

New England Journal of Public Policy

Volume 8
Issue 1 *Special Issue on Homelessness: New
England and Beyond*

Article 73

3-23-1992

Streets Are for Nobody: Marie

Melissa Shook
University of Massachusetts Boston

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umb.edu/nejpp>



Part of the [Nonfiction Commons](#), [Public Policy Commons](#), and the [Social Policy Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Shook, Melissa (1992) "Streets Are for Nobody: Marie," *New England Journal of Public Policy*. Vol. 8: Iss. 1, Article 73.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.umb.edu/nejpp/vol8/iss1/73>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks at UMass Boston. It has been accepted for inclusion in *New England Journal of Public Policy* by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks at UMass Boston. For more information, please contact scholarworks@umb.edu.

Streets Are for Nobody: Marie

Late thirties; alcoholic home; abused. Found job; now on medical disability; in subsidized housing; attending university.

I remember the first day I ever walked into Pine Street. I had my few clothes and I walked in there and one of the people that worked there asked me if I was hungry and I said, "Yeah." And I went over and I sat down on one of the wooden benches, eating a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, and the tears came streaming down my face, and all I could think of was, "Marie, this is what you have let your life come to?"

[She found an apartment but was lonely and continued to spend time at the shelter.]

And after about two months and a week or whatever, I kind of got used to it and didn't go down as often. I still went and visited. I still go and visit today. But I got . . . I got used to it, used to being by myself. And I actually got to like being by myself. Through therapy I started to learn how to be my own best friend and how to — I'm really enjoying my privacy. I didn't have any idea what was gonna happen — I didn't have any idea what was gonna happen when I used to sit on the bench [at the shelter] or be at night in the park. But I remember the feeling of hopelessness. And here it is five years later and a lot's happened in five years. I am not the same person I was five years ago yesterday, the day I walked out of Pine Street.

[She says homelessness made her realize how lucky she is.]

The amazing thing is that I'm not going around blaming my mother and my father and this one and that one. It's amazing. The amazing part is that I take — I took the responsibility. I know that I was the one that put myself there and I was the one that got myself out of there. And I am the one who keeps myself out of there. Because . . . 'cause it really would be easy to say, "Ah, screw it" and give up. I don't want that. I really don't want it. [Much louder and laughing] I feel so good! 🐾

Interviewed by Melissa Shook, September 11, 1988, South End. Reprinted, with permission, from "Streets Are for Nobody: Homeless Women Speak," Boston Center for the Arts, 1991.