

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: <http://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: <http://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 administrator of ScholarWorks at UMass Boston. For more information, please contact library.uasc@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.