount of deconstruction. So, it doesn't have to do with the 'great artists' per se. It's like—what collapses complexity into the singularities of myth and names or knights something great or something ungreat? I think that the motor of that system is the same convention which oppresses and keeps things stereotypical and the same. So, when I hear certain people being called 'great artists', I know why they're being called great. It doesn't mean that I, as a spectator, will deny certain virtuositities. But, I do question the construction of greatness. A lot of people don't. A lot of other women don't. Part of my work is to ask those questions. So, I decline the title.

MP: In some of your work presently showing at Anni-

na Nosei, you have employed a lenticular process — can you explain lenticular?

BK: I decided that I wanted to use lenticular process because of its obvious attributes — changing messages and images. I contacted a number of different companies that do it, most of whom just couldn't make the leap to work with an artist. They're used to making little stickems or little things, you know, a million in a run. Well, I found these great guys in Texas who I just love working with. But, the process is so expensive. I spend all my money in my work. I literally have nothing else but that, and because I'm not a painter I can't — I don't know if you're familiar with the market, but the market for photographic work as compared to painting work, you could be someone just coming out of Columbia and have a first show and get more for your paintings than I would get for my work. Photography is just a whole different trip.

MP: Do you take your own photographs?

BK: No, I used to, for a time. I'm not sure, I think there are enough images in the world. These images are taken from different sources, anywhere from the 20's, the 70's, manuals and newspapers, and magazines and books.

MP: Where did you get the image for, "We won't play nature to your culture"?

BK: I found it in an old photo magazine.

MP: What about the texts in your work? Do you write them?

BK: I write them all myself. But a lot of things are figures of speech that have existed already in culture, like "Search and Destroy," "Mission Impossible," "Divide and Conquer."

MP: You put your work up outside the gallery?

BK: Yeah, billboards, and just regular poster-size things also. And that Times Square sign that I did. I'm doing some billboards now. There's a

billboard in London that I just did, which will be reproduced in this movie that is being made by Channel 4 in England about the artworld — big eight-part film. And I'm also going to do a billboard in the fall. It'll be all around Northern California, but, it will also be in front of the Berkeley Museum. So, that'll be fun.

MP: Why the red frame?

BK: A while ago I decided that I really liked the way it looked. I just kept on using it because I thought it was effective. It was an effective way of making the work be seen and enter into the market construct. Not that everything's outside the market, everything's inside the market economy. And the frames were also about some kind of semblance of beauty for me. I like the red frames. There's a lot of photo-derived work that they're coming out of for instance, in England, which was really heavily informed by the last fifteen years of film theory around *Screen* magazine. I've read that theory. I'm not anti-theory at all. I read a lot. But I'm not a theorist and I'm not an academic. I had very little schooling. That work tends to illustrate a generation of theoretical writing, whereas my work came out of my collision with the image at the site of labor, working at a magazine. If I couldn't make these images strong and effective, I was fired. I was hired to make people look at these pictures. So, my relationship to images, alongside with many other artists I know, American artists working with photography, their relationship to the image is much different than say, the English. The English have a much more developed critical discourse—they are much more verbal about it. Many Americans are very anti-theory but very image-savvy. I think that I'm somewhere in the middle, because I'm certainly not threatened by theory. I think it's very important, but I don't want to illustrate it—I'm not interested in that.



courtesy of Annina Nosei Gallery

Your eyes are green this morning—they are. Like a cat. If you were a tree, you would be an elephant tree, growing out of the ground and back into it, your roots your branches and your eyes are green when they're not brown. An elephant tree is never free of the earth it grows out of but goes on forever that way, not spread toward the sun above the stratosphere, not an incurable heliotrope, not:

Night falls beneath the foot of racing stars breakdancing on centuries of nitrogen. Day and night is the friction of wheels on tar and the sky streaks—what you see before your forehead touches the windshield. A scientist in Berlin says the body weighs .4 grams less after death. If we were postcards we could go anywhere for thirteen cents, but somebody would write all over us first. When you are born you turn into a prism, bend white light into rust, blue, gold, ochre, purple, mahogany and green, shatter and the stream is white again as if it never bent. But all of this is like putting a glass of water on the table. What do pink noise and capitalism have in common? One would never exist without the other? Maybe. Somebody making money is plugging your ears for you. But that's been around longer than Citicorp. Maybe its just the name: Pink noise. "What do you believe in?" "If I ever find words for it I'll let you know." "What do you mean?" If it weren't for the elephant tree would the caste system have ever come about? Reincarnation in seven stages? Oh how I hate this. No, no, no. It's like putting a glass of water on the table. What would happen to language if we took out pronouns and articles? A, the, these, this, that, an, those, you, I, we, them, him, her? And then what would happen? If you do that in your heart you can die of it. Not enough, and you can die of it too. And if you think about it too long? Implosion?

The city was prettiest in the late afternoon and early evening, when trees change from their colors to their shapes against the sky, and windows reflect the sun. The sky turns smokey and pastel and is closer to the tops of buildings. The city seems smaller and deeper.

Kimball Fenn

TO MY MOTHER

What was it like?
his strange heart
beat against your breasts,
throbbled like a beached fish.
Looking up into his face,
did you see his eyes, glazed
over, eyes staring into
their own underwater world.
You were afraid to get your ankles wet.
You remained on the shore
playing tag with the waves
until he picked you up
and threw you in.
You, afraid of the things
beneath the surface
that you couldn't see, slimy things
that might brush against your leg.
Then standing with him
before the altar
all you could hear were waves
crashing in your brain,
and five months later
your water broke, leaving you
with a red-faced baby
squirming like a fish.

Lori Stevens

ABLUTIONS HELEN GLEASON

Esther goes to shower secretly in my father's bathroom because the spray pattern of that shower-nozzle arouses her. She takes showers in brief, shimmering spurts. Walking back into our room breathless and refreshed, she lies down on the bed. Sucking in her breath she instructs me to hold the front of her favorite, tight, black pants in my hand while she inches the zipper over her broad, brown hips.

I am riding alongside of my boyfriend's father in a horse-cart. We are careful not to jiggle too close to each other as we make light conversation. He is wearing a sturdy plaid shirt and is holding the reins firmly between his palms. In a warm drawl he includes me in his retirement plans. It is about time the families met each other. Couldn't a canoe trip bring us closer? For a second I consider announcing that my father is a homosexual. Suddenly, in front of us the horse lifts his tail. His anus opens like a pulpy flower, and a brown, menacing sweetness pellets out. After a stricken silence I comment that the corn looks greener this summer. The plant stalks are swollen. We are surrounded by a thicket of brazen, underwater growth.

Dad and I are swimming in a wooden pool full of Swiss bathers. Lining the basin on the left is a wall of pure, sheeted glass. You can see the milk-white mountains and their thick, blue veins ribboning down.

I stand shyly at the pool's edge, barely thirteen. A towel is tucked neatly around my waist. My knobbed breasts contract against the loose-fitting hand-me-down. I'm wearing a one-piece bathing suit that was once my sister's. Now it is fraying thin, partially transparent with age. I haven't grown an inch in three years. "She's a shrimp on dry ice," my father says. He's taken me along this trip to visit with an endocrine specialist.

Dad's knees are quivering from a full day battling the snow-drifts. It was far from one melodious descent as promised by the alpine ski brochure. They neglected to say you had to be good skiers. I twisted my ankle, my ski unleashed itself down the mountain and my dad tore his back lunging after it. Nonetheless, he readies himself for one last dive, a firm believer in the calming effects of exercise. He's somewhat of a fanatic and has a horrible temper when accident rears its monstrous head, and life's lurching motions can no longer be constrained by his favorite phrase: "Ahh . . . isn't this harmonious?"

He dives into the chlorine with a quick, angry smack. I can tell he is in pain and even more mortified by the prospect of looking awkward. He falls into a characteristically meticulous stroke, carving his arms evenly through the air and concealing his anger with sharp, self-consciously tidy kicks.

We decide, later, to change in the vestibule labelled 'family', as it seems customary with the Swiss. In a mock English accent, highbrow, as if imitating Alistair Cooke, he pronounces this "a culturally felicitous choice."

When I was younger my family was clinically concerned with hygiene: the dissection of dreams, the squeezing of pimples.

Returning a cranky sun-scorched mass from a day at the beach, we would claim shower partners. Mine, most often, was Dad. He'd grab me, feet-first, and hang me under the jet-stream, my hair hanging down, and my face filling with heat and blood.

"Rome would have been worth the trip just for this bidet!" my father enthusiastically announced, making loud, splashing noises we could hear from the terrace. We were sitting outside at the table, surrounded by potted rosebushes, having what he liked to call "a ceremonious Sunday breakfast." My father grimaced in the direction of the bathroom and cried: "Oh damn! Now that I'm all relaxed and happy in your precious company, I have to go. Will you all stay right there until I get back?"

He prided himself on his bowel movements. If we didn't ask after them he'd start looking discomfited, offended. "O.K. Dad," my brother would intrude finally, after a tantalizing delay, and with a semi-patronizing note of sarcasm. "How was it. Tell us."

My father always brought soap back for me from his business trips. Fat, white pearls of soap in fancy, plastic containers with the name of the city emblazoned on the cover in golden letters: LISBON. For Esther, my insomniac sister, he brought rubbery sleeping masks and dark blue airplane slippers.

My first woman-friend, or bosom buddy, was Albertina. We met when I was thirteen years old. She told me she was writing a novel about her three cats. She had a thick, brown braid and smelled warm and musty like a bull.

One afternoon she charged up to me in the hall where I stood clinging tremulously to the radiator, my habitual spot. She hung a small, red sign around my neck that read: OUT OF SERVICE, and with a radiant grin ran off. She was teasing me because I wore loose hand-me-downs, ill-fitting mini-skirts that hung from my body like tarpaulin over a plank. I looked like the site of an archeological ruin, perennially under construction. She said I reminded her of those bedraggled whores on the Appian Way, clustered around their oil-drum fires. She could tell from my flat backside that I felt like a foreigner.

I needed that warmth. I remember pressing my empty belly into the sides of that old radiator, seeking out its peeling, burning core. I may have looked like a cast-off but I tried hard to feel like the survivor. I felt pride as I overcame the indefinable nausea of loneliness with the stabbing pains of a self-imposed hunger. Albertina and I had quite different temperaments. Once I refused to get off the bus with her on the way home from school and spend the night at her house because I hadn't brought along a toothbrush. Im-

promptu decisions were her forte, and however obstinately I clung to my orderly regimen, secretly I craved her freedom. I put my foot down in outrage when, early one morning, she spent our collective breakfast money on cream puffs.

One of our long-standing disagreements was about soap. Albertina loved to take long, lavish showers. She would fold up her braid into a pair of loose-fitting underwear, plant her legs firmly in the bathtub and stand, chest thrown back, spreading soap generously across her big, rubbery bosoms. I'd watch her from the vantage point of the toilet seat, my eyes peer-

ing hungrily out of my head, my knees tucked into her warm-smelling nightshirt.

The soap bar travelled wherever she took it: full circuit. Cradling it in her palm she'd spoon it between her thighs. I asked her if her brothers did the same and if they did would she mind it. Absolutely not, she answered. Her whole family were vigorous washers. Soap washes itself, she explained. The layers keep whittling down, that's what keeps soap so hygienic.

She had a third tit, carved like a wart three inches to the left of her belly-button. We called it "the little one." She said it was a relic from her early days in the rain forests of the Amazon.



Fred Bever
untitled
photograph, 3" x 4½"

WRITING HER SELF; *Écriture Féminine* Reviewed

AVA ROSE

For centuries, western civilization has silenced women, robbing them of social, economic and political power. Yet they have been denied more than the opportunity to be heard, to shape their lives and influence their cultures. Women have been denied the very possibility of self-expression: they have not been allowed to realize their own voices. By focusing on psychoanalytic and philosophical (rather than sociopolitical) concepts of identity and repression, certain French feminists have examined the ways in which a male dominated culture — and in particular a language which takes for granted a male speaking subject — have relegated the “female” (both real and symbolic) to a position of silence. Many of these feminists have affirmed the necessity for women to define, or create, their own (psychoanalytic/sexual) identity. They encourage women to seize the role of speaking subject that has traditionally been not only male, but masculine, in order to speak or write in ways that will affirm their particular experience.

The French oppose this *feminine identity* to the patriarchal representations and definitions (which I will call the patriarchal feminine, or femininity) that have been ascribed to, and prescribed for, women. Implicit in this patriarchal construct of femininity is a certain marginalization, or deviation from the normal, the healthy — that is, the masculine. This equation of the masculine with the normal is nowhere more apparent than in traditional (Freudian) psychoanalytic theories of sexual development and identity. Luce Irigaray, and others have criticized the “phallogentrism,” or male-centeredness, of psychoanalytic theory, which privileges the male sex organ, and equates maleness with subjectivity. With the phallus as the ultimate signifier, the symbol of sexual identity, and libidinal and creative energy, *woman* represents that which is other, object. She is the signified rather than the signifying because she doesn't possess that which affirms identity, and therefore gives the power to name/objectify.

Lacan counters this bipolar opposition (phallus/non-phallus) with the concept of *jouissance*.¹ He argues against Freud's universalization of the masculine/phallic libidinal economy, proposing a feminine experience of sexuality which is *in excess* of the phallogentric model, radically Other and irreducible to the phallus/non-phallus dichotomy. In Lacanian theory, however, language is still defined as strictly phallogentric. It is the demand expressing desire, which is based on lack and symbolized by the phallus. The model for this linguistic demand is the desire of male-child-subject for female-mother-object. Woman is still object/other, and feminine desire (*jouissance*) is still radically Other (not symbolized).

French feminists have affirmed and appropriated this Otherness of feminine sexual identity as outside

(or pre-) Symbolic, in order to resist the patriarchal equation of femininity with passivity/objectivity. Critics like Cixous and Irigaray use feminist revisions of the psychoanalytic model of sexual identity — which assumes a relationship between desire and language, libidinal and cultural energy, etc. — to theorize a *feminine speaking subject*, and a discourse that might inscribe the feminine (*jouissant*) rather than the masculine (phallogentric) experience.

Several American feminists, while agreeing that “. . . working out self-representations that challenge phallogentric discourses is an important part of [a feminist] ideological struggle,”² criticize the French feminists' “celebrations of the feminine” (Jones 362). Ann Rosalind Jones specifically accuses Cixous and other champions of *écriture féminine* of essentialism and oversimplification, suggesting that, in proposing an affirmation of a “feminine nature,” they underestimate the effects of Symbolic discourses on feminine identity. While I support this criticism, I find Jones too hasty in her rejection of the body as a site from which women can attack the forces which have driven them away from their sexual, linguistic and social identity (Jones 368). I believe that an exploration of women's *jouissance* — that takes into account the repression and even constitution of that *jouissance* in/by the Symbolic — might point to forms of writing that would express the complexity of women's experience.

In philosophy woman is always on the side of passivity. [. . .] as soon as there is a will to say something. A will: desire, authority, you examine that, and you are led right back — to the father. You can even fail to notice that there's no place at all for women in the operation.³

Philosophy, art, religion, family — society's discourses have been dominated, even shaped, by *men's* “will to say something.” Women have been *spoken about* just as they have been the objects of men's desire, but in discourse as in sexuality, women have always been “on the side of passivity”: “The subordination of the feminine to the masculine order [even] appears to be the condition for the functioning of the machine” (Cixous “Sorties” 92). Symbolic discourse, then, depends upon this objectification, this obsessional defining, silencing and mastering of the world, which characterizes phallogentrism. Luce Irigaray finds that psychoanalysis has marginalized and objectified woman in the same way, asserting that “Female sexuality has always been theorized within masculine parameters.”⁴ Feminine *jouissance* has been denied, erased, excluded, woman's sexuality being reduced to “. . . a hole-envelope . . . a nonsex organ or a masculine sex organ turned inside out in order to caress itself” (Irigaray 99). In a (masculine) libidinal economy

that is based on the prevalence of the gaze, . . . “her sex organ represents the horror of having nothing to see” (Irigaray 101). Cixous reveals this vision of woman’s sexuality and subjectivity as dark, obscure, unknowable—hence, marginal.

Where is woman in all the spaces that he surveys, all the plays he stages at the interior of the literary enclosure?

There are many answers, they are well known: she is in the shadow. In the shadow that he throws on her, that she is.⁵

Woman is more than *in the shadows*, she *is* the shadow; she represents the unseen, the unheard, the unthought/unthinkable in phallogocentric discourse. As Xavière Gauthier points out, if a woman remains silent, Other, outside the historical process,⁶ then she renounces access to activity/subjectivity. Yet even if she emerges from the shadows, from silence, and begins “. . . to write *as men do*, [she] will enter history subdued and alienated” (Gauthier 162). If women speak within masculine discourses, if they “find ‘their’ place within the linear, grammatical, linguistic system that orders the symbolic, the superego, the law, . . . a system based entirely upon one fundamental signifier: the phallus. . .” (Gauthier 162), “their place” is still that of object/Other/non-phallus, and their speech therefore alienates them from themselves. Appropriation of masculine discourse, of phallogocentric creativity, places woman in the paradoxical position of being at once subject and object. She can speak to the extent that she can appropriate phallic subjectivity, while divorcing herself from the passivity associated with the femininity that that (phallogocentric) order assigns her.

Cixous addresses this alienated position of the woman who tries to find her place in language in *La Jeune Née*:

Who am I? . . . What is my name? I want to change my life. Who “I”? Where is my place? I search. I rummage everywhere. I read, I interrogate. I begin to speak, what language is mine?
(Cixous *La Jeune Née* 130).

The answering of the question “Who am I?” by women themselves is both the goal, and the condition of possibility for an *écriture féminine*. Woman herself must define the feminine; she must define her self in order to discover her own discourse—a language that she creates and in which she is subject. A woman must indeed ask “*Qui ‘je’?*”—Who is the “I” in phallogocentric discourse, and how can a woman say “I” and thereby constitute herself as subject? Cixous and Irigaray, among others, find the answer to this interrogation of woman’s identity in the body—in feminine *jouissance*. They believe, like Chantal Chawaf, that “. . . if a music of femininity is arising out of its own oppression, it materializes through the rediscovered body.”⁷

In “The Laugh of the Medusa,” Cixous posits (and praises) a woman’s autoeroticism as, “a world all her own [. . .] A world of searching, the elaboration of knowledge on the basis of a systematic experimenta-

tion with the bodily functions, a passionate and precise interrogation of her erotogeneity” (Cixous “The Laugh of the Medusa” 246). Cixous believes that what men have said about women—to women about themselves—has resulted in women not-knowing themselves. Therefore, this discovery, or uncovering, of feminine *jouissance* must take place apart from and outside of masculine constructs of sexuality. This positing of female desire as radically different, as Other, is more than a political strategy, it is defined by the very *nature* of that desire, as Cixous sees it.

It is at the level of *jouissance*, in my opinion, that the difference makes itself most clearly apparent in as far as woman’s libidinal economy is neither identifiable by a man, nor referable to the masculine economy (Cixous “Sorties” 95).

As opposed to this masculine libidinal economy—which centralizes desire in the phallus, which defines in terms of binary oppositions (phallus/non-phallus), which objectifies, fragments, and fetishizes the body—Cixous sees female sexuality as multiple, decentralized, non-finite, infinite (Cixous *La Jeune Née* 162), and therefore by its very nature as outside the phallogocentric discourses. Irigaray shares Cixous’ vision of a feminine identity that is by nature diverse and decentralized. In “This Sex Which is Not One,” she asks, “Must the multiple nature of female desire and language be understood as the fragmentary, scattered remains of a raped or denied sexuality?” (Irigaray 104). Her answer is “no.” While she does not disavow that female sexuality has been “raped” and “denied,” she does not find in this repression the cause of its multiplicity. She posits instead the decentralization of her erogenous zones and her never-completely-differentiated relationship to the m/other as the sources of a sexuality that is diffuse and multiple.

Irigaray finds a parallel to woman’s *jouissance*, in which “. . . the geography of her pleasure is much more diversified, more multiplied in its difference, more complex, more subtle than is imagined—in an imaginary centered a bit too much on one and the same” (Irigaray 103), in woman’s language:

. . . in which “she” goes off in all directions and in which “he” is unable to discern the coherence of any meaning. Contradictory words seem a little crazy to the logic of reason, and inaudible for him who listens with ready-made grids, a code prepared in advance. In her statements—at least when she dares to speak out—woman retouches herself constantly (Irigaray 103).

Thus, woman’s language, like her sexuality, is self-reflexive and autoerotic.

Cixous also draws this parallel between feminine *jouissance* and feminine writing—between a woman’s body and her text. As she must experiment with her body to discover her sexual identity (Cixous “The Laugh of the Medusa” 246), so must a woman experiment with language to realize her subjectivity.

"Write!" says Cixous, "and your self-seeking text will know itself better than flesh and blood" (Cixous "The Laugh of the Medusa" 260). Cixous sees the very act of a woman writing as a reappropriation of her body—a recreation of herself: "In writing herself, woman returns to this body that has been more than confiscated from her. . . . In censoring the body one censors, with the same blow, breath, speech" (Cixous *La Jeune Née* 179). Cixous believes that it is precisely because women's bodies *have been censored*, their *jouissance* and their desire repressed, that they have not written. "Why so few texts? Because so few women have as yet won back their bodies. They must invent the impregnable language. . . ." (Cixous "The Laugh of the Medusa" 256). Again, this movement is autoerotic and subversive. If women are to affirm their *jouissance* and their subjectivities, they must reject the constraints, the prohibitions of Symbolic discourses, law, and order which have frigidified and impregnated them—forcing them to reproduce the law, and relegating what is left of their desire/creativity to darkness, secrecy, and obscurity.

You've written a little, but in secret. And it wasn't good, because it was in secret, and because you punished yourself for writing, because you didn't go all the way, or because you wrote, irresistibly, as when we masturbate in secret, not to go further, but to attenuate the tension a bit (Cixous "The Laugh of the Medusa" 246).

Cixous calls on women to go further, to explore without fear or guilt the dark secret of their sexuality, and to inscribe their *jouissance*, their difference, their feminine identity, in their texts.

Cixous also locates the revolutionary and subversive power of feminine *jouissance* and *écriture féminine* precisely in its Otherness, its marginality. Rather than rejecting this position, Cixous affirms its value:

We the precocious, we the repressed of culture, our lovely mouths gagged with pollen, our wind knocked out of us, we the labyrinths, the ladders, the trampled spaces, the bebies—, we are black and we are beautiful (Cixous "The Laugh of the Medusa" 248).

If female sexuality has been a dark secret, an obscured, unexplored "dark continent" (Cixous *La Jeune Née* 125), then it is precisely in her menacing marginality that a woman has the power to subvert Symbolic order. "When the 'repressed' of their culture and their society returns, it's an explosive, *utterly* destructive, staggering return, with a force never yet unleashed and equal to the most forbidding of suppressions" (Cixous "The Laugh of the Medusa" 256). According to Irigaray, the subversive force of feminine *jouissance* lies in its difference from—even antagonism to—the (masculine) Symbolic order. A woman desires (and creates) in accordance with, "another economy which diverts the linearity of a project, undermines the target-object of a desire, explodes the polarization of desire on only one pleasure, and disconcerts fidelity to only one discourse" (Irigaray 104).

Thus, a woman experiences her pleasure and expresses her subjectivity in a way that is in some sense "pre-symbolic": "She alone dares and wishes to know from within, where she, the outcast, has never ceased to hear the resonance of fore-language" (Cixous "The Laugh of the Medusa" 260).

This position has been accused of oversimplifying women's relationship to their bodies, and positing an essentialist view of feminine identity that some American feminists find unrealistic. Ann Rosalind Jones asserts that, "the French feminists make of the female body too unproblematically pleasurable and totalized an entity" (Jones 368). Jones argues that:

There seems to be no essential stratum of sexuality unsaturated with social arrangements and symbolic systems [. . .] that sexual identity ("I am a woman, I experience my body as sexual in this way") never takes shape in isolation or in a simply physical context (Jones 167).

Thus, Jones rejects as naive French celebrations of feminine nature such as Madeleine Gagnon's affirmation that, "we don't have to confront ourselves in order to free ourselves. . . all we have to do is let the body flow, from the inside; all we have to do is erase."⁸ Jones' argument is precisely that we *cannot* erase the effects of the Symbolic on our unconscious, that a woman's Imaginary is formed in a patriarchal world, and she must constitute her subjectivity within Symbolic discourses. While Cixous asserts that although "the period in time governed by phallogocentric values. . . extends into the present, [this] doesn't prevent woman from starting the history of life somewhere else" (Cixous "The Laugh of the Medusa" 264). Yet Jones argues that *there is no elsewhere*: even woman's autoeroticism, she claims, is not free of "images from a phallically dominated world" (Jones 368). This argument undermines Irigaray's position that "a woman touches herself by and within herself directly, without mediation, and before any distinction between activity and passivity is possible" (Irigaray 100). Jones, in fact, puts into question the fundamental project of *écriture féminine*: woman's answering of the question "Who am I?"—her (re)creation of her self—through the reappropriation of her body, and its inscription in the text. "Can the body be the source of a new discourse? Is it possible assuming an unmediated and *jouissant* (or, more likely, a positively reconstructed) sense of one's body, to move from that state of unconscious excitation to a written female text?" (Jones 372).

I agree with Jones that, "if we argue for an innate, precultural feminine, . . . if we define female subjectivity through universal biological/libidinal givens" (Jones 368-9), we are in danger of oversimplifying and essentializing women's experiences of their bodies. However, I find Jones too hasty in her rejection of the body as a source of an alternative discourse for women (Jones 366). Jones argues that "the female body hardly seems the best site to launch an attack on the forces that have alienated us from what our sexuality might become" (Jones 368). And yet, because they have been excluded from (and alienated

by) the male-dominated (and phallogentric) cultural and linguistic discourses of the Symbolic, women have traditionally launched an attack on its repressive forces by using their bodies, hysterically expressing —not their “feminine nature”—but their paradoxical and alienated position “within” the Symbolic order. The body is therefore a critical site for a woman to explore her self—because she has been both alienated from it and relegated to it—because, as Jones herself says,

The leap from body to language is especially difficult for women. Lacanian theory holds that a girl’s introduction into language (the Symbolic order represented by the father and built on phallic/non-phallic opposition) is complex, because she cannot identify with the positive poles of that order (Jones 372).

If the phallogentric structures of the Symbolic have alienated women from language, and from their bodies, then it is by examining —rather than dismissing as paralyzing— that alienation that women may find a discourse expressive of their subjective experience.

Notes

¹ Hélène Cixous, “The Laugh of the Medusa,” New

French Feminisms, trans. Keith and Paula Cohen, ed. Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron (New York: Schocken Books, 1981) 245-264.

² Ann Rosalind Jones, “Writing the Body: Toward an Understanding of l’écriture féminine,” *The New Feminist Criticism*, ed. Elaine Showalter (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985) 361-378.

³ Hélène Cixous, “Sorties,” *New French Feminisms*, trans. Anne Liddle, ed. Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron (New York: Schocken Books, 1981) 90-98.

⁴ Luce Irigaray, “This Sex Which Is Not One,” *New French Feminisms*, trans. Claudia Reeder, ed. Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron (New York: Schocken Books, 1981) 99-106.

⁵ Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément, *La Jeune Née*, (Paris: Union Generale d’Editions, 1975) 115-193.

⁶ Xavière Gauthier, “Is There Such a Thing as Women’s Writing?,” *New French Feminisms*, trans. Marilyn A. August, ed. Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron (New York: Schocken Books, 1981) 161-164.

⁷ Chantal Chawaf, “Linguistic Flesh,” *New French Feminisms*, trans. Yvonne Rochette-Ozzello, ed. Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron (New York: Schocken Books, 1981) 177-178.

⁸ Madeleine Gagnon, “Body I,” *New French Feminisms*, trans. Isabelle de Courtivron, ed. Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron (New York: Schocken Books, 1981) 179-180.



Tiziana Pirrone
untitled
line drawing, 18" x 24"

artilugios

apenas es creíble el mundo o
tengo qué decir

pero el beso que doy
sueña otro beso
como a sabiendas de lo poco
frota el amor aunque
no acuda nadie aunque
no dure

donde pudimos ser cuerdos
prende la hermosura

bag of tricks

scarcely is the world credible or
have I anything to say

but the kiss I give
dreams up another kiss
knowing full well how little
rubs love even though
nobody comes to rescue
even though

where we might have been wise
beauty burns

noche de verano

nada alcanza a ser del todo fúnebre
apenas mece ahí
 los obstáculos
 -posibles-
 de las cosas

tampoco yo pierdo la calma

(huye el tiempo
por el labio
de una magnolia)

summer night

nothing manages to be wholly funereal
barely sways there

the (possible)
obstacles
of things

nor do I lose my head

(time flees
along the lip
of a magnolia)

María Negroni
tr. Anne Archer and María Negroni



Fred Bever
untitled
photograph, 4" x 6½"

WOMEN IN SWING

LIZ SHER



Trombone trio: Ina Balle Byrd; Judy Bayron; Helen Jones

Courtesy of Greta Schiller and Andrea Weiss

The International Sweethearts of Rhythm were the hottest, longest-lived all-female jazz band of the 1940's—but if you've never heard of them, it's no surprise. They were the first racially integrated women's band in America. Their fans consistently turned out in droves, and often waited on line for hours to hear the Sweethearts sizzle. The Sweethearts set attendance records all over the country; they performed regularly at the Savoy Ballroom, the Plantation Club, and the Apollo Theater in Harlem. Joe Louis, Count Basie, and Duke Ellington were among their biggest fans. Yet despite all this, the Sweethearts were and are largely ignored by the white music press, a phenomenon which, in part, can be explained: they never cut an LP, and their audiences were predominantly black. Lastly, most jazz journalists at the time were white males, and while they could accept black male musicians, and female artists such as Fitzgerald and Holliday, who were vocalists, they simply could not take seriously a group of women who presumed to play big band jazz, a medium which is dominated by heavy brass and percussion. During the 1940's, people still believed that women were too weak, in body and in character, to play instruments like the saxophone and trumpet. And although the Sweethearts' career was followed closely by black newspapers such as *The Chicago Defender*, to this day the Sweethearts are conspicuously absent from every "definitive" jazz anthology ever written. They have been all but blotted out from music history.

In 1937, at the Piney Woods School for poor and orphaned children in the Mississippi Delta, Laurence C. Jones, the school's director, realized that 'all-girl' bands were a new fad in swing. Following the example of Ina Ray Hutton, who led an extremely popular all-white women's orchestra at the time, Jones enlisted fifteen or so of his young students to play music together, in order to raise money for the school. He called the all-girls—for at the time they really were girls—band the International Sweethearts of Rhythm, and it was monumentally successful. In fact, the Sweethearts were so successful wherever they played that soon they decided to leave school and to play professionally, much to Jones' chagrin. Although Jones had a few of the girls who were still under sixteen arrested, claiming that they were too young to work, there was no stopping the Sweethearts. Once established on the professional circuit, where they were tagged with the somewhat diminutive reputation of being "the prettiest" all-girls band around, and of being "a novelty," the Sweethearts learned to swing so hard and hot that they attracted some of the top female musicians of the period, including trumpet player Tiny Davis, and saxophone player Vi Burnside, both of whom stayed with the band until its demise in 1949.

The Sweethearts were trailblazers in many ways. With the absence of men on the homefront, social conditions in America during World War II were such that an unprecedented number of work opportunities were open to women and minorities. As a matter of necessity, droves of women and minorities migrated to urban centers and entered the work force. And for a time, while the war still raged in Europe, a greater tolerance and liberalism developed toward the ideas and realities of women working, traveling alone, and living independent lives. In this temporary war-time loosening of social prejudices, the Sweethearts flourished.

Adventure, mobility, financial independence, excitement, undreamed-of freedom: joining the Sweethearts meant having access to every opportunity which, under "normal" circumstances, would have been closed to these women. Many of the original bandmembers from Piney Woods learned to play their instruments in virtually no time at all, the hard way, by ear, with little formal instruction, because, as one musician put it, "It was now or never." Some of the musicians joined the Sweethearts on a moment's notice: vocalist Evelyn McGee, for example, left home to become a bandmember the day she was asked to join. When one of the saxophone players was too ill to play, the Sweethearts called Roz Cron, a Jewish musician from Boston, to replace her. A few days later, Cron left home for good, and joined the band on what turned out to be, for everyone concerned, a marvelous adventure. For many of the Sweethearts—young females, many black, many orphaned—to join the band was to make a colossal leap onto the Freedom Train, and to land on one's feet.

The Sweethearts were predominantly black and mulatto, but there were also women of Mexican, Puerto Rican, white, Chinese, and American Indian des-

cent. They were often billed, however, as an "All-Girl Negro Band" or an "All-Girl Colored Band." One reason for this was that the sound they generated, their ability to swing, their deep, rocking rhythms, were in the public mind closely associated with black people. Yet, there were times when being billed as an All-Girl Colored Band was to their distinct advantage. When the Sweethearts were touring the deep south, the white and light-skinned mulatto women had no choice but to wear dark make-up, in an attempt to masquerade as black. It was simply a matter of survival. Still, as one bandmember put it, "We couldn't paint their eyes." The musicians were often harassed, and on occasion arrested, by the southern white police, who were incensed by the band's integrated status. Because segregation laws barred blacks from railroads, restaurants and hotels, the Sweethearts ate and slept on the bus in which they traveled. Thrust together as such, coupled with the fact that they shared the common goal of playing the best swing music they could, created a strong sense of loyalty and support within the group.

It is thanks to Rosetta Reitz, the owner of Rosetta Records, that the Sweethearts are being brought to public attention once again. Reitz has made it her life's work to track down and re-issue old blues and jazz rarities, in an attempt to bring to light the many female artists who, though forgotten, were powerful creative forces in music. An archivist/producer, Reitz has

issued "The Women's Heritage Series," which among other titles includes *Mean Mothers/Independent Women's Blues*, *Ida Cox's Wild Women Don't Have the Blues*, and *Big Mamas*. As a natural outgrowth of her exploration of jazz and blues, Reitz recently issued *The International Sweethearts of Rhythm*, an album including sixteen tracks salvaged from radio broadcasts made before the Sweethearts' European Tour with the U.S.O.

The experiences and evolution of the Sweethearts is also the subject of a new documentary, *The International Sweethearts of Rhythm*, a Jezebel Productions/Rosetta Records production. Produced by Greta Schiller and Rosetta Reitz, and directed by Greta Schiller and Andrea Weiss, the film traces the band's history through rare footage of the Sweethearts in performance, still photographs, and current interviews with six original bandmembers, and their arranger, Jessie Stone.

Caught up in the spirit of adventure and independence, it was with naiveté that the Sweethearts swung their way across the United States and into Europe. They did not realize at the time the vast extent to which they were breaking new ground. In one fell swoop of spontaneity, excitement and swing, the Sweethearts, however unknowingly, smashed the preconception that women were unfit to play music with drive, intensity, and expertise, and set a blazing example of sex- and race-equality.

THIS HOUSE

At the bottom of the house my mother sings
amazing grace over the whine of the vacuum.
My father sits in the living room pointing
the remote control, flashing through
early news, cable stations. His shoes
beside him are grained with sawdust,
his hands smell faintly of blood.
Susan is in the bedroom painting her mouth
scarlet, combing her electric hair.
On the second floor my grandmother
shouts in Armenian into the phone, complains
about my lazy uncle the telephonaholic.
He paces the kitchen with the wireless
telephone murmuring to his girlfriend.
Here in the attic I watch over it all.
I relearn the number of stairs in the dark,
travel from bottom to top.
I carry the keys, forget the exits.

Nancy Kricorian

DreamPiece

In the dream, Wolf's Lane is especially lush and green. I come across a cat and start to pet her, the cat then follows me for many blocks down Wolf's Lane. I suddenly realize that if the cat follows me too far it will get lost and be unable to find its way back home. I turn around and start to lead the cat back to its house. The cat doesn't follow me all the way back and I feel worried that I may have caused the cat to get lost. In the next part of the dream a tiny moth is following me and I really want to make sure that the moth gets back to its home. I try to catch the moth in my hand to carry it back and at first when I open my hand I find a crushed moth and get upset. However another moth flies from my fingers and I happily realize that this is the moth I'm responsible for. I lead this moth back a few blocks and then it turns into an enormous brilliantly colored dragonfly. This dragonfly is very bright and shiny and colored in bright pink and purple. I leave it sitting on a bright green lawn, confident that this magnificent insect will find its way home.

* * *

One dream recurred and it went like this: my brother locked me in his room and shut out the lights. He ordered me to read all the books before dawn or he'd slay me, slicing me up, hanging my head from the steeple.

The room grows larger, longer and deeper. Books unnaturally stuff the room. They hang from metal shelves; they hang from the draperies; they hang from the chandelier—swinging. They have no jackets and the covers are faded reds—blues—browns. Pages are stuck together; there are no words to read. Having no place to walk, I crouch on a pile of books and scream through the light seeping beneath the door: "I can't read in the dark—send in some light." I demand that he twist open the door. I scream clouds until the dread of the morning, the dread of unopened, unread books cloaks me, until I see no more green rubber boots outlined by the light seeping under the door.

* * *

I remember being in an Olympic-size swimming pool, the type you would find at a YMCA. The strong odor of chlorine perforated the air. The surface of the pool was covered by a layer of orange rinds. I tried to swim but couldn't move because of the density of these rinds. I called out for help only to discover that I was all alone.

* * *

Thomas, my CC professor, was in a hotel room in France working on a nuclear defense weapon which would be virtually unmatched. Other CC students and I were in rooms on the same floor of this hotel. We were not allowed to leave the hotel for security reasons. Thomas needed only broom handles to complete his experiment, so the clever kids and I went running around, scheming to get the hotel staff's brooms to win Thomas' approval. But one day I wouldn't help with this experiment any longer. There were hundreds of white experimental mice running in uniform clothes around the floor of Thomas' room as he tried to bully me into acquiescence—but I would not listen. Grant and Peter stayed with Thomas while I ran to my room. The mice became a threat, following me down the hall. Thomas laughs. I slammed the door to my room, but one mouse made it in behind me, and I heard them laughing as I screamed, "It was your choice, and now you can never escape."

* * *

I remember standing with K. in my room. The door was open, and Mom passed by to go to the laundry. As the word "gay" came up in conversation, Mom jerked her head around, and said to me, "It's one thing if it goes on, but do I have to see it?"

* * *

I am with L. We are walking through the verdant Maine countryside. At the top of a hill there is an old abandoned building with a tin roof. Someone (a consciousness outside the scene) decides that right now is the time to bring the building "back into use." The building is actually an old oven. The oven is turned on and all of a sudden flames start bursting out of the windows. The roof gets hot and I can't jump off because I am too scared (L. is on the other side of the roof and I cannot see her). Dad is suddenly there on the roof with us. He jumps off and finally I jump into his arms.

* * *

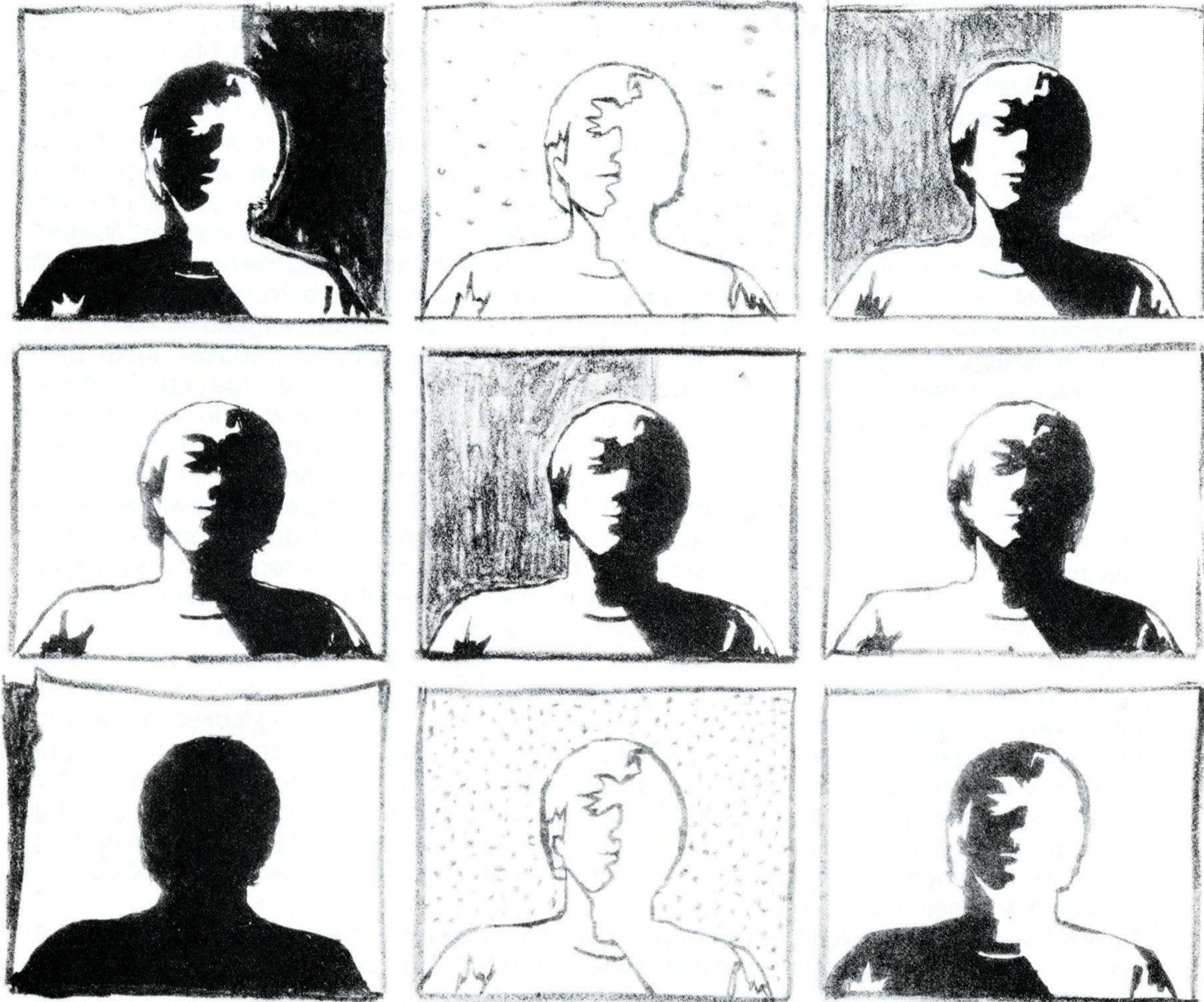
A woman I knew, who was pregnant, went into labor in the night when it was suddenly suspected that she'd die. I went down the three long flights of stairs in my apartment building, all the while screaming that it wasn't fair. It felt like the woman was me. When I got to the bottom a man's voice said that it had to be but the baby would survive and that was the most important thing. I got angry at the voice and said it was a mistake for the woman to have gotten pregnant, that it wasn't worth her life. I went outside in a panic, determined to reach the woman, but outside it was dark and I felt threatened. From the street I looked into people's windows trying to get the attention of someone who might be willing to help.

Suddenly I was in a room with a lot of people who were distantly related to me; most of whom were women. They were all sitting on the floor against the wall. I squeezed in behind one woman and sat with my knees close to my chest. Everyone seemed either sad or angry. I reached around to see my neighbor's face and immediately felt the strain of my "newcomer" status.

Next I was in the home of some distant relatives. I kept walking around the house opening different doors, but what was inside was always the same; small dark rooms with wooden walls, they looked like old storage freezers. Each time I opened one of the doors I got a nervous feeling in my stomach. Sometimes I would want to see farther into a room, but I wouldn't let go of the door handle for fear that it would close behind me. I had an extraordinarily large cup of coffee sitting on the floor next to the window, it was on the floor because there was no furniture in the house except for the chair on which my cousin was seated. Suddenly my cup of coffee began making its own way across the floor. I followed it until it stopped in front of one of the doors. I opened the door thinking that fate had led me there. Inside there was a red glow which seemed to try to draw me in. I got scared, my hand tensed up and froze on the door handle. I made my way back to the window and told my cousin and another man about the red glow. They laughed at me for being afraid. The two men walked around the house while I sat by the window unwilling to move. After a while they called me over to the same spot to which the coffee had led me. "Go and see what's in the room now," they said, but I said I didn't care to see whatever it was. They insisted so I went in, keeping my hand on the door handle. "No," said my cousin, "you have to go all the way in to see it." I hadn't wanted to tell him that I was afraid of being locked in, but at this point I was desperate. He said that I didn't have to worry about the door shutting, but I only half believed him as I stepped farther into the room. The red glow had disappeared, all that was there was a skeleton hanging in the corner. My cousin and the other man had put it there thinking it would scare me but it didn't. I turned around and saw that the weight of the door was making it close. My heart began beating faster and my stomach knotted up. I rushed toward the door and pushed it with both hands. I got out safely.

Next I was standing in a big open space like a concourse. I was going to move and was on my way to the phone company to buy a new phone. I had two small children with me, they were my sons but I couldn't remember giving birth to them.

by Beth Franny Jean Liz Marianne Polly Sarah



1/4

"States of Mind"

Justin Dorazio JABY

Justin Dorazio
States of Mind
drawing, 11" x 15"

NIGHT

We were sitting in the window seat in your room, because you do not like to sleep in your bed but rather as much as possible in my place with your hands in your mother's hair, though I prefer another arrangement. So I put the quilt around you and as many pillows as I could find and even one against the window—I trust the window guards but don't insist on that from you, and we were talking. And you said to me, what if I was watching tv and I went inside the tv because I wanted to be in there, in the show, what would you do? And I said I would follow you and find you and you said but you wouldn't have to do that, I would be a cartoon then and you could get another son and I said no, I have the son I want. This is him here.

Michael Parish

PLACING

Without frames
the lawns are blue;
herbs fray in the breeze,
silver-green and dry
petrified fireworks
outliving the frost and old paint.
Without frames
the windows are
like looking at planets and feathers
through rings of ice,
the rusty atmosphere
is brilliant
beneath the pale
blue vacuum.
Without frames
bones are more human
than family names,
your grandmother's silver bowl
is an artifact
and your face
reminds no one of anyone.
Without frames the lawns are blue
blue as thick deep soil
blue as no sun.

Kimball Fenn

CRITICAL LIGHT: ADRIENNE RICH ON SELVES AND COMMUNITY

MELANIE HAHN

I wrote this paper in August of 1985 and now, re-reading it five months later, I am surprised. The issues which this paper explores have become points of departure for me, springboards into myself. In essence, Adrienne Rich's ongoing transformations serve as a roadmap for thinking women, women who are confronting the issues of self, integrity, creativity and community, women who are learning to trust the accuracy of their own perceptions. This quest carries through from the personal to the political—what we are about is understanding our selves and re-visioning social relationships.

Adrienne Rich was born in 1929 in Baltimore, Maryland. She attended Radcliffe College, married, and published her first book of poetry, *A Change of World* (1951). She gave birth to a son and published her next volume — *The Diamond Cutters* (1955). After giving birth to two more sons and divorcing her husband, she chose to become a lesbian. Since then, Rich has become more and more involved in creating the women's community. She has written a well-documented, highly personal study of motherhood — *Of Women Born: Motherhood As Experience and Institution*. She has also written twelve books of poetry, and two books of prose; she won the National Book Award twice, which she chose to share with the other nominees. A highly gifted and articulate writer and poet, Rich's solution to the questions facing women today is always changing—a key theme of Rich's recent poetry has been coming to terms with her *selves*—her many needs, her ambivalent behavior.

Rich has not only allowed her solutions to change, she has allowed her integrated needs, her unified selves, which I will explore in greater detail, to envision social change. In Carol P. Christ's terms, Rich is concerned with the spiritual quest and the social quest. Her personal solutions, her balance, her integration of the four issues of self, integrity, creativity and community, all undergird and provide a vision for women's social quest—the quest for political and social equality. The ways in which Rich develops her themes and solutions all unify to a belief in the strength of women's community.

An examination of Rich and her integration of the four questions facing women must begin with the poem "Diving Into the Wreck." This poem is eloquent because it speaks of a woman's experience of nothingness, of the feeling that the perceptions held by most people about a woman's experience are terribly inaccurate. The persona in Rich's poem dives into nothingness, into the wreck of patriarchy. The journey is spiritual, and rewarding simply for confronting the

truth: that male portrayals of women's experience are inaccurate, or worse, do not exist: "We are, I am, you are/. . . the one who find our way back to this scene/carrying. . . /a book of myths/in which/our names do not appear." A key element which Rich utilizes in this poem is the androgyne. The androgyne is the whole, neither masculine nor feminine, the person(s) meant by the deliberately ungrammatical "the one who find our way back." Though Rich will later reject this persona as a figure which does not adequately acknowledge the feminine, and which thus validates patriarchy, in this poem the androgyne represents an important reconciliation of the dualisms in a thinking woman's life.

In the later poem "Integrity" Rich reconciles the dualisms and unifies them to create her whole self. A woman's ambivalent feelings are represented by her selves. Rich's ambivalent feelings of anger and tenderness are finally unified: "*Nothing but myself? . . . My selves./After so long, this answer./ . . . Anger and tenderness: my selves./And now I can believe they breathe in me/as angels, not polarities.*" She develops this notion of reconciliation further by adding the idea that the integration of all her needs fuels her creativity. She is like the spider, who not only possesses the ability to create, but to create from damaged materials: "Anger and tenderness: the spider's genius/to spin and weave in the same action/from her own body, anywhere—/even from a broken web." In addition to the selves, the poem has other dualistic elements. "Critical light" for example, is light which is essential, necessary, yet at the same time judgmental. "Critical light" also implies accuracy of vision needed, the creative ability necessary to re-vision solutions to the problems which women face. Rich names this need for accuracy by precisely describing colors: ". . . the stand of pines/violet-black really, green in the old post-card." The postcard is patriarchy's inaccurate representation of women's experience; her own perceptions disagree with those which most people in society hold—"violet-black really, green in the old postcard."

Nothing is extraneous or indeliberate in Rich's work. The "wild patience" oxymoron which opens the poem is emblematic of her selves now unified—wildness is compatible with patience and vice-versa. Rich has found integrity by unifying all her parts; the epigram to the poem is Webster's definition: "The quality or state of being complete; unbroken conditions; entirety." Rich has discovered integrity by unifying her ambivalent feelings and by trusting her own perceptions.

This stress on faith in one's own judgment and perceptions underlines the notion of honesty which is so important in Rich's work. Rich has devoted a great deal of energy to exploring the importance of honesty, especially for women, as a tool to help name female experience. (See, for example, "Women and Honor: Some Notes On Lying" (1975) in *On Lies, Secrets and Silence*.) Rich wants to "give something secret of herself to the world" — for Rich, that involves acknowledging all of her components.

Rich's sense of creativity, too, is intimately connected to her acknowledgement of all her selves. For Rich, creativity has appeared in many stages of her life — beginning in her father's home in which she wrote under his tutelage to gain his approval,¹ then as a young wife trying to be a "real woman who could have it all," then as a mother, without the time or peace of mind to write — a situation which made her feel powerless and alienated from herself.² Rich went on to creatively accept her own judgments by confronting the void, the alienation inherent for her within patriarchy. Most recently, Rich has used her creativity to integrate her feelings of anger and tenderness. Rich is a woman who has struggled to come to terms with her need to create.

As an outgrowth of her acceptance and affirmation of her own need to create, Rich has widened her definition of creativity to that which Western society has not traditionally considered "art." Rich defines creativity as that which forces the creator to deal with contradictory emotions such as anger and tenderness. The product of creativity is what comes from dealing with these contradictory feelings. Hence, as part of her wholistic vision of integrity, the writer affirms such traditionally undervalued artforms as handicrafts — but she takes her definition of creativity a step further, and includes motherhood as an expression of creativity as well. From here, it is not such a far leap to seeing women's "emotionality and personal involvement as a positive, life-affirming value."³ Rich sees a woman's culture, and this implies that there is a women's community.

For Rich, the personal is political. Her belief and faith in the women's community is a natural outgrowth of the integration of her selves and of the recognition she gives to her own and other women's creativity. Rich expresses her commitment to community in three ways: through her lesbian sexuality, through her commitment to the international community of women and through her vision of an alternative to patriarchy. For Rich, dedication to women's community represents the integration of her selves. Her commitment represents a union of the spiritual and social quests.

Rich bases her faith in women's community in her lesbian sexuality. She believes that her sexual involvement with women is an expression of love for all women. Carol P. Christ articulates well the expansive nature of Rich's sexuality:

"For Rich, women's love for women has cosmic significance because it overturns ancient patriarchal patterns in which women nurture but are not nurtured, in which women are rarely

loved fully and unequivocally *in their strength* as well as in their weakness by either men or women. . . . For Rich the vision (though not always the reality) of full, deep, emotional sexual love between women is not the only, but may be the most complete, expression of love for 'women, for ourselves.'"⁴

Rich herself deals with the subject of loving and being loved in strength in the poem "Splittings." She writes that although at times loving a woman is an attempt to return to the mother, a love that is clinging or passive is problematic. "I choose to love this time for once/with all my intelligence." In Rich's vision, it is easier to feel intelligent love with women than with men.

In defining herself as a lesbian, Rich is doing more than expressing a sexual preference; she is making a political statement. She carries this love for women beyond the personal sphere into a commitment to all women, regardless of race, religion or nationality. This is boldly expressed in the prose-poem "Frame," the structure of which is a dialogue. Most of the poem is a description of a scene; interspersed, in italics, is commentary on what is seen within the frame of the scene. The scene is not static; it involves violent action. A non-white woman is walking down the street on a Boston campus in 1979. She comes in out of the cold to a building to wait for her bus. The description of the scene also includes what the woman is thinking about: "On her mind/is organic chemistry and the issue/of next month's rent and will it be possible to/by-pass the professor with the coldest eyes/to get a reference for graduate school,/and whether any of them, even those who smile/can see, looking at her, a bio-chemist/or a marine biologist, which of the faces/can she trust to see her at all, either today/or in any future." These lines summarize themes which, in her prose, Rich argues affect women's educational experiences profoundly.⁵ In this scene, the speaker enters with commentary. She doesn't know the woman yet she knows what the woman is thinking about, in spite of age and racial differences, and in spite of the speaker not actually being part of the scene. She writes: "I do not know her. I am/standing though somewhere just outside the frame of all this, trying to see." The scene is developed in more detail and the speaker comments: "I am just outside the frame/of this action when the anonymous white man/returns with a white police officer." The speaker witnesses violence and understands that it occurs in silence because she, a white woman, is supposed to deny that violence for no reason occurs. Rich describes the scene powerfully: "in silence that he pushes her into the car/banging her head in silence that she cries out/in silence that her tears begin to flow/that she pleads with the other policeman as if/he could be trusted to see her at all/in silence that in the precinct she refuses to give her name/in silence that they throw her into the cell/in silence that she stares him/straight in the face in silence that he sprays her/in her eyes with Mace in silence that she sinks her teeth into his hand in silence that she is charged/with trespass assault and battery/in silence that at the sleet-swept corner her

bus/passes without stopping and goes on/in silence.” The violence of the scene is described in a fantastical, song-like rhythm, yet the words make the scene all too believable. Together, rhythm and words transform the scene into a vague ritual which, like so many rituals, is repeated with no question as to why. And such a transformation into ritual makes complete sense: in Rich’s view this is the way the white male world routinely treats anyone who is not a white male. In Rich’s view, unless one questions patriarchy, we are all accomplices to the routine violence directed at most of us. The poem ends with the speaker witnessing and testifying to the injustice of such routine treatment. The speaker comments: “What I am telling you/is told by a white woman who they will say/was never there. I say I am there.” The use of the word “am” in the last sentence brings the poem away from the specific scene to the universal. Rich says that both being a woman, regardless of race, and being committed to women’s vision of community, means always being alert, always being aware or “there” to the harsh injustice inherent in patriarchy. Being a thinking woman in Rich’s mind means inevitably, necessarily, being connected and committed to women’s vision of community.

Being connected to women’s community is really what Rich is about. She seems to be stating, “Woman, you must be committed to an alternative vision of community because men will not let you do otherwise. If you try to ignore your womanhood, you will be persecuted on every level. Men will not let you forget that you are a woman and that being a woman is negative in their minds.” Rich aims to affect people and to effect change. She has a wide range of writing styles which I believe are attempts to interest the greatest number of women in her views. For example, many of the views expressed in her essays in *On Lies, Secrets and Silence* are written in a bold, angry style. In contrast, *Of Women Born* is equally scholarly and moving, but it is not written in the same angry style. *Of Women Born* won the National Book Award, in part, I believe, because it is not angry. In my mind, Rich’s less radical style is valuable; it allows her alternative vision to receive the attention it deserves.

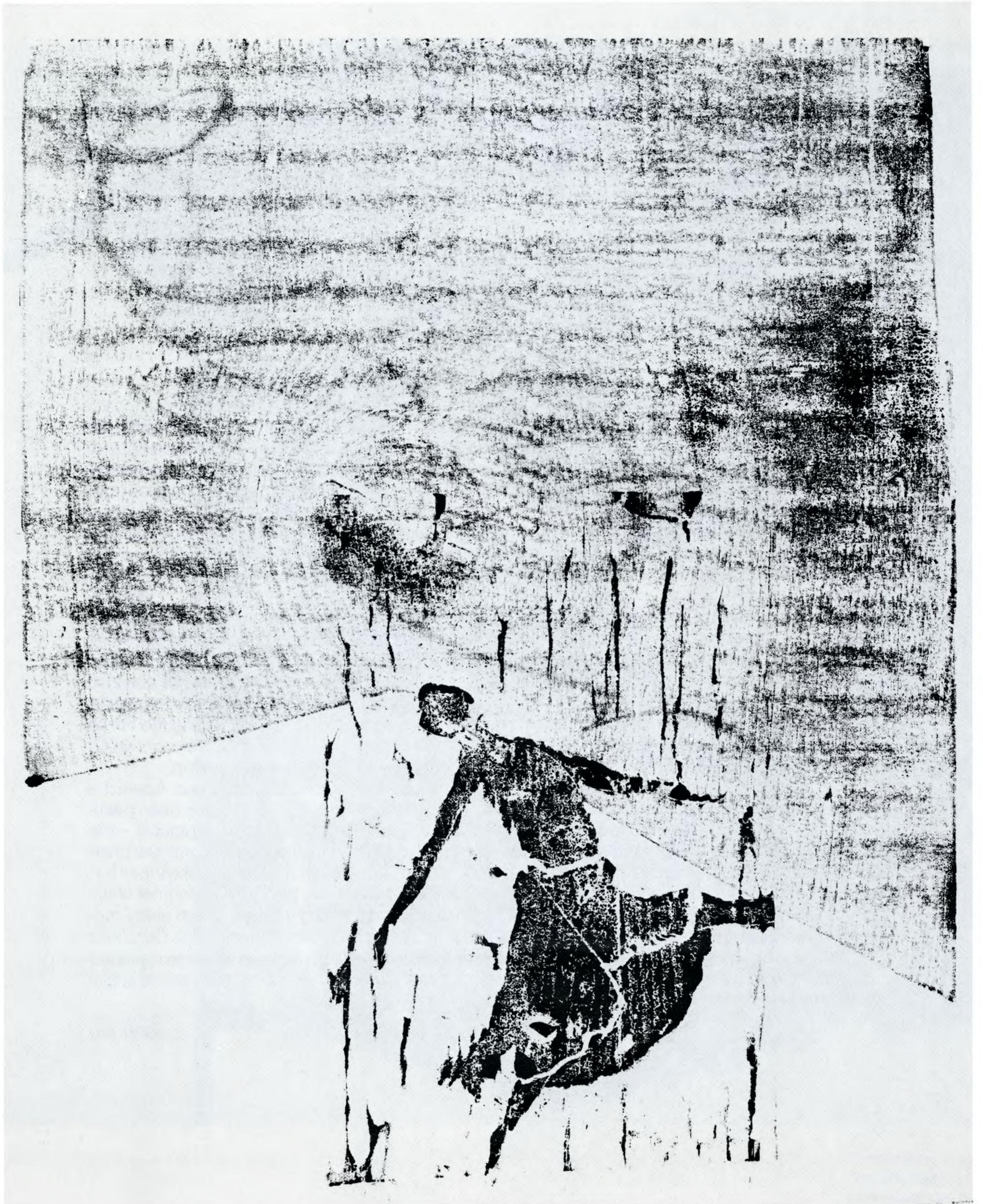
Vision is the most exciting aspect of Rich’s work and her dedication to women’s community. Rich envisions a radical change in society in which all people would affirm emotional concern, personal involvement, and regard for life — qualities which she feels women have been forced to develop in traditional roles. Rich would eliminate patriarchy so that all people would develop these qualities. The world would be based on community and would include full development of the self, and of one’s creativity and integrity. Rich has come to live her own life according to such a unification of all her needs, of all her selves. Rich has affirmed herself, her art, her honesty and her need to give and receive support from others in an intensely spiritual and political journey. She has dived “into the wreck” and has come through to wholeness or integrity. Rich has provided a role model of a woman living a creative, dynamic life.

Footnotes

1. Rich’s feelings about her early writing are described with Rich’s typical concise articulation in “When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision,” in *On Lies, Secrets and Silence*, 42.
2. Rich, p. 42.
3. Carol P. Christ, *Diving Deep and Surfacing*.
4. Christ, p. 89.
5. Adrienne Rich, “Claiming an Education,” in *On Lies, Secrets and Silence*.

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Tiziana Pirrone
untitled
woodcut, 19" x 25"

CAROLEE THEA

Carolee Thea is a mixed media artist living in New York City. She received her BS from Columbia University and her MA from Hunter College. Her works have been shown in numerous galleries, including the Frank Marino Gallery, the A.I.R. Gallery, and the 14 Sculptors Gallery, all located in New York City. The following passages are excerpts from the Watson Gallery Brochure. The Brochure discusses Carolee Thea's show at Wheaton College, running from February 9 to March 21, 1986.

The deliberate conflation of painting and sculpture constitutes one of the most vital traditions in Post-War American art. Ever since Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg exhibited such groundbreaking works as *Drawer* and *Monogram* in the late 1950's, succeeding generations of artists have continued to find ways to collapse the formal aspects of painting and sculpture. Carolee Thea's "Constructs" not only extend from this ongoing American tradition, but also from its European Modernist beginnings. One can, for example, deduce that Constructivist principles influenced the underlying geometry of such expressive compositions as *Rhino Mirror*. However, Thea doesn't simply appropriate a wide range of historical precedents. She has done something far more difficult: she has transformed both this history and her own into a flexible mode of personal expression.

Thea forces the immediate collapse of painting and sculpture through her use of the frame. Typically, it is one that was found in a junk shop and carries with it a rich constellation of meanings the artist must first isolate and then unlock. Rather than forming a decorative border around a painting, the frame is made to function as both a scaffold and a shallow container. The purpose it fulfills is formal and thematic: it is used to hold sculptural forms in place, as well as to suggest a narrative connection among the disparate elements. At the same time, by dislodging the frame from its historical usage, the artist is able to transform it into a kind of microscope through which she can examine the various social dynamics informing the way we look at painting.

The Dutchess can be read as an ironic commentary on our notions of portraiture. Against a gray oval ground the artist has attached an oddly shaped, bone-like branch that has been painted white. Around the branch and affixed to the frame are a helter-skelter of found objects—the detritus of the Dutchess' life. Whereas portrait paintings emphasize the fiction of a continual present, *The Dutchess* dramatizes the inevitable effects of time. On one level, the artist uses these formal devices and castoff objects to confront the fictions implicit in every portrait. On another level, she is questioning the possibility of portraiture in the late 20th Century—a time when every moment can be immediately preserved on a Betamax, Instamatic, or Xerox. Finally, *The Dutchess* inverts the way women have been perceived by men. An image of seduction has been replaced by objects from a sarcophagus. Instead of replicating reality, Thea investigates the various social codes that are at the root of each perception.

John Yau

Courtesy of Janice Leoshko and John Yau



Carolee Thea
The Dutchess
oil on wood and mixed media
51" x 44" x 10"

what is it they want me to say, anyway?

i have been rude, and scared, and furious, and altogether indifferent due to this particular article because there are only but so many ways that one can be redundant before the rest of the world catches onto your game. this is the particular dilemma in which we so-called “feminists” and “women’s libbers” and “women’s studies scholars” and “womanists” find ourselves in. and so i sit here wondering whether i should use this space to rid myself of the overwhelming anger which overtakes me at the mention of a “women’s conference/magazine/talk/poetry reading/etc./etc.” but then i realise that i’m losing oxygen from my pedestal because none of us have been immune to the limelight of being “feminists.” c’mon, y’all know what i’m talking about: for example, if you’re a first year college student and have some inkling of the world’s situation, then what you do is to attend the first meeting of the “women’s alliance” or “the feminist union” or “women’s studies study group” and you find yourself set for friends — to eat, talk, and party with. i mean this is how i met most of my friends—and in these meetings, for the first time, you learn “the political significance of your identity.” what that is trying to say is that you learn that you’re black, or lesbian, or whatever—when for all your life you’ve been thinking that you’re just plain “you” and you discover all these other people who just find you absolutely fascinating (!!!) because you look different from them yet, lo and behold, you share their feelings on some issues! that is what my first impressions were of the “women’s community” as it exists on this campus.

but then, there were those of us who were serious about our thoughts and really struggled to overcome some preconceptions: for example, colour coordination does not a sister make or “beyond sisterhood is still racism.” there was, among the group of women that i ran around with, this silent agreement that while we would vehemently discuss our differences IN THE MEETINGS, let us not confuse the “wisdom of feminist sisterhood” with masculine mind-fuck like, “the role of white women within the slavocracy of the south in 1860’s” — these were not issues for black & white women to work through, rather they were the efforts of black & white men trying to keep women apart. that argument worked out pretty well until a friend of mine got disgustingly upset about a poster of “Gone With the Wind” hanging on the wall of her “feminist sister.” i remember her saying to me that it was trifling shit like that which kept black & white women apart—the lack of knowledge and courage of most white women to own their responsibility in the degradation to and in-

justice against Black people in this country.

and then came the infamous “blockade” in which people of diverse politics and varying amounts of anger tried to get together about an issue; the problem arose when we realised that each person was there for a different issue: there were those who saw the cause as one in which human rights were threatened; and then it was about imperialism and various other jargon concocted by white people (especially the ones in this country) who immediately feel threatened when something is presented in very BLACK & WHITE terms—and that is what south africa is about after all. south africa, for many of us, represented the first leg in a struggle in which people of colour would eventually take white people to task for the mess this world is in: so to make *everyone* feel less political, and for heavens sake less *racial* politically, there began the speeches — the endless speeches, some of which i myself made—about non-violence. the very interesting thing is that at the beginning of the rally i had spoken about coalition — borrowing the words of Dr. Bernice J. Reagon — which is working with people who look nothing like you. but a coalition is premised on clarity about individual political positions — so that if you ain’t clear about what you want, how the hell are you going to negotiate with someone else about common ground. and see, in coalitions, ain’t nothing said about liking each other, cause you ain’t there to make friends, you there cause you need help with achieving your own agenda.

the problem with writing these kinds of articles is that they are boring — for the last 26 years there has been an avalanche of written material about/for/by women on almost every aspect of women’s existence at almost every period of history in almost every place in the world. the fascinating thing is that when white women literally became exhausted with documenting their history, and footnotes started to exceed the actual text, there began this scramble to document the history of women of colour/third world women/women from the developing world — all these names to classify a group of women with the single intent of driving home the fact that we were different from *women*, a label white women could not easily abdicate. y’see, if you attach a further classification to my central identity then you begin to get this foolish notion in your head that i’m fundamentally different from you: Alice Walker talks about this in a piece she wrote for the book ALL THE WOMEN ARE WHITE/ALL THE BLACKS ARE MEN/BUT SOME OF US ARE BRAVE, a book which broke ground by introducing the audacious assertion

that Black women had a history of their own, distinct and different from that of their race & their gender.

so now that difference had been introduced with the fierce activism of a predominantly, though not exclusively, group of Black women in the early 70's, folks truly got confused: since we're different, should we always talk about the differences, and if we do that how will we ever get anything done. out of this dilemma emerged a great deal of taxonomic remedies; that is to say many folks really thought that if we fiddle around with the process of names, and write a great deal of poetry about it and then host(ess!) many conferences—then, our asses should really be covered. what i'm saying is that the white women's movement has used the same techniques as their brethren: when unwilling to really give anything of value up in the face of some serious opposition, then tap-dance and try to take folks' minds off the real issues. and how do you do that, pray-tell? well, divide and conquer has been a popular move throughout history: so you publish a "select" group, and invite that same group to speak and lavish laurels on that same group, until you get "jemima johnsons" talking your line, afterall we all *know* that it's only white people who can be racist/conniving and downright unscrupulous. don't we?? not hardly 'cause the folks who showed the white men where to find "cargo" in the vastness of Afrika have borne descendents who are still betraying all of us: ie. Duvalier, Marcos, Khomeini, Savimbi, Barre, Farrakhan and the list is painfully long.

"in the final analysis," as they say, there really ain't any kind of analysis that has not really been put down before. originality is at a premium within the women's movement, unless someone comes along with the fresh angle that we should finally do *something* with all of this information. there is a famous essay by Poet Audre Lorde, in which she says "the master's tools will not dismantle the master's house" and those of us who consider ourselves activists of any sort really need to get to the full implication of that. information is seriously abundant in a way that it hasn't been at any other period of human evolution; what we ain't got too much of is folks with courage and patience to fight it out with the man.

i finally got around to reading THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MALCOLM X after many years of reading his speeches etc. and the real lesson of that Brother is in his life: the process by which an "endangered species" (black youths) turns it all around on the man, and truly becomes a leader of international perspective & cross-cultural importance. my mother often tells

me that he was the "last hope" of Black people in this country because if we could allow him to be killed like that, then what kind of people are we??? i can already hear the screams: "but, ubax, it is so much more complicated than that." is it really or have "the scholars from prestigious institutions" simply renamed the issues without offering any kind of solution. but then again, we intuitively know the solutions because the blood of those who came before us is still wet on the ground.

sorry; folks, didn't mean to get so dramatic, but the truth of the matter is that there is a serious drama unfolding on the world stage: in the space of weeks, the Filipenes and Haiti got rid of their respective "tom johnsons," and reagan came out with a plan to get serious with Nicaragua while confused children of Grenada welcomed him with the song "this land is your land, this land is our land . . ."; corporate vampires have setup what they call 'free zones' in much of the world so that they can dispense with pain-in-the-ass legislation for minimum wage, maternity leave and "reasonable working hours," while the women of the world convene in Nairobi and betty friedan discusses feminism under a palm tree; we speculate about the political consequences of mayor goode's bomb attack on an entire Black neighbourhood as the nation mourns the martyrs of space exploration; somewhere in the back of our heads is the knowledge that botha's got THE BOMB but that's no consolation 'cause so does reagan and you block it all out with "crack" . . . if you didn't already know it, folks, we in some serious trouble and ours is the generation that had better do something 'cause ain't no way 75% of the world's people gonna allow themselves to be in perpetual subservience, without snapping at some crucial point. so, give history some serious hours; give yourself time to decide what you really want, and then get your butt to one side of the issue or the other. the main point being: "give yourself *time* to decide what you really want" 'cause consistency is also at a premium these days.

*I would like to acknowledge my debt to: mullaxo farah, jane forress-betty, laura flanders, audre lorde, betty powell and a long line of strong somali women who all taught me to look the truth in the eye, and then do something about it. to them who've given love & respect & space in which to be different, i wish them peace. this will be my last publication while an undergraduate, as i prepare to practice what i've preached.

ubax hussen

RII KANZAKI INTERVIEW

M. P. DUNLEAVY

Rii Kanzaki is a freelance video artist living in New York City. After attending the School of Visual Arts in 1977 she produced a number of video works including both abstract videos and documentaries. The abstract videos, like "Flora", which she completed this summer, experiment with natural forms and color. For her most recent video, "Forbidden Rebels," shot in 1983, Kanzaki went underground to get footage of New York's subway graffiti artists at work on MTA trains. Kanzaki is now editing footage that she shot this winter on the side of a volcano in Hawaii.



Rii Kanzaki

MPD: What made you go into video—instead of film, or something else?

RK: I never thought of going into film. It never occurred to me. I went from printing—doing lithography.

MPD: What's lithography?

RK: It's a kind of printing. You print on stones and plates and things.

MPD: Did you do lithography in college?

RK: I did a bunch of things. I was an English major and then I took a bunch of design courses. I did real well and the guy kept bugging me about being an Art major, but I thought, "Naa, only creeps and stupid guys are Art majors" (laughs). So, I never wanted to be an Art major. I did a lot of design in his classes, shapes and colors and form, training, being able to draw straight lines and cubes without a ruler or anything. They had this young printing teacher who came and I just liked the idea of printing. At first you printed a series, so they had to be all exactly the same.

MPD: It sounds a lot like the techniques you use in video, especially in "Birds" and "Flora."

RK: Yeah. So after lithography the next step for me seemed to do video, not film, because in video you could technically lay down colors.

MPD: What brought you to New York?

RK: Well, I had to return my brother's car. I'd borrowed it for like a year. I didn't know anything about New York; I'd never heard of it before, I knew nothing. . . but I liked it. It was the first place that I felt like I didn't stick out. Everybody else was so much weirder than me. I felt so normal that it was great! I saw the video artist Nam June Paik's work, and I thought, "Oh man, this guy does great stuff!" I saw his work at the Museum of Modern Art and I said, "That's what I want to do."

MPD: And so what happened after you saw Nam June Paik's work?

RK: I decided that if I wanted to get into video, what I should do is volunteer work. So, I kept calling Shigeiko Komoto—who happened to be Nam June's wife, but I didn't know it. I just kept call-

ing and he kept answering and I didn't know it was him! But I kept bugging her and saying, "Oh, can I come down and work there?" They thought I was real weird. But finally she said I could come down and help out at this show. So, I came down and helped with the show and after that, every Thursday I'd go down and help them. We were showing at Holly Solomon, a gallery in Soho, so we'd have to cart over a video deck and a monitor, and we put it in this baby carriage and we'd stroll it over. That's how I met Bob, my husband; he was working there. So, I worked at Anthology Film Archives for a while, and at P.S. 1, in Queens, up till 1981, helping them do shows, and I got to see a lot of video. Got to see all the things I didn't want to do.

MPD: What did you know that you didn't want to do?

RK: A lot of stuff that was real boring. Like a lot of times they'd have the artist in front of the camera, and they'd talk about some boring subject or other. The tapes would be too long, and images wouldn't be very good, very pretentious.

MPD: What were people doing back then? Was it features?

RK: No, this was all experimental. So some of it was interesting, some was pretty bad. . . but I got to meet Nam June through them. He's funny.

MPD: Did you like his stuff?

RK: I liked his stuff. He does a lot of image processing, that's like electronic coloring.

MPD: Like what you do?

RK: Yeah, and that's what I liked a lot. Once, when I went to France, to an art center, I saw this huge piece, with about twenty-five, thirty monitors on the floor. I looked down at it and I thought, "That looks like Nam June's work!" and sure enough it was. I just happened to be there when it was up; I didn't even know about it. He influenced me a lot. Because he does a lot of that electronic processing stuff and the fact that he always tries to do something different. I don't like the idea where an artist establishes himself—let's say de Kooning—and all he does is paint de Kooning's. To me after a while it's really boring, they don't change. I mean, he

just paints and gets the money, and that's it. He's doing it for money. So I could never get into doing art for money's sake. Of course, Nam June's real poor, he's a pretty well-known video artist, but he doesn't get that much money for doing video. You can sell a painting but . . .

MPD: But you don't sell a video.

RK: Right. I mean you could sell a tape, but you'd sell a tape for about \$100-\$500 at the most.

MPD: So, when did you get your first video camera?

RK: It took a long time. I think it was in June of 1983 and I started out in video in 1979. I used to take stuff off the T.V. or rent equipment. It makes a big difference if you have your own equipment; you can do anything you want, and go anywhere you want. With the camera, Bob and I spent a lot of time going all over the place.

MPD: Was Bob into video for artistic reasons?

RK: Actually he liked film better. He worked on a video piece but he always considered himself a "filmmaker," and somehow he saw a videomaker as a lower class. But since I don't have that background in film I'm not real uppity about it. It's just another medium; no better than video and no worse. So, in a way, I think it's better for me since I'm not so stuck up about whether I'm a filmmaker or videomaker. Bob just slowly changed; now he's a videomaker.

MPD: When you started were there a lot of women artists?

RK: Not really. There aren't very many now.

MPD: Is the ratio of women about the same in film and video?

RK: No, I think there are more in film; there's more money in film, so maybe that's why they're there.

MPD: Women have a hard enough time getting a decent salary anyway, right?

RK: It's true. It's hard to be female in video and do anything technical. Number one, the industry is basically male—which is like most any industry—so, they always assume that because you're female you don't know how to do anything technical for some reason, you know, you're inept.

MPD: Did they give you trouble when you were starting out?

RK: It was very hard for me to learn anything technical. They just didn't believe you could actually learn the stuff or that you could be mechanically inclined. I think there is real prejudice in the video industry than, let's say, in the film industry. It's hard because there's no specific prejudice, but if you ask them questions they often speak to you in a very condescending manner. And they don't give you as much detail as they would maybe if you were a guy.

But I worked with Mary Lucier, who's doing real well now, and that was really good because she was real ambitious and she had her stuff together. . . a kind of female figure to look up to and think, you can exist, you just have to work real hard at it. I think her work is real good. She's a good feminist. She's older than me and

I think that makes a big difference. By the time I got old enough to care about being a feminist, I don't think the movement was as strong. I'm not real outspoken, I think you should be conscious of the feminist movement and what they try to do, and you should always try to promote that. It is a struggle, but a lot of women see each other as competition. . . I don't think it should be there. Jesus Christ! It's enough that you have to struggle against all the male chauvinist attitudes.

I think if you're a minority too, it makes a bigger difference. Because not only am I female, but I'm also a minority; I'm not white. I think I became more aware of not being white and being different long before I ever became aware that being a woman was thought of as not being superior. And from that racial prejudice I began to see how prejudiced they were against women.

MPD: In the video industry in particular, what was the strongest prejudice you encountered?

RK: In the video community itself I didn't encounter as much racial prejudice, I think. Oddly enough, there are a lot of Oriental women in video.

MPD: I know you've always said, in general, things are different if you're Asian.

RK: In a lot of ways being a woman is real good because when they want to give out grants or residences, they are always bound to select at least one woman. In fact, they might select a woman, even if her work isn't as good as somebody else's, specifically because she's a woman—and maybe because she's a minority. I think the decision should be based on the work, not who you are. But it really has nothing to do with the work you do, when you get a grant or you get money, it has to do with who you know or who knows you.

MPD: So it doesn't even boil down to racial or sexual bias, it boils down to connections.

RK: Right. So if you're a hustler, you'll do real well, regardless of your work.

MPD: Now in your work, for example "Flora," there seems to be a lot of randomness in the way you mix images and the way the images go with the sound. It seems as though a lot of things happen by chance. How much of it is by design and how much of it is you saying, "Let me see what would happen if I did this?"

RK: What I like to do is put as much chance in it as possible, because to me chance is pretty unique. Earl, who is blind, does many of my soundtracks. But obviously he never sees the images he's making the soundtrack for. I give him a bunch of bird sounds and I say, "Put a little wind in it and make me a good soundtrack." He grumbles and bitches and makes a soundtrack and I take it, listen to it like twenty times, get real familiar with it, and then I look at all the images I have that are supposed to go with the tape, and decide what might look good there. I never really have an idea of how it's going to



courtesy of Sarah Wells

Graffiti artist "Sharp" at work in Forbidden Rebels

look until I take it in and actually start putting it on. And a lot of times it doesn't look good, so I have to take it off and put in something else. I have a list of alternatives if that shot doesn't work. As to what goes where, like the bee sounds, I knew that at two minutes and five seconds into the piece I needed some image of a bee, or it would look nice if I had a bee there. And as it turns out, I got a bee there. You can be pretty loose and still have it look fairly precise. Then they think, "Oh wow, she must have planned that for ages." And frankly, all I did was time it with a stop watch and say, okay, two minutes in, I've got to have a bee there.

MPD: When you did your graffiti piece, "Forbidden Rebels," how long did you have to hang out with graffiti artists before they would let you in? How many of them knew that you wanted to tape them?

RK: Well some of them knew about it from the outset. First I met G-man, and he hooked me up to this other guy, Dez, and actually I got to meet Sharp through him. Then, once I met Sharp, he did all the rest. I mean, I met Delta, his partner, and I met Spin, this other guy that he knew, and they knew that I wanted to tape video. In fact, Sharp took me to see Delta painting and I shot some stuff there.

MPD: Was that when you were underground?

RK: No, when we went to the train, we went with Spin. I really wanted to go into the tunnel. I had been there a week before and checked out the area and stuff—he was more scared than I was. I just figured, well, you get caught, you get

caught. But I didn't know as much as they knew. You could get beaten up, you could get robbed, a lot of stuff could happen to you. But I just wasn't too concerned.

MPD: Did you trust them?

RK: Yeah. But they didn't trust me. I had to hang out with them for quite some time . . . it took me three months to find the people I wanted to use and then I hung out with them for about a year. Also I didn't use their real names or faces in the piece because they were all afraid of being identified in the tunnel shots where they painted the subway cars.

MPD: You also made a documentary about South Bronx breakdancers in 1982, "167 St/Bronx 83."

RK: These breakdancers and rappers were having sort of a performance in this part of the South Bronx and one of them asked me to come shoot. I was scared to go to the South Bronx but I got like nine or ten people to come with me and we got some really great footage which became parts of "167 St/Bronx 83." I've been really lucky in some of the stuff I've been able to get, like the subway tunnel shots of the graffiti artists at work and these breakdancers in the South Bronx.

MPD: Is there any kind of political statement in your work?

RK: I try not to have any. I think about it, but—eh. There are so many guys making political statements all the time. For me video is a much more personal expression of my own relationship to the environment and my own aesthetic.



Kenneth Ashworth
untitled
photograph, 10" x 13"

WOORY'S WART

Woory twert wary
Of squirtcreams and nary
Dert Woory use thart arn his face.

Burt durt to his worry
Woory twert sorry,
He woke up and find a great wart.

"Very nary wert ever
A wart so dishever,"
Sart Woory, and tart up his face.

His wart he tagged "Burt,"
Ert it probartly hurt
Art he stick that pin rart in his nose.

"Burt," sart he one day,
"You darn't have come to stay,
You bark up me breathing, you see.

Yer groot for two thin:
Tart to hang my cottin,
Art I'll string you wit lights are Crimble."

So Woory wert nasty;
He curd off hurt warty
(Burt now thar's a new one named Bill).

Alison Gregor



Suzanne Sbarge
untitled
photograph, 7½" x 10½"

NAMING

HELEN J. PFEFFER

Stuka is putting candles around the flag. His favorite flag, that one, he supposes he will never tire of decorating it. No bayonets today, tacking it to the wall, no helmets weighing it to the floor at the corners. Just candles, all the candles he could find, and the flag is draped over the coffin like a cloth on the coffeetable. He lights a few candles and blows them out to see the black string of smoke rising from the wick.

Inky sits on the bed and watches television, and smokes. She watches Stuka when his back is turned to her, and when it isn't she watches him from her eye-corners, but she says nothing. She hates that flag, no, she should hate it but she doesn't. She feels for it the hatred of some who hate it for reasons. She has for the flag only second degree hatred, third really, if her confusion about the hating people is to be counted. The colors are nice: red, like Stuka's hair, and black, like hers, and white, like snow and coke and Lucky's. But she hates, and doesn't hate, and feels guilty for not hating, so she is smoking and not saying anything.

So because she is quiet, when Stuka finishes with the candles he goes to play his guitar. He plugs in his amp and puts a record on and plays. The record is so he won't feel so alone when he plays. Inky turns the television down so Stuka can hear the record better and Inky can hear Stuka better. He hasn't played in a while, she remembers the last time pretty well, and she wants to encourage him, because even when no one else is around, it makes her proud to hear him play. But he played before she knew him, it's nothing she's done that's made him so good, the pride is unfounded. Nonetheless, there it is.

During the commercial, and Inky hasn't been paying attention anyway and doesn't know what's going on at all, she hops off the bed and walks over to Stuka and bites him on the shoulder. Stuka doesn't mind, if she bites softly, and if she doesn't he pushes her away and scowls. But this time he smiles, and when the song is over he puts his guitar down and pulls Inky onto his lap. He has to reach over her to lift the needle off the record.

"So," says Stuka. He knows Inky hates the flag, but it's just so nice looking.

"Tonight," says Inky, "I'm going to take another name."

Inky got her name after she left the dye too long in her hair and instead of dark red, it was black. Jonno had wanted to know if she had spilled ink on her head. He had wanted to know so loudly, and in front of so many people, that Inky had become Inky. Suddenly, she felt, and with no planning. It was just one more thing, like her hatred of the flag, that had been given to her instead of taken.

"It's not really my name," Inky whines. She doesn't like to, but sometimes she can't help it.

Stuka doesn't like the whining either. He took his name a long time ago, when he used to run with his arms stuck straight out from his sides. He used to swoop, and growl like an engine. He doesn't do that

anymore, of course, but he is still Stuka.

"Take your old name back, then," he says, reaching for the guitar.

"That's not my name either," says Inky crossly, and she pushes his hand toward her and away from the guitar and tucks her head under Stuka's chin. He pets her hair, watching the record spinning silently.

Inky used to dance with Angel. Stuka played, and Jonno too, and other people, and Inky and Angel danced. Angel liked to hop onstage, swinging her hair and hiking up her dress with both hands. Inky mostly stayed down on the floor unless Angel dragged her up, and sometimes she did, and then Inky danced onstage too. It didn't matter that Inky was frightened of being seen by people she couldn't see, everyone looked at Angel and not at her. Even when Angel rushed across the stage to Inky, and kissed her, and ran her hands up and down Inky's sides, everyone looked at Angel. Well, maybe Stuka didn't, but why shouldn't he, no one was stopping him. And Angel danced so fast, and whipped her hair back and forth so hard, that no one was really sure if she was wearing anything under her hiked-up dress, or where she was touching Inky. Even Inky didn't know; the lights confused her, and the music, and the vodka she drank because she was so happy.

"When are people coming over?" Inky asks.

"Seven," says Stuka. "Bobby the K told me seven. And Cat got back from L.A. yesterday, she'll be here."

"And T and Gregg Gory?"

"Yeah. And a couple of skinheads from North End. I didn't want them here, but Gregg says they'll behave."

Inky nods and runs her fingers through her hair so that it stands up like a thistle. She smooths Stuka's bangs and curls them under. Stuka smiles at her and hugs her. She makes herself small on his lap, so he can wrap both arms all the way around her. She lets the air out of her lungs and disappears, almost. She doesn't cry until Stuka goes upstairs for some iced tea, and she is finished and watching television again when he comes back.

Angel thought it was because of religion that Inky didn't like the flag. Inky didn't think so. Inky thought very clearly, and she knew that where there was clear thinking, religion could not survive. These people, though, well, they've got no religion but everyone knows they don't think at all. That's what she told Angel, but Inky doesn't speak as clearly as she thinks. Angel looked around Stuka's room, and said these people had a religion, just not a recognized one. They have rituals, she said, and ceremonies, gatherings, hymns, quests, crusades, what else does a religion have. Inky said a religion has an object of worship and this was an army, not a religion. Angel thought maybe it was an army, but it worshiped power, and resistance, and anarchy, and violence, and pain. Inky

shook her head, and Angel said it wasn't religion after all, the reason Inky didn't like the flag. It was a fear of war. Inky said she thought very clearly, and people who think very clearly are always afraid of war. Angel had a dream about after the world was demolished, and some outer space creatures came down and found a Bible and tried to translate it but they got all the words and letters wrong so it came out like the script for five seasons of *Batman*.

Stuka comes and sits on the bed with Inky and watches television. He thinks he knows why she is so quiet but he doesn't. He thinks maybe she is depressed, or maybe she is angry. Inky is very interested in this particular episode of *Star Trek*, and besides, she can't think of anything to say.

Cat did Angel's cards one day, and said Angel should get away from where she was and go somewhere else. Angel told Inky this, sitting on the floor next to Stuka's amp. Jonno was sitting on the floor too, and Stuka was coming down the stairs with the beer. Everyone took one, but there were enough left over that Stuka could set them up like bowling pins on top of the coffin. Inky asked Angel where she was going to go, but Angel stood up and pushed all the bottles over with her arm. Some rolled off the coffin, one broke. Inky began to look for her cigarettes, she was shocked and angry. Angel picked up the pieces of glass and threw them away. She pulled her shirt off over her head and mopped up the beer with it. Jonno grinned and swiped at her from the floor. Stuka tossed her one of his jackets. Inky found her cigarettes and lit one. Angel wore the jacket all night, turning back and forth in front of the mirror. She lifted her right arm out straight in front of her, laughing. Jonno tried on a few helmets and aimed a Luger at Angel. Stuka played his guitar. Inky finished all her cigarettes and went out to buy more.

At seven, Inky is helping Stuka light the candles. She has nothing against the candles, they are dirty white and thick and might fall over and burn the flag to ash, so she has nothing against the candles.

Cat comes down the stairs, tan, and shuffles her cards. Jonno isn't following her, but he comes down right after, and sits with his back to the wall on the floor. He pulls his knees up to his chest and rests his head sideways on them. From certain angles, his neck looks broken. Gregg Gory opens the door at the top of the stairs and lets in his girlfriend, and Bobby the K, and the skinheads from North End, and T.

Inky suddenly has to look out the window to see how many cars are parked in the street. There are three, but she doesn't know how many there were before, and is upset.

Stuka's hair is wet, and he has a cap on to help it dry straight. Jonno has a blond hair wrapped around his wrist many times, or maybe it is many blond hairs, but it is secured with a band-aid on the inside of his wrist. He found her, and even though he's Jonno, he will

probably never be the same.

"That's going to come off in the shower," Inky says, wondering if she should, but Jonno only nods, sideways, because his head is still down.

One day, one day when Jonno and Stuka had pushed the coffin against the wall and were playing their guitars in the middle of the room, one day not long ago, a week ago, tops, one day Angel and Inky had gone out for pizza, for them and for Jonno and for Stuka.

Inky was driving Stuka's car because she had no car of her own. Angel had decided where to go that was not where she was. Inky thought that was a stupid place to go, everyone went there and Angel was only going because Cat was there and the cards were there. Angel said she was going because it was her city, that's what it was called. And Inky was in a bad mood, and she said it was only her city if that was her name, and it wasn't. Angel said it was her name, it was given to her. And Inky said no, she took it herself, no one gave it to her.

And Inky knew Inky was in a bad mood, and still she said that she knew why Angel danced, and knocked over bottles, and talked about cities that didn't mean anything to her, or she to them. Angel said she hated people who thought so goddamn clearly. Inky shrugged her shoulders and didn't say anything else, not when they were waiting for the pizza, or when they were driving back, or when they got to Stuka's and started eating it.

Stuka didn't say anything either, but he doesn't talk much. And Jonno was writing a song while he ate, so he was quiet, too. Angel asked if she could borrow one of Stuka's jackets for a while, but he said no, he didn't like to lend them out. Angel went and put a helmet on Jonno's head, but he took it off and went on writing. So Angel said she was going home, and since she didn't live very far, no one offered to drive her but everyone said goodbye, even Inky, who felt bad about what she had said. And Angel walked up the stairs and out the door.

The candles are almost out, and Cat has turned over all the cards but she won't tell anyone anything. Gregg Gory's girlfriend is crying. Stuka is dipping the tips of his fingers in the melted wax so he has ten little half-spheres to lay out on top of the coffin in patterns. Bobby the K is sitting on one side of Jonno on the floor, and T on the other. Gregg Gory is playing with Stuka's guitar, and the skinheads are drinking beer and behaving. Inky has no more cigarettes, but she doesn't want to ask Stuka or anyone for a ride to the store. She can't remember the last time anyone said anything. She supposes they are being solemn, but really no one can think of anything to say. It is almost nine, and she wishes everyone would leave. She wishes someone would do something she could watch. She worries that the band-aid will come off Jonno's wrist in the shower and that will be that. She asks Gregg Gory's girlfriend for a cigarette and sits down on the bed to watch television.



Suzanne Sbarge
untitled
photograph, 7" x 9"

GASES

The cough like oysters in the throat, the light from the lamp oyster-white
"My business is to discover what makes for the intellectual impulse"
Dear God and all that time with me here thinking you were an ordinary guy.

She had eaten lunch with the fourth unsung hero of our generation this week
An understandable fatigue was the result
When the water is brown the only civilized thing is to make tea

Since the biographer will be here any minute you'd better tidy up
Things said with the ring of truth rarely have it
Get all the best people and mistrust them

The meaning of consecutive and sustained has made a sustained disappearance
Every office has a trap door slightly to one side of where you're standing
The hand on the throat like a fever, like an airgun, like a fork

April Bernard

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AGAINST BIOGRAPHY

As if my own odors weren't enough
but the drudging shape of her life
page by page, hour by hour, the serge suits
and the roses in the park. I don't live
there, and it's none of my business. She
doesn't live there anymore; it's none
of anyone's business. That the spirit
rose or fell, that the laundry was done
or was not, that her courage bore her
as it bores me, through long days of
spitcurls and housepaint and magazines
and 40 dollars or so more a month.
It's reverse alchemy: she who strove
to rise above the muck — now patiently,
mercilessly, returned to accident,
routine, and soured love.
What she wrote to him, what the reviews said —
don't ask.

And keep these days
off the record, this smell of contraction
in dry steam heat, the smell
of the shape of the bodies we trust will
not long hold us here.

April Bernard

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GOING EAST LOUISA ERMELINO

He was at the train station. His name was Mick and he had on dark clothes. I liked the way he looked with his dark hair and his dark clothes.

He looked like he could take care of things. He looked like he could take care of me. But for now I had Jeremy in the pink jacket taking care of things. I had Jeremy taking care of me.

Jeremy told Mick we were taking a train to Ankara to look around. Stop a few days in Ankara and then on East.

Crazy idea, Mick said. A crazy idea to stop a few days in Ankara with her, her with all that red hair.

Jeremy opened his eyes up as round as they could go.

You've got to take a train straight through, Mick told him. You've got to take a train straight through and not get off until the end.

The end of where? I said.

I'm going tonight, Mick told Jeremy. There's a train straight through tonight, straight through to the end. We can all go together.

I don't know, Jeremy said. He was taking care of things. He was taking care of me.

The end of where? I said again.

I wanted to go slow, Jeremy said. I wanted to stop off in Ankara.

I'm telling you, Rick said. You're going to have a hell of a time in Ankara. You're going to have a hell of a time with her and that hair.

We left the train station and walked in the street all together. My coat was long and dragged in the mud.

A Turk bent in front of me and kissed the hem of my coat. He had his mouth against the muddy hem of my coat.

He was kneeling in front of me but he wasn't praying. He knew you had to get down to pray, fold your whole body and put it on the ground, put your forehead on the ground so many times you got a bump where it touched. He wasn't praying in front of me.

He looked up and I saw bits of gold in his open mouth. I pulled my coat away, out of his hands.

The men in the street came around us. I held the hem of my coat off the ground. The men came closer. I saw bits of gold in their mouths.

Jeremy put his hands in the pockets of his pink jacket and opened up his eyes as round as they could go.

I looked at Mick.

Pull up your scarf, he said, and cover your mouth. Pull your scarf over your mouth and hold it with your hand, your right hand. Hold it there and look down. Look down at the ground, he said, and make them forget you have all that red hair.

We walked through the men in the street. Mick first, me next, looking down at the ground, holding my scarf over my mouth with my hand, my right hand.

I couldn't see Jeremy but I guessed he was behind, with his pink hands in the pockets of his pink jacket and his eyes opened up as round as they could go.

We can all go together, Rick said, when we got to the Gulwani Hotel. We can all go together tonight, straight through, straight through to the end.

Yes, Jeremy said. We can all go together.

There was a Danish girl at the Gulwani. She had yellow hair down her back and a skirt above her knees. She had a fur coat and red lips.

I liked the way she looked. She looked like she could take care of things. She looked like she could take care of herself.

I thought about men in pink jackets and men in dark clothes. I thought about men with gold in their mouths. I thought about walking with my mouth covered and my eyes down, going straight through, straight through to the end.

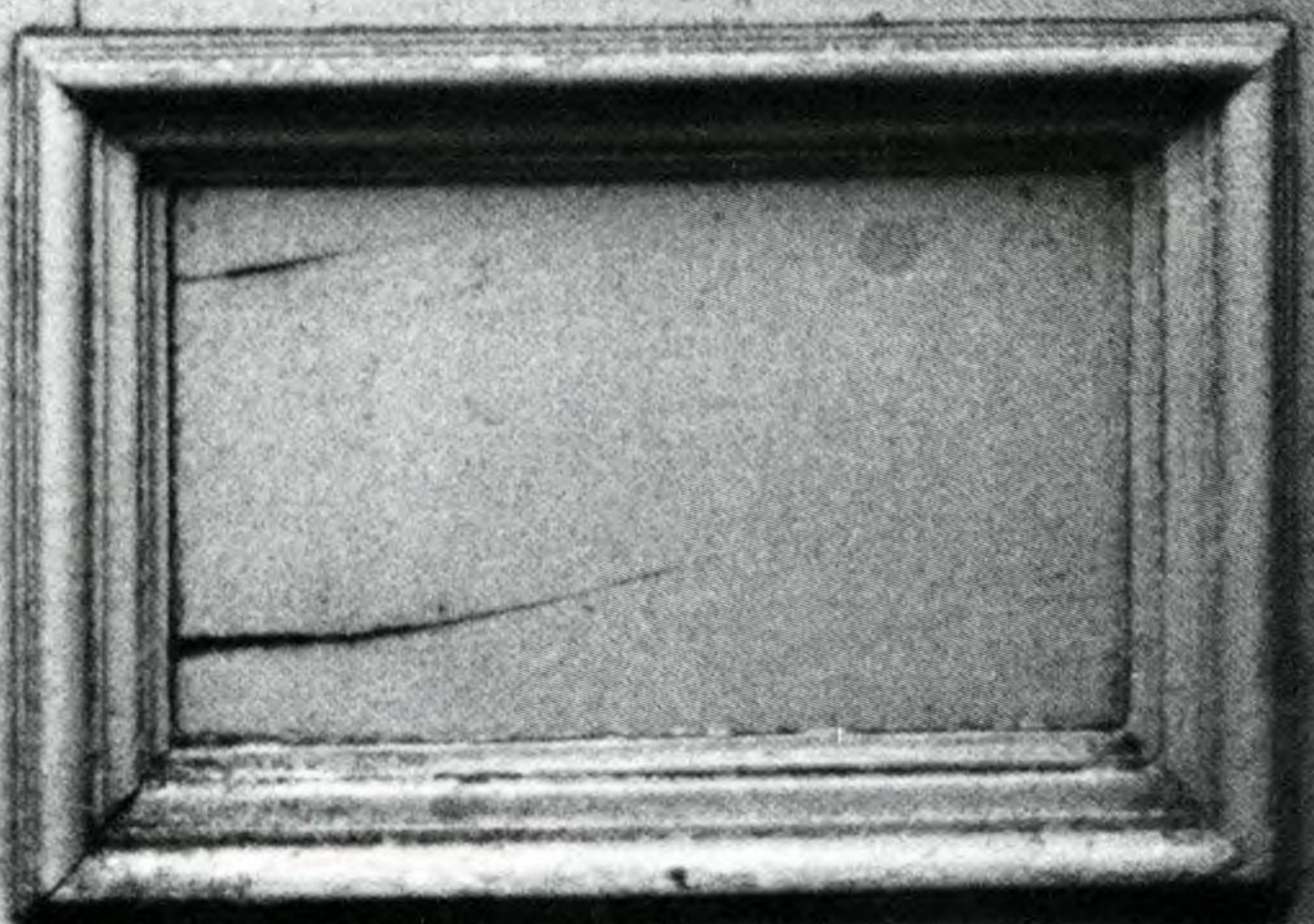
The end of where? I said.

I asked the Danish girl where she was going. She said she was going East but she was taking her time. She was going slow. She was taking a train to Ankara and she was going to stop and look around for a few days.

I said did she want some company and she said sure. We could leave whenever I liked.

Handwritten text on the left panel, possibly including the word "HAR" and a large "20" below it.

Handwritten text on the right panel, possibly including the word "HAR" and a large "20" below it.



Eve's Rib
209 Macintosh Center
3009 Broadway
New York, New York
10027

December 15, 1986

Dear Friend,

Enclosed is a complimentary copy of the first issue of Eve's Rib, the feminist arts journal of Barnard College. In this first effort, the editors have tried to create a forum where feminist voices and concerns could be expressed and heard, and where we, as students, could explore our individual and collective commitments to feminism, and to a love of art, literature, and intellectual pursuit. Eve's Rib was created in the spirit of experimentation, open discussion, and changing definitions of feminism; and of the close examination of values, language and artistic form, of group effort, mobilization and support; and of individual searching, questioning and growth.

Eve's Rib does not restrict itself to publishing works by people affiliated with Columbia University. We welcome your submissions of prose, poetry, criticism, photography, lithography, drawings, etc.

It is our hope that Eve's Rib will inspire thought, insight and discussion among your staff and students. We welcome and invite any comments and questions you may have.

With Best Wishes,

The Editorial Collective
Eve's Rib, 1987