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Wavelength · Spring 1982





State House, Boston, 1980, Glen Gurner

Wavelength

Volume 3, Number 4
Spring 1982

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for Clara Schumann
and Johannes Brahms





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LETTERS

To the Readers:

The *Wavelength* staff would like to remind its readers that "Father Penn is a fictitious being." However, the facts contained in the article "A Dissenting Jesuit's View of the Catholic Church" of the last issue of *Wavelength* were obtained from the following sources: *The Inquisition*, by John A. O'Brien, MacMillan Publishing Co., New York 1973, *The Spanish Inquisition* by Henry Kamer, New American Library 1965, *L'Inquisition* by Pierre Dominique, Librairie Academique Perrin, Paris 1969, *The Humanist*, Vol. 41 Number 1 Jan./Feb. 1981, *The Making of the Popes 1978: The Politics of Intrigue in the Vatican*, Andrews and Memeel, Inc., Kansas City 1979, *Witches, Midwives and Nurses: A History of Women Healers*, The Feminist Press, New York 1973, *Vatican U.S.A.*, by Nino LoBello, Pocket Books, New York 1973, *The Vatican Empire*, by Nino LoBello Trident Press New York 1968, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Church* by Malachi Martin, G. P. Putmans Sons, New York 1980, *Newsweek* Nov. 3, 1980, *A Modern Priest Looks at His Outdated Church* Trident Press, New York, 1967, *Church, State, and Freedom* Beacon Press, Boston, 1967

Father Penn

To the Editors:

Why isn't this signed? What's the difference between this and anti-Semitic literature? In my opinion it's unethical not signing it. The author puts me in mind of medieval or middle age Christian scholars who wrote down every negative fact they could find or think about Judaism and then wanted to know why Jews didn't march in droves to the Baptismal font, dropping their culture and traditions by the wayside.

Furthermore, the author doesn't know who Catholics are today. He calls them "brainwashed." Well, all the statistics concerning practicing Catholics in the U.S. today show that they are picking and choosing what parts of their religion they will practice. This is particularly true where birth control is concerned, but in other areas too. The Catholic missionaries and clergy in Latin America, though they have been reprimanded several times for getting involved in temporal affairs (siding with the people against political regimes), continue to concern themselves with politics. They feel it is their Christian duty no matter what

the Church's doctrine is. Why does the author think those Maryknoll nuns were killed? Or did he consider that? Why not look at what these people are doing, then show how corrupt the institution is and ask, even if they aren't adhering to all the doctrines, can they still in good conscience support the coffers of this institution.

Also the piece is really insensitive to the fact that religion involves family traditions. Catholics I know today are not strictly following the doctrines, but are seeking to preserve what is good in their traditions.

Archie Bunker also likes to rant about how much money the Catholic Church has. Not a terrifically intelligent point of view (neither is it original).

Mary Beth Cooper

To the editors:

It is very distressing to me and to the many people both within and outside the university who have contacted me that in its last issue *Wavelength* printed such an inflammatory and prejudicial article against Catholicism. Certainly nineteenth century American "literature" is replete with such anti-Catholic attacks, but I had the impression that such bigotry no longer existed — at least not in print.

One of the most disturbing features of the article is the rage with which it is written. It is unfortunate that the author did not have the security and/or maturity to identify himself/herself. Of course given the virulent attack, it is understandable that the true author did not wish to claim responsibility. Less understandable is that *Wavelength* permitted such a scurrilous article to be printed without requiring the author to sign it.

The author's manipulative style is not geared so much to give facts, much less truth, as to create an emotional response on the part of the reader against religion in general and against Catholicism in particular. An obvious example of deception is that the article was written to give the impression that an ex-Jesuit priest wrote it. Although, to the critical reader, the adolescent rage of the article clearly points to a younger author, many who read the article thought it was in fact an ex-priest who wrote it. Such slander against the Jesuits is inexcusable.

The article itself is poorly written and filled with false statements, cliches, half-truths, sweeping generalities, innuendoes

and non-sequiturs that as such do not merit a rebuttal. On the one hand, it would be naive to think that an institution, despite a divine authorship and guidance, could have almost two thousand years of human history without human failings. The Church is the first to admit this. However, to the many of us who experience the Church as a major force for good in which God is present and who actively work within it to bring about a better world, the article is personally very insulting and offensive. I, for my part, would be ready to discuss how the Church can be more faithful to its preaching; but such a dialogue is impossible with one who is obsessed with denigrating at every opportunity.

On a more philosophical level, it may be worthwhile for *Wavelength* to reflect upon the educational foundations and implications of the state university of which it is a part. Briefly put, while the modern secular university does not propagate any sectarian belief or value system, it encourages various systems to co-exist side by side in peace. This is part of the meaning of pluralism. Such an institution of higher learning, along with its component parts, seeks to create an environment in which tolerance at least, if not genuine appreciation, can flourish; certainly not an environment in which hysterical attacks slander a segment of the population.

I hope that in the future the *Wavelength* staff will evidence better judgement in deciding which articles are fit for publication. I hope it will not again encourage a disgruntled student with hostile feelings against a particular group to publicly vent his/her ire. Such venting can only serve to further prejudice against religious, racial and sexual minorities.

I personally am ready to excuse the article as simply due to the inexperience of the student staff, although that does not lessen the damage done. And since *Wavelength* is ultimately accountable in some form to the university (I have not been able to view a copy of its constitution), then the university administration and faculty must examine its own degree of responsibility for the article.

Fr. Maurice Loisele, O.M.I.
Campus Minister, U.M.B.

Dear Father Penn:

Thank you or your thoughtful and well-researched article in the recent issue of *Wavelength*. As always, it takes great strength and humility to stand alone for the

sake of Truth. The life of Jesus the Christ bears witness to this.

I would add, however, that although the Church's colonization of the bodies and minds of women is well documented, the latest front in their continued expansion-plan is the continent of Africa. Blithely ignorant of the rich indigenous spiritual traditions, the Pope has made his true objectives blatantly obvious with his recent tour. The Church seems to be striving to become the MacDonalds of Spirituality.

Or, as the late and Honorable Bob Marley put it:

"But I'm gonna stare in the sun
let the rays shine in my eyes
I'm gonna take just one step more
Cause I feel like bombing a church
Now that you now that the preacher is lying
So who's gonna stay at home
When the freedom fighters are fighting
Talkin' blues, talkin' blues,
They say your feet is just too big for your shoes
Talkin' blues, keep on talkin' blues
They say, you hear what they say,
didn't you hear?"

(from: "Talkin' Blues" by Bob Marley)

Blessed Be, Father Penn, Keep the Faith!

Yours,
Betty-Jo Demetralakas

To Father Penn:

As women who were raised as Catholics, we appreciate the rare and candid perspective of the Catholic Church expressed in your article "A Dissenting Jesuit's View of the Catholic Church" (*Wavelength*, Feb.-Mar. 1982). We can identify with your assertions that fear and guilt are two emotions the Catholic Church manipulates in order to obtain control and maintain devotion from its followers. We agree that Catholic dogma is not based on honest principles. As you so aptly illustrate, the ideals of Christianity and the actions of the Catholic Church are two completely different things and that the Church's actions are beneficial to a small group of people in terms of money and power. But by attempting to legitimize oppression of women, the Catholic Church is damaging to a great number. The problem lies in using the pulpit as a lobbying place against the freedom of choice. The pope's position on abortion, birth control and women's role in

society is clear. However, there are as many, if not more, Catholic as non-Catholic women having abortions and in other ways Catholic women are rejecting the Church's limited perception of them. The contradictions of the Catholic Church and the connection between its patriarchal doctrines and women's oppression need to be heard more often. Whoever Father Penn is, she or he must also have been brought up Catholic because it would be difficult to believe such understanding of the contradictions and such willingness to relate them could come from one not exposed to Catholicism.

Kristan Bagley
Judy Bousquin
Monica Crowley
Denise Oberdan

Dear Editors:

This is in protest to the scurrilous, insulting and mendacious attack on the Catholic Church that appeared in the last edition of *Wavelength*. It was objectionable on a number of grounds. First, the ferocity and ignorance manifested in the article precluded any hope of objectivity and fairness. So one-sided was the attack that your express desire that Catholics read it with an "open mind" strikes the reader as hypocritical. After all, you add, we (meaning the Catholics among us) have been "brainwashed." Nice. You encourage open-mindedness of Catholics by insulting their intelligence. Further, your claim of brainwashing might be taken more seriously if *Wavelength* itself weren't so obviously trying to brainwash the UMB community. The leftward political bias that is so apparent in *Wavelength* makes it appear more a political journal—a mixture of sandbox Marxism and fanatical feminism—than a literary journal. I will return to that point later.

As an attack (which is what it was), the article was not only groundless, it betrayed not the least knowledge of what Catholicism really is. As one example only (there are many I could choose), the name of the Jesuit priest you mentioned (the *real* Jesuit priest, not the phoney one whose name was attached to the article), is *Robert* not *Richard* Drinan. This is a small error, but of interest because it is an easy one to avoid, Father Drinan being a well known political figure. As for the opinions expressed regarding various aspects of the Catholic Church, there is virtually no evidence,

given. Is Confession, for example "a complete farce?" Carl Jung did not think so, yet you say it is. No evidence is given for this opinion except the testimony of an imaginary priest. There are many examples of this throughout the attack, and it would be tedious to list them all. Generally, the harsher the accusation, the less evidence is offered.

My expression will seem harsh, but consider. What would be the reaction if *Wavelength* published selections from the notorious "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" with a commentary by an imaginary "Rabbi Oldword" who supposedly announced that his only purpose was to inform freedom loving Americans of the plots of his co-religionists? Or suppose there appeared in your journal a racist diatribe, the fulminations of some demented race baiter, complete with phoney genetic "evidence", but attributed to a fictitious former civil rights advocate? Or suppose, just suppose, there appeared in *Wavelength* an attack on feminism composed by a fictitious former member of NOW which accused the women's movement of being a Communist front which advocated he murder of babies, and of being responsible for the breakdown of the family, the decline of sexual morality, and the increases in divorces, abortions and teenaged pregnancies? I hope never to see such things in print, and what would be the reaction to such attacks? Would such attacks ever see the light of day in *Wavelength* or any other UMB publication? Yet your attack on the Catholic Church was on the very same level.

The most appalling aspect of the attack however, was not its content, since its crudity and ignorance made it more of an irritant to the informed Catholic than a threat or a challenge. It is, rather, the fact that the whole thing is a lie. A "Father Penn" is the purported author, the title is "A Dissenting Jesuit's View of the Catholic Church," and the preface to the attack and the attack itself are written as if by this estranged Jesuit. Like reporter Janet Cooke's eight year old heroin addict however, "Father Penn" does not exist. This fact you admit on the bottom of the last page of the piece, where you state, "Father Penn is a fictitious being." Why did you bother to state this? In the hopes of keeping your Pulitzer? No matter, since it was obvious from internal evidence that no Jesuit wrote that attack; frankly, a Jesuit would have done a much better job. Announcing that the attack was a phoney only barely redeems your honest-

ty, for what we have as a result is an unsign-
ed attack on the Catholic Church.

But what, I asked upon reading your attack, could be the motive? Could such ignorance and hatred of the Catholic Church still exist in the City of Boston 150 years after an angry mob burned down the Ursuline convent in Charlestown? Is it possible that you have a narrow minded enough person on your staff that his mind is filled with the prejudices of the 19th Century toward Catholicism? Probably not. No, your attack has, I believe, another motive, one more in keeping with the prejudices of the 20th Century than the 19th, for your attack on the Church is not motivated by religious fanaticism, it is motivated by political fanaticism. The Church is characterized as, "the most powerful institution in the world," and as an institution, "...based on blind dogma, through which the darkest side of patriarchy is expressed." Neither of these statements is true, of course, and typically, no evidence is provided for them, however, these two complaints provided the real target and the real motivation for your attack. In this age in which politics has swallowed up everything, you see the Church only and exclusively as a political agent, and thus your only categories for comprehending her, as I said before are those of sandbox Marxism and fanatical feminism. Because you reduce the Church to the terms of your own small fantasy island of politics, i.e. those of power and patriarchy, you cannot see her history, her spirituality, her goodness, or even, God help us, the need for some agency other than the self-appointed commissars of sexual equality and the real commissars of socialist states, to remind the human race of duties and responsibilities beyond its immediate needs and desires.

John C. Caiazza, Ph.D.
UMass/Boston
Associate Director
Office of Student Financial Mgt.

Editors:

The Catholic Church has always been the target of fanatical attacks: it has survived for 2,000 years. "If the world hates you, know that it has hated Me before you." (John, ch. 15, vs. 18) Christians were torched to illuminate the pagan games; *Wavelength* wants to strike the match again.

Doris Pionton

To Father Penn and editors:

Ode to Catholicism

*Christian guilded lovers
with cross your heart pain,
wearing bands of thorns so cutting,
while singing in the rain.
The monks mocking music
breathing in parade,
the worrying beads of devotion
carried by a maid.
Starvation feeds the empty bowls
while skeleton's remain
the ghost from the confessional
judges us as sane. The coins of charity
token's of Ceasar's
feed the pious appetite
what costs to appease her
won't you take me to the altar
so we'll get saved?
Sure, but the crosses are burning
and the saints are on the run.*

M. Turner

Sexual Harassment

To the Editors:

This letter is in response to the article written by Beth Bagley entitled "Sexual Harassment at UMB." The Office of Affirmative Action has a strong commitment to implementing University Policy prohibiting sexual harassment. In the past we have been handicapped by lack of staff, but with the arrival of Ms. Jocelind Gant from Boston State College we should be able to improve upon our handling of sexual harassment complaints as well as other complaints.

However, I would like to call to the attention of the readers of your excellent magazine certain inaccuracies contained in Ms. Bagley's article. Ms. Bagley stated that federal law required the adoption of a grievance procedure to address sexual harassment grievances and the appointment of a Title IX officer, "whose job solely involves investigating these charges." She further asserted that the University had neither the required grievance procedure nor the Title IX officer. This statement is totally untrue. Since the article did not specifically state the "federal law" in question, I presume that Ms. Bagley refers to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Section 106.8 of the Amendments requires institutions receiving federal financial assistance to designate a responsible employee and to adopt and publish grievance procedures. However, there is no

requirement that these procedures be developed to consider "solely" sexual harassment grievances. The purpose of Title IX is to eliminate discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. In short, contrary to what Ms. Bagley has stated, the University *does* have a Title IX officer and *does* have a grievance procedure. The Director of Affirmative Action serves as the Title IX officer and the affirmative action grievance procedure addresses issues of sexual harassment as well as other forms of discrimination.

Finally, in the article Ms. Bagley referred to an alleged meeting between Janet Dynarski and me in my capacity as Director of Affirmative Action. Ms. Bagley writes that Ms. Dynarski stated that "Johnson was not very helpful" and that, "he told us that this did not fall under his jurisdiction." This statement is untrue. I never met with Ms. Dynarski and never made such a statement to her.

I share the concern of many members of this community with respect to sexual harassment. I urge any students and employees who have a grievance to bring them to my attention or to the attention of Ms. Molly Matson, Librarian. In addition, I urge interested individuals to work with the Office of Affirmative Action in attempting to educate the community to the nature and illegality of this reprehensible form of discrimination.

Robert Johnson Jr.
Affirmative Action Officer

Khomeini's Atrocities

The 1979 Revolution in Iran came about because the people were seeking democracy and justice. They wanted jobs, land reform, equal rights for women and minorities, adequate health care, housing and education, and independence. The majority of the people were deprived of all of these needs during the shah's dynasty. They were hoping that the Revolution would help to achieve these goals but they were betrayed by the leadership of Khomeini. Of course it would be unfair to blame the Iranian people for their initial support of Khomeini since they had always been ruled by dynasties who actively suppressed the political/social awareness of the masses.

It wasn't long before the Iranian people realized the true nature of Khomeini's regime. The new regime not only reversed the gains of the revolution but also surpass-

ed the shah's dictatorial regime in several aspects. The demolition of women's and minority rights, censorship of all news media and a total ban on all opposition papers, widespread corruption and fraud, along with social and economic chaos were the achievements of Khomeini's regime.

The answers that the people received for their problems was inconsideration and more violence and suppression. On June 20th, a rally organized by Mojahedin gathered 500,000 people in one of Tehran's squares to object the total dictatorship practiced by the regime. Acting on Khomeini's order, the Revolutionary Guards opened fire on the peaceful demonstrators, killing 50 and wounding 300. This cowardly response of killing peaceful and unarmed demonstrators clearly showed that the government was not going to tolerate any opposition towards themselves.

Since then, approximately 4000 people have been executed or killed under torture by the government. According to Amnesty International Report on October 13, 1981, by then "already over 14,00 political prisoners were held in Iranian prisons and the number of executions in Iran during the past three months was 600 more than all executions in the world during the past year." The extent of brutality was best expressed in an article by *TIME* magazine on October 12, 1981: "While Khomeini's Islamic Guards are executing enemies of the regime in the streets, they are also torturing suspected opponents behind prison walls, with a ferocity unequaled even by the deposed shah's notorious SAVAK agents. Many of the prisoners who are being tortured are merely relatives of dissidents sought by the political police."

The people's response to all these cruelties showed itself through well-spread armed resistance and negative responses to Khomeini's calls for cooperation with the security guards. To organize the opposition, a coalition was formed by People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI), Bani Sadr, the ousted President and several other popular organizations and elements. The new democratic front called the "National Council of Resistance" (NCR) set its goals as independence, freedom, and social-economic justice for all people regardless of sex, race, ethnic background or religion. With the bitter memories of the shah's dictatorship fresh in mind and the dreadful experiences of the past 3 years broadening their political consciousness, the people have increasingly joined and supported the opposition. To prevent this support, Khomeini has repeatedly called upon his followers to spy and report on

dissidents—even their own families. He has also reactivated another notorious secret police called SAVAMA.

The huge number of daily executions, inhumane torturing methods, and the thousands of political prisoners have not only alienated Khomeini among the Iranian populace but have isolated his regime in the international community.

Amnesty International has asked Khomeini's government for permission to send a delegation to visit political prisoners. However, Mosavi Tabrizi, a top Khomeini aide, has stated that the condition that "Amnesty International first condemn the PMOI, the United States, Zionism and Communism". These impossible conditions were set to avoid exposure of the prisons' conditions to Amnesty International and the world. However, this tactic has not been able to save Khomeini's prestige in the eyes of freedom-loving people around the world.

The Iranian students abroad who had a major role in revealing the shah's murders before, are now active internationally to show the true nature of Khomeini's government. The increasing isolation of Khomeini's regime has led the Iranian government to use any means of silencing the opposing students abroad. On November 3, in a message to the Moselm Student Association (MSA) in the USA and Canada, Khomeini has called on them to spread favorable propaganda and to neutralize the effects of oppositional activities. In addition, Khomeini has praised the MSA as "the future leaders of the country". The implications of this lie in the fact that the newly elected prime minister, several of the cabinet members and other high governmental positions have been given to former MSA members in the United States. Most of these rewards are given to MSA members for their activities, including violence against other Iranian students all around the United States.

Gathering information on Iranian

students abroad is another task for Khomeini's followers. The Iranian Consulates who are ordered to identify anti-Khomeini students would not be able to do so without the help of Khomeini's supporters among the students. A document directed to the consulate states that the "anti-revolutionary students" passports should be taken away. However, what the document doesn't mention is: Who will be identifying these "anti-revolutionary students" on their campuses? What will happen to these students once their passports are taken away? The students who have only entrance permission instead of valid passports will be forced to go back to Iran as their only alternative. Recently several students who had disagreed with Khomeini's policies were arrested on their arrival at Tehran Airport and were executed shortly afterwards. Javad Mansoori, who had issued this communique, was one of the initial commanders of the revolutionary guards. These guards have been responsible for all of the executions and systematic elimination of the opposition.

The lives of the Iranian students will be under grave danger unless some preventive measures are taken. The international measures suggested in Masoud Rajavi's letter to Kurt Waldheim include: granting the right to use United Nation passports, pending deportation of these students, and granting temporary job status to them. On the local level, universities should closely examine the activities of pro-Khomeini student groups on their campuses, and provide protection or the other Iranian students.

We also urge all the freedom-loving people and organizations to voice their opposition to Khomeini's government and the potential threats aimed at the Iranian students.

Anti Suppression Iranian Student Committee at UMB

Compliments of
Ann Ehrlich M.A., M.S.P.
COUNSELOR IN PSYCHOLOGY
Jungian Perspective
Cambridge, Massachusetts

FICTION

4 Short Pieces

...to my teacher and friend Miss Vivian Zamel because of her encouraging work with my writing which has been a great learning experience in both my artistic and human development.

THE CANONIZATION

Sister Helena Altagracia Trinidad Esplendorosisima de los Angeles del Espiritu Santo climbs today to the altars catapulted by clouds of incense, protected behind a panoply of wax candles and paternosters, a suit of armor which has been built by the restless erosive action of three hundred years and a string of boring wizened miracles repeated so often that the church has finally decided to save for her a little place in the almanac and incorporate her into the hopes, not so much because of the endless procession of blind men who return to see, or men suffering from dropsy covering the free flow of their humors, or gangrened limbs that have recovered among hysterical hosannas and strewn roses, but because the pope can't stand anymore the persistent drizzle of delicately perfumed letters brought to him by a multitude of anonymous lank women who are thankful for the intervention of their little saint in the obtaining of a husband after all other promises had wilted.

And there, within the happy uproar of the vulgar Latin and the sacred canticles building up to a paroxysm while she ascends to oblivion, her undefiled little body, flagellated in all imaginable forms in order to exorcize the image of eyes which never left her, shakes, assaulted by his odor of leather and wind, and his sharp laughter which nails her in her mortified feet to the haircloth. And her entrails consumed by old anxieties blossom anew and bring back to her memories of the shameful desires of the delicious struggle and the glorious fall of the days without end, under his hands which delimited her world. Then, in the last stage of her passage, just at the moment of opening the Door of the Golden Legends, the elaborate armor, created throughout so many centuries of peaceful pain, collapses,

struck by those memories, the same memories which plant in her flesh the seeds of unbearable screams. And the suffering is such that the frozen pupil of her eye which first caught a glimpse of him lets escape a shameful tiny yellow head which flowers and multiplies after all these centuries of anxiety, making her levitating hulk of a body, which was always beached by the memory of love, a swarm of worms.

And among the fainting, the devout women's cries, the mortally wounded dominations and potencies, and the fall of the Cardinal's purple, nobody can understand where this little laughter is coming from, laughter which slides nervously by the saint's sculpted gowns, lighting sparks in their plaster faces. They are revived by a light and joyful almost-wind which grows unnoticed until it occupies all the corners of the basilica and climbs with a gigantic leap to the carillon which peals out with glory delivering the triumph of the joke to the heavens where Helena, the mad lover, is greeted by an apocalypse of laughter which shakes even the very heart of the Mystic Rose.

EPILOG OR DID SHE REALLY LIVE HAPPILY EVER AFTER?

She survived the Horror fifty-nine years, six months and three days, and she spent up to the last second of this time going to psychiatrists, shamans, garrulous mesmerists, homeopaths, starving yogies, convulsive black men becoming horses and snakes, and millennial old women who decipher the most intricate constellations of tarot cards. All in vain. Finally, as she was becoming lullaby and myth, she went to the land where the ice is a rainbow, and there, two old brothers, grim in spite of their children's eyes offered her the consolation of literary immortality before she disappeared, lost for ever in her eternal search. All in vain because only death freed Little Red Riding Hood of her attacks of hysterical suffocation, her fear of darkness and her claustrophobia.

THE LESSON

...because of this particular characteristic of the blood system, one of the best forms of suicide is to cut one's veins. While the man generally refers to give himself a big shot in the temple, the woman, with a more melodramatic sense of death, dreams of the picture of her bleeding in the bath tub before the eyes of a world which has forced her to take this step. A sleeping pill, a generous amount of warm water which softens the pain, and death is sweet, ethereal, almost beautiful... Next day the professor gave his Anatomy lecture in a classroom where the empty chairs seemed to be smiling, grateful gravestones.

DON QUIXOTE AND THE ADVENTURE OF THE ICE MILLS

He succumbed because of a stupid bronchitis in some of the last weeks of his first winter which had been surprisingly benign until a storm dragged the thermometers down to record temperatures, and during which all the city's activities were paralyzed. With the beginning of the thaw, the neighbors around the abandoned building began to complain because of the odor coming out one of its broken windows. When the fire fighters tore down the door, they found him between empty bottles of rum and piles of cardboard torn by the cold. His face was lighted by a peaceful smile, as if he were joking about his thin widely open coat through which peeked the rabid orange sun of his cotton undershirt where cocoanut palms of impossible green almost swayed with the music of the supreme phrase which formed a frame around his heart: "Puerto Rico me encanta".

Ramon Figueroa

Lout at St. Leonard's

In the pew next to the confessional, Dave sat, his head bowed. The pew was walnut; the walls were walnut; the whole goddam lower level of the church was walnut. His eyes stared down at the kneeling thing. What else could he call it? "Leave that THING alone," was all he had heard when he was younger. Sticking his sneakers underneath it, he tried to balance it, to reach that point-between sneaker and pew where it could stay suspended on its own. It slipped and hit the slate floor. The sound filled the silence. He looked around. He waited for a reaction. The statues stared ominously past him and nothing moved. He put his foot on the kneeler; the sound still rang in his ears. His left cheek began to quiver. To control his discomfort, he jerked his neck and blinked. Then he looked around once again. His eyes stopped at the altar.

An old man stumbled out of the confessional box, half standing, half arched, and turned toward the back door. When he passed Dave, he glared. Dave attempted to mutter "Sorry," but that too shattered the silence.

The old man stopped, turned to the altar and made several attempts to genuflect; each time his back cracked; finally he threw up his left arm and turned back to the door. "Punk," he mumbled, as he passed Dave.

Dave was surprised; the word didn't echo. Maybe it took practice. "Pa-Pah" It sounded as if he was spitting. "Pah-unk." Again the sound diffused to all corners. Quietly Dave got up to go into the confessional.

It was dark. He knelt, his ankles wedged into the wall. He clasped his hands and placed them on the shelf in front of him. He heard something slide. Then silence. "You there, Father?"

"Yes, son." Then silence. The priest cleared his throat. "Well, son."

"I forgot what to say, Father."

"Forgive me Father."

"Oh, ya-ya. Forgive me Father for I have sinned. It has been three weeks since my last confession." He stopped. Like water, silence filled the box again.

"Whats wrong, son?"

"Well." His finger reached to touch the priest's voice; he felt some steel mesh. "That's what I used to say, but it's been alot longer than that."

"About how long?"

"Ah, I guess about two years." He

thought a minute. "No that ain't right, 'cause that's when my father died, and I figured I could go to Communion without it, 'cause I knew he'd put in a good word for me. Sorta special dispa-ah, a special consideration. And, when you're fourteen you ain't really into sinnin', just thinkin' of 'um."

"So why are you here now?"

"Oh, it's to make my mother happy."

"Well, I suppose." The priest stopped. Dave could hear him shift back. He wondered if he was praying, or maybe he had his lunch with him. Dave looked down at his watch; he couldn't even see his hand. The priest leaned into the steel mesh. "Ya know son, being a Catholic and being away from the Church for so long, not going to Mass, not going to Confession. And not receiving the Body and Blood of Christ is grounds for excommunication." He paused. The silent tide came again. Dave didn't know exactly, but he thought excommunication meant you could go to hell.

"But." The priest's voice started as if no pause had even been made. Then, as if he hadn't spoken, he paused, he stayed silent. "Is ya mother a good woman, a good Catholic?"

"Ya, Father, she is." Uncomfortable in his position, he shifted to the other knee.

"Well son, I tell ya what. Your mother would like ya to be a good Catholic. Right?"

"Yes Father." Dave wished he could see his watch.

"Well then, I'll hear your confession and give you absolution, if you promise to try to make Church more often. Is that a deal?"

"Ya sure Father."

"Now, we're gonna do this by the book. So about how long has it been?" He sat back as Dave started to work it out. "Come on, I don't have all day."

"It's hard to remember."

"Three years, four, five?"

"About three, I guess."

"O.K., We're off. Do ya swear?"

"Ya. I mean yes, sometimes."

"How many times?"

Dave turned his face but kept his voice front. "You think I kept count for three years?"

"Ya. Well, how many times a day?" He waited for Dave to answer. "You out there?"

"Ya Father, I'm thinking."

"Does twenty times a day sound right?"

"Ya that sounds good."

"So, three hundred and sixty five days times three is-ah..." He mumbled, it sounded like he was praying. "Say about, ah

well round it off to twenty two thousand swears?"

"Shi-it!"

"How about we make that twenty two thousand and one."

"Sorry Father."

OK. Now how about acts of fornication?"

"Acts of what?"

"Adultrous acts."

"Don't ya have to be married for that?"

"Sex!" The priest's voice said instantly.

"Oh." Dave's foot scraped the wall.

"Well." His voice lowered. "Hey Father, come on, you think I'm gonna talk to you about something like that? You, man of the Church."

"OK, OK." Dave heard him say something. It must have been a prayer. The priest took a deep breath. "So, why don't I let you talk. Tell me what you want. Who am I to judge? Just let's get it over with. Please."

"Right Father. See I stole some money from my mother and she went on about how I disgraced her, and how God would punish her for havin' such a bad son. So I figured this would make her happy."

"Are you sorry you stole, or sorry that you got caught?"

"Hey Father. When I steal, I don't get caught."

"What the Hell! Did Father Burke put you up to this?"

"Who's Father Burke? Hey, you wanna hear my confession or not?"

"You're serious. This is no joke?" The priest sat back. "Burke said he'd stop me from watching the game at 4 o'clock, just because he wants to see something on educational TV."

"No. No, it's no joke. You think stealin' from your mother's comical?"

"I'm sorry son. Go on."

"That's all right. Father, just one thing. Isn't Hell a swear?"

"Ah, well technically."

"Just put it on my tab."

"Jesus, Mary and Joseph." Pulling himself closer, he said, "And that's a prayer for both our salvations." He stayed at the screen so their voices wouldn't carry. "Now go on."

"Well, like I said, I stole twenty bucks from my mother."

"How'd she find out?"

"Well, I stole it to play a horse, a sure thing; and it came; \$18.40 it paid."

"Nice price for a sure thing."

"Ya, and all on the nose. So after tipping my bookie, I had half a C note. I put ten bucks on the number. And would ya believe it, I hit it."

"What's your bookie pay?"

"720 straight on the dollar."

"Is that how ya had it?"

"Sure enough, Father. Ten big times." Leaning on the wall, Dave got comfortable. "Last night I headed home with over seventy-two hundred dollars."

"And you gave your mother back her twenty." The priest tapped on the steel mesh.

"No Father, I gave her twenty percent."

"You gave her \$1,440.00. Why'd she get upset?"

"Ya know, Father, I think you're in the wrong business. You're good with numbers."

The priest cleared his throat. There was a pause, "Then what happened son?"

"Well at first she thought I knocked over a bank. Then, when I told her where it came from, she wouldn't touch it. And when I told her she had a right to it, it was her cut, she started hollerin'."

"Hmmm." the priest scratched his five o'clock shadow on the steel mesh.

"Well, Father. Did I do good or did I do bad?" Dave started tapping the wall. "Well, Father?"

"I'm thinkin'. Wait a minute." The Father took a deep breath. "You planned to give the money back anyway."

"Sure."

"So it wasn't really stealing to the full extent." He got closer. "Ya just borrowed it like."

"Right, Father, I tried to tell her that. But she wouldn't listen."

"OK." the priest said. "So that's just a venial sin." He sounded like a lawyer. "But there's the gambling."

"What?" Hey, that's when ya lose, Father. I didn't lose."

"Ya, ya but what if you did?"

"It was a sure thing. I mean, otherwise I wouldn't have taken the money."

"You took it." The Father's voice was soft, strong, reassuring. "I'm not saying you were bad, and you did try to make amends; but be careful. Ya know, it can get to be a habit."

"Ya Father, I know what ya mean."

"So are you sorry for those and all sins against the Holy Father?"

"Sure I'm sorry, but." Dave scratched his head.

"But what?"

"Was my playing winners a sin?"

A bang came through the darkness as if the priest had slammed his head on the wall. His voice cracked. "For your penance

say five Hail Mary's." The sliding window slammed.

Dave got to his feet, pushed the drapes aside, and stretched outward. He pulled on his shirtcuffs and turned to the altar.

It hadn't changed. On his toes, he started down. The Father said they were doing it by the book and that called for prayers at the altar.

As he started to kneel at the railing it dawned on him that he didn't remember his prayers. A small kid knelt by the side altar. Dave moved closer and knelt beside him. The boy made the sign of the cross; so did Dave. Then the boy began again;—Dave began to mumble with him. "Our Father who art in Heaven, Harold by my name."

When the boy finished, Dave spoke, "Hey kid, what's your name?"

He looked up at Dave. "Harold."

"Hey that's pretty good, Harold be thy name. Hey Harold, do ya know the Hail Mary?"

"Nah, the Sister hasn't gotten to that one yet."

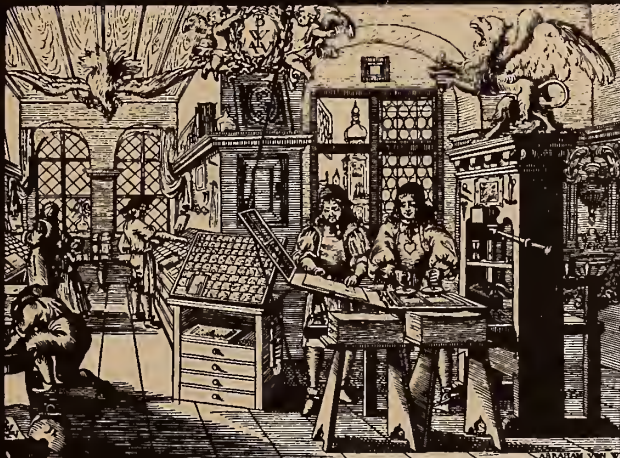
"Now that's a bad habit."

"Hah?"

"Never mind. I'm just supposed to say five of 'um for penance."

"Oh, it don't matter whatcha say, long as ya mean it."

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"Oh ya."
 "Sure thing."
 "How about if ya ask Mary?"
 "That's a sure thing too. That's God's mother."
 "Ya?"
 "Ya," Harold turned to leave. "See ya."
 "Hey, ya, good luck kid."
 "Dave turned to the side altar. It was not as threatening as the main one. He felt better for coming, he wanted to do what's right, he had to say something. With folded

hands raised he looked up. He thought a minute, then said, "Hail Mary, full of taste You gotta forgive such a lovable face. So give me forgiveness and give me grace, and please get my horse home in the eighth. And well, if he can't win please let him place." Getting up he brushed his knees off and started out. At the door he looked back. "Ah, it feels good to have faith."
 AMEN

"Who told ya that?"
 "One of the priests." The boy climbed to his feet. "Cause I'm always messin' 'um up."
 "Ya."
 "Ya, but I betcha I'll learn 'um soon."
 "Why bother?"
 "Well." Harold thought a minute. "Cause, well, they say God can do anything and my mother says if ya want something ya gotta ask right. So I figure if I say my prayers right I'll get what I want."

hands raised he looked up. He thought a minute, then said, "Hail Mary, full of taste You gotta forgive such a lovable face. So give me forgiveness and give me grace, and please get my horse home in the eighth. And well, if he can't win please let him place." Getting up he brushed his knees off and started out. At the door he looked back. "Ah, it feels good to have faith."
 AMEN

William P. Cahill

Coming Soon to a Theater Near You

A tragedy about a man in the present who has the potential to have everything anybody else could ever possibly want in the world.

"No, you can't have that."

"Okay, how about a movie about a movie about a book about a movie?"

Klien sat there in the elegant office that overlooked an immense green valley. His eyes sparkled. He still had that country boy look even after being involved in this town for more than ten years. He was sitting in a plush leather chair and feeling very comfortable. Comfortable because he had Executive Vice President in Charge of Production Les Moore exactly where he wanted him. Klien had made concessions enough all along so that he knew Moore was easy so far.

"Look Klien, I understand the concept of art as well as anyone, but we have to make a movie that will sell."

Moore was in his fifties, black hair flecked with grey, sitting there looking Klien in the eyes with a look somewhere between sincerity and complacency. The studio was doing very well and Moore had been doing this job too long.

And Klien said, "Okay Les, how about a movie based on a book about a movie about a movie? Look Les, the audience will get off on it. A good story about a story about a story about a story with a lot of beautiful people in it and a lot of beautiful scenery."

"Ya, ya, it'll cost a lot of money too," Moore blew his nose, "Shit, you're going to have to have three sets in order to shoot some of these shots. Besides, this seems pretty confusing Klien, we could make three movies out of what it will cost you to

make just one."

"Ya but Les, it's gotta be a spectacle. Think of the glitter, the glamour, think of all those wild eyes going to see a glimpse of the perfection they will never be. Besides, everyone wants to see how a movie is made, you know why." He fed him.

"Ya, ya, because everybody wants to be in show biz." Moore said as he leafed through the script again.

"We've got to give them what they want Les. We can't lose touch with the people, with what they want."

"Okay, a movie about a movie about a book. You don't have to repeat the first one."

Klien looked at him cold. "Maybe I'll have to go to another studio then."

He had Moore, he knew. Klien had lunch with Bob Saul, Executive Vice President of Everything at Monument, two days before, and Klien had made it well known that they were talking business. He was lucky and hot. "The Lascivious Leye" had made a name for Klien and as one critic put it, "...showed the dimension of vision that made a symphony of sex," and Klien intended to ride it out to its unnatural conclusion. Anyone would, thought Klien, that understood the benefits of the system. This was his chance.

And Klien said, "Look Les, this is going to be the sleeper of the season, it'll make four times more than it costs. We have to trust each other Les, believe me this once and you'll never regret it."

Moore looked at Klien and talked into the telephone.

"Get me Mr. Merchant." He held the line.

"He'll go for it," Klien said.

Moore looked at him cold.

"I can't see it Klien, but... Buck, ya Les. Aha, he's here with me right now, that's right." Moore's face slowly relaxed and looked into the telephone. "Should we talk about this anymore?" Moore asked. "OK, all right Buck, right, bye."

Moore looked at Klien and asked, "When do you want to start production?"

"Right away," said Klien.

The universe was his and Wella was his star.

Wella, superfluous to beauty, always suspect. Seen from eyes, idolized, yearning texture in one dimension. Obverse orbs of lust, simple transfers, clear pictures.

Wella in bed, hanging on like taunt dancer to brass ring. Gold around the neck in pendants and chains lustrous in sumptuous taste, twisting while grasping to implacable subjugation.

"Taste the honey."

"Hold the honey till it oozes."

He moved back into.

"Dive and twist me till all and all become rich honey."

He moved over the tender bristles, conscious not of himself but of a subliminal hypnotic gorge, floating over time and reason and even the animal urge, bulging toward a promise. Mind at times flickering, but at words: stallion, gold, magnanimity, mere simple subjects there, whelmed into obscure light.

Happiness be a warm gun.

Sheldon.

She lay there in the soft bright light beneath me, her body still now and my pole hard and ready to plunge. I didn't want

to stop, she wasn't any ordinary chickie — I knew that from the first time I saw her, not the paper mache of most I had met and had. Because I say what the fuck, I hung above her still, still, looking down at her brown skin that made me want to come closer so she would never forget me; that's what I liked about chickies who wanted — making it so they would never forget me, leaving my mark in them all and hearing them say in their soft whimpers while they, and before I came, "Oh Sheldon."

And that's the first movie that Klien originally makes, it's about sex and violence, it's a love story, and about living in America.

Power comes out of the barrel of a gun.

He pounded prolific and supremely beastial directly behind her. The power, the power. Appearing as someone being gradually tortured. The face contorted in intense uncertainty until the moment before and there is no way to stop. He is lost and clenched her buttocks holding on in profound power. He spasms and the screen shook.

Wella writhed in discomfort, her face in the bed and binging the pillows. The violation submission to uncaring, but who would, the inverse answer rejects the past. "I loved once," she says as she cries. Credits slither across the figures on the screen, "The Lascivious Leye," she reaches for his hand as he makes the final prodigious thrust and she turns on him quickly like a feline gouge at his face, her nails ripping away furrows of flesh.

"You'd love to sire a bitch, wouldn't you!" she screams kneeling and facing him.

But he punches her quick in the chest. Her body thumps falling backward in a heave. She lay there stunned straight out.

No.

But what I said came out like I had to say it, because he was power but I could take his power in a way he didn't expect but I'd be damned if he'd enjoy it and then shoot, no. I mean ya I was pissed then that nobody did nothing because it all happened so fast and then he flipped me and was in me but damn if I'd let him like it without cost, damn if he'd get off too.

But that was before.

Now, the other movie is about an awesome future rock star. The title is "Pure Breed."

He loves her more than anything else.

It's a cold night, dark and damp. He's just walking out of a brightly lit office building, his figure is all the camera can see. He's vague, then focus.

He pushes the door into the night. A blast of cold air stings his groin. His legs are

bowed like a cowboy who has been riding in the saddle too long. His cheeks twitch and his eyes tear. Underneath his leather jacket his body begins to sweat, the body contradicting, in turn causing chills, causing tingles and needles of pricking jabs in his testicles.

He is sterile.

A mist floats around him as he waddles down the sidewalk. He appears through the eye of the camera as an apparition, a blur. He moves closer and his features become more apparent. His body seems sleek. His legs, as he moves, bulge the muscles in his thighs of potential power. The smooth skin on his face is perfect and hued, highlighted by hair blacker than no light that glimmers, causing a glow. His jet black pupils make the irises of his eyes, that are inset and shadowed, seem an unfathomable bronze, seem eyes of absorption, mysterious and warm. The women love him.

Cut.

She tells him she is pregnant and he instantly thinks of a thousand reasons why he can have no children, not only because he can't be a parent, but more and most importantly because he can't bring a child into this world. He feels fucked, betrayed, it's all too messed up. All he did was spit and she has control. He does something about it.

He says, "No, then you're on your own."

He is sterile.

He is scared still. She leaves, walks away, but is not alone.

He enamels himself from enamour, severing himself from progenity.

But he said that he loved her more than anything else, he's a son of a gun.

And the third movie is a story of the explosive lust of raw power.

"I can't do anymore," Wella said.

"I won't," said Henry.

"What! Are you both running now, mother fuckers, we need you. I thought you gave me a commitment, or doesn't that mean anything?"

"You didn't say it was going to be like this."

"No more sex."

"I didn't know this was going to happen either. They didn't send a letter apologizing for cutting off the money, no sorries, they just did it." Klien told them.

Henry said, "The parties..."

"I've got an idea," said Sheldon, "why don't we just finish this ourselves?"

Klien looked at him, they didn't trust one another.

"I suppose you want to set the studio on fire, or sacrifice someone."

"No," Sheldon said, he looked at them.

"Damn," they all said.

"You wanted to wake them out of their seats, didn't you?" Sheldon asked, "now here's your chance."

Klien said, "But there's a problem."

"What?"

"This isn't real."

The old foundation was moist and cold covered with moss smelling of musty natural decay. A lone cricket braved the late spring, lost outside in the damp night air. "Get," said Henry, "Here," he said again. There was a hole the size of a child's fist in between the stones where the cracking cement had been. Sheldon scuttled over to it, scratching commando like. Their faces and hands smudged black, they blended visually in the darkness like whispers. Sheldon's hands unlaced the satchel with a delicacy and care Henry had never seen of him before. The explosive was pliable like putty and Sheldon kneaded it into the crack with a sensuousness that made Henry look at his eyes — appearing like congealed moisture as if this were the point where animal became man.

"The wire," said Sheldon, and Henry groped in the dullness and found the bag.

"Just one match to light a second," Sheldon said, and there was a fire flash.

Cut.

"Get out while you have the chance."

"What? Who is this?"

"Your building is pregnant and ready to blow."

"Hello!"

Click.

And the entire movie has to do with the potential understanding of power.

Klien.

It's quintessentially like Monopoly really, it all has to do with moving around and being penalized, going round and round and back and forth, and using money, and building, and then of course, ultimately, dealing with the other players. So I knew I had to add something to it to make it work — to make it so Moore and all the rest of them would like it — I had to manipulate — because it is essentially a movie about a man who wants to be opaque and is involved in all of this, but there is only one place to run to for that, one place to hide, and the character wouldn't do it even though Henry might. Therefore, I must be careful, because he is as severe as a wounded animal and a cuckold — a centaur of spiritual cerebral hemorrhage.

It's the size of the thing I tell him, I said that from the beginning. Consequently, I don't see it as a moral problem of any magnitude at all, because if you're endowed you're endowed, you got it you got it. It's a strictly absolute question of pragmatism for

deciding what to do with it, with what God gave you, if you will. It's also a question, and this is the toughest part, of dealing with one's own feelings — admitting that he likes it and it isn't any precious sacrament. There's nothing wrong with feeling good, especially if it's going to make another feel good, and then make many other people feel good too, even though it may seem weird to some.

The movie is about the future.

Klien flicked the knife at his throat.

"I want more Les."

"Klien what are you crazy, I can't do that without Mr. Merchant's approval."

"Fuck Buck, I have to finish this thing."

"Klien be reasonable I..."

"Les feel this."

The movie is Klien.

I am a shrieking missile with a loaded nuclear warhead. A propulsion force guided to a civilian target. I will wipe out their thinkers. My aim is true. I will destroy thought by obliterating bodies. My course is irrevocable, there is no defense. I am a manmade creation of technical expertise. Great men thinkers used by great men leaders. Men don't care. The pent secret in my mind will explode into forty megatons of hell fire burning, burning children whole. I will screech in their brains and erase them from the earth immediately. Children will singe die, women will fry. Men will live, alone, I hope, and puke their entrails for years of hell on earth; an eternal fustilade of pregnant pain retching all senses. Great men leaders fusion of loss pain in memory

eternal — suffer scum suckers who became modern man, castration is too good for you.

On course my aim is true. I see below me plants rooted to the earth. Women caring for tender tiny human beings. Soft consciousnesses staring at a light bulb.

On course my aim is true.

I am omnipotent.

I cannot turn back.

I don't land safely

Disarm me please, before I hurt someone.

And Klien makes the movie.

I found a long time ago by living in this world that the best way to captivate an audience is to entertain. A good movie should be easy to follow and take the viewer through, or at least suggest to the viewer's mind, a good story. Music should resonate through the mind and being, the artist must seduce the listener through the ears, the orifice of hearing. And the filmmaker, which I, devoted, am, must assimilate these arts with the visual, through a limited view of the real world.

And so every movie should be visual, harmonized, exciting, unusual, arousing, unexpected, and most of all it must make you, the audience, feel. I am concerned that when you see this movie you are entertained, that you can sit through it and not squirm. I hope there is something you can grab onto. I also hope, like a good song resonating in your head after you hear it, that when you leave this theatre the movie will have had a strange effect on you, as if you had been taken somewhere else.

Because if that is true, if I am fortunate enough to have this film engage you so that you leave this theatre feeling a little differently than before, then that means that I will have made you wonder. And that is one step beyond all else that is entertaining, that is a step beyond the movie, it begins to be the movie about the movie.

And if you do leave this theatre and are moved and slightly altered in form and wondering about the movie about the movie, then I ask you not to forget who did it, who put it all together. Because even though you may feel for these characters, may fall in love with the consummation of their personalities, remember, I made the film, I am the one who suffered, the one who truly believed the world was crazy, who truly believed in world perceptions — of vision as a gift. I mean, what you see on the screen is only where it appears to be; but you see it actively, individually, while I am behind the scenes, here, everywhere.

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ESSAY



Kelly Kildow

Impossible Love

An essay of broken reflections

I walk alone down the stairs into the smokey, warm interior of the Cafe Algiers. I flop down into a wood bench, which jolts me, wakes me to the hum of voices. The tables are filling, the sun dimming into the sweet morass of evening. The waitress brings cappuccino, and she is lovely. Streams from my eyes, from my stomach fly out after her swaying hips, but fall in useless spewed out tatters on the floor. I turn hard eyes into the cappuccino, eyes now as black as the coffee. The murmur lulls...

I am in love with Nancy. Oh, I could say it's infatuation, projection, delusion — but it's love. I could try to differentiate it. It resists that, lulls me instead. Perhaps I don't want to look at it, perhaps I am already staring into it too closely... Nancy isn't in love with me, of course. She's married, and I suppose in love with her husband. It does happen. But I'm in love with her, and I make a fool of myself, dragged and tortured through my feelings, caught by my burning Eros for long months.

But her eyes, warm and liquid. But her hair, too much hair, long and smokey, saying caress me, caress you. But her skin, woman's skin-heavy, warm and full to bursting. No, not

fat but heavy and thin, her skin is warm and rich, seems only to sag slightly over her collarbone, dips there and begins in small deep pools her breasts. She sways when she walks — women sway — I have watched her walk away from me often enough, only slowly, languidly, full sea swells at each step, dragging only slightly, pulling and curving the space in waves around her hips. Well, but she isn't fat, only women are like that — their lips part slightly, sag. Their foreheads, Nancy's forehead is firm, but full and rounded, dark no matter how white her skin may be...

"Nancy, how are you doing?" (She confides her heart to me, asleep to my longing, and stretches instead to someone else.) I look away quickly, afraid of my eyes giving me away. So I look all around her office, out the window, at the things on her desk.

"Oh," she sighs, "alright." But then droops. I thrust myself into her life. It's wonderful and painful, but hurts. But her beauty — who would stop? And how can I? We are in the same office together, every day.

"I've fallen in love with someone.

Everything is really screwed up." She doesn't look me in the eye, and my heart leaps at the words. Me?

I smile sadly, nod. I'm good at smiling sadly. What else do I have? I can't intrude on this, but I will intrude, want to insinuate myself. What else do I have? I smile. It hurts, but "tell me, it'll make it easier."

Nancy bows her head. "I don't know how it happened. John is good to me, and we've been together for so long. But Charles is so nice — but," she looks up, sad eyes, "He's married too."

What can I do? I nod. It hurts. Every secret word, every wound is a deep red target for Eros' arrows. How can I not love, hearing all this? I nod. "Go on."

"I don't know how it happened—"

"I love you." What? My head shakes, I put the warm cup down, look sideways. At the next table are two lovers. They're so lovely it hurts. He spoke first, but she answers him, leaning forward and covering his hands with her warm ones. "I love you."

Their eyes sparkle, the room is getting

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smokier. But there is an edge on their voices, insistent, dark with hidden desperation. I'm afraid all of a sudden. The smoke should do it, should take away their voices, but they slide, pulsating, into my ears, coming and going at will. More capuccino. The sweet chocolate on top the best part. It goes with the bitter. The waitress' hips sway as she moves away—

"Karen, I love you so much." The couple again. He moves toward her, glassy eyes, but sparkling, pinnacled towards her, deeply. "No, it's more. I have never felt anything like this before, and when we make love—"

Oh no. Not that.

"—it's amazing, incredible, like I never knew it could be."

But her eyes shift a little, scared by the intensity, tense. "We feel like one, I'm lost inside of you, floating in you." He goes on, leaning more into her. Their cups are side by side, no way to tell whose is whose. He grins, wipes a bit of coffee from her lip, kisses it a sinking pillow kiss. Possible? I'm scared, if he's not. I turn to watch the waitress.

"Only—" he starts again.

"Don't talk, Bill," she smiles. But Bill goes on. "Karen, it makes me sort of scared too, like I can't possibly get close enough to you, I want to swallow you, have you all to myself. I'm always reaching..."

(Do I respect distances too much, a tired voyeur with Nancy, sagging wrinkles from staring too hard through her windows? I do stare, do respect. Mustn't we?)

"Bill." (Karen's voice is liquid, thick with her women's blood. I hear her flowing tongue, feel it retracting, away from her lover.) She leans back. "I love you too, you know that. But it's scary sometimes, you're so insistent." (See? It starts already.)

"Is that bad?" With puppy eyes. But there is the hint of something wilder behind.

"No, but... Well, you seem always so much more certain than I feel. What if—what if I don't feel exactly the same—"

More insistence. "But you have to, you feel it when we make love, don't you?" Bill leans even more forward, across the little table. But I don't want to hear this, really. I have enough already. Where is Nancy?

"George, tell me what's upsetting." Nancy leans toward me. I bow my head now.

"I can't," I start, "it would be too much." Hell, my voice is starting to crack.

"But that's not fair." Nancy's right, it keeps things off balance between us. I search miles into her smile for something for me, a reflection. But nothing, no reflection, only dull sleep in her eyes. Or worse, a broken reflection, myself smashed into a thousand pieces. She has no words for me, but I have words for her, sly ones, tricks to see if she sees through me. I try this: "Well, Nancy, you know what Rilke said: 'When the secrets of the heart are confided, how soon there's deception.'" Of course I leave out the word 'lovers'. That would have made it far too obvious. But how long can someone live with this tension? Will she see through my words? Impossible!

"— Bill, I don't want you to get upset, but I'm going out with someone tomorrow." They are back, piercing me, through. I don't want them, but there is nothing else to hold me, the waitress has disappeared. My cup is empty. I shouldn't look at the poor couple, but I do. There, in Bill's eyes—that look I have seen so often, worn myself often enough—the animal flaring, scared.

"What?" Bill asks. I can already hear his hard breathing start, the constricting one. I

start to pant. "Why?" he asks. Karen shifts back, away from her lover.

"This guy I met asked me out." She shrugs. Oh no, not indifference, lightness now. That is worse.

"You're going to sleep with him." The animal is bristling, scared. And no words from Karen. No, that is worse again—half-hearted assurance would be better. Anything. But Bill is falling into the pit. No words. But he starts again, "Who is this guy?"

"Oh, you wouldn't know him, he's older, a professor—"

Oh no. Much worse. Impossibly worse. I was young, am young, too, felt there was no way to compete with older men. They haunt for lifetimes. In stories lovers tell of their first affairs with older men (always), in affairs with richer, wittier more talented, more successful, more sensitive men. Impossible to meet head on. Only to be lived with, these impossibilities everywhere one looks, a plague. Jack in love with Tim, but Tim straight. And so Jack suffers. My father waiting, after three marriages, waiting until his lover from Russia can get a visa and come to him. They say it takes years. Lisa, after months of tension, bursting out in hot tears in my office that she is in love with her brother. And the horror, the pain in tears and tears. My other patients, in love with me, their pain, their brokenness so apparent. Me a student, falling in love with my teachers...

Aunt Sal, have you done anything about you and Uncle Max lately? Or are you too old to change? Maybe you still don't see how afraid Max is of you, how afraid to come home, afraid of your moods, your great deep depressions that only deepen with each look into Max's fearful eyes. And so you wait to pounce on that fear, when he walks in. And the more depressed you are, the more elated Max, afraid himself of becoming like you, depressed and caught. So he flees, stays boyish, soars on optimistic wings, till it is ridiculous. And you grow old, wounded. This is killing you, making you old, too old, too many pills, doctors, aches so hurtful yet undefined, from your shoulders or back or legs, you are never sure. And Max—that coward? How in awe of his great mind you were, but you never dared to learn his world, only kept to your fleshy one. Then each locked the other out, held something over the other, and so made dependent on your sickness, you are sickly dependent. It is impossible for me to visit for more than a day. The tension is too great, and your icy distance makes you two sterile, impotent. It is impossible to change? Yours is a tragedy of no-reflection, leaden and unmoving, it is stuck in blackness...

"— you're going to sleep with him, I know." Bill goes on, and now the animal, once crouched, flees in panic.

"I'll do what I want." Karen defies. The huntress casts long spears after her lover.

"You would do that to me? I can't believe it. What kind of a person are you?" Trampling everything in its flight. His tiger voice warms, hot blood in his mouth, oozing from the corners. (But does she know what she does? What a chance this is for great and lasting good, a chance to move them both, to break them open, to change. But the terrible, terrible risk. Already she hunts.) And her voice cold, "I'll do what I like. Besides, I thought you were just saying how well you knew me." Ah, traps set for the fleeing animal. But he runs recklessly, tasting the blood of his own death.

"You just don't care." The animal whines.

"I'm a different person from you." The huntress is cold.

"I'm trying to love you." Through gritted teeth.

"All I can feel for you when you are like this is real dislike." She hardens more.

The animal gathers himself for a spring, cornered. "And all I can feel for you is hate."

Jim, my dear brother, are you married now or divorced? The woman you live with is not for you, but you can't leave. Neither together nor alone, and caught in each other's many webs, strong and subtle, loud and harsh. How many times have I cringed in the next room, hearing you two shout, shout that you hate each other, only to fall into wild, deep sea-swells of love-making, deep enough to rock away the word 'hate, replace it with another just as filled with tension, 'love'. Like the waitress' hips, rocking. But don't you see? Your house is broken to bits, windows smashed, holes broken in walls. How much can you take, mistaking passion for love, your two souls wailing like the tortured things they are. Wings plucked off butterflies . . .

"Look, why not break the date? We'll go somewhere, anywhere . . ."

"I'm going, Bill. I told him I would."

"But something will break. It won't be the same between us, never again. Do you really want that?"

Of course not the same, she knows that. But it's no use trying to stand in the way of it. And yet it is true Bill, flight looks just as ridiculous, is just as senseless. But the hot sparkle burns in his eyes, like tears. It has burned all of us, we have been scorched in our own searing flames of Eros. Burning to start a love, burning to stop it, burning to undersand, burning in hurt, Eros without Psyche, flame without water, piercing movement without reflection. But Psyche without Eros is as painful, as impossible. I know, I have been that for a long time . . .

"George, how are you?" Nancy's eyes are sincere, it's true.

"It's too much to begin. If I started, I wouldn't stop. You don't want that." I say what I must, but even that hurts. Will she see through that? But then—

"No, I do want to hear, really." She looks in my eyes, and I look, wanting to go ahead, but

forced to keep it to myself. How could I begin to speak my heart? If only she had said she didn't want to hear, had nodded her head and said she understood why I could not speak. If only I could see Eros' agitation in her, a flame burning, however small, but burning her for a change, burning a reflection. Then how the words could flow out! But the familiar darkness closes over me again, the long night of Psyche, alone weaving, working, working the thousand possible warps and patterns of a connection to Nancy, my Psyche black in her separateness. Nothing, only endless circles. Impossible, impossible to touch her directly . . .

"— But Karen, isn't it an intrusion? Aren't we enough, together?" More pleading.

"I have to do it Bill But don't worry, it'll be fine."

Oh, this girlishness, this playing in flowered fields. What did James Hillman say? Wait, let me look . . . here, yes, on page 97. " . . . even where two exist only or each other, a third will be imagined . . ." And here, later, "The triangles of Eros educate the Psyche out of its girlishness, showing it the extent of its fantasies." Yes, how real the symbol, a third person coming as an actual person, torturing the two into a change, breaking them open. But is a change possible? How many friends do I have involved in triangles, how many messes of souls offered for change that never comes, or doesn't work?

"— well, and I suppose I talk a lot about you to him, how much I like you . . ." Nancy smiles. But no, not that Nancy. Could I be imagined as a third for you? No, no . . .

"Alright, if that's the way you want it." Bill stands up suddenly, making the cups clink, his voice rising. But I don't want to hear this. But Bill, see through her words. See Psyche asking to be transformed, vision the possibilities . . . But no, without possibilities, it is impossible. Ah, but no.

"Bill, sit down." Karen's voice, colder now, set.

Too late, the animal writhes in the snare, twisted, blooded. "Why should I?" Bill's voice rises again. Then suddenly calm, fear and anger pressed struggling into a volcano. His hands shake, and quietly, "You can both go to hell." Then a quick swipe of his hand sends the cups smashing to the floor, breaking something. The dishes, their solitude. Everyone stops, looks. Bill rushes out. The waitress appears, kneels a long graceful dip, picks up the broken cups, smiles a knowing hurt smile at Karen. And Karen, hot now and thriving close to the dragon, blushes.

A last cup. Again the long graceful swells as the waitress leaves. Then across the room, a more particular swell, a glint of particular hair. Nancy comes in, sits down with a man. They kiss. He is not her husband.

Somewhere I imagine is someone who is in

love with me, and I don't know it, may never know. An endless chain of people in love with the wrong person, Eros shooting arrows at unawakened and unaware psyches, psyches living in pain, waiting for Eros to be transformed. What is this great suffering, this hard shattering of one's world? What is it for? There is nothing to do, psyche is depressed, Eros restless.

But it is not only these loves. All love has something impossible in it, even the most fulfilled love. There is a loss always there, an impossibility of two ever coming together. Rilke said it: "Because I never held you, I hold you forever." That 'never' stays, is lived with always, is never overcome. It is love's initiation rite, the problematic senseless hurting that offers the chance. To what? To stare into my cup, see myself darkly reflected there, transformed. To bear this thing, and perhaps in that to get new bearings, new ways of loving this strange beauty, the soul. For pain is a soul experience. But let me find it . . . yes, page 101: "By being touched, moved and opened by the experiences of the soul, one discovers that what goes on in the soul is not only interesting and meaningful, necessary and acceptable, but that it is attractive, loveable and beautiful." So our bearing of this senselessness can have value, beauty even.

Did I say I was psyche waiting for Nancy's Eros? I'm Eros too, reaching toward her. Look, I strain with arrowed eyes, pointed ears, so see through this damned smoke, to see her face, hear her voice, the tones, all the ones I love, all her habits, moods, everything. Wanting her to awaken, to awaken her. Damn Karen and Bill, damn Nancy and her friend. My solitude is broken, everything is smashed. Look at that, there are still bits of broken cup lying on the floor!

But wait! It is impossible, isn't it, that Nancy could love me? But what if she does? My god. Could it be psyche, working her labors alone, not noticing the world outside, that makes me blind? Am I too caught in my own reflection, so that my reflection in Nancy's eyes is broken before it can happen? This love, grown too large in my womb, is unable to be born. I am saturated, waterlogged in my own fetid blood. But it stops there, the reflection, unable to go on. Yet more impossibles . . .

There is a crashing in the kitchen, behind me, like a thousand plates breaking. The people stop, turn. Of course I stare the other way, at Nancy. She and her friend are kissing. But our eyes meet, just for a second, half way through.

by Tom Kaplan-Maxfield

The book that George is reading is "The Myth of Analysis" by James Hillman, archetypal psychologist. It was published in 1976 by Harper and Row.

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POETRY

STRAYCAT-The girl I Wanted to Be

*StrayCat walks in at
quarter of two.
"Where did you go, baby,
what did you do?"
the curtains ask.
StrayCat just laughs.
"She's probably been to a bar"
the radiator hisses.
"I bet she didn't leave alone"
the floorboards groan.
StrayCat peels off her stockings,
balls them up on the counter
with the dirty dishes.
She spreads out on the bed
and drinks a beer.
You can hear her purring
a mile away.*

Julia Robbins



Bob Priest

Tell Me

*tell me you won't think
twice
when the midnight call
comes, says
the bullet lodged in the jaw
left us the face
and the hole
in the cheek
and the warm, wet rags
to keep the blood inside
tell me the evidence isn't
here already
piles of it, mounting
that it isn't
premeditated
that we weren't
warned
what these choices would lead to
as if we had any choice at all
tell me our loving
makes us targets
that after a thousand times, maybe
we'll get used to it
with no more disturbance than the rancid taste
of bad coffee in an unwashed aluminum cup
tell me to leave now
by the fire escape, quickly
avoiding it like the plague
that it is
that it is
to be expected, after all
go ahead
tell me
to sleep at night
— Cindy Schuster*

Cobwebs

*It's my grandmother's hair I see
wrapping the beams and the seams
of our ceiling;
Dangling in whispers
Looping grey in the harsh white light
of a winter day,
The unwoven threads there hanging down
Like the frayed worn edge of the satin gown
She was buried in;
Long like her fingers turning thin
and reaching for me.*

—Gail Linnea Driscoll

*i can only tell you to beware of
 shadows, although it breaks my peace,
 watching you step over that invisible threshold
 between childhood and the
 world...
 where your eyes must creep around corners,
 ahead of your steps,
 your ears becoming stealthy, listening always for
 dangerous and lonely sounds which i cannot
 bear for you to hear,
 although nothing is more Inevitable
 Please...laugh a lot, for you will find it to be
 a Magic Potion
 after you have cried.
 and stand mighty and shout back when you must,
 your Truth
 Feel the currents,
 don't be afraid to
 Be,
 my Love, little Big girl Woman.*

Patty MacDonald

*She crosses the living room, sunken;
 Impenetrable chromium
 Reflects her affliction in dewy-moist contours;
 One slow pull from the red tip of melancholy
 Brings the work of the gravedigger-
 Thrusting at mud and dusk
 As the last of the obliged
 Bang the gate of the churchyard-
 "Son of a bitch," she prays,
 Mascara now at half mast.*

ENTRÜCKTES LEBEN

*Alles war grau, doch es lebte die Welt.
 Alles strahlt blau heut', doch wo lebt die Welt?*

*Ist's Leben wonach ich mich sehn?
 Ist's Leben das sich mir enzieht?*

*Jetzt im Winter da schläft es,
 Bald, im Frühling erwacht es.
 Doch: Wenn der Winter bedrückt,
 Scheint Alles entrückt.*

*Hier, in der Stadt da verdirbt es
 Nah, auf dem Lande geheit es.
 Doch: Wenn von der Stadt befangen,
 Scheint Alles verhangen.*

Emanuel Knill

KNOWING ABOUT TEETH

*They cut in front
 & mash in the back.*

*Like a foundation
 they shake with age.*

*They sing with blood,
 prey brought down in snow.*

*They collect stains
 & later, earth.*

*Ferns may grow around
 them, the sun bleaching*

*them back to original
 white. In April*

*the robin pecks
 at its reflection*

*& children make trinkets
 stringing teeth*

around their necks.

—James Haug

DISTANT LIFE

*All was grey, yet the world was alive.
 Today shines blue, yet where does the world abide?*

*Is it life that I yearn for dearly?
 Is it life that escapes me barely?*

*Now in the Winter it sleeps,
 But soon, in Spring awakes.
 Yet: When Winter's oppressing,
 It all seems receding*

*Here in the city, things rot
 Nearby, in the country they sprout.
 Yet: When the city's confining,
 Behind veils it's hiding.*

Translation by Emanuel Knill
 and Tom Kaplan-Maxfield

*i am beguiled by slivers of lightning
my eyes dilated to the explosion of the
raucous wind,*

*alive
with promises of thunder and Growth
for it is the season of the wild,
the seduction of chaos,
the anticipation of change, and
fear
of the flood*

*sometimes ethereal beams filter through my curtains
before Dawn,
but i must close my eyes to see them*

Patty MacDonald

Auburn Street Lament

*especially in summer that short little house
with a jungle for a backyard seemed our perfect
haven two blocks from sirens
and the store 24 we had roses and morningglories argued
the merits of alyssum versus lettuce seeded
every inch with floral population
explosion couldn't control the vines
didn't really want to anyway removed just enough
small growth for a footpath to the rusty old table
and porch chairs sitting in this crazy overcrowded yard
with rum on ice one day even mangoes and curried goat
always cats pouncing off the roof or sleeping in
between cement blocks
inside some late late nights filling ashtrays
in the 1950's kitchen white gauze curtains billowing
knocking over candlesticks and pencils at that table
of monumental conversations so much was written there
union memos poems letters to the tropics the walls
thumbtacked to death with our dreams and our loves the ceiling
so low going up stairs you hit your head
no matter how short you were so many shapes
in every room sinking slowly into the ground
so the pictures never hanging straight
on the walls
that house had spirit Edgar Allen Poe
used to live there we left our echoes
in the cracked floors too smells of cooking
in the window panes the legacy of strange bugs
in the light blubs that funky beast down
in the basement the mail that never arrived
on time and the rugs that are there
for a reason all this is over now
kidnapped
dismembered shingle by shingle
the house stands
buried alive*

Cindy Schuster

Who Mourns for Adonis?

*The battle rages in Greece and Troy
where the stakes are high,
men's lives are low.
The gods grin with amusement
at their pawns.
This isn't war,
it's a free-for-all.
Hera and Athena head for Troy.
"We'll punish Paris for his sin."
Meanwhile Venus (the goddess of love)
has something in store
for the Grecian ones.
The score is even
most lives are lost.
The gods return home
(it's been a profitable day.)
and they feast on Mount Olympus
(in a godly way.)
And so the battle goes on in Greece and Troy
Men's lives are low.
The stakes are high.
Achilles, Patrokles, gone to their "reward."
Tell me,
Who mourns for Adonis?
Not I.*

Lisa M. Sama

*You keep your fairy tales and midnight ales
roasting in the fire
your chestnuts left the ranch today
and your guests choked on the flour.
the people in the garden said
Annabel's looking slender
the cat left with the milkman
and Jamie broke the blender
everyone else is walking,
high strung on the wire
if I don't quit before you do
be sure not to expire!*

M. Crowley

OBSESSIVE-COMPULSION

Life is nice.
Secure family, financially
and even emotionally.
People are great.
They love, understand
and even listen.
You care,
so I know you're alive

I had many friends
who did not care.
Winter came,
they Died.
I was not perfect.
These people were evil.
Life Sucked...

Mary E. Ritchie

There is greenness
tenaciously refusing to turn colors
not vibrant.
A chill seeps through window cracks.
I do not admire my pen
nor what comes out of it.
Blue, blue, blue,
not the drizzling greyness
flaking face
turn the heat up
turn the heat down
exactly eight-thirty
everything starts
awake
cups of coffee
cups of juice staring me in the face
they approach room temperature
from different ends of the thermometer.

- Maryellen Sullivan

oh wet leaves
wet leaves outside
two A.M. droplets and sewer caps
oh wet lashes
wet lashes from tears
rending emotion twisted
an ant struggling to escape from the toilet
I pee on him
he dies

Margaret Thatcher will not give bugs
the status of political prisoners
"they are common criminals"
this and mistaken voices in song
escape our windows
open windows
onto pre-wet leaves
and are heard by neighboring
(Nay, boring)
breeze-dwellers.
A pearl on the floor
reminds me that I shave one of my armpits
and am depressed,
and this reminds me
of my gashed gum.
I greatly feel the loss of half
of my total armpit hair, and
Margaret Thatcher has the common decency
to flush the pee-asphyxiated ant into oblivion.

haphazard ferns on my bed
from the era of haphazard triangles
the fern folk
the triangle folk, and their ultimate suicide
gashed gums bleed onto the white canine teeth
(decidedly unattractive, Maggie)
The morgidness of shaving
the peril of the hairy,

The sudden rippling breeze
on the wet leaves
the atmospheres orgasm
sudden rippling finished.
All the appliances and utilities are quiet
respectful of the way things are disjointed
silently admiring the incongruity,
they do not purr, buzz, whirr, ring, tick,
or electrocute.

- Maryellen Sullivan

THE REFFET

I

In the Galilean gloom before dawn,
Through an unpainted, steel tubing-made fence,
Waking, moving, heading forward young kine,
Those new mothers, ex-calves' hooves clopped manure.

Expanded ribs billowed full like ship sails,
Globe-eyed, hasty, swaying sheer density,
Udder hides made drum taut, tactile with veins,
Caprice ruminating in armored skulls.

Eight stupored beefs either side on platforms,
Things suck on one side, we'd prep the other,
Stop suction so cylinders can fall limp,
Swears meshed with fists directed lactaters.

Rubber vines hung from glass-tube dendritia,
Each ending in four cylinder suckers,
Damned adept and so swiftly surgical
An ungulate's thick hoof could flick them off.

Trigger the water, shudder the udder,
Rub off yesterday's wetted, fecal shards,
Snap on suction to let the metal mouths drink,
While a waitee hotly drops flop close by.

The first of four bovine strata is done,
Slap and tick'd them home with a rubber
hose, twitching rumps, slipping hooves on the run
to their place; an enclosed concrete yard.

II

Dawn gone, whoop in the second lowing hoard,
The usual, but older, black'n'white,
Heavy, wiser, grudging acquiescence,
Flocks of blue-brown doves flew out of their way.

Flies! The sneaky, silent, gray groups of them,
Bumbling into all the orifices,
Swing the nozzle, splash a twitching crowd
of those cow-circling winged heads off a wall.

Breathe deep, that third group, mighty milk donors,
Veterans, obedient but a mere few were deranged,
Like the others: some calves dropped before dawn,
Anti-milkers' breakfast conspiracy.

Jezreel Valley's sun moved up to its place,
To burn off irrigation's trapped night mists,
Mount Tavor, Natzalet lift into view,
As blue-brown doves swarmed over the cow food.

Thudding the third group, ankle-deep in dung,
The middle Eastern morning heat would start to kneel
down on shoulders, bending heads, punishment
for whacking cows in what was once a swamp.

Then we'd push the pace for the need to eat
In the "Heder Ochel" 'cross the kibbutz,
Meanwhile radio Gimmel rock'n'rolled.
For the army and any "reffetim".

Pacing for us thirty-two suction time,
Just so the crazies would buck and rebel,
Rode their backs and spiral'd their tails to drain them,
Call'd them names, made their fright, used rumps as drums.

Third group emptied, nose in the dear ladies,
Late lactic cycle, mature milk makers,
Mindless fear-globes for eyes but quiescent,
Four-footed milk compressors tapping out.

III

Push, splash, wash, suck, pull, punch (cursing stomach),
Enflame the cheaper Israeli cigarettes,
Sipping lukewarm coffee with fresh, raw milk,
Suck a puff, swallow a flow and fan the flies.

Sagged ladies finished milking's ritual,
Sent the milk and spewed suds through the system,
Socked feet in loose rubber boots shlop off
To the Cheder Ochel's odd left food.

Back to the Reffet (the main job was done),
Scrub some but then have coffee in the sun,
Reffets are part-worked by "mitnevim",
Not of these people, just their volunteers.

Those kibbutzim foreigner mitnevim,
Of that pained and pinched land of hunching hills,
were/are approved doing the less-loved work,
Allowed a long view from the splintery edge
of that near-sufficient concept: kibbutz,
It and ourselves had bartered mutual needs.

Wm. Andy Meier

Reffet: cow shed or (generally) dairy

(cheder or) Heder Ochel: Dining Room. Dots under letters indicate gurreal pronunciation.

Mitne'vim: (mitnedevim) masculine plural for volunteer. (n) the third syllable is usually elided.

DRIFTING

*As a child, drifting had it's own sweet smells,
A scent of fresh cut grass in summers air
Carried to the shade of an ancient oak
Where child-pirates sailed on the rising swells,
Pursuing the stars, abandoned by care
Till the wind sets us to silence, then spoke
In delicious whispers from neighbors yards
As coals made the air echo of the feast;
In the evening mist, when the old played cards
And dogs told stories in the empty streets,
Small eyes looked out past an open window,
Past the eye of a log shrouded street light,
And rested at the sight of tomorrow
Before giving into the dreams of the night.*

—Richard O'Connor

*Anim. Behav., 1980, 28, 52-59. "Rape in
Panorpa scorpionflies and a general rape
hypothesis". Male Panorpa scorpionflies in-
seminate unwilling females by securing the
female's wings in an abdominal clamp.*

*I'm simply not interested
in meeting your friend, the rapist.
You'd like to see me get angry
argue and lose ground
stumbling upon my own words
clumsied by my emotion.
I think you'd like the show;
you'd get excited
vicariously.*

*But I don't even enjoy
metaphorical rapes
never had dreams
never fantasies
of violent penetration
masterbating.*

*You can keep your friend, the so-called scientist
and he can keep his armies of starving scorpionflies
and fantasies
of pitiful panorpian
erection
reveling vicariously in
unlubricated penetrations.*

—mariagrazia marzot

FOR MARCIA

*From your grave, I saw the gulls
land like angles on the rotting pier,
anchored against the biting wind,
many have died this year.*

*A year ago, we laid our cautious grace to rest.
Like hideous crows
we swooped and cried.
Such grief
would never cross your face in life
but that was the best we could humanly do
for you-
the saint of mirrors and birds,
dark reflection, lady of glass.
The gulls
will skim and scratch the frozen earth,
there is no life now.*

*In the distance,
the black waves crash.*

Julia Robbins



Faith Scott

SEA STONES

Sea tossed stones
feel the child
in a skip-dance
when the waves
are calm;
the courage,
and daring,
to throw
farthest
towards the open
sea;
the anger
of broken love
in wave crashing
missiles;
and loneliness
in the weak
and gently
splash
of the pebble.
— Richard O'Connor

HOUSE MOVING

This house stood on Main St.,
now stands by the river a mile away.

If it goes anywhere again
it will be into the water.

We have followed each other
to the strong hands of the river.

Our whispers cannot hold up this house,
winter has spread the cracks
and there is nothing left to repair.

Old wood drifts on the river
scattered like conversations.

Fires burn all night along the banks.
— James Haug

When Love is Not Enough

How lovely are the stars out tonight
But they are no concern of mine
for I curse the stars and all their worth
as they shine down so brightly, laughingly
to penetrate the darkness and the silence
with a billion jeering eyes that haunt me
as if they knew, as if they knew
my secret so well kept
If only I had the power I would cast
the stars, the moon, all bright thoughts
forever into oblivion
and turn the night completely black
— John Hall

PROJECT FOR A SCULPTURE PIECE

Il faut que je le dise
It needs definition and I need another language to say it.
Begin with crying.
Le poids d'un enfant dans mes bras
the muscles of my shoulders hurt.

I make a small clay figure; it's a pregnant woman defiantly
sitting on the floor, arms stretched behind.

How long do you think one can sit like that?
(execute. Sit on floor like clay model)
Not very comfortable, tells me a pregnant friend.
On the other hand it's the only way to stop the pain in my shoulders.
Did you hear what you said?
Did I hear, do I hear, does anybody hear
when I cry or when...
Does hammering it in marble make a louder noise?

Sharp edges, crazy thoughts, clear-headed.

Mariagrazia Marzot



Laura Newbold

The Old Ones

if you walked
 down the savanna
in fear of the teeth
 of a flesh-eating tiger
 who was faster than you
 and much wiser
you might move
slowly at first

then run restlessly in spurts,

you might scatter

 on open ground reaching
 for seeds and nuts
as if they too were travellers
born of fruit and flowers
cast into the wind
for skulking cats and rambling apes
and

if you felt

 the cat creeping
as you drank at the gallery forest
you might reach
 for a rock
keeping near
an open space
waiting
and watching moving behind forward circling the ground
ready to signal
before loneliness had sprung
and you
were surrounded.

—Laura Newbold

Academic Determinism

Driving
without hands and
it gets dark as you roll
round obelisks
quietly folding
before headbeam
looking ancient and pleased
to have been of so much
comfort and-
sometimes shouting
"You don't do tha-"
reading names
placing faces
scanning bodies
present at wake
to be retraced
in kind, evolved and
forgot.

—Laura Newbold

Umbrella

a wax-coated, hand painted
mandarin umbrella
leans, half-capsized
on matchstick legs and bare wood shaft.

water,
as if slicked with oil
moves down several sides, drops running steady, tangling,
leading into lines that dangle growing fat
on the edge before bounding
off leaving the tight-skinned canopy
to open its pores.

—Laura Newbold



Steve Oakley

WHIMSICAL ICARUS

Who trumpets the dawn
Rich in amberous moodiness
Succumbs
To the catcalls of a raging moon
And weighs the wisdom
Of this world's whimsy in a wink
Or else
Gestures the clown
Asleep to folly
See
We die incognito
And even our wings melt
— John Hawkins



John Hawkins

Lightning strikes twice too often
I wish
In the desolation I sometimes feel
That things mattered less
More and more.

Sometimes
Trembling sense leaves me
As lamp-lit dusk approaches.

I tire so easily.
Memory and meaning
Reality and reason
We die so young these days
Though once tireless.

Give strength to wings
That stretch forth
Though in slumber.
We who are so well deceived
Are pure at least
In the brevity of our foolishness.

Illumined but for a blink
The dance
Or pattern deceives still.
Ineffables blush
At the derision of their own mirrored core.

I only wish to want
To know.
All else bleeds me of sight
From which I run
Perplexed.
— John Hawkins

AWAKENING

Under a red and rolling sky,
As haunted as a Rohrschach blot,
Energy finds the middle-eye
And gleans the epiphanal polyglot.

Now rose, now lavender and gold,
The clouds combust and burn away;
Shimmering light bursts through — behold!
The Awakening men call day.

O! This grey pulpy mass of brain,
Like a recalcitrant ghost,
Rattles the mental window-pane
Where dull memory stands engrossed;-
Yet, is shaken from sleep again
As the Sun rises like the blessed Host...
And gives the middle-eye a toast.
— John Hawkins

PHOTOGRAPH 1942

5 years younger
than I
and a few more inches in the thigh
not a staggering resemblance
but it's there
the descent of nose
half to full
moon of mouth
and the eyes —
a 25 second free fall
straight through dark
into light.
— jeffrey brunner



Lou Medeiros

OUTSIDE, THE CITY'S PACE IS IRON, STEEL
AND ROTTING LACE.
AN UGLY HEAP, BUT UNEXPECTEDLY,
IN QUIET GRACE,
THE LONE AND LOVELY MEMBER OF A TREE,
WINTER NAKED OUT OF PLACE,
MOVES PAST THE DYING CITY FACE.
THIS IS ALL MY EYE CAN SEE,
ITS LINE OF VISION ISN'T FREE.
BUT THIS AT LEAST, IN SINGING
JOY IS CLUNG TO VEHEMENTLY
BY ME.

— Nicky Nickerson

FLASHBACK

I can still see
me and Tony
in the back seat of my Firebird.
He was crazy then.
He was so hard
to talk to,
I tried to.
He carried a gun on him anyway. One night, at the pond,
he got into a fight with my old boyfriend,
and I watched things get a little rough.
And then I watched Tony get blown away.

JULIA ROBBINS



Laura Newbold

BETWEEN US

The ride down from the mountain had been unsettling.

From a small clearing at the top
the road slithered through rain forest
appearing here for a moment
then vanishing as quickly as it came
back under a dense layer of vegetation
only to surface again nearly out of sight
as if gasping for one final breath
of thick wet air
before diving once more into deep dark green.

We burned that day as we sat in the sand.

— jeffrey brunner



Jan Norman



Jan Norman

LISTEN

I was sitting here thinking
that even if you just whispered
the frost on my windows
might feel threatened
and melt and run
hurriedly down those rotting cedar shingles
they hammered away at all last spring —
maybe then I wouldn't feel as tired as I do
but I do

And I realize
that it was absolutely
blind of me —
now that there is such sheer space
between us —
not to have perceived your quiet position
but you see my eyes were swollen
shut from trying to find something to eat
and being wounded
I was looking for a place to hide
a cave to dry out in
a house that didn't always come back to haunt me —
demanding restitution
and the rent.

Someone
I think it was Sophocles
or was it Descartes
said that we all have problems —
and me always the slow learner
well I guess I subtracted
when I was trying so hard to add
and now look at me
sitting here listening with delight
as my thoughts crackle in the cold air
and I know it was my sensitivity too
that got in our way.
— jeffrey brunner

El Salvador:

An Account From the Front Lines of the War



Commander-in-Chief Salvador Cayetano Carpio

Edited and translated by Cynthia Alvarillar and William Henriquez

Last December, one of the five leading commanders of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) made public a vivid account of his experiences on both the battlefield and as a political-military leader in El Salvador, a country besieged by an incredibly brutal war. This leader was Salvador Cayetano Carpio, founder and commander-in-chief of the Popular Liberation Forces (FPL), who is widely accepted as the Ho Chi Minh of Latin America and

who has given most of his 62 years for the struggle of his people.

In his account, published in the magazine *POR ESTO!* of Mexico, that drew the attention of the *New York Times*, he offers important details from the very trenches of the war about the massive offensive launched by government forces against the province of Chaletanango, El Salvador late last year.

Revealing how the Salvadoran guerrilla forces broke through an operation of encirclement, he makes apparent the reality of U.S. intervention, the genocide committed against innocent people, and the lies of the U.S. government concerning Cuban

and Nicaraguan participation in the war. Without a doubt it proves to be a living testimony and denunciation of the events that are occurring in Central America and the sacrifices this has meant to his people.

The following is a condensed translated version of the account that has created a deep concern among democratic people of the world. The editing attempts only to economize available space and while the essence remains intact, there have regrettably been some omissions in narrative detail. Brief interludes describing the circumstances around his narration have been added.

On the 28th of September, the enemy disembarked one air transported battalion (a minimum of 600 soldiers), in the area of Ojos de Agua, in the valley facing the Montaña on the eastern side...

... We arranged our line of defense and the operatives of attack to the flanks and rearguard of the enemy.

The next day, these troops, rather than attack toward above, moved to the zone bordering Honduras, toward the guerilla encampment of Yurique, destroying a linking bridge over the Sumpul river to cut off any retreat in that direction. Meanwhile, another battalion entered the mountains to the south, occupying the encampments of El Gallinero and La Laguna and after heavy fighting extended its lines up to Las Flores, thus closing off a wide circle.

That same afternoon helicopters in groups of ten disembarked more battalions of special troops to the northwest side of Volcancillo... Another battalion climbed from Chalatanango toward the heights with the mission to prevent any retreats, thus closing off a strong encirclement of 120 kilometers over the zone.

The operation consisted of about 5 thousand soldiers of attack and encirclement and thousands more in reinforcements with sufficient units of artillery, aircraft and helicopters. There were four or five battalions in the siege and two or three mobile units on the assault and immediate trail. *(By afternoon the encampments were being bombed with 200 pound bombs. Battles were initiated against government troops as they tried to scale the mountain. Government troop advancement was contained inspite of their superior size and fire power.)*



Young guerrilla of the FMLN

These first battles unfolded with the bombings and allowed us to leave the trenches, enabling us to finalize our plans for the military operation of the counterattack, retreat, protection and evacuation of the masses, (including 3 children and a woman in the later stages of pregnancy) breaking the siege, etc. . . .

... At dusk we began the difficult march toward the southern side of the mountain. We were very far from the top while cannons roared all around us... 12 hours after the march had been initiated the entire column was exhausted and injured from the passage through areas of strenuous access; through ravines and acute canyons. The children would cry with more frequency. . . .

... We had yet to achieve our goal; to cross the highway Las Vueltas, then break the encirclement to reach the side away from the principle circle... about 3 kilometers away. We were close... but dawn came upon us. We decided to advance a little more.

Nearing 8 am (October 1) it was unwise to continue further. The surrounding hilltops were occupied by the enemy, who continuously opened fire on us.

The network of the strategic encirclement was very dense. Our observers reported that all the high reliefs of the territory were taken. Machine-gun and mortar posts were on all strategic points of the trails.

We decided to pause, hide beneath the underbrush, and await the night to attempt to break the encirclement.

At eight in the morning, one of our observers excitedly approached to inform us that the enemy was on all the hilltops that we had been detected, and that a unit was coming directly toward us.

Until that moment the orders were to not engage in confrontation unless it was absolutely necessary... Everyone prepared for combat from our respective hiding places. The thick coarse explosions of G-3's and the dry cracks of M-16's broke the brief but tense wait in a furious exchange, whizzing the projectiles above our heads.

The clash was short, lasting about five minutes. Three soldiers of the genocidal government lay dead, the rest fled in retreat, pulling along their dead; we could not confiscate their arms. One of our combatants was injured in the foot.

This incident had grave results on our objectives... we were dangerously surrounded by enemies at all heights; and we were the object of fierce persecution by much more superior forces; and we had just begun the day!

In front of our position was a very steep hill but we had to cross the ravine first. Our explorers had time to realize that.

Soon after initiating the climb I suddenly realized that on each rock a red stamp of blood was left by our wounded comrade who had since passed to the vanguard group. It's the living symbol of the valiant blood that our people have so abundantly shed in our struggle for liberation but at the same time I realized that it was a dangerous footprint that can facilitate the enemy's search. The helicopters, supplied by the North American government, made one reconnaissance after another almost grazing the undergrowth and put their menacing machine guns to work.

The enemy tested the terrain with mortarfire, but it was erratic, indicating that we had thrown them off the track and that that would hopefully allow the night to fall so that we could definitely leave the area.

In the tense wait for the final enemy assault there was neither time nor the possibility of looking for food; there were no supplies. The children now began to weaken and it was impossible to light a fire to give them warm water. We had to give it to them cold. Their cries not only alarmed but also troubled us because each time they became more painful and weak.

From 4 pm onward the enemy fire intensified, while the helicopters persistently circled above the territory where we laid. The afternoon began sinking into darkness while a freezing rain punished our sore bones. The mortar fire slowly diminished and only sporadic bursts of enemy machine gun fire could be heard from neighboring hills.

At 6:30 pm an impenetrable darkness reigned, but we attempted to leave this hill (Los Narajas). We returned to the mountain in a tactically diversionary maneuver that confused the enemy. Hours later we were far behind the forest, opening the way with dense, spiny bush that made wounds on our hands and arms. When the sunlight came we were able to scale the wooded part of a once distant hill.

... The top of this hill had no enemy posts; we put up our own, including a blockade. We settled between the rocks to wait out the day. It was the 2nd of October.

Between some rocks a few yards in front of me I could see comrade Marta with her three children: Jorge who is six; Hugo who is four and Manuelito who is but an infant. The three looked very much alike and all like their mother, with very light skin, lively black eyes now weary from fatigue. The older two are very serious, behaving like little guerillas. Owing to the revolutionary work of their parents, they have liv-

ed in encampments for months and there they behave like adults and everyone shows them love and affection; they are seen with eyes of sentimentality by parents who think of their own and others with a profound aspiration that tomorrow our children enjoy the happiness that today the genocide makes impossible and that our people are conquering at the cost of so much blood and sacrifice.

(The youngest child's condition worsened but conditions rendered it impossible to light a fire to warm water. All reserves were gone. At 6pm a nocturnal march was initiated.)

It was proposed that we near the southwest side of the mountain toward the zone of SicaHuite-Jicaro, to then move toward the highway and break out in that direction.

(At about 8a.m. October 3, the guerillas realize they have camped at the rear guard of the troops. Meanwhile 2000 people, mostly women and children who arrived during the night pray for the army whose operations was underway.)

At this moment, the surrounding contingent of enemy troops... had not detected us. We were personally witnessing the inhuman fury with which the soldiers of the tyranny saturate the masses of women and children with deadly projectiles that are so abundantly supplied by the Pentagon.

The time elapsed slowly and the clash we had anticipated did not transpire.

We organized a march that would go around the middle of the hill that was on our right (El Corralito), to proceed on the same route that we were taking on the other side.

Taking more than 6 hours to circle the hill, we were now fairly far from the troops....

(At 6:00 p.m., October 4, the guerillas arrive at a deep grassy area but due to the risk of detection are unable to advance.)

We opened small tunnels in the grass, shielded by the small ditch that covered our backs and we huddled in the depth to rest. Suddenly, a helicopter hummed from afar and quickly neared our position circling above us; fairly high at first, it now skimmed slowly over the vegetation. It was so low that through the reed I clearly saw the face of the pilot... There is no doubt that we have been discovered.

The helicopter retreated and returned, searching more diligently than before. It was so close, that we could have easily brought it down; but with great discipline everyone obeys the orders not to shoot. Half hour later, more helicopters returned.

Before our astonished eyes, sitting next to the pilot, was a North American advisor, visible in every detail, directing the

maneuvers; some 15 soldiers were unloaded. The helicopter followed the soldiers arriving from the hills and again came to hover above us.

Here, we had in view a hated advisor from the Pentagon, personally directing the murder, the genocide of our people while the false propaganda from Washington and President Reagan himself tells the world that its advisors do not participate in the conduct of operations. *(The cry of a child uncovers them to the government troops who surround the area. They have fallen into an ambush and move rapidly up a hill to relative safety. In the clash one leader was killed and several other noncombatants were killed.)*

Word arrives that our comrade Marta was spotted as she and her children tried to climb up the hill. The helicopter that fired on us cruelly directed its machine guns fire at the mother and children, coldly filling them with bullets. The malicious American advisor directed a new crime from the sinister machine... The bodies of our comrade Marta and her three children remained on that bloody hill.

(On the 5th of October the guerillas continued moving through the hills and came upon a small house where they were able to rest. The next morning their contention unit clashed with an enemy patrol briefly leaving two government soldiers dead. Moving beneath the undergrowth



Members of the people's army

they attempted to climb another hill with the troops close behind.)

The operation to sweep the area moved slowly until late in the afternoon. Through the thick bushes we saw and heard enemy soldiers. When it turned completely dark we reinitiated the march moving away from the enemy positions. Finally, we broke through the enemy's strategic encirclement!

We are now at the dawn of October 8. During the last two days we had vainly tried to mend our wounds that were infected and we sent word to the closest guerrilla encampment... On October 10 help arrived... On the 11th we made it to the encampment.

... It deeply moved us to see the faces of our people... We saw banners with revolutionary slogans on the walls. We again stood on liberated ground!

... By the 15th, all the encampments were again in guerrilla hands except for Volcancillo and La Hacienda. The preliminary count of losses were the following: 15 guerrillas dead, 20 wounded, and 12 lost, 8 weapons lost, 8 recovered from the enemy.

The genocidal army: 33 dead soldiers, 20 wounded, 8 arms lost.

Along with this painful information was the communication that among the missing are two sons of the poet Roque Dalton Garcia; Roque and Juan Jose, with high probability that they were captured by the killers.

This had been a major offensive, concentrating 5-7 thousand soldiers in a relatively small territory, accompanied by planes and helicopters, mortar, cannon and machine gun fire. In only the first five days, the puppet army dropped more than 10,000 bombs, mortar shells, including aerial bombs of 200 to 500 pounds.

(Explaining the failure of the government troops' offensive against the guerrillas...)

While the mobile revolutionary units, aided by local guerrillas and according to plans of defense, stubbornly fought the soldiers attempting to scale the mountains, units of local guerrillas organized safety of the people, and the retreat of the units in the encampments into diverse columns that engaged in small clashes, sneaking out by the creases of the land to later reoccupy the territory completely.

Meanwhile, other units realized attacks on the rearward at points outside of the encirclement especially to ambush the moving enemy.

In less than a year Chalatenango alone had seen 10 offensives of great magnitude.

The suffering of the masses was immense in every sweeping operation. Return-

ing to their villages, they find their homes burned, their livestock killed, their crops ruined and their food stolen. Without food, clothing or medicine they begin to reconstruct with the direction of the popular forces, damning those who cause the people so much harm, honoring the memory of those who have fallen, reinforcing the decision to struggle.

During recuperation, I received, with great happiness, news from the battlefield that informed me: "Commander-in-Chief, the orders received in September were carried out on October 15; the Bridge of Gold above the Lempa River has been destroyed." The propaganda of the puppets



Liberated zone in El Salvador

tried to project the absurd version that Cuban rapid deployment forces had invaded the country to blow up the bridge.

In the last weeks the Pentagon had apportioned more helicopters, some with great transport capabilities, and have newly added 12 planes. The shipment of artillery, machine guns, rifles and munitions are numerous and incessant by sea and air. This torrent is now considered "normal" by the imperialists and its puppets.

The supplies are obviously unequal. While the U.S. limitlessly supplies the murderers of the people with arms, each time more modern and in increasing numbers, the forces of liberation do not receive a single rifle.

Although the false campaign of the reactionary press tries to justify the operation of the Pentagon, the political solidarity is immense...

The recognition by the French and Mexican governments is important to the revolutionary forces represented by the FMLN-FDS. This courageous and realistic step has incalculable consequences in favor of our people.

In this great show of international solidarity it is necessary to state with all frankness that many of our units continue fighting almost with their nails, with battered rifles, with homemade weapons, in-

cluding primitive traps and with arms and munitions captured with more frequency, but still insufficient to the scale of the tyranny.

It is a vicious falsehood fabricated by the psychological warfare of the Pentagon that we are receiving arms from Cuba, Nicaragua or socialist countries of other continents. Our arms are homemade or taken from the enemy with the price of our own blood.

For this reason, in the face of the torrent of imperialist arms destined to destroy our people, I am obligated to end this account of this small episode of our popular liberation war with a CALL TO THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD, so that we can:

BREAK THE CURRENT WALL OF RESERVATIONS AND VACILLATION WE ARE DECIDELY SEARCHING FOR THE EFFECTIVE SUPPLY OF ARMS THAT OUR PEOPLE NEED IN ORDER TO DEFEAT THE IMPERIALIST AGGRESSION.

REVOLUTION OR DEATH!! THE PEOPLE IN ARMS WILL WIN!! LONG LIVE THE FMLN-FDR!! LONG LIVE THE INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY!!! VENDEREMOS!!!

Marcial,
Commander-in-Chief
of the Armed Forces for Popular Liberation (FAPL)
Member of the FMLN
October 20, 1981



Nicaragua Libre

by William Allen

On July, 1979 the forces of the Sandinista Front for National Liberation (FSLN) entered Managua; the revolution was victorious. After almost 20 years of struggle the Nicaraguan people, lead by the FSLN, had overthrown the Somoza dictatorship.

This revolution has inspired hope in the people of Latin America. They have seen that it is possible to overthrow a tyranny, even one generously supplied with modern armaments and training by the United States. As such, it provides a serious threat to Wall Street, the Pentagon, and the Defense Department.

The Reagan Administration and its domestic allies cannot accept a small and independent country such as Nicaragua in the United States, "sphere of influence". The Republican platform of 1980 deplored the Marxist takeover of Nicaragua and called for a rollback of the revolution. Clearly, a large part of the more influential sectors in the U.S. do not respect the right of self-determination for the poor people of the



Margaret Randall

Sandinista

world.

Yet, this does not stem from some irrational fascination with domination. Keeping the southern nations in a dependent status does provide considerable benefits to investors. For example, in countries like Chile, if workers get out of hand; if they ask for higher wages or go on strike, they can be lined up against the wall and shot. In addition, businesses don't have to worry about things like social security, unemployment compensation, or workplace safety guidelines.

So once again, as people have sadly witnessed throughout history, we have a large power trying to subjugate its smaller neighbor. Prominent Reagan administration theorists in the Heritage Foundation and the Santa Fe Committee devised a strategy to destroy the Nicaraguan revolution soon after its triumph. Their plans called for no immediate military intervention in Nicaragua; rather, they called for some "softening up" techniques to be used. Such a technique is to cut off all economic aid. The Nicaraguan economy is particularly vulnerable to this type of attack. It has been controlled by outside interests for centuries and it has suffered from the ravages of civil

war. Compounding this difficulty, when Somoza fled after robbing the National Treasury of foreign exchange, he left the country 1.5 billion dollars in debt.

The Reagan Administration has cancelled aid that the previous Carter Administration had planned to send. It has pressured U.S.-dominated institutions such as the Inter/American Development Bank and the World Bank not to lend money to Nicaragua. \$9.6 million in food aid that was to be used to by wheat has also been cut. These actions have had a chilling effect on the economy: closing factories and throwing thousands out of work.

The second step in the offensive is to aid counter-revolutionary groups operating within Nicaragua, and to support and arm former members of Somoza's National Guard operating from Honduras.

It is well documented that the CIA has managed to penetrate the opposition paper, *La Prensa*, as it previously did in Chile with the Santiago daily, *El*



Margaret Randall

Rivas 1980



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Matagalpa, 1979

Mercurio. The former conservative newspaper, now resembling a tabloid, is used not for ideological attacks against the Sandinistas but for psychological warfare. Working hard to create a climate of fear and uncertainty, *La Prensa* reports on the inexplicable and bizarre. Using techniques straight from the U.S. Army manual of psychological warfare, the Sandinista Government is subliminally identified with terror, death and economic disaster.

Somoza's National Guard, many of whom were guilty of torturing and murdering unarmed people, were not killed. Due to the heavy Christian influence in the revolution, most of them were allowed to leave the country. Since the Sandinista victory, the former National Guardsmen have killed more than 200 Nicaraguans who live near the Honduran border. These terrorists are funded and receive fresh recruits from foreign sources. There are training camps, as has been well reported in the news, for right-wing Nicaraguan exiles and other assorted mercenaries operating in the United States. This is a violation of U.S. law Title XVIII, Section 950, which prohibits military training on U.S. soil for the purpose of invading a foreign nation.

The Reagan Administration is engaged in an undeclared war against Nicaragua. Threats and intimidation are being used to destabilize the country as

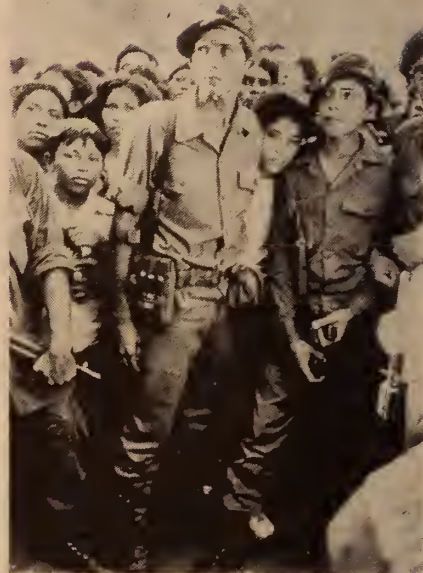
part of a calculated strategy. When questioned, Reagan and Haig refuse to rule out direct military actions by U.S. forces against Nicaragua.

The Nicaraguans have good reason to fear an invasion by the United States. The U.S. has invaded Nicaragua several times in the twentieth century: in 1907, 1910, 1912 and from 1927-1933. In those days the U.S. couldn't utilize Castro as an excuse for invasion. Who knows what the State Department said before the Russian Revolution?

Nicaraguans also fear an aerial bombardment by the United States. With no Air Force to speak of, this poses a serious threat to their national security: these people have experienced the destruction and terror this threat could mean. During the insurrection Somoza heavily bombed his own country. The city of Leon, the second largest in the country, was bombed with white phosphorous. During the revolution 50,000 died and 120,000 were wounded! The Nicaraguan people know war.

The Reagan Administration has moved ahead with these plans for destroying the Nicaraguan revolution. On March 10, the Washington Post reported that Reagan personally ok'd covert actions against Nicaragua. This information was leaked to the press with what is considered the approval of the top officials.

The level of the conflict is mounting steadily. The Reagan administration has openly admitted that they will finance and



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Managua, 1979

train 500 commandoes to carry out acts of sabotage within Nicaragua. To explain how this differs with "international terrorism" is an exercise in twisted logic indeed.

In January, a group of saboteurs was caught trying to blow up the only cement plant and the only petroleum refinery in Nicaragua. They were also plotting to murder important political leaders. If these counter-revolutionaries were successful it would have been not only a great human tragedy, but it would have dealt a serious blow to the enemy of Nicaragua.

The Reagan Administration has also mounted a full scale propaganda offensive for foreign and U.S. consumption. They have tremendous resources for attacking the FSLN in the media and are attempting to utilize them to the fullest. Reagan, Haig and Kirkpatrick talk about the human rights violations of the Sandinistas. They claim that the Sandinistas are totalitarians for imprisoning three businessmen and four communists for a few weeks. They also claimed



San Roman, Esteli 1979

Margaret Randall

that the Sandinistas are slaughtering the Miskitu Indians, referring to a photo in a French newspaper that shows the burned bodies of Miskitos. This later turned out to be a four-year old photo of a massacre committed by Somoza's National Guard. This talk of human rights violations in Nicaragua, while ignoring the official policy of torture and murder carried out by the military regimes of El Salvador and Guatemala, is an insult to the intelligence of the American people.

The Nicaraguan revolution is beset by attacks from the United States and its allies in Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala and Argentina. What has the Nicaraguan revolution accomplished that the American people should fear? The Sandinistas have conducted a massive literacy campaign which reduced illiteracy from 52% to 13% of the population. They have carried out a massive plan to immunize the population against infectious diseases and they are currently trying to eradicate malaria. Land has been distributed to previously landless peasants from the confiscated Somoza holdings. Two of the first things that the new government did after taking power were to fix the prices of basic foods and to establish a minimum wage.

Nicaragua remains a poor and underdeveloped country but it has made impressive gains. In the past 2½ years unemployment has been reduced by ten percent. In comparison, the other Latin American countries have suffered serious increases in unemployment. Nicaragua also has the lowest rate of inflation in Central America.

The Nicaraguans have advanced the

movement for democracy in Central America. Under the Somoza tyranny the Nicaraguan Congress consisted mostly of his relatives. Today there is a 49 member Council of State which represents all major social sectors in Nicaragua. The peasant organizations, the church, the unions, the small business associations, the industrialists (COSEP), the small farmers' association, the Miskitus, the women's organization and the opposition political parties all have voting seats in the Council of State along with the FSLN.

The individuals who sit on the Council of State are not chosen for their personality or their wealth, but rather they are chosen by their respective organizations. These representatives are responsible to their respective organization and they can be recalled.

This is a government that the people have chosen through a prolonged revolution which required tremendous commitment, valor and sacrifice. Clearly the Nicaraguan people have more power than they have ever had before.

It is not in the best interest of the American people for the Reagan Administration to attempt to overthrow the Nicaraguan Government. The people of Nicaragua have made the current government by fighting for it. They paid a very heavy price for their liberation in blood. The Nicaraguans have a right to live in peace and dignity and North American intervention could engulf all of Central America in a war. The revolutionary movements in Latin America are deeply rooted in the population. In order to stop them hundreds of thousands of people will



Margaret Randall

Dora Maria Tellez, second in command of the attack on the National Palace

have to be killed, perhaps even young American soldiers.

The Nicaraguan revolution has made impressive social reforms. The Sandinista government is working for the vast majority who are very poor, not for a wealthy oligarchy. The people of Latin America have suffered centuries of oppression. There is the hope today that this process of dehumanization can be halted and through the active participation of the majority of the people, a more just society can be constructed.

However, for the people of Latin America to live in peace and dignity, the citizens of the United States must organize to prevent the U.S. government from embroiling us in another Vietnam. The revolt of the poor against malnutrition, illiteracy, disease, and the corrupt dictatorships that keep them down is not a threat to the security of the American people but rather a commitment to the revolutionary ideals on which this country was founded.

Science for the People Vol. 14 %1 Jan/Feb 1981, "CIA Psychological Warfare Operations" by Fred Landis published concurrently in Covert Actions Information Bulletin.



"Christianity and Revolution, there is no contradiction"

Margaret Randall

Tell the Children the Truth

by George McKenzie

The Black population of the entire world is confronted with a formidable task, unlike those of the "master race" who have disproportionately recorded massive propaganda that is now being passed down as science. Black people must plunge deep beneath the accumulated strata of their ancient heritage and canvass their African heritage and finally emerge with an agenda for Black survival.

No more lies! The Black scholars in today's society can not be detached logicians or timid subscribers to the prevailing opinion of their past, as recorded by those of the "master race". Blacks are by nature of their very existence trailblazers who must ferret out every last inch, every last grain of truth about their past and thereby force the predominant myths of their pasts to the walls. Blacks must, in short, shift the burden of proof to those who for their own selfish reasons chose to deliberately deny or distort the African past.

The children of African descent must not be suffered the indignity of those unfounded myths that we have come to encounter in this day. Blacks, especially in America, must strive for a full and comprehensive documentation of their history in order to prevent the catastrophe of ignorance and apathy toward their true heritage and identity.

The Black people's quest for recognition, respect, and equal status as citizens of this nation is intrinsically tied to the plight of Africans in the Caribbean, Europe and in Africa itself, from where their foreparents came. This is a fact that only the most misguided and misinformed among the race dare to deny. Thus, they must seek to transcend the colloquial approach towards the categorization and portrayal of their cultural, political, social and religious experiences here in America and the Caribbean, which is often handed down with the affixed stamp "made in America," without ever referring to the link between the cultural, political, social and religious ties to the African slaves and their transplanted heritage. It is the same colloquial, narrow and morbid view that made it possible for Europeans to come to define them as "Negroes", "Coloreds", "Sambos" and the many other degrading names affixed to them, but never to recognize them for who

and what they really are — Africans. Perhaps historian John Henrik Clarke offers the best summary of the above expressed view point: "There is no way to go directly to the history of Black Americans without taking a broader view of the African world history. This is the background to Afr(ican) American history."

J. W. Vandercook, in his book TOM TOM, gave substance to the above line of reasoning, when he wrote: "A race is like a (Human) — until it uses its own talent, takes pride in its own history and loves its own memories, it can never fulfill itself completely." Sad to say, if there is to be any more than marginal truth in this observation, it goes without saying that Africans based upon the available historical records, have very little to look forward to. For in seeking to advance themselves, the Europeans, in their attempt to record history, have successfully delineated, distorted, and all but totally destroyed the truth about Africa and the African contributions toward world civilization. Black people

have come to be portrayed as a people without a past, or at most with a past tied up with savagery.

Again, historian Clarke can be cited in shedding some light on this trend that we have come to encounter in the pages of so-called history books:

It is not possible for the world to have waited for the Europeans to bring the light, because for the most of the early history of man, the Europeans themselves were in darkness. When the light of culture came for the first time to the people who would later call themselves Europeans, it came from Africa, the Middle East, and Asia... Most history books tend to deny or ignore this fact... It is too often forgotten that when Europeans emerged and began to extend themselves into the broader world of Africa and Asia during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, they went on to colonize

place

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most of mankind. Later they would colonize world scholarship, mainly history. History was written or rewritten to show or imply that Europeans were the only creators of what could be called civilization. In order to accomplish this, the Europeans had to forget or pretend to forget all they previously knew about Africa.

• In the years when the slave trade was getting effectively underway, some Europeans were claiming parts of Africa, especially Egypt, as an extension of their "continent" and their "culture"... The critics of Africa forget that men of science today are, with the exception of a few, satisfied that Africa was the birth place of man himself, and that for hundreds of centuries there after, Africa was in the forefront of all world progress.*

We can therefore lay to rest all foreign claims to Egypt. Egypt is Africa. Egyptian celebrated civilization must be placed in its proper context for all the world to see. Black must not be denied as they are denied, the knowledge of early African contributions to world civilization. It must also be made known that there were Africans in the so-called New World before and at the

time of the arrival of Christopher Columbus.

Sir E. A. Wallis Budge in his book *Egypt* made the following observation:

The prehistoric nature of Egypt both in the old and new stone ages was Africa, and there is every reason for saying so that the earliest settlers came from the south... There are many things in the manners of customs and religions of historic Egyptians that suggest that the original home of their prehistoric ancestors was in a country in the neighborhood of Uganda and Punt. Some historians believe that the biblical land of Punt was in the area known as Somalia.

What does the majority of the African population of the world know of its African past? What does the African population in the New World know of its ancestral heritage? What, more specifically, does the African American, who is constantly tortured with his slave past, know about Africa's Golden Age? Marcus Garvey, the great African Nationalist, propounded: "A people without knowledge of their past is like a tree without roots." More recently, the great African liberationist, the late Bob Marley, citing the suppression of the

African past and the gross miseducation of the African people, echoed from the stage to the world:

We refuse to be
What you wanted us to be
We are what we are
That's the way it's going to be'
You can't educate I
For no equal opportunity...
Babylon system is the vampire
Sucking the children day by day
Babylon system is the vampire
Sucking the blood of the sufferers
Building church and university
Deceiving the people continually
Me say them graduating thieves
and murderers, looking out now
Sucking the blood of the sufferers
... We've been trodding on
the winepress much too long
... We've been taken for granted
much too long...
Tell the children the truth
Tell the children the truth
Come on and tell the children the
truth.**

*BLACK SCHOLAR, Vol. VII, #1, September 1975, p. 42.

**SURVIVAL, Island Records and Tapes, 1978.

Asians at UMB

The Asian American Society has been very active this year. We have pulled together social events like an apple-picking trip, dinners, dances, and numerous lunches. We offered bi-lingual tutoring and counseling for Asian students and supported the campaign against reorganization and cutbacks on education.

The AAS has an extensive community involvement component which deals with childcare, bilingual education, city district representation for Asians, and healthcare in Chinatown. We see our community as a very important center that must be protected and strengthened. We also recognize the importance of the community

in the preservation of our rich culture and language.

The AAS wants to unite all Asians (of different nationalities and backgrounds) to help ourselves and each other. We also want to promote better understanding among all people. We hope you will join us. We are located in **Building I, 4th floor, room 168.**

Haitian Refugees: Mistreated by the U.S. Government

by Ashley Batista

The current debate over the Haitian refugees revolves around whether the Haitians are considered economic refugees or political refugees. The Reagan administration argues that Haitians are "just looking for a better place to live" and the U.S. considers them "economic refugees." On the other hand, the Human Rights Organization has denounced the Duvalier Regime in Haiti as one of the most repressive governments in the world.

From a legal standpoint, the distinction between political and economic oppression is a crucial one, but for many Haitians, victims of extortion and abuse at the hands of the "tontons macoutes", the distinction is an artificial one. Their poverty, they say is due to a system in which agents of the state exploit the people economically.

The Haitians refugees are politically and economically oppressed. Because politics and economics go together, we cannot separate a political system from an economic one. If we look at Haiti's political system, we can see that Haiti has been ruled for the last 25 years by the Duvalier family. The present President, "Baby Doc" Duvalier, took power in 1971 when his father died. At that time "Baby Doc" was 19 years old. According to many refugees, the repression orchestrated directly by the President does not approach the level of the fourteen year terror of Duvalier's father, "Papa Doc." But many members of "Papa Doc's" murderous security force, the tontons macoutes, have been dispatched to terrorize the countryside. Moreover, "Baby Doc" ended his decade of "liberalism" in 1980 by arresting many of his critics, imprisoning some and exiling others. Today in Haiti, there is no opposition party or workers' unions. Strikes are illegal and it is considered very dangerous to oppose the government. According to Gerald Saint-Juste, director of the Haitian Refugee Center in New York, 30,000 people have been killed in the last few years in Haiti. He also charged that there are 35 jails per school and 189 soldiers per teacher in Haiti.

It is estimated that since the Duvalier family took power in 1957, 20 to 25 percent of the Haitian people have fled into exile to the Dominican Republic, United States and other countries. American officials estimated that between 300,000 and 400,000 Haitians now live in America, most of them illegal entrants.



"In the countryside 85% of the population lives below the poverty

If we see how most Haitians live, we can understand why so many risk their lives in leaky, over-crowded boats to go to Florida. Living in Haiti means constant contact with misery, disease and malnutrition. Port-Au-Prince is a decaying slum, and the population of this capital city has swollen to more than one million as farm families swarm into the city to look for work. Most people end up jobless, and unemployment is between 50 and 70 percent. The average annual income is \$275 and in the countryside 85 percent of the population lives below the World Bank's "absolute poverty level" of \$135 per year. Of every 1,000 Haitian children, 150 die before their first birthday, and twice that number do not reach age four. Average life expectancy in Haiti is 52 years. There is only one doctor per 50,000 people and they concentrate in cities, but 80 percent of the population live in the countryside. Haiti spends less money on education than any other country in the United Nations. According to 1978 statistics, 0.9 percent of its gross national product is spend on education.

Haiti gets more foreign assistance per person than any other nation — \$140 million total in 1980 — but because of official

corruption, little reaches the people. About 40 percent of state revenues are diverted into a multitude of private bank accounts. Foreign aid also goes directly into Duvalier's pocket. Shortly after the IMF credited the Haitian government with a \$22 million loan in 1980, \$20 million was mysteriously deducted from the national budget and used for unknown purposes.

The Haitian situation continues to deteriorate thanks to the United States government that is now closing its doors to the growing flow of people fleeing poverty and the regime of terror.

Currently there are nearly 2,500 Haitians being held in detention camps in Florida, Texas, Kentucky, West Virginia, New York and 700 in Puerto Rico. A total of 8023 Haitians were jailed in the US during 1981 and most of them are threatened with deportation back to Haiti.

I do not understand how the U.S. can provide all kinds of aid to Cuban refugees while ignoring the plight of the Haitians. Apparently, for any person to be considered a political refugee by the U.S. government, you must come from a socialist country, and it will help a lot if you are not black.

!!Adelante Companeros Latino Americanos!!

Saludos calurosos para los compañeros latinoamericanos que han desido agruparse en LASO (Latin American Student Organization). Los acontecimientos que se desarrollan en nuestro subcontinente necesitan que la juventud progresista se organice y exprese su solidaridad, no importa lo lejos que nos encontremos, somos hijos de tierras saqueadas, explotadas, intervenidas oprimidas y desgarradas a lo largo de mas de cuatro siglos de sangrienta historia.

A pesar de tantos crímenes, traiciones y humillaciones los pueblos de nuestra America Latina siempre han mostrado que estan dispuestos a llegar hasta las ultimas consecuencias para lograr su felicidad y su libertad. Hoy mas que nunca la conquista del amanecer dejo de ser una tentación para convertirse en una realidad, los humillados y traicionados se han lanzado definitivamente a la conquista de su rendicion.

La causa latinoamericana es una causa politica, social y económica. Para que America Latina pueda nacer de nuevo tiene que empezar por derribar a sus "dueños" país por país. Se habren tiempos de rebelion y de cambios, desde Cuba en adelante el mapa de dominacion inicio un proceso irreversible. Otros países por distintas vias han conquistado su liberacion como la Nicaragua Sandinista hoy amenazada por una inminente invasion norteamericana. Hoy le ha tocado a nuestro hermano mas pequeño "el purgarcito de America" (como le llamara el poeta Roque Dalton a su país: El Salvador), desafiar la potencia mas poderosa del mundo. La realidad economica, politica, y social de nuestras tierras jamas debe ser soslayada por nosotros al contrario, como sus hijos, debemos ser difusores y portavoces para que otros comprendan las depredaciones a que hemos sido sometidos y nos den su solidaridad.

Sabemos que los jóvenes de LASO tienen importantes tareas que cumplir en la difusion de la cultura y el arte latinoamericano pero esto no debe ser motivo para no mantener siempre en alto la solidaridad en contra de los crímenes que se comenten a diario en nuestros países por parte de los enemigos de la justicia y la libertad.

Estamos seguros que los compañeros latinoamericanos de U Mass sabran cumplir con este doble objetivo.

!!Adelante LASO!! El futuro es de los oprimidos y explotados de la tierra!!

Willian Henriquez
Third World News Editor



picking coffee

Rini Templeton

Third World Voices: Sounding Louder

With Sandino, I fought. Amidst battles we crouched behind barricades to dodge bullets and draw purposeful diagrams on the fine dirt. I saw my daughters raped by government spies while European women strolled 'la esplanda'. Their children, unlike ours, were not maimed, but giggled playfully around their mothers.

Brought as a slave to the cotton plantations they stole my family, my language, my culture. I have been burned out of my home, by hooded men igniting saturated crosses. I have felt the sudden snap that jerked my body. I have hung from southern trees.

Ancient, sacred graves of my Indian forefathers have been scarred. There I held gun, knife or tomahack. The gun I held barred the BIA and other traitors' entrance to our resisting nation. I have brought up the hatchet for Little Bighorn, many times

at Wounded Knee. In its place we buried our hearts.

Coolies they called us, workers we were. Laying tracks and building bridges, breaking through the granite Sierras; their Manifest Destiny took us too. We dug up their gold; we could not claim our own. We even fought in their war while our brothers were on the mountain, caged once again.

Today, in the barrios, ghettos, reservations, and chinatowns we are looking at our history, our culture and our struggle. And, we can feel the fury. It is felt by our children as it is being bred into their hearts. But they should never have to cry like their parents might have. They, like us, are learning that they can never stop fighting because the struggle goes on.

Cynthia Alvarill

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gold, and Black cargo
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*And atop the ship's sail soars
the Albatross.*

Robert Moore

Emigrados

*Emigrados, ao encontro dum tempo desencontrado
nas praças que ficaram no além!*

*Peregrinos, a descoberta da paz que o berço primeiro
não teve p'ra dar...*

Crianças no trapezio enredado de novo circo...

*Gente que sente, ama e cre as vezes...
outras vezes pensa, chora e desacredita...
e lá no fundo, onde o humano sempre se
descobre, se faz vivendo este presente...*

Immigrants!

*Immigrants in search of a time unfound
in the harbors left behind*

*Travelers looking for a peace unknown
in the land that gave them birth*

*Children in the tangled trapeze
of a new circus*

*People who feel, love, believe at times...
who other times think, cry and despair!*

*And deep down inside, where human struggle
unravels itself, people who become
men and women of a new present*

Immigrants, here and now!

Emigrados

*Emigrados al encuentro de un tiempo desencontrado
en las playas que se quedaron atrás.*

*Peregrinos a la descubierta de una paz que
la primera cuna no ha tenido para darles.
Crianças en el trapezio enredado en un nuevo circo.*

*Gente que siente, ama y cree a veces...
outras veces piensa, llora y desacredita...*

*y en el fondo, donde el humano siempre se descubre
gente que sigue viviendo este presente.*

Antonio Sousa — Boston

PHOTO ESSAY



K1400

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Danforth Museum, Framingham, 1980, Glen Gurner, p. 42

Jamaica Plain Apartment, 1979, Glen Gurner, p. 43

Santa Monica, 1980, Glen Gurner, p. 46

Arlington, Va., 1977, Nina Schlosberg, p. 46

Carmel, 1979, Glen Gurner, p. 48

Suenterrabia, Spain, 1979, Nina Schlosberg, centerfold







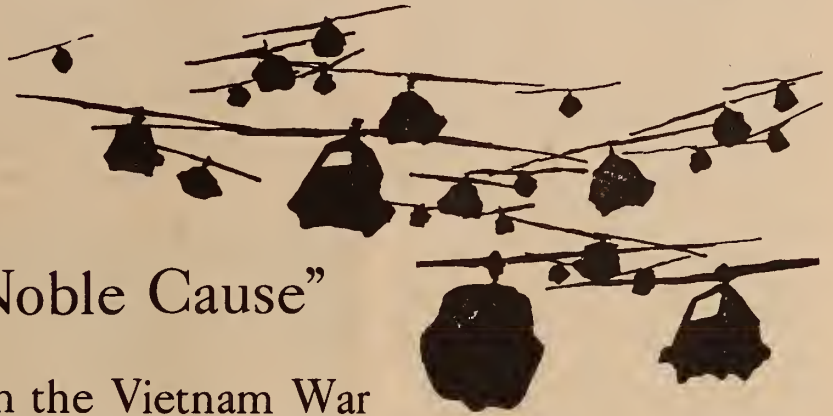








NEWS



Reflections on a "Noble Cause"

Vets Look Back on the Vietnam War

by Michael Letwin

"Well, it's time we recognized that ours was, in truth, a noble cause... We will never again ask young men to fight and possibly die in a war our government is afraid to let them win."

— Ronald Reagan on Vietnam,
August 18, 1980

"We didn't win, thank God."

— Vietnam Veteran, David Connolly,
April 1981

The Vietnam War ended seven years ago this month. Does it matter, after all this time, what we think about Vietnam?

It does to Ronald Reagan. He's sending tens of millions of dollars in military aid and dozens of U.S. "advisors" to prop up El Salvador's junta and to crush the country's popular nationalist revolution. He'd like to send American troops in to finish the job. What's stopped him so far is that people at home remember Vietnam.

Although the war ended in April 1975, and that the government has tried to have us forget it ever happened, the mere mention of Vietnam continues to evoke images of saturation bombing, burning villages, peasant massacres, corrupt U.S. "allies" and tens of thousands of dead and maimed G.I.s.

The images remain so powerful that even the much-discussed "New Patriotism" of the Iran-hostage days has faded, while the "Vietnam Syndrome" — the administration's term — has led to growing and powerful opposition to U.S. intervention in El Salvador, even before American troops have been sent.

According to a recent *Newsweek* poll, 54

percent of those polled nationally are against any form of U.S. involvement in El Salvador, and 89 percent oppose sending troops under any conditions. Twenty-five percent of the people who are supposed to fight the next war have refused to register for the draft, despite repeated threats from the government that they will be prosecuted.

government has given up on winning in Central America. After all, the power and prestige of the world's largest economic and military empire is at stake. So, while backing off for the moment on the use of U.S. troops, the administration has dramatically increased military aid to the juntas in El Salvador and neighboring Honduras, and is about to do the same in Guatemala. It is also

"You'd be pullin' bodies out of this jungle someplace and there's two tanks marked 'Shell Oil', and we're losing soldiers to protect it"

Of those who have joined up, the reason is usually the poverty draft — unemployment. Gone are the days when most working class and minority young people believed that it was their duty to fight, kill and die without question on orders from above, or because their fathers and older brothers did so.

As a result of this widespread opposition to another Vietnam, particularly in El Salvador, officials including the Secretary of Defense and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff have publicly admitted that the U.S. government lacks the political support in this country to use American troops in Central America, and in the last month, Reagan and other top officials have announced for the first time that they have no intention of sending them.

But the current wave of domestic opposition to U.S. involvement in El Salvador, significant as it is, doesn't mean that the

actively attempting to overthrow the Sandinista government of Nicaragua.

Because these policies lack popular support at home, the administration has also been waging a massive propaganda campaign to whip up support for continued, and if possible, expanded U.S. intervention. They argue that the revolution in El Salvador is nothing more than a creation of the Russian, Cuban and Nicaraguan governments, who, the administration claims, are out to take over the Western hemisphere by way of Central America and Mexico.

Because this is the identical argument that previous administrations used to justify Vietnam, the Reagan administration has had to insist, on the one hand, that Vietnam and El Salvador have nothing in common, and at the same time, that we shouldn't oppose U.S. intervention in El Salvador because Vietnam was a "Noble Cause."

In Reagan's version of Vietnam, JFK,

Johnson and Nixon were right about Vietnam all along — that it was fought to defend a small "Democracy" in Asia against "Communist Aggression" on the part of Moscow and/or Peking. The American military machine was the hero of the war, the argument continues, and would have won if it wasn't for the treason of the Anti-War Movement at home which prevented it from going "all the way." American GIs were thus stabbed in the back by the Movement, which is therefore responsible for the dire plight of Vietnam vets today.

Through this logic the administration hopes that we will associate our negative feelings about the war with the fact that the U.S. was defeated, rather than memories of the destruction wreaked by the American military and the dictatorship it supported.

The bottom line of Reagan's version is that preventing another Vietnam means not that the U.S. government should stay out of other people's countries, but that when it

For them, massive Vietnamese resistance made Vietnam a war the US couldn't and shouldn't have won. And they resisted the U.S. military in the field and joined the Anti-War Movement at home in that belief.

Today, Vietnam remains an unending nightmare which has profoundly affected their lives and the lives of their fellow vets. It was the U.S. government, they point out, not the Anti-War Movement, which poisoned them with Agent Orange. And they say that rather than solving the problems which the war created for them, the administration is exploiting Vietnam vets to whip up support for new wars which will result in the destruction of another generation of young people in the coming Vietnam.

These vets have resolved to tell their story, especially to the young people who didn't experience Vietnam first hand so that we will never allow the government and those it represents to create it again.

Only in this way, they believe, will their

were doing. We were landing outside of villages where little kids would be coming up to you, spitting on you, giving you the finger, and telling you to go home. By the second week I was in Vietnam I began to ask "What are we doing here?"

Stahl's doubts turned to disgust as he witnessed U.S. treatment of the Vietnamese.

"I remember one time in early '68 when a couple of helicopter gunships I was in were heading back to base with some extra ammunition. All of a sudden, the pilots saw a farmer riding his bike next to a rice paddy, just minding his own business. They just dropped the extra thirty-six rockets we had on the farmer and blew him to pieces."

David Connolly was in Vietnam from 68-9 in the Army's 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment. He lives in South Boston where he grew up, works at New England Telephone as a frameperson, and attends the University of Massachusetts part-time.

"I saw how we'd walk in and kill a whole village," says Connolly. "The Army'd call it 'Search and Destroy.' Or we were relocating people into cities where there was no sanitation, no food, nothing. The people had to try to make it on the black market, through crime and prostitution. There were 500,000 prostitutes in South Vietnam—one for every GI!"

"I'm saying, 'Wait a minute.' I remember my younger brothers and sisters. I couldn't imagine doing things like that to little kids and babies."

Atrocities, says Connolly, were not the result of individual GI "excesses." Rather, he says, they were the product of a carefully devised American military strategy.

"In a war where the 'Enemy' was a guerilla movement with immense popular support, all Vietnamese were fair game," he says, pointing to the "Body count" programs whose goal was to kill the greatest possible number of Vietnamese, civilians, old people, women or children included. "If it's dead, it's Viet Cong," was the attitude of the military, he explains. "It gave us a license to kill."

Another part of U.S. strategy, says Connolly, was the "Strategic Hamlets" program, in which civilians were herded into barren concentration camps to prevent them from aiding the guerillas. Torture and rape, he says, were regularly practiced to gain information and to terrorize the population.

Connolly points out that this war against the Vietnamese relied heavily upon an intense conditioning of GIs by the military. In part, he recalls, the Army used technical sounding words intended to camouflage reality. "Instead of saying 'kill,' the military



Mark Foley, Shep Gurwitz, Rick Stahl

goes into El Salvador, it should be sure to win.

The administration isn't alone in recognizing that the way we remember will determine our reaction to El Salvador. This article, drawn from interviews with 6 Boston-area men active in veterans' rights and anti-war organizing, reflects the views of a growing number of Vietnam vets who have begun to speak out against Reagan's version of the war they fought.

To them, Vietnam was anything but "Noble." It was a war against the people of Vietnam and against American G.I.s themselves, since it was working class and minority kids who died on the front lines. They saw the Vietnamese and their own brother G.I.s sacrificed in the name of "Democracy," when what was really at stake was the quest for a world where American capitalism could be guaranteed safe profits.

war not have been in vain.

Is Reagan right in calling the Vietnam war a "Noble Cause"?

Rick Stahl was an in-flight helicopter mechanic in the 16th Marine Air Group of the Third Marine Air Wing between 1967-9. Today, he lives in Cambridge and is counselor at the Vietnam Educational Training Program at the Boston campus at the University of Massachusetts.

"Originally," says Stahl, "I felt that I could help someone in Vietnam, enlighten them. I thought that by waging war in their country, they would have automobiles, factories, telephones and TVs. That they could turn on the nightly news and see what life was all about."

"But it wasn't long before I started meeting other GIs who had a different attitude. They were ashamed of what they

invented 'terminate with extreme prejudice'. And you never heard that you were going to take this humane being and section him almost evenly with this weapon they gave you," he says.

Ron Armstead, a black vet who was aboard the USS Natchez off the Vietnamese coast in 1966-7 and who is now a counselor at the South End Veterans Outreach Center explains that the military also encouraged racism among GIs. "The Vietnamese became less than human. They were called 'dinks,' 'slopes,' 'gooks.' They were dehumanized in the war."

However, GIs found out that the military's policies against the Vietnamese made victims of U.S. soldiers as well, says Steve Miller (a pseudonym), who was an aerial artillery spotter in the Army's First Infantry Division in 1968-9. "There was a real pressure on the higher officers for the numbers of bodies. But they just had to gamble with men."

"All we were was bait," agrees Connolly. "You'd be expected to go from such and such a landing zone to the next LZ to draw fire so that they could call in high technology. You want some figures on American casualties during Tet, the first big National Liberation Front push on Saigon in 1968? Four thousand, one hundred and fourteen killed in action, 19,285 wounded, 604 missing. In just a two month period!"

The feeling that they were being freely sacrificed highlighted the glaring contrast between GIs and officers, says Connolly. In the field, he says, "You rarely even saw a captain. They'd drop the general in on his helicopter with gunship coverage, and he'd get a Silver Star. Meanwhile, we didn't have enough Medevacs to get the wounded out. We could call in half a million dollars worth of artillery for a noise or a light, but we couldn't get any underwear or a new pair of boots. The officers would sell your food, and you'd have C-rations."

From what they saw in the war, these vets find Reagan's claim that the Government "didn't allow them to win" to be a false explanation of U.S. defeat in Vietnam.

Throughout the war, argues Connolly, the Government did everything it could to win, short of nuclear war. At its height, he points out, the US had over 500,000 troops in Vietnam, that it waged a decade long massive air-war in which more bombs were dropped than in all of World War II, that it defoliated a huge area of the countryside, experimented with a spaceage "electronic battlefield," and waged secret wars in Cambodia and Laos.

"The Government pushed as hard as it could," say Connolly, "and there are about

two million Indochinese and one hundred thousand Americans—fifty-three thousand of whom died later from their wounds—to prove it."

The reality, says Stahl, is that the U.S. lost the war above all because most Vietnamese were united in their opposition to the U.S. in the cause of national independence from their centuries-long domination by the West and Japan.



Kristan Bagley

Shep Gurwitz, Dave Connolly

"As long as the last Vietnamese was still alive and had a bullet in their rifle," he insists, "they were not going to give up. If you killed one, there were ten others waiting in the wings to take up the gun and wage war against the invader. We weren't going to break that backbone."

"There's two million of us, and one hundred thousand have committed suicide"

In contrast to the anti-American forces, the U.S.-backed Saigon regime was corrupt, brutal and had no cause to fight for other than personal gain, says Miller. "The South Vietnamese national police would come around in groups" he recalls, "bully somebody and take whatever people had. They wore these white uniforms and were called 'White Mice.' It was like putting the mafia in uniform. They'd kill GIs or anybody for their money. And when you'd see that kind of thing, you'd wonder: 'Are these the people I'm fighting with?'"

Connolly recalls that ARVN (Saigon Army) soldiers were usually drafted peasants who had no interest in fighting. "Their own

soldiers didn't do anything," he says. In the big battle at Hue in '68, US Marines were outnumbered four-to-one on the battlefield because the ARVNs who were supposed to help them were looting the bodies of the dead Marines."

In addition, as the war ground on, GIs, sickened by their role and the pointless loss of life, began to resist the war effort, says Miller.

He recalls that Black troops were often the most active resisters. "There was a lot of Black Power, especially in the infantry. There was a general refusal to do anything. They're not going to work, they're not going to wear their uniforms right. There was this Black GI who had all these medals, tons of them. On his last day there, he just walked into the Commanding Officer's office, took his chunk of medals, and chucked it right at him."

The particularly militant attitude of Black troops, say these men, was due not only to the general experience shared by all GIs in Vietnam, but also to the specific situation of Black soldiers. For example, they point out, Blacks were assigned by the military to the dirtiest and most dangerous positions, one result of which was that while they made up only 11 per cent of the population in 1970, they suffered 23 per cent of the casualties in Vietnam.

Black resistance was also fueled by the Civil Rights and Black Power movements in the US, which led many Black GIs to feel that, as Black victims of racial segregation and discrimination, poverty and repression at home, they had no reason to fight and die in Vietnam, especially when "No Viet-

namese Ever Called Me Nigger," as a popular saying went. Especially after the assassination of Martin Luther King in 1968, many Black GIs came instead to believe that their battle was against the society that had sent them to Vietnam while leaving racism intact at home.

As Armstead recalls, "I came back and my community looks worse than when I went. It looks like the war was in Roxbury! I can't go six miles into South Boston. Yeah, I went twelve thousand miles to fight for something I can't get right here."

GI resistance, however, came to be widespread among GIs of all races. Large numbers chose to go AWOL or to desert

entirely. Drug use and general disrespect for authority was common. One of the most popular acts of resistance, recalls Miller, was "fragging" — killing officers responsible for needlessly sending GIs to their death. "There were more officers killed by their own men in Vietnam than in any war this country's fought," he says.

Connolly remembers one such incident following an especially high casualty rate in his unit caused by an over-zealous officer. "We came in at six or seven o'clock and the officer responsible was dead by ten. He was killed by our brothers who spent the night listening to this shit go on, knowing that we were going through because this mother-fucker decided he was going to extend his manpower."

As the war went on, incidents of larger scale mutiny became more common. Says Connolly, "I remember being in the field in late '69, and the radio telephone operator put the headset up to my ear and somebody said: 'A Company, 2nd of the 7th Infantry, 199th Light Infantry Brigade just told their company commander, 'Fuck you. We ain't fighting.' And then he went off. Lots of times we just said 'no' when the orders came down.

"So we obviously couldn't win," insists Connolly. "The only people who wanted to fight for the country were on the other side."

The conclusion that these and many other GIs came to during the war was that US intervention was not motivated by a desire to "defend Democracy" in Vietnam. Rather, they came to believe, they were sent to Vietnam in part to protect investments of Western capitalism in the region. For example, Connolly recalls that 59 of his comrades were killed one afternoon in a firefight over a rubber plantation owned by Michelin Rubber Company near Dau Tieng in 1968.

Stahl came to this realization when "You'd be pullin' bodies out of this jungle someplace and there's two big tanks marked 'Shell Oil.' And we're losing soldiers to protect it. So it didn't take long to realize who we're fighting the war for. It was for the interests of the rice people, the rubber plantations, the oil."

Perhaps even more important, say these vets, were the fears of American business and government policy makers that a Vietnamese victory would encourage revolutions elsewhere, thereby threatening the "stability" of US economic and political dominance.

Miller doesn't dispute what politicians and generals then called the "Domino Theory," pointing out that revolutions have followed the US defeat in Vietnam. But,

unlike the policy-makers, he believes that every people has the right to decide the direction of its own society.

"If you look around the world, there's the same thing going on in many countries. People want the right to determine their own existence and their own way to go about things. I think that is a democratic principle. The US doesn't respect that, the Soviet Union doesn't respect that, in Ireland the British don't respect it."

The belief that the US used them for a war of conquest in Vietnam has left many vets more bitter and much wiser, as is reflected in the lines of Connolly's poem, "Thoughts on a Monsoon Morning":

Used, by the rich of my country.

Duped, by those I looked up to.

Wondering, how can I tell those

who blindly wave the red, white, and blue?

"Vets became aware of a lot of things as a consequence of Vietnam," says Armstead, reflecting on his own feelings and on those of many of the vets he counsels. "How racism works, how exploitation works. How being profit-oriented reduces the individual to a second or third consideration. How the loss of life means nothing as long as it produces dollars.

"And that's what the war seems like it was all about: dollars. Helping a few people

Vietnam was heightened by the feeling that he was betraying his Irish heritage by helping to suppress a movement for national self-determination. "If we allow the American public to look at us like heroes, then it'll just happen again — they'll get another crop of 19 and 20 year-olds."

If their experiences led these vets to views so starkly opposite to Reagan's, why do some vets still defend Vietnam?

Because they can't face the idea that the suffering they inflicted, experienced, and witnessed in the war was in vain, believes Mark Foley, who was in the Army's Thirty-Second Medical Depot in Vietnam in 1970-1 and who attends the University of Massachusetts today.

"Mentally, they need to have something to hold onto, he explains, "even if they don't really buy it anymore. They have to believe that they went over there to get a job done, no matter how it ended up. I think a lot of guys are hanging onto that because if they let go, there's a void they can't fill."

"How can you pump bullets at somebody 'till his face or his knees are completely blown to pieces?" asks Shep Gurwitz, a paratrooper in an advanced reconnaissance unit of the Army's 173rd Airborne Brigade in 1967-8, who lives in East Boston

"El Salvador is the same as Vietnam--another corrupt dictatorship to support, another people to keep down for the sake of corporate profit"

get some money, expand their sphere of influence in another area, to dominate some trade somewhere else. It's not about people here."

"I think Vietnam veterans learned early on in the war that we were there to fight for the interests of the multinationals," concludes Stahl. "That we were losing, just wasting life to protect their investments, in a country that we should never have been in. And that pissed us off to be used like pawns."

The result, he says, is that he doesn't feel any pride for his role in Vietnam.

"I'm not proud, in a sense, to say that I'm a Vietnam veteran. Because I committed that rape and pilferage. To be proud that I served comrades there who are still suffering today, that's where I can get up and boast a bit. But as far as being there for the Government, I'm ashamed."

"I think we should put the message across that there can be no pride in what we did," agrees Connolly, whose opposition to

and attends the University of Massachusetts today.

"How can you watch little kids crying on the side of the road, dirty and grimy and no parents? You say, 'Oh boy, was all this worthless?' Some people just can't deal with it that way. They displace it, put it somewhere else. And if they take a look into that picture and feel the pain, they're gone. That's how they deal with it. Then they can make Vietnam seem like the right thing. You can make *anything* seem like the right thing."

Stahl encounters another group of vets who are able to admit that the war was wrong, but whose reaction is to blame themselves. He has no difficulty understanding this reaction, since there are times when he has felt the same way.

"My father had this hate for the people they waged war against in World War II," he says. "But we can't hate the Vietnamese, so the hate is turned inward, and we begin

hating ourselves for the ignorance and the stage of development we were at when we went to war at 17 years old. And today, at 34 years old, that hatred is starting to come out.

"There's two million of us, and one hundred thousand have committed suicide," he adds. "Well, it's denial. They're not able to accept what they did."

Other vets, however, reject self-hatred. From the start, they point out, working class and minority young men had little knowledge of, or choice about Vietnam, even before the draft boards reached them. In their communities in the mid-1960s, they say, there was a tradition of military service which made joining up seem like the natural thing to do.

"When I was in high school," remembers Miller, "the big joke was that when you got out you were going to 'Saigon U.' It was just expected. You lived with it for about three years, and I knew they were going to draft me. So I just figured, 'Well, I'm going to go down and get it over with. To hell with it.' And that was it. I joined the Army to get out of town."

In South Boston, Connolly's situation was similar: "Friends of my parents, older people, would say to me, 'What are you going to do when you get out of high school?' I'd tell them, 'I'm going to Vietnam. Where the hell do you think everyone else is?' There was nobody on the streets that was older than you."

Connolly believes that he was a victim of the government's effort to recruit and draft the youngest possible working class youth, because it found them the easiest to mold to its requirements. "Do you know how old the average veteran of World War II was? 26. I didn't know anybody who was 21! The average age in Vietnam was 19.

"That's one of the first things I try to tell people who ask me about the war," he continues. "We were little kids, see? And they gave us a gun and told us we were going to be John Wayne and that 'those fucking dinks ain't worth shit.' And a few old men directed the whole thing."

Partly because he was a little older, Foley was already against the war by the time he enlisted, but he too found no way to avoid the military. "I joined because they would have drafted me anyway, and the Army promised to send me to Germany. They didn't tell me they would send me to 'Nam afterwards."

"When I got my orders for 'Nam, I came home and found absolutely no support from my friends and family. They said, 'Well, you got orders, you got to go.' They were going

to work tomorrow, and didn't want to hear it. My folks were worried about whether I changed my life insurance benefits from them to somebody else. Not the fact that I was going to Vietnam, but that if I died, they wouldn't get the money!

"The options were horrible, fucking lousy, you know? To think of the MPs pulling you off to your house someday and dragging you off to Leavenworth! I finally decided, 'Well, I don't even have the bucks, so what am I going to do? No way I'm going to Canada with no support from anyone.'"

Until massive GI resistance blossomed in the late '60s, the options were even fewer once in Vietnam, explains Stahl. "They wouldn't shoot you for deserting, but you had to choose whether you were going into a stockade where they beat you about the head and shoulders with a baseball bat every

the War (VVAW). Foley believes that this involvement was the single most important thing a vet could do for his own mental health because rather than wallow in guilt over Vietnam, anti-war vets tried to end it.

"I think that the anti-war movement saved a lot of guys who were in the war," he says. "They didn't, like a lot of veterans, have problems because they've taken their guilt personally. It was an amazing feeling to be in a demonstration with five hundred guys in jungle fatigues walking through the streets of some city in this country to end the war. Everyone felt that 'Hey, I got all my brothers right here with me. They all feel the same way, they've all been through a lot. We know we're right, we just *know* it."

"So all these guys in VVAW had an outward direction for their rage. They were no longer blaming themselves. They knew

"Everyday in 'Nam was like a year out of your life"

hour, or you went into combat. Which would you choose? I chose to try and survive, and in surviving, you had to wage war."

"What makes a difference is class," concludes Miller. "If you go to a group of people who are pretty wealthy, you don't hardly meet a Vietnam vet at all. You go down among people who work for a living and you meet all kinds of them. A lot of guys from South Boston, Medford and Somerville, which had the most killed in the country for its size."



Rick Stahl

"I grew up in South Boston, from which twenty-eight guys were killed in Vietnam," says Connolly.

Vets who came to blame the war on the government and economic system, rather than on themselves, often joined the anti-war movement when they got home, says Miller. Although some people in the movement blamed them for the war, especially in the early years, vets became an important and distinct force against Vietnam, particularly through Vietnam Veterans Against

the War (VVAW). And I think it was very effective in turning public opinion."

"I tell you," says Miller, "the one thing I take pride in is the fact that I came to be in VVAW, to make a stink and say this shouldn't be going on. Other than that, the war is just something I did. I would have rather done it fighting for truth and justice than what we were fighting for. Then I could be proud."

...

Even for those vets who have been able to "direct their rage," the war continues today. In part, they explain, Vietnam continues to take an enormous emotional and physical toll on those who returned.

"Vietnam makes me crazy every day," explains Connolly, as he recounts story after story of friends who have been driven to drugs, alcohol or suicide because they can't shake the war. "You see a lot of dudes who come back from the military and hate everybody," says Gurwitz. "They hate themselves and their families."

"You're old and you haven't even had the chance to be young. I've never been young. I came out of high school right into the service, and then bang — when I came back I wasn't twenty-one anymore. I was fifty-five. Every day in the 'Nam was like a year out of your life. I'm thirty-four years old and I don't know how to talk about simple things. There's this thing: 'Don't get too close, man.' People tell you they see you scoping out everything in sight in a non-combat zone and sitting with your back to the wall all the time. I don't have nightmares — I

Learning About Vietnam at UMB

One of the most popular and interesting courses at UMB especially among veterans (there are approximately 1,000 vets at UMB) is the "Social Legacy of Vietnam," which is offered by the Sociology Department and is taught by Professor Jim Brady. In this class many aspects of the Vietnam War, particularly those that presently affect Vietnam vets, are closely examined and discussed. Because there are several Vietnam combat veterans in the class, students are given a keen insight into the realities of the Vietnam and post-Vietnam experience. Discussion in the class are often very emotional and provoking.

The creation of this course is one part of a larger commitment that Professor Brady has made to Vietnam veterans at



Kristan Bagley

UMass/Boston. Presently, Brady is working closely with the university administration to create the Joiner Center for the Study of War and Recovery. Brady has written several grant proposals for funding. When the Joiner Center is fully operation it will be the first comprehensive center of its kind nationwide offering undergraduate courses on Vietnam and veterans in the various disciplines, allowing scholars to



Kristan Bagley

conduct original research on little understood aspects of the war and its relation to society, and ultimately will provide counseling and tutorial services to veterans with emotional or academic problems.

have daymares. It's with me all the time."

Connolly and Gurwitz are not alone. Recent studies report that hundreds of thousands of vets suffer from "Post Vietnam Stress Syndrome," whose effects include a high alcoholism, drug, suicide, divorce and prison rate. Because they are also workers and minorities, vets are among those bearing the brunt of the economic crisis. No one

under the new administration, one of whose first acts was to try to cut the budget for Vietnam vet services. "Ronald Reagan pinned the Congressional Medal of Honor on a Vietnam vet and then signed an order that cut off the funding for the outreach centers," says Connolly.

"Ronald Reagan can't look at Vietnam veterans as heroes when he's trying to cut

beings."

Outrage is the only way to describe these vets' reactions to US intervention in another Vietnam-type war which, they are convinced, will send their younger brothers or sons to the fate of those who went to Vietnam.

"I've been yelling at people over El Salvador," says Connolly, "to the old guys that I work with, a couple of whom were in the infantry during World War II. I'm trying to tell them: 'You know, I did the same thing you did. You got to listen to *me* now. You haven't listened to us for ten years. They're doing wrong again. They're starting 'Nam all over again in this hemisphere, and you people aren't doing anything about it.'"

"Yup," agrees Miller, "they're gonna pack off their kids again."

"The beginnings of El Salvador are just the same as Vietnam," argues Stahl. "And we're calling it a 'Little Vietnam' because it's just a matter of time.

"They're flooding the country with millions of dollars worth of weaponry and technology to wage a war down there. As soon as the first American ship is hit, they'll have another Gulf of Tonkin incident," he says, referring to the attack against allegedly innocent US ships off the Vietnamese coast in 1964. Though the Johnson administration later admitted that the ships were involved in military operations against North Vietnam, the incident served at the time to win unanimous Congressional support for

"On his last day there, he just walked into the Commanding Officer's office, took his chunk of medals, and chucked it right at him"

knows how many GIs were contaminated by Agent Orange, a chemical used by the military to devastate the Vietnamese countryside, and which causes cancer, birth defects, and a long list of equally deadly diseases.

The government not only created these problems by sending them to Vietnam, say these vets, but it has refused to take the necessary steps to remedy them. They charge that Veteran Administration benefits and hospitals have always been hopelessly inadequate and unsympathetic to their needs, to the point that vets are given drugs instead of counseling and are denied treatment or compensation for Agent Orange poisoning.

Despite Reagan's proclamation that Vietnam vets are heroes, these vets point out that their position has grown worse

back all the programs that are vital to us," adds Stahl. "We have seventy million dollars worth of programs that are crucial to Vietnam vets. All seventy million are on Stockman's hit-list. It suggests that white man speak with forked tongue. He's saying one thing and doing the direct opposite. We just look at him as another farce, another obstacle, because we know that Reagan will never give us what we want. He'll just throw crumbs our way to try and keep us pacified."

Stahl is particularly angered by the contrast between Reagan's cuts in programs for Vietnam vets, and the unprecedented funds allotted to the military. "I think about the amount being spent on building up the war machine again. They are more interested in building Trident submarines and Cruise missiles than in ever answering the question of what effects Agent Orange has on human

massive US military intervention in Vietnam.

"And I'm sure that if you look at what's happening in the military training centers and boot camps, they're probably telling the new soldiers to hate 'spics,' to kill El Salvadoreans, just like we were told to hate 'gooks.' El Salvador is the same as Vietnam — another corrupt dictatorship to support, another people to keep down for the sake of corporate profit."

These vets are actively working to prevent another Vietnam, this time before it starts. Ron Armstead speaks frequently at anti-war demonstrations in Boston. Stahl, Connolly, Foley, Gurwitz and Miller are active in anti-war activity in Boston and at the

University of Massachusetts where they have helped to launch the William Joiner Center for the Study of War and Recovery, which conducts courses on Vietnam.

"It's our obligation as vets," says Stahl, "to let people know what the situation is with the government today, and not to let Vietnam recur. Because we're the most recent ones with knowledge of what war can do and the amount of suffering it inflicts not only on our own veterans, but on other peoples as well."

Michael Letwin is a free-lance writer and graduate of UMass/Boston Class of '81 who is currently doing anti-war work in New York City.

The Life Of A Child

*Vietnam enters the life of a child
when her father wakes up screaming in the night
when her mother tries to calm him and can't.*

*Vietnam enters the life of a child
when she sees her father's thousand yard stare
and knows he's somewhere else not here
he's out somewhere stalking his prey his own soul.*

*Vietnam enters the life of a child
when her father batters her mother
in front of her eyes and she cries
for him because he cannot cry.*

*The life of the child enters the father
and he finally becomes wise
from seeing her now less innocent eyes.*

*Vietnam enters the life of a child
like some passed down genetic fix from her father —
an original sin latent with potentials
of evil and good.*

*Vietnam enters the life of a child
when she asks her dad what did he do,
and he says I thought I sinned for you, dear
and all you meant to me.
I thought I sinned for another child
very much like you a child called democracy.*

*Vietnam enters the lifeblood of a young country.
Vietnam enters the life of a child.
Vietnam is with us always.*

"FORGET NAM"

for Jerome Banks and William Wiesle

*"Ratshit" and "Weasel" and me,
are behind this dike,
and Charlie is giving us "what for"-
"Ratshit" lifts his head,
just a little,
just enough for the round
to go in one brown eye
and out the other,
and he starts thrashing
and bleeding and screaming
and trying to get
the top of his head
to stay on,
but we have to keep shooting.
A B-40 tunnels into the dike
and blows "Weasel" against me;
he doesn't get the chance
to decide whether or not
to give up and die.
Now I'm crying
and screaming, "Medic",
but I have to keep shooting.*

*At this point, I always wake,
and big, black Jerome,
and little, white William,
my brothers
are not dying beside me,
even though I can still
smell their blood,
even though I can still
see them lying there.*

*You see, these two
have been taking turns
dying on me,
again and again and again
for these twelve years.*

*And still people tell me,
"Forget Nam".*

—David Connolly

By Mark S. Foley

Thoughts on a Monsoon Morning

Originally written after a memorial service for 59 troopers from F Troop, Second Squadron, of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, who were killed in action or who died as a result of wounds they received when ambushed by an entrenched, numerically superior force, while on an operation in the Michelin Rubber Plantation, near Dau Tieng, Vietnam.

*Cold, despite my blanket.
Lonely, amongst my friends.
Wondering, with the things I've done
can I ever make amends?*

*Sickened, by this needless waste.
Stoic, to those around.
Wondering, what will break me,
the next fight, or death, or sound?*

*Missing, those who love me.
Hoping, for the next month or so.
Wondering, how will I ever fit in
with people who just don't know?*

*Terrified, by the death grins.
Afraid, I'll be one of the dead.
Wondering, why did I ever think
it wouldn't be as bad as they said?*

*Used, by the rich of my country.
Duped, by those I looked up to.
Wondering, how can I tell those
who still wave the red, white, and blue?*

*I hate every fucking one of you
who make dollars from our deaths.
I hate every fucking one of you
for my friends' dying breaths.*

*I hate every fucking one of you
banker of corporation head.
I hate every fucking one of you
for so many, so young, and dead.*

*I hate every fucking one of you
with your pin-striped, dark blue suits.
I hate every fucking one of you
for all those empty boots.*

David Connolly

After Hearing Hueys And A Hunter In The Woods

*His children urged him
so he went walking
in the almost nude,
late November woods,
flashing,
on what was a jungle
before the planes,
that he walked through
with other children once,
and still does some nights.*

*He knew he would hear them
even before he did
but that didn't help.
The other noise,
unconnected,
but inseparable to him,
started also.
Not the innocuous "KPOW"
that we used as children
but the "KUSSSH" that killed,
that looked for us
in woods like these.*

*He doesn't know how many times
his oldest said, "Dad,"
or how long the little one cried,
as he ran, low and loping,
dragging them along,
away from the danger in his mind.*

*The older one, at ten, knew,
and comforted him
as if he were her child.
"It's OK, Dad, really."
The younger one, at seven,
didn't know,
but without his explanation said,
"I was scared cause you were scared,
but I wasn't scared of you, Dad."*

David Connolly

Cambodian Aftermath: Khao-I-Dang

by Lisa M. Sama

As a registered nurse, Barbara J. Beeghly, a biology major at UMass/Boston, has focused her attentions on pediatrics. Recently, through newspaper and magazine articles she became aware of the plight of the Cambodian people. These people have been forced to leave their homeland and relocate to Thai refugee camps where there are many malnourished children and unsanitary conditions. Beeghly was so disturbed by what she had read on the horrendous conditions of the Thai settlements that she decided to volunteer her services in order to care for the sick and malnourished.

Beeghly, in her efforts, sought the aid of the International Rescue Committee, a charity funded by donations from large corporations and the government. This service has established itself in countries such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Thailand where it provides health care services and educational support for oppressed people. She, in effect, became a member of the organization and in September 1980, she was sent to Khao-I-Dang, a holding center in Thailand for Cambodian refugees. This was the beginning of a fifteen month stay.

A few weeks ago, Beeghly discussed her experiences in Khao-I-Dang. The following is a series of excerpts from an interview with *Wavelength*.

On Her Duties

I worked in an inpatient facility with 40-50 patients aged newborn, premature babies up to 16 years old. The problems were acute. They were very sick children who would deserve to be in an intensive care unit here.

My job was to carry out therapeutic measures to try and get them better. We had physicians there, but not at night. As a nurse, I was responsible for the patients and alterations in their care. I worked much like a practitioner which I was accustomed to work because I had been working at Children's Hospital in an I.C.U.



B.J. Beeghly



B.J. Beeghly

But along with taking care of the patients... we were also teachers, and counselors; we were advocates for the Cambodian people that were there, we wanted them to resettle. We would go to the embassies and talk with them, and submit them letters of recommendation.

The job was much more vast. It took on a public health perspective, it took on an inpatient perspective, and it took on counselling and social work. It was a lot of different things.

After I was there three months, I assumed the head nurse-administrative position with the pediatric facility in the camp. My job expanded and I was involved in clinical care and consultant responsibilities. I was responsible for the Khmer staff and the American staff.

We had approximately 3-4 physicians who kept very busy. The nurses would also be very busy with responsibilities in teaching the Cambodian camp residents, who very much wanted to work in the medical facility. The nurses would teach them as many nursing procedures as they could and create nurses out of these individuals.

What we wanted to do was essentially work ourselves out of a job and allow them to take over and take care of their own people because we didn't know how long we would be allowed to remain in that camp providing the care that we provide... The best thing we could do for the people that are there now is to teach them everything that we know that will help them to maintain themselves in the integrity of the society that is in the camp. For the most part, one of the jobs of the American staff was to teach the Khmer people how to take care of the situation and how to prevent a lot of the health problems.

We worked 12-15 hour shifts and we got five days off every month in which we could leave the area. This allowed me time to collect myself and gather my resources together.

One of the other jobs that I had was to work with the other areas in the camp... I also had to cooperate with a lot of the national groups that were there. I managed the pediatric facility, but there was also an adult care facility, a tuberculous ward, a surgical ward, and an obstetrics ward where there would be five births a night.



B.J. Beeghly

Sokhomal, a 22 year old Cambodian man whom Beeghly is sponsoring

The Camp and the People

The Camp, Khao-I-Dang, had a very high birth rate. Part of that had to do with the fact that the people wanted to re-create because many of the mothers had lost anywhere between two and six children during Pol Pot. (That lasted from 1975-1979, when Pol Pot was in control.) Families were broken and people were massacred. The birth rate is very high because the people want to replenish their society. The other thing is that they're in a camp where there isn't a lot to do. There isn't work for everybody so they're going to spend more time together.

The women are another problem; their role is one of being a mother and a homemaker who are dependent individuals. They acquire a husband between the ages of 15 and 20. They are raised with the thought that they should find a man because he will take care of them. They are not taught to think a lot. For the most part, the camp population is 75 percent rural peasant and many of the women are illiterate. But this is not to say they are not intelligent. They are very intelligent... but the culture feeds into this desire to have more and more children.

Overpopulation is a problem because one of the things lacking in the camp is food. Protein deficiency is a prevalent problem that affects the children. There are no fresh fruits, fresh vegetables or minerals. There are all kinds of vitamin deficiencies... and many infections because a malnourished child is susceptible to everything.

The situation in camp is one of not enough food, too many children, not enough work, and no freedom because the Cambodians are not allowed to leave the camp. If they go outside the camp boundaries, there are Thai soldiers (who guard the camp), who will kill them. If there are people from Cambodia who are trying to reunite with their families, they are endangering themselves by attempting to enter the camp. The Thai guards will call warning and then shoot at them.

Human rights don't exist within the camp. The U.N. tries to protect these people... but the people are very much the victims of politics and military power. They have no rights and they

know it. It's very dehumanizing for them.

Smuggling is a problem because there is not enough food in the camp and because people are not allowed to leave the camp. People resort to the black market, sneaking out and bringing things into the camp at a very high price. That's one of the reasons the soldiers are so quick to open fire. They are trying to shoot these black marketeers who are trying to make a profit from the camp.

The Khmer people who work within the pediatrics ward want very much to leave the camp. But they don't want to go back to Cambodia because there is not enough food. They are educated professionals with skills. If they go back they will be questioned, their physical person may be in great danger.

The people within the camp have suffered greatly. They've lost half or all of their family through the Pol Pot experience and starvation. They are not going to go back to a place where there is no food.

I think what people need to realize is that these people have not chosen to be refugees. They've been made refugees by U.S. politics and world politics...

Afterthoughts

Before I left I knew that there were problems within the camp and that I would be able to help. But having gone over, I realized that it takes much more than a simple touch of the hand. The problem isn't so much medical as it is political and social.

... With 45,000 people in a small, small space, there has to be some sort of medical facility. But more than that, I realize that these people need a solution to their problems. They are locked in a camp with no place to go. This doesn't require medical people, it requires politics and people taking a humanitarian approach to these individuals...

I have many very dear friends within the camp, so I can't ignore the problem. It requires me to speak out and I have written letters to various senators.

I don't think the people here understand what the situation is. I didn't realize what a hardship life is for them until I had put myself in their situation and actually stayed with them in the camp, ate their meals, slept on their beds, and saw the rats running up and down along the houses...

People think of refugees as unintelligent, unworthy individuals. They are in fact, some of the brightest, motivated, loving people I have ever met. When I first arrived there, I thought of them as refugees, but it didn't take long for me to see them as people, then as individuals, then as people as close to me as my own family.

....

According to the National Center for Genocide Studies, "95,000 Cambodian refugees currently in Thailand, including

unaccompanied minors and families, face forced repatriation by the Thai at the end of 1982 unless the U.S. policy will permit a generous resettlement program for Cambodians during this year." In 1981, the U.S. took in a large number of Cambodian refugees and now officials from Immigration and Naturalization feel that other countries should open their doors to the Cambodians because of the evaporating state of our economy.

The Cambodians have applied for visas in Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Canada, and the U.S. But if they have little or no skills, it is possible they will sit in the holding centers for years or be forced to return to Cambodia. Cambodians, who have been lucky enough to emigrate, have done so with the help of family members already located in a new country or very influential friends.

Beeghly is sponsoring a 22 year old Cambodian man named Sokhomal and eventually she hopes he will come to the U.S. She has written to Senator Kennedy for help in getting Sokhomal and his mother extricated through Immigration and Naturalization: The Senator has been sympathetic and supportive, but he can't do a great deal. Recently, Beeghly has heard that Sokhomal and his mother have been sent to a processing center in France. She is pleased with this, but she would rather see them here.

The Cambodians are gentle, peace-loving people who have valuable working skills. It is important that their cries of help are heard by concerned citizens. Please write or call your local congressional representative. Or write to one of the establishments listed below. Your concern will be appreciated.

Romano Mazzoli
Chairman, House Sub-Committee on Immigration
Rm. 2246
Rayburn Building
Washington, D.C. 20515
1-202-225-5401

H. Eugene Douglas
U.S. Coordinator for Refugee Affairs
Dept. of State (S/R) Rm. 7526
2201 C St. NW
Washington, D.C. 20520
1-202-632-3964

Richard D. Vine
Director, Bureau for Refugee Programs
Dept. of State
Washington, D.C. 20520
1-202-632-5822

Workfare: An Issue at UMB

by Charles Wardell



Diane Dujon

In a corner of the room, in an alcove behind a small, portable blackboard, a young woman was sitting at a table. The breeze drifting in through the third floor window of the sparse Park Square office hinted that winter's back had finally been broken. But what she was discussing — an issue that, for many, had turned the winter into a long, ongoing battle — was still very much alive.

The woman is Diane Dujon, a student at UMass/Boston, mother of a three year-old daughter, and a member of the Coalition For Basic Human Needs (CBHN), an organization of welfare recipients who lobby for welfare reform.

The issue is Governor King's "Workfare" plan, a controversial proposal which would force thousands of recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) into the workforce, creating an army of unskilled, minimum-wage laborers.

Diane is typical of hundreds of students at UMass: welfare mothers who, unable to support families as single parents, return to school for an education which will permit them to become financially independent and to get off the welfare rolls — for good.

"Nobody wants to be on welfare," said Dujon. But for many recipients, a lack of essential skills (over half of all Massachusetts welfare recipients lack a high school diploma) effectively bar them from jobs that will pay enough to support a family, making public assistance the only recourse. "There was a time," she said, "when — if you were good — you could

make it without an education, but not any more."

However, on October 13th, thousands of Massachusetts AFDC recipients experienced what many considered a serious threat to their future in the form of a proposal submitted by Governor King to the federal government: "The Massachusetts Comprehensive Work and Training Program," popularly known as "Workfare." The proposal, if enacted, would have resulted in what its opponents vehemently referred to as "slavery" for about 60,000 Massachusetts welfare recipients, most of them single mothers. All AFDC recipients with children over six, or with children over two for whom daycare was available, would have had to participate. "Failure to comply" meant the loss of all benefits for the entire family.

The proposal had two parts. The first consisted of an intensive six-week job search at a pre-determined site called a "Job Club." The regulations mandated that a participant spend some 40 hours per week calling potential employers and engaging in personal interviews. The first job offer had to be accepted, provided it was at least minimum wage and conformed to minimum health and safety standards.

If after a six week job search a participant could not find a job, she would have been forced to work off her welfare grant in a non-profit organization. This was the "workfare" stage of the program.

Workfare outraged welfare recipients for a number of reasons. First was daycare. Under the plan, the Welfare Department intended to use other workfare mothers as baby-sitters. The possibility of their children being placed in an unlicensed daycare situation, under the supervision of an untrained person upon whom the job of daycare supervisor would have been forced, was for many mothers the most objectionable part of the proposal.

Another aspect of the plan which drew heavy fire was the effect it would have had on those in higher education programs. There was no provision for training people for jobs even though, economically, such a provision would have made sense both for the state and the welfare recipients (see box).

The proposal was taken seriously at UMass/Boston, especially at the College of



Kristan Bagley

Phyllis Freeman

Public and Community Service (CPCS), where approximately 30 per cent of the students would have been forced to leave school in order to search for jobs. It was estimated that one thousand students would have been lost throughout the university.

To insure cooperation, the proposal contained measures its opponents charged were punitive. A recipient who did not — in the opinion of her individual caseworker — comply with the rules was "sanctioned" for a specific period of time; meaning the entire family would have lost all benefits. The first offense was punishable by a sanction of three months, the second by a sanction of six months, the third by a sanction of one year. Theoretically, failure to comply could have included such things as refusal to cross picket lines during a strike and refusing to leave a three year-old child in an unlicensed daycare situation.

Opposition to the proposal began to mount on many fronts, but the leader in the fight was the CBHN. "We began a media blitz," said Dujon. Coalition members went on talk shows, passed out leaflets and held demonstrations both at the State House and the Welfare Department. They lobbied legislators and talked to unions, ministers and priests, educators, and members of various non-profit organizations, trying to get them to lobby against the governor's proposal. "Finally," Dujon said, "we developed a real network through the state of people opposed to workfare."

UMass/Boston opposition was coordinated by the Dean's office and the Law Center at CPCS, working closely with the CBHN during the entire operation. Under the direction of professor Phyllis Freeman of the Law Center, students and faculty set up counseling groups for students who would have been affected by the proposal, contacted various state lobbying groups, and set up a community education program to keep welfare recipients informed of their

Workfare: A Program With Serious Flaws?

King's proposal doesn't take into account some very real problems of poor women. Perhaps the plan could work for men, but since poor women have, on the average, distinctly different problems than men, and since at least 75 per cent of all Massachusetts AFDC recipients are female heads of households, the governor's solution may be seriously flawed.

Workfare's path to economic independence is through finding a job; any job. Often, this is precisely what a man will need to get him back on his feet. For a woman, though, the story is often quite different. In the majority of marriage breakups it is the woman who finds herself in the position of raising and supporting the children; in only 25 per cent of all divorce cases does the father actually end up paying child support, meaning the mother ends up as the sole provider. Often, unable to support her children on what she can earn, she turns to the welfare system for help.

A 1978 study done by the Department of Commerce reported that the average paycheck of a full-time working woman was only 59 per cent of what the average man earned. Mean earnings for all female high school graduates was less than 7000 dollars, while the *minimum* necessary to support a single parent and two children (the average AFDC family) was approximately 10,000 dollars; the typical yearly salary of a 1979 college graduate. Given



Kristen Bagley

Ginger Southern addressed the University Assembly concerning the work-fare issue

that the woman with a college education usually earns less than the man who has never finished high school, and that over half of all AFDC recipients do not even possess a high school diploma, the importance of education as a path to self-sufficiency becomes clear.

The stated purpose of the governor's proposal is to make AFDC recipients "economically" independent." Nobody argues with this as a desirable goal. In fact, a measure giving workfare participants the choice of attending college would be a big step towards achieving that goal. In the long run, the state would get back its money in the form of higher taxes paid and more productive workers. The King administration chooses to ignore this, however, and instead insists that the way to

get people off welfare is by putting them to work. Certain types of training are offered under the program, but only if absolutely necessary and only if — in the judgement of the Welfare Department — they are directed towards a "concrete employment goal." While this could be a boon for business, providing an endless pool of programmers and technicians to be gobbled up by the Massachusetts high-technology industries, it could prove to be a short-term solution. As jobs are given over to automation, the people who are trained for them could wind up back on the welfare rolls.

Another serious question in the workfare battle is cost-effectiveness. In other words, will the new proposal actually save money or will it end up costing the state more than the present welfare system? Opponents of the proposal believe the latter, but the governor has persistently refused to subject his proposal to public scrutiny. In a March 8th report prepared by Professor Phyllis Freeman and three students at the CPCS Law Center it was stated, "We are prepared to present detailed testimony through noted experts that this proposal, if implemented, is not at all likely to be cost-effective." The same report referred to the governor's refusal of a public hearing as "precisely what we mean by abuse of the public trust by the executive branch of our government."

rights under the proposed regulations. In addition, they worked individually with a number of students who were reportedly being harassed by over enthusiastic case workers. CPCS Dean Murray Frank held a series of meetings with the Regents and with representatives from the Welfare Department to discuss the issue. He worked on building up a network between various universities and talked with the State Human Services coordinator to complain about the proposal from the point of view of the college. "It was entirely because of the college's efforts," said Frank, "that the Executive Office of Human Services and the Welfare Department were brought together to think about education."

"This school was really set up for it," Dujon said. "The system here is made for students to work on just such issues. The framework was already here; we just brought workfare into the classroom."

Because of massive opposition from

many fronts, Governor King agreed to give in on certain points of the initial proposal. In a February 11 news conference the governor and other key state leaders announced that an agreement had been reached on the Comprehensive Work and Training Program. The agreement stated that after the initial six week job search a number of options would be made available to recipients. The options included English As A Second Language training, High School Equivalency, and up to two years of post-secondary training if it led to a "concrete employment goal." Also under the new agreement, recipients already in school could not be forced into job search for at least 24 months, could not be used to cross picket lines during a strike, and could not be sanctioned for lack of adequate daycare. Under the new proposal sanctions cannot be applied to the entire family; only the actual offender may be punished by the loss of benefits. The opponents of workfare had

won a battle.

But though some hopeful concessions had been won, there was (and still is) a long way to go. For instance, although post-high school training, seen by the Welfare Department as leading towards "useful employment," is one of the options, traditional higher education is not included in that category (statistics show that, on the average, a college education will *more than* pay for itself in the long run). Opponents also charge that the regulations for verifying daycare availability are "ambiguous and punitive" and that no adequate provisions are made for children with special needs.

The workfare controversy will doubtless continue for some time to come but the opposition is ready for a long siege. When asked to sum up what the coalition's goals were — what they would be satisfied with as a solution to the workfare situation — Dujon responded, "What we want is the complete abolition of workfare."

Interview with Robert Corrigan and Murray Frank

In a recent interview with *WAVELENGTH*, Chancellor Robert Corrigan and former CPCS Dean Murray Frank expressed their views on the new work and training program and its effects on public higher education in Massachusetts.

The Chancellor's office has been at the forefront in addressing the workfare proposal. With the threatened loss of "several hundred students" and with a number of students having had "unfortunate conversations" with their social workers, the Chancellor recognized the issue as one which demanded immediate attention by the university. "Our first responsibility," said Corrigan, "was to alert students who might be welfare recipients that there were counseling resources available on the campus and that we were concerned." In some cases, especially in those where the welfare worker was being a little too "enthusiastic" in enforcing the not-yet-in-effect regulations, both the Chancellor's office and the Dean's office had to intervene personally on the part of the student.

Frank said the university was "primarily responsible" for insuring that students in four year institutions were "blanketed-in"—given waivers for the remainder of their current semester before being required to report for job search. He said the next step was to get students blanketed-in through their entire four years, then to get a college degree recognized as leading towards useful employment.

The Chancellor said that the primary responsibility of UMass/Boston as an institution was to "do what we can to define policy such that it is more humane and



Murray Frank

Kristan Bagley

responsive" to the needs of disadvantaged students.

Frank pointed out the traditional role of the public university in influencing public decision-making as one of "studying the implications of and helping in the formation of public policy through research and information-gathering."

When asked why AFDC recipients should be permitted to continue in a standard, 4-year program the Chancellor paralleled the situation with the implementation of the GI Bill after WWII. "One of the most significant things that happened in the 20th century, with regards to education," Corrigan said, "was that a whole new group of people became part of an educated workforce as a result of the GI Bill. And here we have, we think, several hundred welfare mothers on our campus who are breaking the cycle of public assistance, who if they graduate will presumably take full-time jobs and not only get off welfare, but begin to contribute to the tax base." He also emphasized that in terms of taxes generated by higher salaries, the GI Bill had

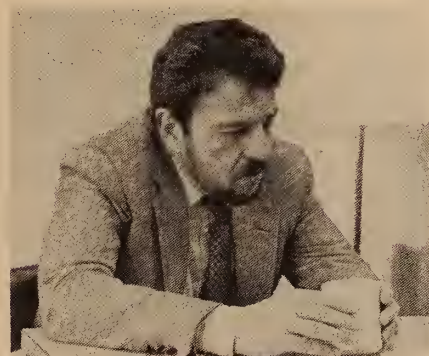
more than paid for itself.

Frank pointed out that the GI Bill had more to do with "democratizing education" than anything that had ever happened before. He said it was, for many, the "port of entry into professional careers. It proved that working-class and even below working-class people could get into the mainstream. People got into professional careers who not only would not have been able to, but for whom the general perception was that they shouldn't be able to." Both Frank and Corrigan felt that the benefits realized by the GI Bill would be comparable to those of an educational component of the current workfare proposal.

The Chancellor expressed a hope that the outcome of the present fight would be "an understanding on the part of the people in Human Services that one of the best investments that they can make, both in people and in the future of the Commonwealth, is to allow welfare students to continue in legitimate four-year degree programs."

Corrigan said the university has an obligation to bring into it "as much of an economic cross-section that it can." If workfare is implemented, he said, "The university will lose a certain kind of student that it's chartered to serve. It would affect not so much the quality of UMass/Boston as its tone, and would threaten its place as a service institution to the community."

The Chancellor indicated that his office would remain active in the issue. "We'll continue," he said, "to whatever point there's still the possibility of change, to constructively push for that kind of change."



Robert Corrigan

Kristan Bagley

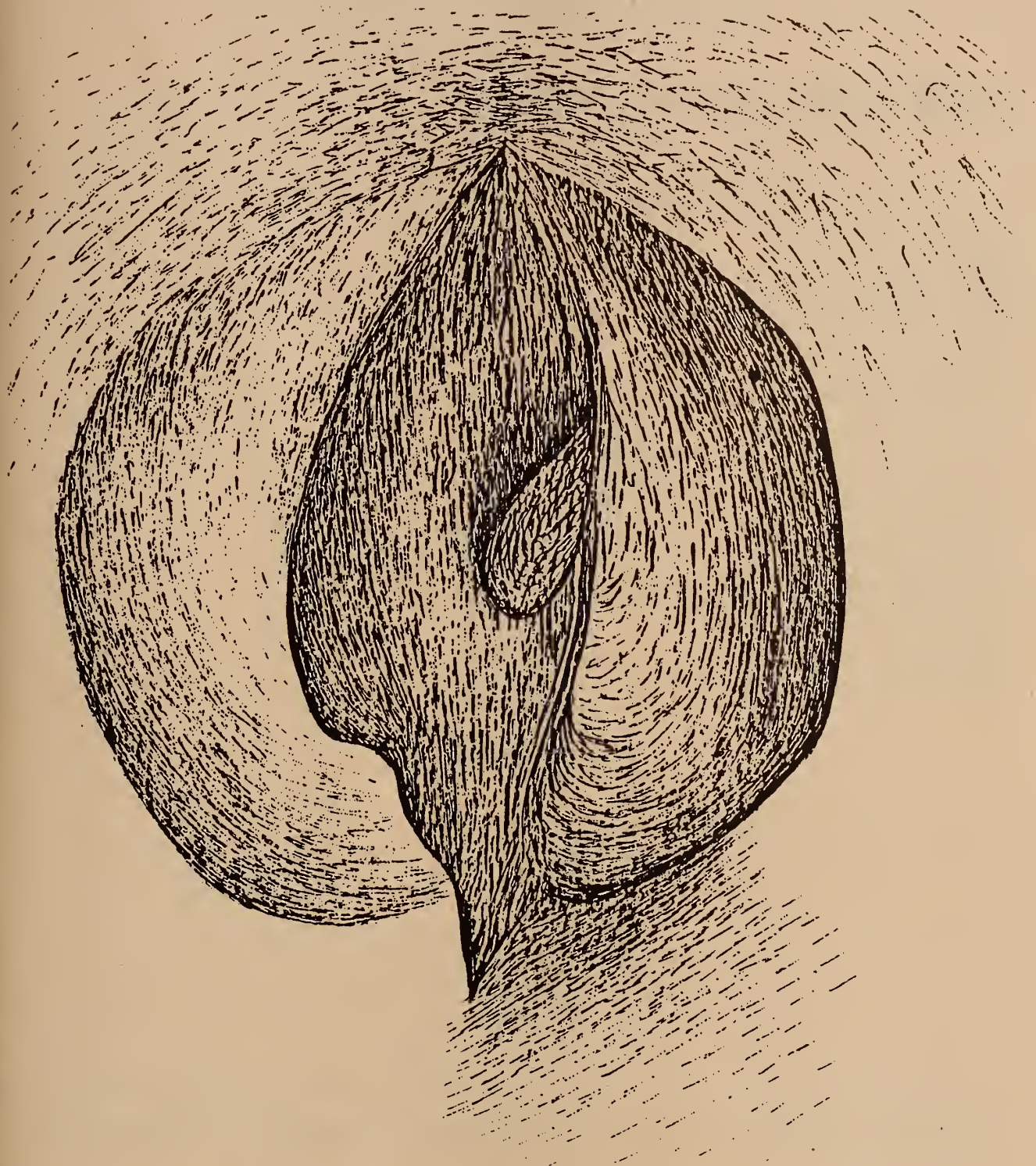
Attention

ARTISTS PHOTOGRAPHERS WRITERS

We need your help and submissions for *Wavelength's* Summer and Fall issues. Hone your critical abilities by becoming a literary, news, photographic or arts editor. Submit your creative impulses and sublimations and watch them leap from the page: we need poetry, art, photos, essays, articles. Submissions should be addressed to: *Wavelength* 010/6/091, Harbor Campus, UMass/Boston, Dorchester, Mass. 02125 — ext. 2609. *Please* include a self-addressed stamped envelope.

POSITIONS

Photo Editor, Art Editor, Production Manager, Literary Editor, News Editor, Business Manager: work study (summer and/or fall), Sales Person: to sell ads on a 30 per cent commission basis.



Writing as Women

WRITING AS WOMEN

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The collective of women students who worked on this anthology:

Beth Bagley
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Kayla Kirsch
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With thanks to *Wavelength's* staff, Joanne Kenney, Karen McDonald and Laura L. Montgomery. Special thanks to Pam Annas.

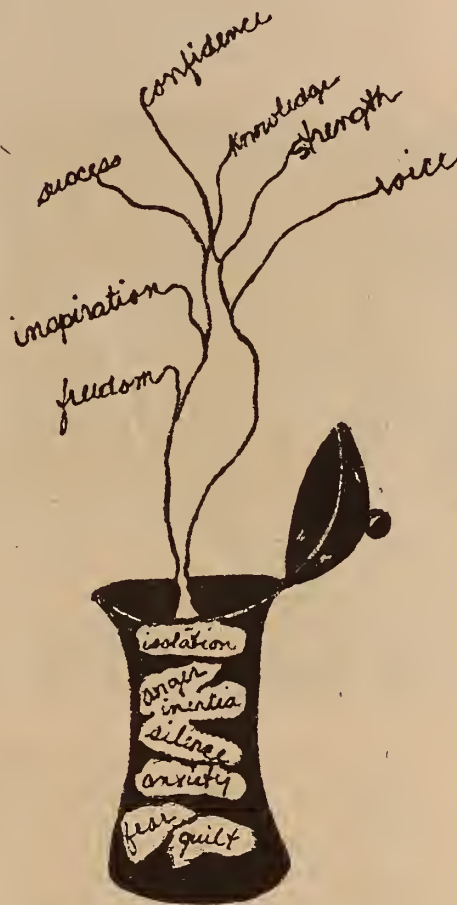
The collective of students who compiled this anthology of writing from their class wish to be responsible for any feedback on the section whether negative or positive. All correspondences should be left in the Women's Center mailbox in the SAC office 010/4/181.

Introduction

Fall 1981 was the first semester that the English class "Writing As Women" was held at UMass/Boston. The class was composed of approximately twenty-two women students, and was put together and facilitated by Professor Pamela Annas. The focus of the class was to explore and pursue the issues surrounding the relationship of writing and language about women and by women. Each individual student's personal experiences with writing and language, as authors and readers, was brought forth and shared with the class. Through this process we not only learned from each other, but we also grew together in our ongoing struggles as women writers.

We began our class by reading the essay "Taking Women Students Seriously" by Adrienne Rich. Discussion focused on sharing our personal feelings about our relationships to language. We talked about why we write, and how we have been responded to as women writers.

We also talked about the politics of the English language itself, how much of what is seen as "good" writing denies the value of our voices and experiences as women. Examples of our exclusion from traditionally valued writing were said to include the public/private distinction. Much of women's lives has centered in the private sphere of the home, which has traditionally not been seen as "important". Our experiences as working-class women, as women of color, as mothers, as wives, as lesbians, as single women, and as daughters, are denied, minimized, or erased in what is traditionally seen as "good" writing, as "important" writing.



graphic by Judy Bousquin

Looking at the politics of language in relation to our varied identities as women led the class to develop insights into our individual approaches and aims for writing. Members of the class shared their negative, as well as positive, experiences in writing. We discussed, discovered, and redefined the phrase "writer's block." We developed writing support groups within the class that worked well for some and not as well for others. During the semester, some of us in the class voiced anger at ourselves, and some of us voiced anger at our classmates. We aired

our differences and talked about what it meant to be silent. We talked about words, their distortions of meanings, and explored the feminist principle of renaming ourselves and reclaiming, reconstructing, our language as women, as readers, as writers. We wrote and shared our writing with the class; we rewrote and shared that as well.

This anthology represents much of what we, the students of the "Writing As Women" class, learned, felt, and accomplished throughout the fall 1981 semester. It is not intended to be representative of the totality of our experiences, as that would be impossible to duplicate. However, as we collected our individual submissions to this publication, we discovered that much of our experience in the class process was reflected in our writings. The pieces touch on many of our personal experiences as women. They talk about our relationship to language and the input we have as women into that language." Some of the pieces explore our female sensuality as reflected in words; others discuss our personal legacies as individual women. At least two selections offer a social commentary developed through a woman's voice. The "I Am" poems explore the process of viewing ourselves as different women with identities to share.

This anthology touches upon our individual and varied relationships to language as women; it represents much of what we have learned together as a class; it is a sampling of our voices. We are publishing what we feel is valuable: our feelings, our thoughts, our experiences, our pasts, our identities, our words.

photo by Kala Kirsch



Silences

by Beth Bagley

Silence makes as much clatter as conversation to me. It seems that this is true for many women: kept perennial children by sexism, many of us still are "seen but not heard." This state of silence is like being locked inside a piano; chords and strings are there to play but our fingers are frozen and the cover is tightly shut. The cover stays down because of stage fright and because the piano player is expected to stay in shadows and never drown out the trumpet player. The cover stays shut because we fear we might make a mistake and miss a note or that what we play will not be accepted. For many women, silence is weighed with harmony: if we stay silent there's no discord and we never need to show our anger. However, there comes a point when the music sheets slide, the keys become yellow and the silence becomes too loud—we get tired of being so hushed and locked in silence.

My mother always said, "If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all." Therefore I spent half of the time being nice and the other half seething

quietly. Anger and assertion became very mixed up with language because being "nice" was a matter of survival. At school when I was young the nuns used to line up all the girls and measure our skirt lengths. To not show your knees was an obvious task of survival, but something more subtle was done to our language as girls—it was pinned, measured and trimmed of anger. I notice now that often when I'm angry I

"I noticed now that often when I'm angry I smile; the corners of my mouth turn up instinctively. Though I'm furious, I keep the same smile that was plastered across the faces of my dolls. Even if I threw them across the room or left them in the cold all night they always smiled."

smile; the corners of my mouth turn up instinctively. Though I'm furious, I seem to keep the same smile that was plastered across the faces of my dolls. Even if I threw them across the room or left them in the cold all night they always smiled. When I'm angry I can feel the cotton stitches of my smile.

What would happen if I spit out all that cotton and cloth underneath my smile? Rejection. That's what I believed as a child. All the best girls in my home and my class were quiet, so I strove for the "low, modulated tones" described in all the novels I read. I was an angry talk, to be magicians with social skills.

girl who 'feared rejection'—talking-out brought rejection whereas silence brought acceptance. It was better to sit silently while inside my head I kept up a chatter of my real thoughts and feelings. Silent children have imaginary playmates, keep diaries and can sometimes almost forget to verbalize emotions. A parallel between acceptance and silence began and often when I speak now I'm still untangling the associations.

I learned to read by making associations. I remember exercises where you had to circle words that went with "policeman" or "nurse." When I think of this I become sure that language is tied to the role we play and the role that others put us in. In my family I was always the "quiet one" and now this is still true. When I'm at a family party I feel like a cat tied in a burlap sack—arms and legs kicking against the sack because of language. I always used to be the first one to get up and do the dishes; scraping off plates and pans in the kitchen, I'd let everyone else talk. Now I don't do that but I sit on the edge of the sofa and feel uncomfortable. I make little jokes as if I can't be taken seriously. I become angry and say awkward things and then I sulk. I think I should go do the dishes, wash glasses, stick a sponge in my mouth.

If role definition reflects language, then I think it is true that women are often "nurses" even in language. In a small group situation I sometimes find myself trying to make 'fences,' that is, make connections between people such as you know so-and-so or you think that too. Or when a conversation becomes heated I try to change the topic or twist it until the two people can seem to agree on Welfare though they don't agree at all. Disagreement makes me nervous and I think that women are often taught to 'smooth the ruffles' in

At a party a man is allowed to be obstinate or opinionated while the woman travels behind and picks up the pieces along with the empty drink glasses. Women can become invisible, apologetic mediators.

Women are also identified as match-makers, fortune-tellers and witches: the emotional aspects are under our domain. This can be both positive and negative. For one thing, there's all that responsibility. A positive factor might be that women are often able to form

continued on page 17



Blackwashing

by Kayla Kirsch

It wasn't until we were driving to the Strand Theatre that I realized I was trying to talk like them. "Where dy'all grow up?" I asked the all-Black women's band called "Sweet Honey in the Rock" as I chauffeured them to their rehearsal. "I hear that!" I nodded as the singer Bernice Reagan discussed growing up poor in Georgia. "Say waht?" I asked as I shifted back to my New York street talk.

Inside the theatre, Janet*, the freelance photographer, whisked the band into a corner and took out her photographs. Before they could open their mouths, she waved her arms in the air and babbled about her pictures of children in Atlanta, Black Solidarity Day, and Native American prisoners. As

she asked them silently, "Do you like me, am I Politically Correct, will you care about me, have I proven my worth to you now?", she forgot to say "hello", to look into their eyes and smile, or to warmly acknowledge their presence.

Instead, both Janet and I tried to communicate with the band members by focusing completely on the color and culture of their skin. But in the process of revering these Celebrities and praising their Blackness, we abandoned our own selves and cultural heritage. Perhaps our behavior stemmed from the guilt and fear attached to being perceived as White Oppressors. Although Janet and I (and the many other White women who were involved with the concert production) had good inten-

tions, we "Blackwashed" ourselves. We tried to paint ourselves Black and obliterate our "Whiteness" when we spoke to these dynamic women.

In our effort to climb over a huge wall that divided Black and White, we tried to strip ourselves of our white skin. But not everything that is associated with being White is "bad". Defining parts of ourselves as "good" or "bad" is too dichotomous, and polarized; this kind of thinking is too simple. All of us need to examine our own cultural roots and upbringing, taking with us those parts that seem useful and discarding what feels oppressive. Somehow, we've got to come to terms with the color of our own skin in order to look beyond it and see other people as more than a Color.

By mid-day, after chauffeuring "Sweet Honey in the Rock" back and forth from the theatre to the hotel, I became frightened, disgusted, and totally conscious of the deifying, the trying-to-please, the stereotyping, and the self-abandonment that plagued myself and other White women. I wondered how we could overcome our distorted assumptions about each other (as Blacks, Whites, women, celebrities, workers) in order to develop a deeper kind of communication.

And then I remembered what I had learned when I traveled for a year and became friends with many different kinds of people: music and humor were Universal languages. The sound of our voices blending, both in harmony and in dissonance, had once created a feeling of safety. Singing and laughing had allowed us to share our commonalities as well as our differences.

It was only after I let go of my guilt and my illusions of the band members as Movie Stars-Ghetto Kids-Black Goddesses that any kind of genuine communication occurred. We sang "Old Cape Cod" on our way to the Strand for the final performance. We joked about being neurotic vegetarians. With our mouths, hands, and feet, we improvised an African beat on the way back to the hotel. When we weren't trying to compensate for our differences by hiding them, then we could even enjoy the silences.

*for the purposes of this article, I have changed her name. It is not my intention to make personal accusations, but rather, to explain a subtle form of racism by using "Janet" as an example.

photos by Kala Kirsch



Pushy Aggressive Woman: The Evolution of a Poem

by Dorothy Dwyer

i

You're not going to call, are you? I scared you away. I thought you liked "Pushy, Aggressive" women but you also said that I couldn't depend on you. I accept that. Oh, you're driving me nuts! I wish I could think of some words to describe how I feel. Call me! No, don't call. No, call me! Please call. Just say "hi". No, that's too possessive. I don't want to be POSSESSIVE. She was possessive and you're not with her anymore because she didn't give you enough space. You've got such beautiful clear sky blue eyes, like a fresh water pond. Mine are hazel puddle water eyes which change with the weather but never clear, never dry up. I want you to put your arms around my waist and just hold me. Don't do anything but let me feel you breathe and your beard against my forehead. Let me feel the whiteness of your face with my eyes and hear the contentment of your body with my hands. But I'm never going to get to do any of those things, because you're never going to call. I'm never going to see you again because you're scared of me and I never meant to scare you. I thought I was the one who was scared.

iii

You're not going to call, are you?
I scared you away.
I thought you liked "pushy,
aggressive" women.
You also said that I couldn't depend
on you.
I accept that.
CALL ME!!!
no, don't call me
No, call me.
Please call, just say "Hi".

You've got such beautiful, clear, sky-
blue eyes, like a fresh water
pond in the mountains.
Mine are hazel puddle water eyes at
the curb of a busy city street.

You're never going to call.
I'm never going to see you again.
I never meant to scare you.
I thought I was the one who was
scared.



photo by Kala Kirsch ii

You're not going to call, are you?
I scared you away.
I thought you liked "Pushy, Aggressive" women.
You also said I couldn't depend on you.
I accept that.
Call me!
No, don't call me.
No, call me!
Please call, just say "Hi".
No, that's too possessive.
"She" was possessive, and you're not with her anymore.

You've got such beautiful clear sky blue eyes, like a fresh water pond
in the wilderness.

Mine are hazel puddle water eyes which change with the weather,
but never clear.

Put your arms around my waist and just hold me.

Let me feel your breath.

Your beard against my forehead.

Let me feel the whiteness of your face with my eyes and the
contentment of your body with my hands.

But, I'm never going to get to do any of those things, because
you're never going to call.

I'm never going to see you again because you're scared of me.

I never meant to scare you.

I thought I was the one who was scared.

Writing Proficiency

by Deb Whippen

i believe that the Writing Proficiency Exam at the University of Massachusetts at Boston measures a student's ability to deal with a stressful situation more than her ability to write. i believe that the exam is an institutionalized shut-out valve for students who do not represent traditionally valued status to the University. i feel that the actual experience of taking the exam is alienating and stressful, and that students gain little from the ordeal, regardless of whether or not they pass it. i reached these conclusions through talking about the exam to other students and professors, and from my experience in taking the exam.

i am a transfer student at UMass/Boston. i transferred with 63 credits and am now finishing my second semester at the University. Last summer, after filling out forms for my financial aid, after typing up letters getting credits transferred to my major, after appealing a rejection of my loan application which was caused by a computer error, i received a letter from the university stating that i had been automatically withdrawn from school.

This did not make me happy. i was even less happy to find out why. As a transfer student with over 60 credits, i was supposed to have taken the exam before the beginning of my second semester. i didn't because i didn't know that the cut-off point was 55 credits; i thought that i had to take the exam sometime before i graduated.

After a telephone call to the Office of Academic Support, i wrote two letters: one to a woman who could grant me an extension in which to take the exam, and another to the Registrar's office asking that my transcripts be sent to the woman so she could see that i was a "serious" student.

Luckily, i am a "serious" student, or so it seems on paper. If i wasn't, who knows where i'd be now.

i finally did take the exam. i waited in a long line, had my I.D. checked to make sure i was who i am, and was herded into a large auditorium. We could write about one of three subjects: U.S. Immigration Laws, Nuclear Bombs, or the Effect of Television on Children. None of these subjects were particularly inspiring to my muse, and i opted for TV since at least it was in my immediate range of experience.

i had read the pamphlet put out by the Office of Academic Support about the Writing Proficiency Exam, so i knew



"Ten minutes into the exam, a woman in front of me began to sob loudly. I could not talk to her because it might look as though I was cheating. She sobbed for the entire two hours. I felt as though she personified my creativity and spirit."

about the "Nine Elements of Writing Proficiency." The Nine Elements are considered by the authors of the pamphlet to be essential to "good, clear expository writing." i was only worried about four of them:

5) Focus on the intellectual issues in the question and avoid irrelevant digression into personal reminiscence or anecdote.

7) Use appropriate language

8) Use sentences with enough length and complexity to handle the subject matter and enough variety to hold the reader's attention

9) Abide by the rules of grammar and spelling

These four phrases indicate an attitude towards writing which i do not share; that writing is "good" if it separated from personal experience; that i am not the judge of the appropriateness of my own language, and therefore language is not my own. How long does a sentence have to be to be long enough to handle the subject? Accepting that the word "rule" means "governing power", or perhaps, an "authoritative direction for conduct", i feel that "abiding by" or "tolerating" or "conforming to" traditional notions of grammar and spelling, when those notions are not part of my voice, means that my writing does not represent my interests, but rather the interests of those who govern.

i was particularly worried about my i's; they're small and uncapitalized and i've been using them for years. They do not abide by the "rules" of grammar and spelling. i had to remember to use big i's (I), which are large and weighty and get in the way of what i'm thinking about.

If i did not pass the Writing Proficiency Exam, i would not be allowed to take any more classes at UMass until i did pass. Actually, i could take one: Fundamental Skills 044. However, if i took less than four classes, i would carry fewer than twelve credits and my financial aid would be discontinued. It is very difficult to get back on financial aid once it has been discontinued.

i cannot attend school without financial aid.

During the exam i spit back the words i thought my "reader" would want to see on the paper, and hoped that my estimate was more or less correct. Ten minutes into the exam, a woman in front of me began to sob loudly. i could not talk to her because it might look as though i was cheating. She sobbed for the entire two hours. i felt as though she personified my creativity and spirit.

i finished the exam, went home exhausted and relieved, and received a form letter the following week stating that i had passed the exam.

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Writing Proficiency continued

i never saw my words about how television affects children again.

Then again, they weren't my words.

In preparing for this paper, i interviewed a tutor for those students who fail the exam (or are failed by the examiner). Sue (not her real name; she values her job) said that my experience with the exam was not uncommon. She said that she views the exam as the University's attempt to upgrade the school's "caliber"; to weed out those students who are the most oppressed, and therefore the least valuable: english-as-a-second language students, working class students, students of color, women students.

i realized, from talking with Sue, that my story and feelings about the Writing Proficiency Exam were, and are, indeed valuable. i also realized that my story was one of hundreds, and that the hun-

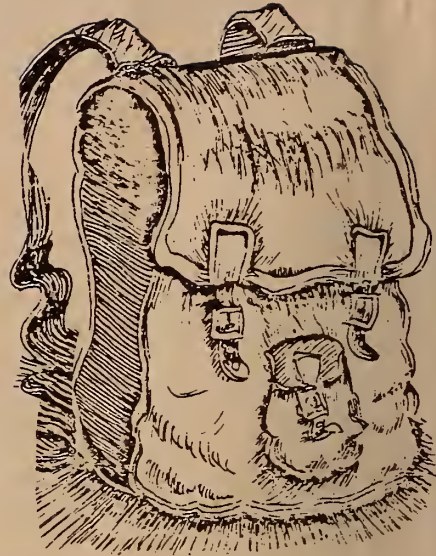
dreds were reactions to an overall strategy of the University: weed out the undesirables (undesirables being defined as those without privilege).

The pamphlet about the exam says:

The writing requirement is part of a general effort to improve the education offered by the college...

i would substitute for the word "improve" a new and more accurate word, "eliten" — eliten refers to the process of making something become elite.

Many undesirables are able to "pass" on the exam, and since i am one of them perhaps i could discern who the others are, and then we could bond together on campus and claim our education as our own. For, though i may be able to handle an alienating and stressful situation such as the Writing Proficiency Exam, i still need to learn about words and writing—something the exam is not about.



The Block

by Catherine Walsh

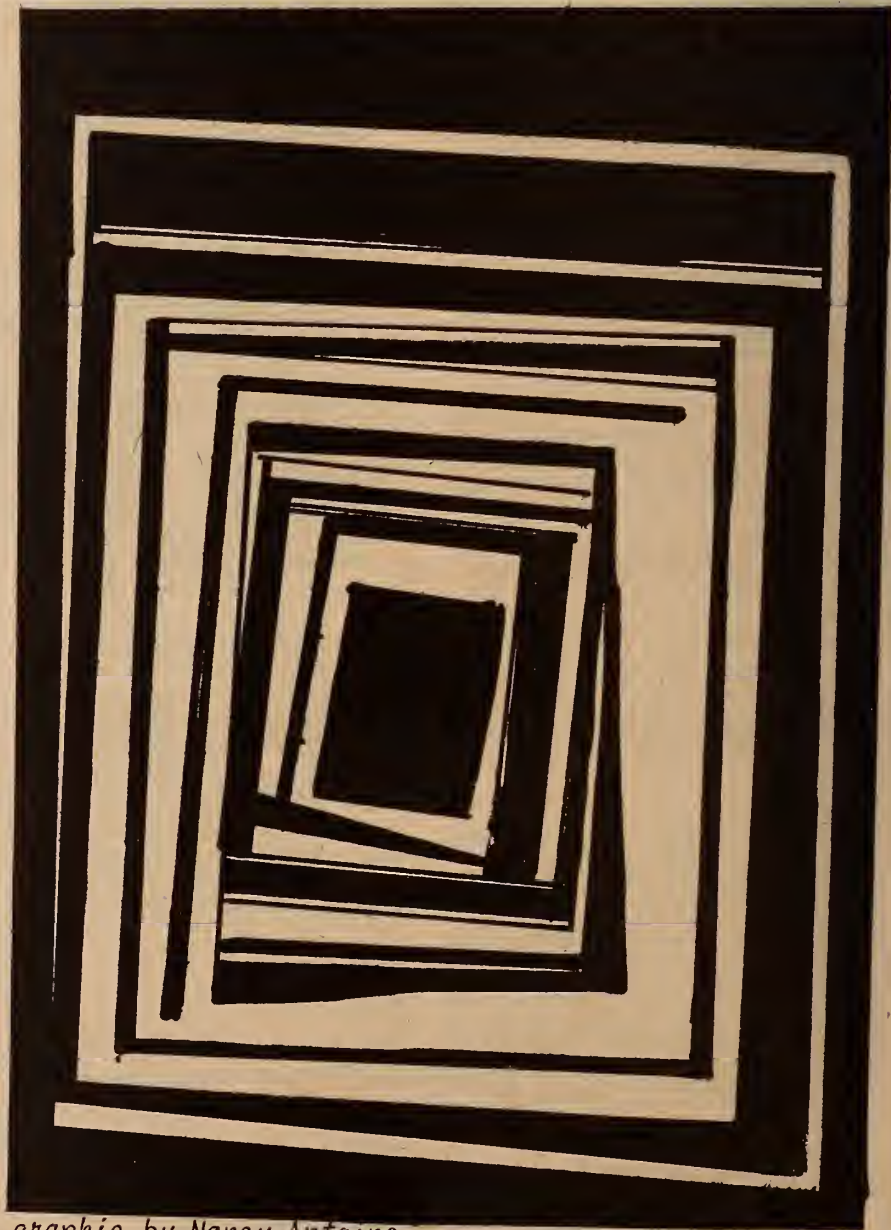
There is nothing as discouraging to a secretly aspiring writer like myself as botching up a paper, especially when the paper is a final exam. After having worked diligently all semester, after making many sacrifices, including foregoing much needed sleep, the feeling of inadequacy generated by such a catastrophe is overwhelming. Such was my experience during a recent exam.

For one whole hour I sat semi-mummified, unable to get started with my business. It was as if a hostile force had invaded me. As I read each question, ideas and possibilities flashed across my mind. But I was not able to really think. I was not in control. Only ripples of thoughts waved across the sea of my mind. Ripples that never carried enough volume or force to produce a full fledged, legitimate, or weighty idea that could pick up enough momentum and power to engulf everything in its track into one beautiful, bold, sweeping wave. I did not know then that there is a label for my dilemma. It is *the Block*.

I will try to describe the brutal Block in more detail. My mind becomes a battle ground, a chaotic muddle, instead of being an organized file where information is released at the press of a thought. It is football season. One stout idea stands up to assert itself and go for the ball, but before it takes aim it is slapped in the mouth, punched in the teeth, kicked in the shins and goes sprawling in the mud. A bigger burlier thought tries to make its mark only to meet with

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page 7 Writing as Women



graphic by Nancy Antoine

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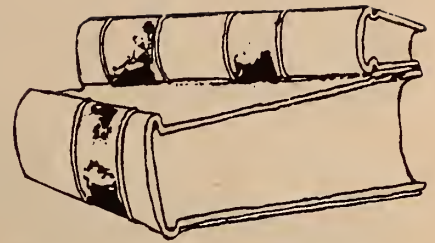
the same violence from the unruly mob. The result is a bloody Irish brawl. I sat there wondering if my dilemma has something to do with my inheritance. Maybe my genes were for too long soaked in Irish whiskey. Maybe I should play football and give up trying to write.

I watched my colleagues. Almost everyone seemed to have a dose of the Block. Several looked out the window as if they were looking for assurance from the clear blue sky and the cool soothing water in the bay that they were still on earth, flesh and blood. In a short time they would breathe again the salty sea air, tread in the friendly dirt, and crush the supple green grass underfoot. Some students left the room. I had a strong urge to get up and go home. But I did not. I just sat there filled with dread as if I had been launched upon a reluctant journey, like leaving home for school after the holidays, in days gone by. I tried to lecture myself on how senseless and childish my attitude was. I tried to recall the many successful exams I had taken in the past. But it was no use. My mind was like a March sky wracked and tattered by the wanton wind that belched great clouds across my face, smashing and toppling against each other, choking out light and reason.

Half an hour had passed. To my left, Patricia had already written pages and seemed as much at ease as if she were writing a letter to her mother. To my right, Dennis, who never took a note in class, was busy writing while I, who had taken volumes, sat there sweating gumdrops. I was overcome by a feeling of inadequacy. I might as well admit the facts: I could not rise to the occasion. "This is where they separate the men from the boys," as the saying goes. Oh how I loathe myself. My husband will say if I tell him, but I will not, "I told you so. You are wasting your time in a Liberal Arts program." Maybe he is right. After all, he usually is. The idea of making a career by the power of my pen is a high flight into fancy. If I had any sense I would go to Northeast Regional and become a plumber or a carpenter, as he has so often suggested.

Why can't I be like my friend Phyliss and find happiness living in a sterile house? Her image comes before me: she stood there with a gallon jug of clorox in one hand and a scrubbing brush in the other as she opened the door for me a week ago. Later, as we were having a cup of tea, she almost became hysterical when she spotted a little spider climbing behind the chair. I tried to calm her. She shrieked that she could not stand anything that was alive. After hearing that, I did not have the guts to tell her that in my house the spiders have their

own undisputed domain. My children have always been aware of this setup without ever having been told. Well, to heck with it all. I will never strive to be like my friend Phyliss. I would rather be a plumber any day. Well, I must write something. I cannot hand in a blank book. How could this teacher expect so much? We never gave her reason to.



Writing Blocks

—compiled by English 216: **Writing as Women**
fall 1981 Pam Annas

speech vs. silence
criticism/judgement
perfectionism
authority
freezing (at exams or other "crisis" points)
procrastination
writing anxiety
depression and numbness
self worth
what is my relation to my creativity
organizing material/clarity and coherence
confidence
the mechanics of writing
"creative" writing vs. essays
when the subject matter is alien
fear of intimacy/fear of communication
taking risks/fear of success
will the writing be any good/fear of failure
fear of my power/energy
fear of my anger
fear of knowing myself; what will happen if I realize who I am and what I want; what changes will I have to make in my life?
alienation from language itself: it doesn't belong to me, it isn't real to me, it isn't me
the question of audience or community: hostility
indifference
support, nurturance, love
what is my voice
"objectivity" vs. "subjectivity"
conforming to what's expected
fear of being trivialized
fear that I can't write the way they want me to or I refuse to write the way they want me to
the tyranny of structurelessness
empty words and sentences—blah blah
fear of being boring
dumb
insignificant
ridiculous
not liked
fear of being particular and specific, therefore committing oneself on paper in language
public vs. private writing/kinds of writing I feel comfortable with
writing vs. talking
the need to be in control/the fear that one is not
sloppy writing
self consciousness and embarrassment
a sense of class/race/gender nonprivilege



photo from Whippen family album

Grandmother

Emma was born in '95,
But now she's not alive — she's dead.
A dark grave holds her still — always will,
Death is forever they say.

A child and mother at eighteen,
A woman alone and torn between
her son and the need to survive.
They took him away —
So folks tell me.

From Quebec to the Lawrence textile mills,
What dreams did she lose along the way?
Work was a ten-hour day.
For twenty-five years of her life,
poverty, work and strife,
They gave her a pin which reads:
"Service Wins Favor."
It took her sight away.

Did she love me?
She never held me,
But knew I was there.
Did she care?
I don't know.
French honour and pride
Would not allow such
expressions.

Now she's safe in her pit.
Her rage against blindness done.

Did she ever love anyone?
Yes, for I am her grand-daughter,
Her blood in my veins,
Heritage of a fighter,
of a sufferagette,
I can't forget,
that all I am,
or hope to be,
lies in that dead, proud Body.
Writing as Women

Hi Grumps!

by Deb Whippen

"Hi Grumps!"

"Deb!" he says and i know that he is glad to see me. He is laying on the bed beneath a small, droning television that hangs from the ceiling. Tubes of yellow, brown, and green liquid crawl from under his blanket and curl up a thin metallic pole where they are fed drips from plastic bags. His left arm moves in a welcoming motion against the weight of a flat board that holds his intravenous lines in place.

"What happened today Grumps?" i say. i sit in the empty chair beside him. My eyes watch his eyes. We are alone for our hour together, the hour that we claim everyday as special, the hour before the family will start arriving in ones and twos. They will enter the room and look away from him, they will not let him speak of being sick, they will pretend that the outside world has stopped, that he is not missing a thing.

He tells me of the X-rays he had taken, of the new doctor that came by, of the nurse that made him laugh. He says that he is scared and that maybe they will let him eat something soon. And then he will say:

"So what's on tonight's agenda Deb?"

i will tell him where i will go, who i will see, what i will read. My i's become a we, and we discuss our homework from the night classes i attend, how to get rid of the mice in my apartment. i share with him a past i never knew: why he quit college in 1921, why he took a job in Chelsea city hall instead of working with his brother at Whippen's Ice Cream in Cambridge, how bad he felt when he sold the house on the lake in New Hampshire because Nana hated the drive. He tells me why it is important that i study, that i write, because i am a Whippen and that our life is wasted when we stop listening to ourselves and our needs.

We grow together, love each other, share our lives for over two months, one hour a day, in his hospital room. i watch his eyes as i tell him, ask him, that i am going to New York City. He says yes, go, have a good time and remember everything. My last night in New York i call my friend, she says my grandfather died four days ago, i missed the wake and funeral.

Since that time i have continued to write and to study, i have decided to keep my last name of Whippen. My muse is myself and my past, my grandfather whose i's became a we, who reminds me in memory never to stop listening to myself and to always remember.

Diving

by Mary McAlister

Why blue, I wonder, freeing silky strands of her long black hair caught between my lips and lashes. Leaning on one elbow, gently disentangling in this dark room, lit only by the glow of streetlight through window shades above the bed, I wonder why I am seeing a cloud of blue sparks. Settling back, belly around the curve of her hip, burrowing into her cradling shoulder, I let my mind drift down into my blue vision.

The color intensifies. My vision encompasses blue sky and blue water meeting in a fringe of dark green pines, small in the distance. I am suspended over water, sitting on gray weathered boards; my thin tanned legs squeezing together, my feet dangling above the water. My hands touch and my extended arms form a V against the sky.

On this night, this first time loving a woman, I have recalled the day in my childhood when I learned how to dive.

All that summer I had been watching the divers cleanly slice the water with a grace and power I longed for. I loved the moment when, approaching the dock's edge, they threw up their arms before bringing them down and out into the final forward arch that carried their bodies out, over, and into the water. The inevitability with which the entire fluid motion followed that first gesture thrilled me. I wanted to dive so badly I did not believe I could. I made my first dive sitting on the edge of the dock, bent forward, back curled, fingers pointing into the water. Throughout the morning lessons I had sat like this, on the crowded dock. All I needed was to let go, a small act of will; I couldn't do it. I did not fear the water; I loved it, trusted it, felt more secure in its dense support than on land. But I was terrified of making this headfirst plunge. In the afternoon I returned alone to the pond and sat one long hour on the dock's edge. The sun's heat prickled my scalp, my arms were numb. I would not dive and I would not quit trying.

I sat, waiting and staring.

I could look up at the sky through my scissored arms; it was a suspicious blue, too intense; an opaque shield until, as I stared closely into it, it began to throb. Looking out across the water was a relief. It was a clear blue at the surface that deepened in the distance where the sun sparkled. Beneath me the water was several shades mingled in subtle, shifting patterns. It was gray where the rippling surface created shadow, green where the sun sent shafts of golden particles and, beyond

I am a paper doll
popping the perforated dotted lines.
I am a vacuum sucking in air.
I am a pack of index cards;
people pick my brain.
I am a sheet of erasable paper
smudged and illegible.
I am the five foot T square
used to order the universe.
I am the focal lens
on a handheld camera.
I am the hole in a sock
enlarging with every toe poke.
I am a taperecorder
stuck on fast forward.
I am a declawed calico cat
pawing all I see.
I am a satin-skinned blue tulip.
I am part of a live 3D puzzle
manipulated by many hands.
I am newformed dough
clinging to the rolling pin.
I am anise saturating cookies.
I am the reflection of light
on crinkled aluminum foil.

Soul Lexicon



that, mysterious obsidian; I peered deeply.

I slipped. I had looked too long into the black spaces behind the shifting planes of light, they were the same black as my lover's eyes, and then, as on this night, I had been drawn in. A small, splintery motion unhitched my seat from the warm boards and I fell through a moment my fear extended.

Neither my fear nor my longing had prepared me for the ease of this gentle reception, the delicious coolness on my sun parched body; the light rippling caress, how closely the water hugged me, how perfectly we fit together. I

laughed and laughed again to see my joy bubble and rush to the surface. I turned somersaults, dipping down again and again into the dark water's depths. I lay below the surface laughing at my fresh vision of a world changed by my submersion. I was euphoric, overflowing with delight as I bobbed up breathless, clinging weakly to the dock's edge.

A light touch recalled me to the present; the woman I am lying with is asking me why I am laughing.

by Francine LaTerza

I Stand Naked

by Patricia Smock

I stand naked in front of my bedroom mirror, looking at my large whiteness. Once only viewed critically, I now appraise my body lovingly. I am strong, sturdy and built like a cello. The image before me in the mirror is familiar, yet at the same time new and exciting. The warm familiarity of myself floods me. The touch, smell, and taste of myself are the sensations of my first and lifetime lover.

My hips are sleek and hairless. They are the rounded back of some sea creature diving and swimming. Perhaps a porpoise with just the arc of its back visible as it speeds through the water. But the visual smoothness is a ruse that masks the prickly almost invisible hairs covering my thighs and ass. I rub them in one direction, and they are the hairs of a newborn's head. I rub them in the opposite direction, and they become the uncomfortable stubble of a just shaved leg. I move my palms inward from my thighs, across to my belly. While slowly moving my hands inward, I also turn them over, palms outward. The softness of my belly against the roughness of the backs of my hands, the warmth of my belly caressed by the coolness of my hands are wonderful contrasts of sensation. I am at once touched and feeling. I first stroke downward following the orderly but blurred line of my belly hairs. Hairs that cover a slightly indented vertical division of my belly into halves beginning at my belly button and ending among my pubic hairs. I love my belly button. It is the one mark on my body that reminds me that I came from, and was connected to, another woman. My hand is seduced further down my belly by the hair line. It is the wispy fur of dandelions gone to seed. The dark confusion of my pubic hairs waits. Dark confusion, I smile at the absurd implied sinister connotations of this image. Thoughtlessly, I begin methodically and completely scratching the entire of my pubic area. Thus totally charming myself with my own mirrored crude crotch-scratching self.

Lastly, I explore my breasts. I've watched my breasts form and grow over the years, sometimes I have felt detached about them. Me, their casual observer. I've seen these once pink, light, tight, seemingly milkless and glandless, scared, bound, naive, shy breasts age into my fuller, prouder woman's breasts. And, saggier, the years of bralessness having freed and loosened their form. I trace with both my eyes any my index finger the white-blue lines, stretchmarks, that run from the wide base of my breasts into my nipples. They stand in like missing veins, or empty riverbeds. I lick my index finger and my thumb, and roll my nipple between them. The first rush of wet warmth is quickly replaced by a thrill of cold-aided dampness. My nipple and the brown circle-color surrounding it pucker in response. The brown of color tightens to sunbaked mud cracks.



Anger into Action

by Pam Glaser

photo by Diana Myers

One out of every three women in this country will be raped before her life is over. I am already an active part of this statistic; I have been raped. Unfortunately I can't relax and enjoy my life now—statistics don't work that way. Not a day goes by that I don't think about being attacked again. I walk down the street, and, especially if I am alone, or in a thinly populated area, I wonder about each and every man who approaches me. Will he be the one? I wonder about my male friends and relatives, because statistics say that in over 60 per cent of cases I will be at least casually acquainted with the man who rapes me. Every day I open the news-

self-determination. To me, the fear that I experience on a daily basis constitutes a rape of my mind—a continuous violation of my freedom and self-determination. I cannot go wherever I want and do whatever I want. I am always restricted by the implied threat of rape that every man poses—merely by virtue of his existence.

Any man could be a rapist. He could be black or white (over 93 per cent of the time he will be the same race as the woman he rapes), young or old, cute or ugly, or anything in between. He could be a policeman, a garbageman or my father. It is one of the biggest con games of all times that we, as women, have

"Instead of ballet and baton twirling, instead of knitting and playing tennis, women will learn how to defend themselves... I have a vision. I can see a cultural revolution that could take place in this country."

paper and read about another horrible rape, or hear about another friend of mine who has been raped. Any time any woman is raped it brings up in me an anger and hatred so powerful I feel that I have the capacity to kill.

The law defines rape as: The forcible penetration of an act of sexual intercourse on the body of a woman. Feminists have broadened that definition to include: Any type of sexual assault that is an invasion of bodily integrity and a violation of freedom and

been led to believe that men will protect us—from themselves. Recently in Boston, a man at the Brigham Hospital wrote a glowing letter of recommendation for a fellow staff member, Dr. Hussain. Hussain was looking for a new job; he had just been fired because of his conviction of rape in the gang rape of a nurse. It is clear from cases like this that men only protect men.

Our legal system, which is run by men, does not protect women from rape. Because of the social stigma at-

tached to rape, and the humiliation that women face in court, it is estimated that only one out of every ten rapes are reported. In 1981, in Massachusetts' Middlesex County, where I live, arrests were made in only 67.9 per cent of the reported rapes. Of the rapes reported, only 16.1 per cent of the men actually went to prison, while the rest are still walking the streets.

Men rape because they hate and fear women. The violence of rape is a way to control and humiliate us—to take away our power and dignity. Rape is common to every patriarchal society such as ours. Men ensure that they keep the power that patriarchy affords them by systematically beating down women, through rape, battering, and other forms of physical and psychological violence.

All of our cultural conditioning leads men to be rapists and women to be victims. In order to stop rape we have to eliminate the system of patriarchy. I have a vision. I can see a cultural revolution that could take place in this country. It has already started. To understand how this revolution will work, think about the psychology of rape.

The rapist needs a victim. He has many weapons; his victim, traditionally, has few or none. His weapons are: the historical privileges of membership in the more powerful group; his larger size; his culturally enforced traits of aggression, athletic ability, and fighting skills; the implied threat of his ability to inflict injury; his access to weapons such as guns and knives, and the resources to learn how to use them. The woman, as a victim, is: smaller physically, culturally conditioned to be weak and passive, less athletic, and has been denied access to weapons and fighting skills. What we have today is a war. Men are armed and well-prepared for battle, while women are totally unprepared. The rapist counts on the fact that women are unprepared. He neither wants nor expects a fight.

The vision I see of a revolution is one where the women of this country become strong and learn to fight back. When we see this situation for what it is, a war, and prepare ourselves for battle, we can stop being victims.

I do not blame women for being victims. Centuries of conditioning put us in the position of victim. But men will not stop raping and beating us if we just ask them nicely. Reasoning with them will not work either. We have to forcefully take their power away from them in order to stop being oppressed by it. And they will not give it up easily.

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In my vision, we begin by having women teach Karate and other fighting arts to all women. It is especially important to teach the young, as they are the most vulnerable. Instead of ballet and baton twirling, instead of knitting and playing tennis, women will learn how to defend themselves. Building strength, even through weight-lifting and sports, isn't enough. Girls and women must be taught to develop power through learning to fight.

When a woman is attacked, as in any emergency situation, she feels a rush of adrenaline surge through her body. This adrenaline makes her much stronger than usual. What is missing, in order for her to use her strength, is the technical knowledge of what to do. She must learn how to kick a man in the knee and break his leg so that he cannot chase her. How to gouge his eyes and blind him so that he cannot see her.

Along with these technical skills will come a change in attitude. Women will learn to value ourselves, and be willing and ready to fight for our survival. We will turn our fear into anger, and our anger into action. We will band together and fight back in groups as well as alone.

This vision is already a reality on a small scale. The National Women's Martial Arts Federation, to which I belong, has members all over the country, who are dedicated to teaching women the fighting arts. Among our



photo by S. Fleishman

Founder of the Boston Women's Goju-Ryu, Pam Glaser (photo far right) teaches Karate. The school is located at 26 Waltham St., Boston, MA, 426-3806.

members there are many women who have successfully fought back against verbal and physical harassment and rape. As we continue to teach in our gyms, community centers and colleges, the number of women armed with these skills grows. My vision is that we continue spreading this knowledge until all

women know how to fight.

We will fight back. And we will win.

Any woman who wishes further information about Karate or Self-Defense classes in her area should write to The National Women's Martial Arts Federation, P.O. Box 945, Provincetown, MA. 02657

Taking Each Other Seriously

by Patricia Smock

The conflict didn't begin on the day it exploded. No, it began with the first day of class. It was such a wonderful rush to be in a small class of women gathered to write. We were not there to write research papers, or abstract stiltedly intellectual topic papers, or to answer leading questions designed only so students can spew forth as much specific crap as possible. Instead we were to think and write about ourselves, to share the experience of the writing process with each other, with other women. The uniqueness of this situation, the potential, and the gift to be allowed this in a university setting put unbelievable expectations on this class. The class was too good to be true—the answer to a dream. Reality had to set in.

It was not enough to be a room full of women sharing a common desire to write. For we weren't only writing as

women. We were also writing and discussing written work as Lesbians, Black women, working class women, Hispanic women, Jewish women, Irish women, mothers, even a militantly bisexual woman and the list goes on and on with as many variables as women in class. That we were all women was the foundation. It was the common factor that gave us a place to start. From that starting point we ran straight on, head-first into our differences.

I can now write about the class itself and the specifics of that awful day with the certainty that hindsight gives. Yet I was unaware at the time that trouble was brewing. I was, like perhaps most of the other women in the class, trying to find my own place, testing out my own voice. There is a certain amount of fear that goes with taking Women Studies courses and being responsible for all the interactions that happen in a classroom.

For instance, if a woman makes what I think is a racist statement, how do I call her on it? After all, who am I to judge her? How would I feel if she in turn pointed out some assumptions underneath one of my remarks? How can we be free to think, speak, share, or grow when we feel afraid of each other's close scrutiny? When we are afraid of our own ignorance?

Besides fear, there is a high level of insecurity that also accompanies the responsibility of Women's Studies classes. (No woman can be completely certain the words she speaks or the ideas she holds are her own.) First we bring to the class different degrees of past work on issues such as class oppression and racism. Second, like immigrants in a foreign culture, women must wrestle with the reality of expressing themselves in a language not their own.

The door slammed shut, all the oxygen had followed M. out the door.

We were asked in "Writing as Women" to think about ourselves as women. That is, to think about the one shared huge aspect of oppression in our lives — our womanness. This heightened our awareness, opened our sensitivity to other aspects of our oppression. One working class woman sat and fumed during a class discussion of hunger. Someone had made the comment that we as Americans could never understand what subsistence hunger feels like. The working class woman did know hunger, but she was too shy, unsure, ashamed, or angry to speak up.

But I've side tracked from my task, to tell about the day of the "blow-out" incident. In the barest most factual way, what happened is this. One of the women in the class, an Hispanic woman, M., chose to respond to a particular reading and came to class that day prepared to speak about her reservations. The assigned reading was by Lesbian feminist writer Mary Daly. Mary Daly takes words and reduces them to their roots to uncover hidden assumptions and meanings in language, but she only writes about the European-Christian origins of language. M. brought in a response to Mary Daly written by the Black Lesbian feminist writer Audre Lorde. In this article, "An Open Letter to Mary Daly", Audre Lorde questions Mary Daly's limits and her omissions as racist. M. had a copy of the article made for all the other students in class, passed it out, and asked if she could speak.

Although her talk never happened, I don't think M. was just going to talk about Mary Daly's cultural solipism, but was going to use this article as a forum to discuss her feeling about the class. M. was criticizing the class for our own cultural tunnel-vision. Because she wrote so well, it was easy to overlook the fact that she not only had to find her voice as a woman using an alien language, but also as a Spanish person writing in English. In this class of all women, a class of women who were dealing with their own oppression, many of whom had participated in anti-racist C-R groups, M. was still isolated and alienated.

Yet I didn't know all this at the time. I had the hand-out M. made and was waiting for her to speak. Before M.

could begin to speak, make her statement, or even say anything, a white woman sighed heavily, audibly, gathered her belongings and stalked out of class. This white woman is working class, a mother, involved in welfare advocacy, and had been involved in anti-racist work. For me, sitting there in

class, I could not grasp what was happening. Why had she walked out. M., was of course, greatly offended. She blew up. Pissed, she stormed out of the room also. After the door slammed shut, a dead quiet filled the room. It was chokingly airless, as if all the oxygen had followed M. out the door.

With both women gone the rest of the class sat paralyzed in a sickeningly immobile silence. Women went to find the two women and bring them back to class. Only M. returned.

When she came back, M. spoke about her isolation and her anger. She said how tired she was of being responsible for educating white feminists. She said she was exhausted and unwilling to have to explain herself all the time. It took a lot of courage for her to return to class. M. put herself on the line. Yet little of what she said got through. We questioned her on specifics and got bogged down in personalities. What we needed to discuss and understand was something much larger. We needed to realize that we, the class, had not made room for her. That we had not made the space for her experience to exist, and that M. was sick of having to fight for her right to exist and to see that existence reflected in class interactions and in course material. Perhaps because of the uniqueness of an all woman's writing class, M., frustrated, decided that she was unwilling to fight for what seemed so assumed by the rest of us, that this class would be a place where our voices would be heard.

M. left the class after this day. She did finish the course as an independent study. The white woman who first walked out returned to class and finished the semester. I can't help wondering if it was because she was white that she felt she was able to return to class. Yet she spent much of the rest of the semester isolated from the class as a whole. She rarely spoke in class, and never truly re-joined us. It is hard for me not to have mixed feelings about her decision to walk out. She said she had made the decision as a move for self preservation. That she felt her anger rising and didn't want to be driven to express her anger in ways she'd be sorry about. I don't understand how she felt that day, but I do get a sense that what she did was an expression of her own

need. She chose to act out of that need. I do not understand that attitude anymore than I understand M.'s unwillingness to view the women in class as separate women, and not as a unified block of racists.

I have no overall analysis of the many sides of this complex incident. I have tried to include as many threads of this intricately woven issue as possible. Let me try to articulate some of my feelings about, and since, that day. The class "Writing as Women" was to be an oasis for me; I put great hopes and huge expectations into that class. So many feminist things I've been involved with lately have been torn apart by anger and differences among women. For instance, the NWSA (National Women's Studies Association) Conference this year became a heated war between white women and women of color, between straight women and Lesbians, and between academic women and community women. I wanted this class to be different. I was tired of the pain of deconstruction, the unguidedness of anger. I felt ready to build. I wanted something that was, by the process of honest feminist growth, not yet possible. I wanted women to get beyond their anger, but I first must be willing to hear and learn to understand that anger. I see many feminist organizations and even other Women's Studies classrooms torn apart by this head on clash of differences. My learned woman's inclination is to try to settle the disagreements as quickly as possible with the fewest number of feelings getting hurt — to sweep the ugliness of scenes like this day away. This would be easier, and would feel better, but would deny the women with differences from my existence. And that is what all the anger is about.

Broken down by the anger expressed that day was a barrier that I created between myself and the class. I had built up a self/other distinction between myself and the other women in class. I was ready each day of class to give my opinion and to say my bit, but I wasn't really open to accepting what other women had to say. I wasn't taking other women's stories into myself. That horrible angry day broke down this self/other split. I felt part of the class, not just myself attending class. Only then was I ready to let things that happened in class affect and change me. Almost as if I were a fraud, M.'s anger made me feel exposed, found out, and embarrassed. I began to examine my behavior in class, and myself as part of the class.

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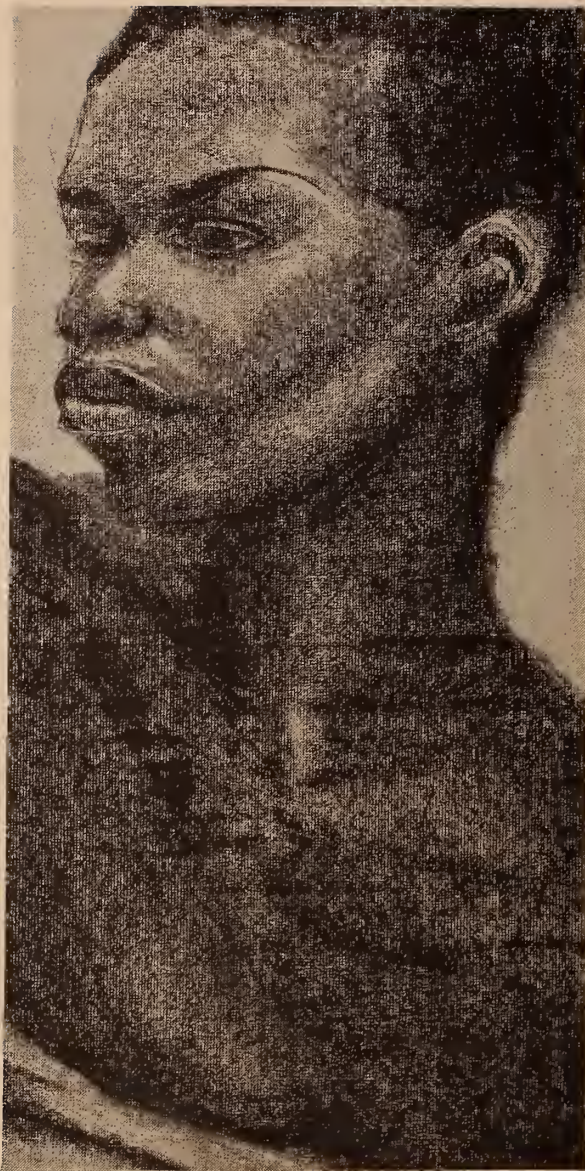


photo by Karen Sjöholm

In the Tub

by Mary Price

I fold my body into the water, each of my hairs standing on end in reaction to the hot water against cold skin. I sink further into the tub, submerging myself slowly—first my legs, my ass, then, my back, my breasts. Covered with water now, I feel protected by the hot fluid around me; like the comfort of getting into a bed of thick covers or being held tight by a lover: the contact of water to skin, the warmth and distance between me and the rest of the world. As I lie back in the tub I feel my body relaxing; I trust the safety of the heat and let go. This is a haven for me and one of the few places I feel safe. My eyes, at first unfocused, now focus on the ripple of water against skin. I love my body through a layer of water. My pubic hair floats up just barely above the water like plant life growing up out of the ocean. All my hair seems now to be free floating, waving back and forth like the cilia of lower life forms, I expect it to cause perceptible movement. My belly, a small half-circle, rises and falls as I release and contract my stomach muscles playing with the landscape of body through water. My breasts amaze me the most though. Full breasts with a tendency to hang when I stand, they are now upright. Proudly sitting, seemingly on top of the water: a circle of nipple, surrounded by a circle of white skin, then a circle of water underneath which lies another circle of skin. I rock back and forth, my breasts, belly, and pubic hair slowly swaying causing the water to splash up against the sides of the tub. The sound of splashing and swaying soothes me. I am soothed. I am changed; no longer in control of this body of mine.

Encounter

by Elizabeth Burns

I felt cold, sweaty and dirty after my first and last sexual encounter with Ken, an encounter that lasted thirty hellish minutes.



Ken, a protestant priest, looked like a jock with big brown eyes, a big brown nose, a big brown dick, and big brown feet. He smelled like a musk ox and tasted salty as fried salt pork. A childhood pal, Ken never wanted me during my teens. He thought about the cloth, and only about the cloth. But now when his calling was in doubt, Ken wanted sex—and from me; I was very ready.

Ken thrust his penis into my open vagina. The erect dick I wanted because of an early and recurring childhood fantasy. The thrust I neither wanted nor needed to make me come. But he did it time and again in spite of my cries. It seemed to me that this 6' 5" hunk of a man knew nothing about being gentle. I told him to ease back, that I wasn't going any place so he needn't jab at me with his horsehead. He didn't take the suggestion well because he wrapped his ample thigh around mine and thrust so hard I felt a sharp pain that extended at my cervix to my left ovary and beyond. He was sweating like a pig and made these strange "onk" sounds from deep within his throat. Through much of that painful experience I fixed my eyes on a large wall clock and counted every excruciating second. I hated the thrusting; I wanted to escape, but I was trapped.

His penis stayed erect for the entire thirty minutes—then it happened—Ken's semen spurt forth, from a mauling bull it came, flooding my valley and creating a pond of pure protein and anger. Thank God it was over.

There was no after glow or chit chat. Ken didn't bother to thank me as he was dressing. Nor did he kiss me when his clammy hand was on the door knob. All he said was that it was his first and last time with me or anybody and goodbye!



Unfinished Business

by Judy Bousquin



Procrastination is not alien to the human race. Everyone puts things aside at some time or another for one reason or another. It is a fact of life. No one can do everything on time all of the time or as thoroughly as they would like to. However, there is a group of people who utilize procrastination as a tool more often and more seriously than any other group: students. Due to heavy workloads and the pressure to perform, students are very susceptible to procrastination.

The preoccupation of putting things off is a common affliction to which many students, including myself, have been subject. Regardless of its prevalence, there is a stigma attached to it, for procrastination has long been synonymous with laziness. Victimized students do not want to be labeled lazy, especially if we are in the process of evading an assignment. No, we do not want to be tagged because we know there is validity to our procrastination. Procrastination is not so much denied as it is euphemized. And we learn the popular and accepted excuses for not being prompt with our work. These excuses may not be appropriate for many cases at all but who would believe the real reasons anyway?

Fear underlies many of the reasons for procrastination. Fear of failure, fear of success, fear of the work itself, fear of criticism, fear of expectations, fear of appearing dumb. Some of us fear the outcome of our work — that it will not be worth a professor's time or will not meet our own standards. This fear is

characteristic of perfectionists in particular. The overall quality of the product is insignificant — perfectionists are never satisfied. Other procrastinators are diffident: fearing to expose their opinions, they lack confidence in their voice. They are, also, unsatisfied with whatever it is they produce.

Fear is not the only basis for postponement. Alienation from our work can make us not want to deal with it. Not feeling connected with either the subject matter or the way it is taught can stifle creativity. Then there are writing blocks, family problems, health problems and other personal concerns that all have the potential for hindering productivity.

There are, no doubt, chronic procrastinators among us. These are people who thrive under pressure, or claim they do anyway, and deliberately wait till the last minute to get down to anything. They can be, but do not necessarily have to be, distinguished from the individuals who feel incomplete if they do not have the sensation of a ton of bricks on their shoulders. And some procrastinators simply need the security of constantly having something to do. Because procrastinators are always busy, usually doing something other than what they know they should be doing.

Whatever rationalizations we cling to to defend our placing work aside, we go to great lengths to avoid doing whatever it is we want to avoid. Eschewing papers and studying and reading can be either a conscious or an unconscious

avoidance. No matter what our degree of sensitivity is to it all, we know that something that is expected to get done is not getting done. Much time and energy is required to effectively put off academic responsibilities whether the root of the procrastination is recognized or not. But this does not mean that we do not think about our work or do not attempt, on some level, to do it. On the contrary, the shunned assignments are always on our minds — we know the work has to get done — we want to do it — but tomorrow looks more promising.

Anything else, besides the undone schoolwork, seems not only more interesting, but more crucial to the procrastinator. The usual mundane duties of cleaning out a closet or waxing the kitchen floor, washing the dishes or dusting old books are more appealing when undesirable school tasks need attending to. These are typical methods of active procrastination. Active procrastination is used mostly by those who are consciously putting work aside. Being productive while avoiding the need-to-be-done project alleviates guilt, is easy to justify (this has to be done anyway), and, if in the position of ignoring the ten page research paper that is due the following week, one can pacify oneself by saying... "I can think about my approach to the Russian Revolution while sorting out my winter socks."

A more subtle avoidance is passive procrastination. Unlike its active counterpart, procrastination in the passive form initially goes undetected by the procrastinator — an unconscious evasion of work. The reason it is labeled "passive" is because it is basically a roundabout method of putting off a task. We may actually set aside time to do something and even have all the pertinent materials at hand. Our attention, however, is easily diverted by reading irrelevant information, writing unnecessary notes or scribbling in our books. Eventually we realize we have procrastinated — we either have nothing or very little to show for the time we supposedly devoted to the work.

Another type of procrastination is when we are so overwhelmed with our overdue work that we cannot even get started. Those of us inflicted with this kind of procrastination are acutely aware of what we are avoiding but we are too numb to face it. We are also so guilty about not doing what we are putting off that we find it difficult to plan any sort of project to prolong confronting our toil. Outside circumstances need to be relied upon to relieve anxiety, i.e.,

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closer friendships than men. However, even that is isolating. Once, in talking with a group of women, I found that many of us felt more comfortable speaking one-on-one with people than in groups. This is a landlocked situation and one that seems to fall along gender lines. The danger in it is that it's like sharing your poems only with a best friend while the men go out there and get the reviews. The ability to make close ties or talk about emotions is not really valued in our society.

What do women talk about? There's always been talk between my friends and me like "the garden is beautiful, it's beautiful, isn't it?" women's talk that some view as trivial or unimportant in content. But there's something strong in the kind of talk that goes on around kitchen tables. A secret code develops. This code began for me at parties where my friends and I would giggle over Beatle magazines. I feel a loyalty to that code but a resentment that was so often based on discussion of lipstick or George, Paul and Ringo. Boys, I imagine, talked about fighting, sex and baseball. A language went along with those codes. The language I learned as a girl was pretty, full of passivity and silence; there was no proper language for the issues of blood and anger. Much of what went on when I was a child made me angry but there were no words a nice girl could use to describe it. Her options were to remain silent or to use indirect language, the kind that curls around anger like smoke and soon disappears. And so now I think our language can sometimes seem 'trivial,' can be about diapers and the 'beautiful garden' because we've been taught to speak safely and bandage our hurts with polite, pretty words. And we talk about the bandages in questions and sighs, unable to curse, yell or break windows in the 'beautiful garden.'

The garden grows roots. In practical terms, these associations often make it frustrating for me to talk. In conversation with a person I find that I often rehash what they're saying and rephrase the idea. Or I fill in a blank for them as they grope for a word. When they ask a question I often answer with a short sentence which is not a method of synthesizing but of panic. If a person expects an answer I begin to avoid eye contact so that I'll give them a chance to leave the conversation. I often end midsentence saying "I don't know what I mean" when most times I do. My hand is often close to my mouth or brushes my lips so that the words become mumbled. I am always somehow in near retreat, fearing boredom or ridicule or a number of negative responses. My

biggest fear is that I might have to disagree or form an opinion or ask for something I want. For a long time I thought I had no opinions; I thought I was meant to be some kind of wall-flower in that garden, only accepting talk that was stripped of thorns.

I don't think that this is a problem that is particular to me; I think that many women suffer from some form of silence. When I was young we played a game called Silent School where the winner was the girl who could remain quiet and unmoving the longest. The game for girls was not who could jump the highest or argue the best. The game was which girl could be the least demanding and least opinionated. To speak up now is to step outside of that game, even though there's a feeling that you're breaking the rules. But then the rules need to be broken because silence has such a loud, clear sound.

Taking Each Other Seriously

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Women's Studies classes are unlike any other classes. In other class rooms there is an absolute, the teacher. Information can be open for discussion, but the final authority on that information is always the teacher. In a Women's Studies class, the students bring with each of themselves the authority of their own experience. Each student is responsible for all that happens in the class. There is virtually no way to attend a Women's Studies class and be a passive or uninvolved student.

The benefits of this way of approaching education are obvious. Knowledge is not a stagnant block of irrefutable facts. It is, like feminism, a fluid, ever changing process of accepting information, testing that information against personal experience, and accepting that which works for you as true and rejecting what doesn't work. Often this process is as painful as it is rewarding. In the class "Writing as Women," there was a conflict and an angry confrontation not unique to this class but like so many confrontations characteristic of feminism right now. Feminists began with much the same naive optimism that I began this class. And, as with the class, feminists are now finding we must dig in at our border, more painful, realities. I realize now how fragile both students and teachers of Women's Studies are as we grope for better more honest ways to learn.

Thanks for support, suggestions, etc., in this article to Deb Whippen, Judy Bousquin, Beth Bagley, Mary McAlister, Nancy Antoine, Francine LaTerza, Pam Annas, and Allison Hurley.

Patricia Smock

enough snow to cancel school for a week, a broken leg, a knapsack with important books stolen.

Procrastinators do not heed the proverb: "Do not put off till tomorrow what you can do today." But things can be put off for just so long. Tomorrow eventually comes, often without warning. Then it is time to depend on strong coffee, inspiration and endurance in order to survive the sleepless marathon of work.

Many of this breed feel unsatisfied when the work is completed. We know we could have done better if we invested more time and energy or more productive time and energy to assignments. The continuous worry of producing something, anything, the rereading and rethinking do not seem, in retrospect to have been worth it.

The process of doing procrastinated work is boring. Procrastinators have to go back to something started long ago and rehash stale notes and thoughts. Whether the final product turns out to be outstanding or just okay, procrastinators judge their work as insignificant. It is made even more dull and meaningless when the procrastinator misses out on social events to do the long put-aside work. And it seems all too inconsequential when the procrastinator gets down to business and recalls all the other things they have put off.

photo by David Garcia



On Taking Women Students Seriously the September issue of Ms. "save these pages?"

by Maryellen Sullivan

Let me start out by saying that what I am about to write is written in anger. The September issue of *Ms.* magazine was a back-to-school issue and contained a section called "Gazette" and in parenthesis "save these pages." There are four pages of "tips, quizzes, and trivia" for the college woman that I found totally offensive and belittling. I cannot imagine anyone taking a woman student seriously if this piece of journalism is supposed to be any indication of our mentality.

For me, *Ms.* magazine is not a voice that speaks to feminists. It is, however, a valid medium that reaches out to women who were raised with patriarchic values and who are gradually rejecting the more abhorrent ones. It also gives me an indication of what the mainstream American woman is experiencing, since I do not own a television, and therefore miss the shock-value of this particular medium. I am always careful to read between the lines, that is, I pay attention to advertisement, layout, and the overall "party-line" of a publication. The ads in *Ms.* are only slightly more conscious than the other "women's magazines," but condescendingly so. Advertisements that urge women to break away from male cigarettes, liquor, automobiles, etc., and discover slimmer, lighter, pastelly, sleek women's products are extremely manipulative and present a false, bourgeois, empty version of "liberation."

Anyway...this entire "Gazette" made me furious. One helpful list was headed with the title: "What You Can't Live Without, but You Might Want to Hide." They list your Barbie, vibrator, retainer, Cliff Notes, Fredericks of Hollywood catalogue, Hostess cream filled cupcakes, Kwell, rosary, Jolen mustache bleach, *Seventeen* magazine, and a five year diary. Primarily, saying that we would want to hide these things indicates shame. We should be ashamed, but someone finds them essential to a woman student. The message I get from these items is as follows—

a Barbie: the epitome of the male defined woman, large breasts, disproportionately long legs, feet in the eternal high-heeled position, blond, white, and plastic. (I ask myself if any editor in the country would print a male counterpart to this, and what would it possibly be?)

a Vibrator: this is a token reference to

sexuality and by all means we should hide it.

a Retainer: the middle class experience as the normal one. Orthodontia equals money, and so may education soon.

Cliff Notes: Are we serious students?

Fredericks of Hollywood catalogue: despite all the hard work put into breaking this stereotype of women, we all secretly long to be Barbie dolls with crotchless underwear...

Hostess cupcakes... and we don't really respect our bodies.

Kwell: assume you will contact lice or crabs from a sleazy but somehow cute liason.

a Rosary: religion is not cool, it is not liberal. Hide it.

Mustache bleach: be feminine and unoffensive; certain aspects of our bodies are repulsive.

Seventeen magazine: assuming you are either a teenager or have the mentality of one.

Five Year Diary: these words written in scroll on a pink vinyl cover. What self-respecting writer would write in one except as a joke or in deliberate mockery.

In another section we have roommate compatibility advice. Here our individuality and maturity becomes trivialized. We are advised to choose a room mate who is the same size as we are so that we can expand our wardrobe. This advice is cliched and minimalizing to women's relationships. It reduces human interaction to the level of "What can I get from this person?"

"You'll know the roommate honeymoon is over when she tries to physically abuse your teddy bear for some trifling offense on your part."

I live with another woman and our disagreements are very real and upsetting. Disagreements in our living situation usually revolve around delicate issues of individual space and resentment of invasion therein. Often, people are carrying a lot of heavy emotional baggage when it comes to living situations. Experiences of living with their families, neurotic housemates, or demanding lovers make current living arrangements highly charged with expectations. I respect this and take it seriously; it is not the insignificant absurdity portrayed by *Ms.* One would gather that college life is one big frolic or sleep-over party without any frustrations too large that they could not be taken out on a toy.

When the "Gazette" editors give us suggestions on how to earn money they present us with "The Ultimate Student Service" which is a tuck-in service at bedtime for students who sorely miss Mommy and Daddy. The charge is two dollars for a bedtime story and a "chaste night-night peck on the forehead." Is it possible to scream on paper? AAAGH!

There are many of us out there working for a living at demanding jobs for very little pay while simultaneously attending school. We are not all middle-class because we attend universities, even though Reagan would have it thus.

I could almost cry when I read their list of "Valid Excuses for Being Late to Class." Here it gets too, too trivial. December 28th is the Miss Cheerleader contest and January 22nd is the Supreme Court decision on abortion. That they juxtapose these two issues makes me sad.

Two final questions: who are these people? and why save these pages?



photo by Francine LaTenza



The Dance

by Joyce Wermont

The pianist opens the song with a tune that invokes images of gypsies and flamenco dancers. Soon the melody begins to interweave those ancient musical strains with modern urban jazz, spanning centuries. The orchestra is warming up, other instruments one by one blending in, each bringing its own special influence. The trumpets' sharp, tangy notes penetrate the air, golden and glowing. Open palms slap drum heads, skin on skin, and the room is filled with African rhythms, fast, staccato. The sound of maracas and cowbells sends my blood rushing. This music is red-hot spicy cayenne that clears the sinuses, making its way into those deep, hidden, untouched corners where no sound has ever gone. The leading melody is joined by a chorus of four, five, maybe more, singing a repetitive verse, almost a chant. The words themselves are music, exciting and soothing at the same time, hypnotizing. Guitars add a fullness and richness to the sound and a lively bass makes the whole song jump.

Looking around the room as I dance, I see a crowd of heads bobbing up and down, moving to the tempo. Some couples dance graceful, practiced steps while others move in their own free style. Such a variety: men in suits and women wearing colorful, flowing dresses, flowers in their hair, others simply dressed in jeans and cotton shirts. There are brown faces, black, and white, some sweaty, others intent and serious, but most smiling and relaxed. The ballroom is large and luxurious, lit by thousands of tiny bulbs in the ceiling which sparkle and give the impression of a starry sky. The room is packed, the dance floor lined with people talking and drinking, and I feel the heat radiating from nearby dancers. As a woman whirls past me, I catch a whiff of her perfume.

The song ends, a temporary stillness, and the crowd disperses. Sweat pours down my face and back, adding to the dampness of my hair and clothing. Heat forms an aura around me and my temples throb. My breathing is short and rapid. For nearly two hours I have been dancing non-stop and I think about sitting down for a drink, taking a rest. But as the next song begins I know I can keep dancing for hours; my energy is boundless. The music moves in my blood like wine. My body yearns to lose itself in the endlessness of those drums, those chanting voices. My untrained feet know instinctively what to do. I'm in perfect sync with my partner, as though we had been dancing together for years. We move back and forth, apart, together, apart, together, swinging each other round and around, in and out through the loops of our arms, our movements growing wilder and wilder. I enter a state of euphoria, my spirit soaring, brain on fire, until there is nothing but pure sound and movement. My body was made for this rhythm, and I am flying.

Cezanne

In this way we have a place to stay and he was not met because he was settled to stay. When I said settled I meant settled to stay. When I said settled to stay I meant settled to stay Saturday. In this way a mouth is a mouth. In this way if in as a mouth if in as a mouth where, if in as a mouth where and there. Believe that they have water too. Believe they have water too. And blue when you see blue, is all blue precious too. Is all that is precious too, is all that. And they meant to absolve you.

In this way Cezanne nearly did nearly in this way. Cezanne nearly did nearly did nearly did. And was I surprised. Was I very surprised was I surprised. And in that, patient, are you patient when you find bees. Bees in a garden make a specialty of honey and so does honey. Honey and prayer honey and there. There where the grass can grow nearly four times yearly.

— Gertrude Stein



reproduction of Picasso's Stein

Cezanne/Stein

a found poem by Wendy Bembery

In this way we have a place to stay
and he was not met because he was settled to stay.
When I said settled
I meant settled to stay.

When I said settled to stay
I meant settled to stay — Saturday.

In this way a mouth is a mouth.
In this way if in as a mouth
if in as a mouth where,
if in as a mouth where — and there.

Believe they have water too
Believe they have water too
And blue when you see blue,
(is all blue precious too)
Is all that is precious too,
(is all that)
And they meant to absolve you.

In this way Cezanne nearly did, nearly
In this way.

Cezanne nearly did
nearly did
nearly did

And was I surprised.
was I (very) surprised.
was I surprised.
I (was) surprised

And in that, patient,
(Are you patient when you find bees)

Bees in a garden make a specialty of honey
(And so does honey)

Honey and prayer.
Honey and there.

There where the grass can grow nearly four times yearly

D i s a r m e d



photo by Francine LaTerza

by Kayla Kirsch

Before I broke both of my wrists, I was not capable of real-izing what life was like for a person who is physically disabled. It wasn't until I hit the concrete after falling backwards from a second story porch in Somerville that I began to directly experience life without arms.

My swollen fingers cramped involuntarily against the rough edges of my cold white prisons; two plaster casts were molded securely around my arms. Although I pressed my arms against my chest for protection, I still felt naked, vulnerable. Raw.

However, despite my shaky emotional state, I learned several tricks to handle my new disability. When my eleven-year-old housemate, Jeffrey, cut his finger with a butcher knife, I kicked the telephone off the hook on the wall, and with the big toe of my right foot, I dialed my friend Marian's phone number and then called the Mount Auburn Hospital. Fortunately, when we got to the emergency room the nurse didn't make me fill out the insurance forms.

Now, months after the accident, I can recall four distinct stages of adjusting to living without arms: 1. Sheer Hatred of the Able-Bodied, 2. Self-Blame and Internalized Isolation, 3. Support among the Physically Challenged, and 4. Self-Evaluation of My Own Process.

My first stage, "Sheer Hatred of the Able-Bodied", is based mostly upon ANGER. I hated able-bodied people because they could put on their clothes, call a friend, eat their food, shovel their driveway, write a letter, and wipe their rear ends without even thinking.

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They didn't realize how hard it was to perform simple tasks such as going to the bathroom. If I left my pants unzipped, I could pull them down by rubbing my side pocket against the sharp plywood corner of my housemate Holly's desk. This process usually took over fifteen minutes and left me sweating. Relaxing on the toilet seat did not last long. How could I wipe myself? I could not figure out a way to do this without my hands.

For many weeks, I "drip dried" and attempted to compensate by soaking in the bathtub everyday. But since I could not scrub my body, I simply sat in the

"My arms were not only broken, they were like huge emergency brakes that forced me to pull out of the fast lane and park my busy life by the side of the road."

warm water and hoped that if I concentrated hard enough, the brown fragments would lift off my body by themselves.

Now that I had entered the world of the "handicapped", I became keenly aware of able-bodied people's behavior. Not only were they unaware of physically disabled people like me — they were also inconsiderate to each other. In addition to slamming doors in my face, they pushed through the bodies that blocked their way to subway entrance, and they drove their ambulatory comrades off the roads with their cars. Even the cyclists cursed at each other when they rode their bikes through the construction in Harvard Square. Able-bodied people only smiled when they wanted something: a ride, a job, or a date.

But then I remembered that just before I leaned on that faulty railing, I too, had been an able-bodied person; I had had the luxury to disregard the oppression of people with physical differences because it didn't directly oppress me. In fact, I had overlooked "able-bodyism" in the same way that white people can avoid racism and men can deny sexism. I began to make broader connections: when we're not victimized by an oppression, we often do not see it. Men, Caucasians, heterosexuals, adults, Christians, upper and middle class, and able-bodied people all walk around with invisible passports to privilege. In fact, because they falsely assume that everyone has the same choices as themselves, they hardly ever acknowledge that they are privileged.

My second stage, "Self Blame and Internalized Isolation", resulted from poor communication with my friends and housemates. After one week of spooning rice and beans into my mouth and stroking my teeth with my green Reach toothbrush, they disappeared back to their busy jobs and herds of friends as quickly as they had rushed to help me. From my dark hovel (or so it seemed), I watched them race around like headless chickens, to and from work, meetings and classes.

My arms were not only broken, they were like huge emergency brakes that forced me to pull out of the fast lane and park my busy life by the side of the road.

Now, instead of running around from 8:00 am to midnight, I stared at the cracks on the left corner of my white ceiling and listened to Spanish dirges on the radio. My arms were as heavy as barbells. At night, I anchored my weights above my head and rocked on my waterbed until the sun rose.

With newly acquired leisure time, I also became an observer of my housemates' frantic lives. I felt like I was watching scenes from the theatre of the absurd: Holly running out the door with a bowl of lentil soup in her right hand and her tool box in her left hand, and Jamie making telephone calls in the shower. When they came back for a quick shower or meal, I expected that they would offer to make me dinner or to help me wash my hair. Sometimes they did, more often they didn't.

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In some ways, strangers were more comforting than friends. I could ask them to hold open doors to the Baybank, or to reach into my pockets to get me quarters for subway tokens. They were usually kind, eager to help (when asked), and left feeling like they had done a good deed. Once their specific task was finished, we parted and I expected nothing more from them.

A quick favor was easy for a friend or a stranger to accomplish, but it soon became clear that the world really wasn't set up to accommodate physically challenged people. Although the Boston Post Office now has ramps for wheelchairs, a feminist newspaper called *Off Our Backs* recently published an issue on women and disability, and some people *did* stop to open doors for me, most people don't have or make the time to help. Many people are afraid of wheelchairs and of physical "deformity". "Able" and "disabled" people have been kept so isolated from each other that our fears have swelled and our sensitivity has diminished to dangerous proportions. Disabled people are viewed and treated as if they are islands who have drifted far from shore.

My initial anger now shifted into a fear that plagued me from the time I could not dress myself each morning to the time I could not pull up my blankets

down my hectic life and re-evaluate," I decided, "so I had better get used to it and take responsibility for the karma I had created." (I had even worn all-black clothing on the day of the accident.) "Put your broken wrists in perspective," I scorned, "this is only a temporary situation; your arms will heal. Stop making such a big deal about nothing." But it was a Big Deal. Not only had my navicular bone cracked—my heart felt as if it was bleeding. People, including those whom I had once called "friends", had become uncaring strangers. I, too, was an island abandoned by the busy mainlanders.

Fortunately, in my third stage, "Support Among the Physically Challenged", I was able to reach out of my hard plaster casts to other islanders. When my next-door-neighbor, Heather, told me about the Michigan Women's Music Festival, it seemed like a perfect opportunity to turn a nightmare into a vacation. Heather, Holly, Jai, myself and eight other women rented a van and drove twenty-four hours to the rural concert site.

The Michigan Women's Music Festival 1981 provided an excellent model of what the world could be like for the physically challenged people. Every dirt path had treadways and ramps for wheelchairs. A campground

women who would smile at me eyeball-to-eyeball and offer their support.

In this new environment, my injured body was a passport to meet many wonderful women who I would normally only see as an Outsider. During my four days at the festival, I spent every meal at the disabled women's tables. It was there that I met Mary from Boston, who walks with metal crutches, Glenna, who speaks with her hands and listens with her eyes, and Billie, who eats with an artificial arm.

On Friday, when we were eating lunch and talking about being physically challenged in the "Real" world, I turned to my new friends and asked, "Do you ALWAYS have to ask for what you need? Don't you get sick of it?" Billie looked at me firmly with her blazing green eyes and said, "Honey, if you don't ask for it, you ain't going to get nothing. And even if you do ask, you might still get nothing."

During dinner on Saturday, Karen pushed SuAnn's wheelchair next to my seat and we sat quietly as she ate her mushroom-barley soup by pressing rounded knobs on the side of her wheelchair which directed a pair of metal arms into her mouth. "What happened to you?" she asked me in between slurps of soup which often dripped over her chin and onto her lap. I watched her face as I told her about the creaky porch railing. She paused for a moment; the hollow in her open mouth was weighted with sorrow. "You're lucky you didn't fall on your neck," she finally whispered, "That's what happened to me ten years ago."

It was then that I realized the frailness of our bodies, the constant possibility that tomorrow we might not have arms or legs or even a brain. I would push my housemates onto our living room couch during the next Tuesday night house-meeting and drill these possibilities into their hearts and minds. "What would you do if next week you became paralyzed like SuAnn, from your neck to your toes?" I would scream, "You might be limited to the three rooms downstairs. Holly, you couldn't work as a carpenter. Jai, you couldn't train for the Marathon. Paul, you couldn't dance every Friday night. You might live in fear and frustration that your wheelchair could fall over and you couldn't pick yourself up."

As Billie spooned yogurt into my mouth with her plastic fingers, I knew that us physically challenged people couldn't wait around for The Great Consciousness Revolution of Able-Bodied People. We had to look among ourselves for support and encouragement. Even though able-bodied people lumped us together as anonymous masses of "deformed" protoplasm, we

"As Billie spooned yogurt into my mouth with her plastic fingers, it became obvious to me that us physically challenged people couldn't wait around for The Great Consciousness Revolution of Able-Bodied People."

each night. Before I broke my wrists, I had always resisted depending on anyone: parents, lovers, even friends. But suddenly I needed all of them, including strangers, to spoon oatmeal into my mouth and to button my blouses. If they left, I would die.

My throat turned into a knot of rubber bands as my fears swelled even larger than my chunky fingers and throbbing wrists. I wondered if anyone would ever be there for me when I needed them. From the third to the fifth week, I sat in the bathtub and cried every day. I could hardly talk, especially to my housemates. Amy, Daisy, and Cuca called, but it never seemed like enough. My friend Nancy made me a walking traction machine out of bicycle hooks and rope, but I still felt uncared for. The entire human race had let me down.

I felt sorry for myself—a frail, vulnerable creature whose shoulder muscles had turned into bedrocks of tension. In my existential depression, I blamed myself for the accident. "I had willed my broken wrists in order to slow

and booth was set up so that physically challenged women could congregate and generate support among themselves. There were toilets and solar-heated showers that could accommodate women without legs. Workshops such as "Deaf Awareness" and "Breaking the Isolation of Physical Differences" were scheduled throughout the four days. In addition to a medical tent, emotional counseling and Shiatzu massages were available (for free) to any women in a tent called "The Womb."

In this atmosphere, it was easier for me to ask for help than in Boston. I went to the physically challenged booth and asked a woman with orange hair and a cowboy hat to help me take a shower. When all of my tentmates had gone swimming in a nearby stream and I needed to put on my sneakers, I clenched my black High Tops between my teeth and walked over to two women sitting in front of an orange pup tent nearby. Whether I was walking to the music jamming tent or attending a workshop on "Jewish Women and Women of Color", I knew I would find



Disarmed

knew we weren't that simple.

I sat at the table watching a group of deaf women waving their hands and grinning, and I started to think about the language used to describe them. How dare able-bodied people call them "dumb"? And how could anyone think about Billie, with her wisdom and her gentle plastic arm, as an invalid? An INVALID. Disabled. Crippled. Handicapped.

In the same way that "minority" minimalizes people of color in the United States and "lower class" diminishes the working class, words such as "invalid", "dumb", "disabled", and "handicapped" devalue the worth of people with uncommon physical characteristics. Although these words probably originated with the good intention of clarification, they actually distance and victimize people into narrow categories. Some women in Michigan offered me new words: "physically challenged," "physically different", and "differently abled". These are the most empowered words I've learned so far; even though I'd rather not define anyone solely by their physical body.

I hugged Billie and SuAnn, boarded the orange van, and I shuddered at the thought of returning to Boston. My housemates and I needed a break from each other; I still felt like a burden to them. When we arrived, I left immediately to spend the last two weeks of August with my family. By that time, I could turn the pages of a book and even type using my pointer finger. With my left arm in the able-body camp and my right arm still in the disability zone, I entered my fourth stage: "Self-Evaluation of My Own Process."

As I was sitting in the bathtub for the 2000th time in five weeks, I realized that I was contributing to not getting what I needed. At the Michigan Women's
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Music Festival, it had been a safe enough atmosphere to ask for help; even able-bodied people went to the healing tent for massages and comfrey salve. My lack of assertiveness in Boston stemmed from the fact that I didn't think I had the right to ask for help and receive it. My housemates and I had never sat down and planned a schedule to help me eat, get dressed, or take a shower; this was a new experience for all of us. I had hoped that they would help me spontaneously because they wanted to. But my household, like the world, was not set up to provide for people like me. Instead, I had silently developed invisible expectations for them and because no one was adhering to my hidden agenda, I felt chronically disappointed.

It is only recently, three months out of my casts, that I realize none of us, abled or physically challenged, learn to ask for what we need. In fact, our acquired polite behavior, covert communication styles, and fears of being rejected and too "demanding" make us chronically disappointed, needy, and unfulfilled.

Rather than finding ways to be fulfilled, we learn to become dependent. Girls and women depend on men for economic survival and many males depend on females for their emotional survival—but depending is different than needing. Dependency is when you rely on someone to give you something and you have no control of the amount or when s/he will share it. Asking for what you need is taking control of yourself. I had once thought that being strong meant I had to do everything alone. But now, after two broken wrists and one fractured heart, I understood that strength could be derived from other people's support. Sometimes asking was a necessary prerequisite.

It has been five months since I crashed onto the pavement at 260 Mor-

risson Avenue. Now that I can use all ten fingers to type and I can ride my bicycle over potholes, I am considered an able-bodied person. Except for saying "hello" to students at school, I once again have little contact with physically challenged people.

I feel like the author of *Black Like Me*, who tinted his skin from white to brown and moved to Georgia to experience life as a Southern Black. How did he deal with Black people when he came back to the North and removed his brown skin coloring? And with his newly acquired insights, how did he treat White people?

As a person who has been both able-bodied and physically challenged, I still have many unanswered questions. Would Steve, my deaf classmate, be offended or angry if I offered to take his anthropology notes? Is it condescending to say "hello" to the woman at the grocery store simply because she sits in a wheelchair? Am I making a false assumption that she is isolated and wants my outreach? By continuing to raise the issue of physical differences to able-bodied people, am I harping on old grievances or am I raising points which are important for them to consider?

In the crowded Boston streets, in my household, and at the Michigan Women's Music Festival, I sampled the frustrations, innovations, and community spirit that stem from being physically challenged. I now know that the ramps, toilets, workshops, and support at the music festival need not be limited to those 200 grassy acres in Michigan. Nor do I need to use language that devalues people who are differently abled.

As I walk down Massachusetts Avenue, I can envision ramps on every door and signs in each window that say, "WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE." Two people are walking down the street speaking with their hands. One of them looks up at a nearby billboard of the American Sign Language alphabet in order to finish her sentence; she is learning sign language at school. A legless woman is teaching carpentry to a group of blind children. A girl on roller skates pushes her friend's wheelchair across the smooth concrete and dances to the disco music that pours from their radio.

Although I'm not sure how to initiate all of these changes, I can offer one simple suggestion: act now. The next time you see a door without a ramp, ask the owner if she or he has plans to make it accessible in the near future. Or if you see someone with a cast, think about what she or he might need. Does he have boxes to be carried? Does she need a hand with that door? Visit the Disabled Student Center at school. Read the *Off Our Backs* issue on women and disability. Educate and sensitize yourself.

I AM

I am the cool burn of ammonia
I am a crusty, paint-dried rag
I am old milk.
I am fish — the burnt, juicy skin
I am mucus clogging my throat.

I am a long, cold, hungry corridor
I am shreds of green
that litter the cutting board
I am the soft warm fuzz of cheek-to-cheek
I am a shrill ring, piercing sleep.
I am a mis-matched pattern of wallpaper
I am the blues and grays that calm —
I am the yellow sun that irks nerves.

I am the hardening thigh
I am muscle, relaxing
I am the "harsh call of blood"
I am the ache from neck to shoulder
I am the memory of my mother
I am a woman growing older

I am the dream of a brown solid friend
I am mercury, sliding into wakefulness
I am hot wire — sparking red, orange, blue
I am a receiver, sensing skin

I am a dancefloor, shifting silky glances
I am side-wise, sliding across your eyes
I am nubbled flannel sheets
I am hesitation, smokey, mauve
I am a piece of good meat.

I am the brush of lip to skin
I am the tear of sweat
I am the press of thigh
I am the bite.

by Marilyn Stern

by Nancy J. Antoine

The storm that is inside me, it's black and cold,
and building.
I can't get it out of me,
it won't stop.
I am a carbonated water waiting,
for my cap to be unscrewed.
I am honey dripping slowly,
down the side of an icy jar.
I am vibrant colors swirling,
on an artists' canvas.
I am wrapped in a quilt,
protected from winter's chill.
I am lightly floating, lofting
with every cool sweeping breeze.
Sometimes I feel as though all my moves are conditioned,
like a robot that has been pre-programmed.
But,
most of the time
I am driven
like a fire out of control.



graphic by Nancy Antoine

I am old gray stiff gum welded to the underside of a table.
I am the dark greasy goop stuck under a busy mechanic's finger nails.
I am crystal icicles melting from my anchor on a sunny February morning.
I am transparent droplets dripping into the density of air.
I am white particles of salt hugging moist alabaster turkey meat.
I am cream losing itself in coffee.
I am cigarette smoke hanging in the air like a curly mane of hair.
I am strong rushing wind embracing a precarious kite.
I am purple bruised flesh, by accident.
I am delicate flakes of dandruff balancing on hair tightropes.

—Dorothy Dwyer

Philodendron

I. The philodendron had lived
in a broken, cramped house for too long
For months the wretched plant was entombed
Its roots were tangled and twisted at the pot's base
And its feet were gasping for air through the drainage stones
Growth and reproduction were stagnated, almost suffocated –
denied the expression of their natural course
The forgotten leaves were limping on the end of several threads,
withdrawing from life.

II. A new planter and fresh earth were in order
Dead leaves and flakes of dust trailed the path
from where the dying plant had been sitting to where it would be
repotted
The spindly threads, showing no semblance of life,
were snipped and discarded
The remaining stubs and the feeble roots shaken from the spent dirt
and transferred to a larger cup of cool, rich soil.

III. Gradually lime-colored buds
spurt from brown papery coverings on stiff stems
The young greenery instinctively thrusts upward –
the point of the leaves' shapely hearts faces the ceiling
In time the flourishing stems creep near the rim of their plastic holding
And spill their delicate, smooth bodies
to join the network of dangling tendrils
The philodendron now thrives in the filtered bathroom light.

Judy Bousquin

WORDS

by Marilyn Stern

Words are sounds.
Sentences are births of individuals. Each word is
D-i-f-f-e-r-e-n-t.
This paper needs a purpose.
It needs a thesis. The thesis needs a question.
The question needs an answer. Sooner or later we all must settle
down to the business of communicating clearly and concisely.
Look at Sylvia Plath. She wrote poetry thesaurus in hand.
She killed herself.

What do we learn about "real" writers,
women

They are very unhappy.
They go crazy.
They kill themselves.
They are deadly serious.

Last night I had a dream that Audre Lorde, Stein and
(I can't think of the word here) led me around (walking) and
told me that when I had something inside I felt just say it what-
ever it is.



State House, Boston, 1980, Glen Gurner

