



Queen's Feminist Review
Volume 8, 2000



Seeing Green - Donna Marie Romeo

Mission Statement

The Queen's Feminist Review strives to represent the diversity of feminist experience through poetry, prose, and visual art. Our continuing mission is to provide a viable forum for feminist artistic expression within the Queen's and Kingston communities. As feminism changes and grows, so our Review expands to acknowledge the many voices that continue the discussion of feminism. We aim to produce a publication where feminist voices can be heard simultaneously as individuals and in unison. Our aspiration is to produce a publication of high artistic quality, thus claiming a place for feminist art in our community.

Editorial Board

Editors:

Karen Bourrier
Vicky Brown
Stephanie Earp
Melissa Farmer
Corrine Kennedy
Kathy Ko
Laura MacInnis
Rachelle Villanueva
Megan Winkler
Sarah Wiseman

Typesetting and design by Rachelle Villanueva.
Printing by 1000 Islands Publishers, Gananoque, Ontario.

Front cover art, "Masquerade," by Kristy Weiber.

All contents copyright 2000. The Queen's Feminist Review reserves the right to reprint, in future issues, any material which has appeared within its pages. The Queen's Feminist Review also reserves the right to be acknowledged in all future reprints of original material which has appeared within its pages. All other rights are reserved by the contributor.

Please address all correspondence and submissions to:

Queen's Feminist Review
AMS Social Issues Commission
John Deutch University Centre
Queen's University

Special Thanks

The Editors would like to thank the following people and groups for their support, without whom this project would not have been possible:

Queen's Principal William C. Leggett
 Dean of Arts and Science Robert Silverman
 Human Rights Office
 University Chaplain
 University Advisor on Equity
 Faculty of Education
 School of Physical and Health Education
 Institute of Women's Studies
 Department of Economics
 Department of Political Studies
 Department of English
 Department of Art
 AMS Social Issues Commission
 AMS Board of Directors
 OPIRG Kingston
 Kingston Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transsexual
 Association
 Society of Graduate and Professional Students

Thank you also to Alfie's Pub, the AMS Campus Activities Commission, and CFRC Radio for your support of the Queen's Feminist Review.

Finally, we would like to offer our gratitude to the many individuals who have guided and helped out the Queen's Feminist Review this year. Many thanks to Martha Hinton, Karen Hindle, Lisa Mori, Paul Thorne, Debra Christie, Steve Stone, and all of our contributors.

Editors' Note

We came together in September with one goal in mind: to provide a creative space for the discussion of feminism and issues concerning women. We strove to provide an opportunity for the expression of unique voices, using various media, in the pages of an engaging and entertaining book. In this aim we sought to represent a diversity of women's experience, both positive and negative, embracing difference in our celebration of feminism. This goal proved more complex than our idealistic intentions had originally anticipated.

In creating this space we have come to understand what feminism means to each of us. The debates and discussions during those long meetings forced us to re-evaluate our stances on several complex questions.

Is feminism the struggle of each individual woman against the odds of oppression? Is it the development of a united understanding of how far we've come, and also how far we have left to go? Is it the celebration of our strengths and the confrontation of our fears and weaknesses? Can we understand women's experience without understanding the experiences of men? These are only a few of the issues that were raised by the generous and talented contributors whose creative work lies within these pages.

In the end, our journey of laughter, negotiation, self-discovery, and dedication has brought us to the publication of this book. Through a process of consensus, we have chosen the following pieces as an expression of what feminism means today. We hope this collection

brings to light the complicated web of issues and experiences that influence, threaten, and bring joy to the lives of women.

We believe that feminism remains an integral part of understanding the experiences of women. We recognize the essential contributions that women of different sexual, racial, economic and social backgrounds bring to an understanding of women's experiences today. Perhaps the most important lesson we have learned from our contributors and from each other is that having the space and freedom to creatively express one's hopes, fears, dreams, and struggles is essential to reaching an understanding of the meaning and purpose of feminism. It is in this spirit that we present this year's Queen's Feminist Review.

We hope this book challenges and inspires you.

Corrine Kennedy, on behalf of the Editors

If you make that face

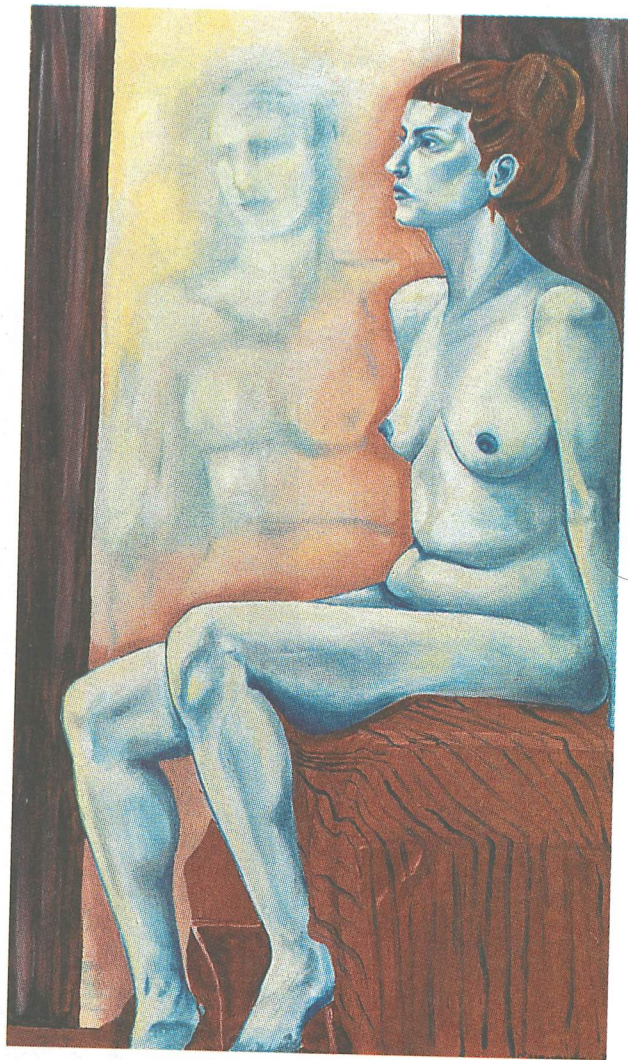


Donna Marie Romeo

QFR

8

Female Nude in Blue

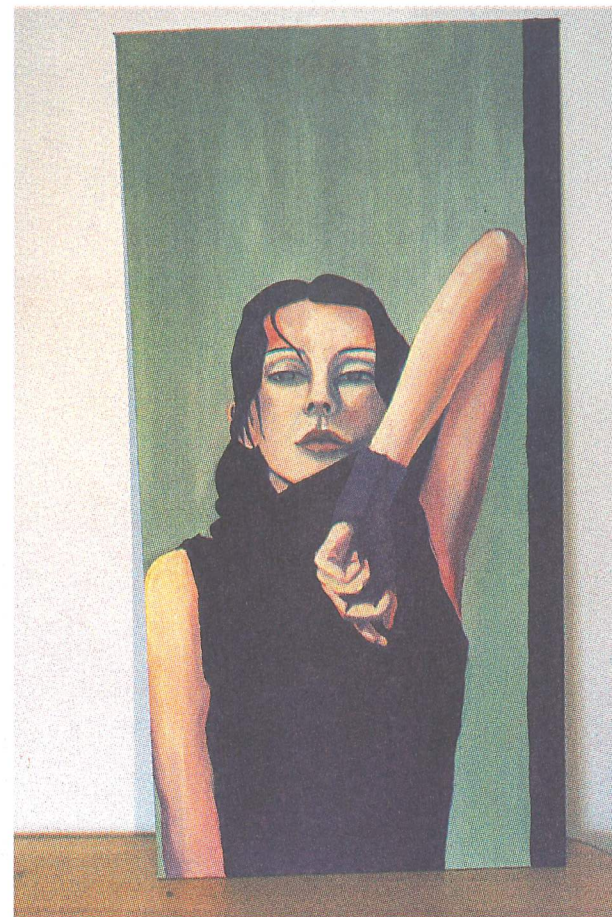


Catto Houghton

QFR

9

St. Mercedes of Berlin



Catto Houghton

Contents

Seeing Green Donna Marie Romeo	1
If You Make That Face Donna Marie Romeo	7
Female Nude in Blue Catto Houghton	8
St. Mercedes of Berlin Catto Houghton	9
untitled Amy Bagshaw	14
I want Barbara Bloom	15
Bearing Indigo Darlene St. Georges	16
Remember Baby Sarah Muir	17
A Belief Carol Liao	18
Transaction Michelle Switzer	20
Anna's Sunburn Karen Bourrier	21
Firefighter Stephen Carroll	27

Toys Megan Winkler	28
@12 Michelle Switzer	29
Mandy and the Animals Paul Quick	30
Sane Jane Sarah Muir	37
Beshe was in her bathtub sloshing when the phone rang Paul Quick	38
Beshe Sarah Muir	39
Neitherside Show Paul Quick	40
Self-Portrait Sarah Banting	41
Two Months Jane Arbour	42
Courses R. Li Wai Suen	44
Sleuth Catherine Lynn Davidson	45
Hunger Tara Kainer	48
Weather Tara Kainer	49

Nude #1 Stephen Carroll	50
I Just Wanna Be a Woman Ashley Winning	51
By Chance May Chan	55
Nothing I've Been Meaning To Tell You Marina Hess	56
Conversation with Dorothy Parker Amy Bagshaw	58
Bloody Knuckles Amanda C. Betts	59
Reborn Barbara Bloom	60
Appreciation for Eros Mary Elizabeth Thomas	62
City in Your Heart Ken Butland	63
Better Legs R. Li Wai Suen	65
Gender. Really? Natasha Webster	67
Short Round-Faced Women Can Be Dangerous Barbara Bloom	68
The Love Story of my Grandmother Carol Liao	70

Unknitting the Cloth Tracy Riley	72
Innocence Erin Anne Byrne	73
Looking for Meaning Monika Dutt	74
Why I Cannot Watch Politically Incorrect with Bill Maher Alicia Sacco	79
Ginger Chelsea Elliott	80
Still Jane Arbour	82
We Don't Always Enjoy It Anna Anstey-Porter	83
Cailin Jane Arbour	84
Here's to the Girls Caley McClean	86
Amelia's Dream Kristy Weiber	88
Lilith and Eve Kristy Weiber	89
The Future Jennifer Whalen	90
Salome Rebecca Jaremko	96

QFR 14

Untitled

It is unnerving
to feel as though
venus has reincarnated
her devices
into me.

I don't mean to be
so calm.

Amy Bagshaw

QFR 15

I want...

To devour
everything written
eat it whole
...write everything

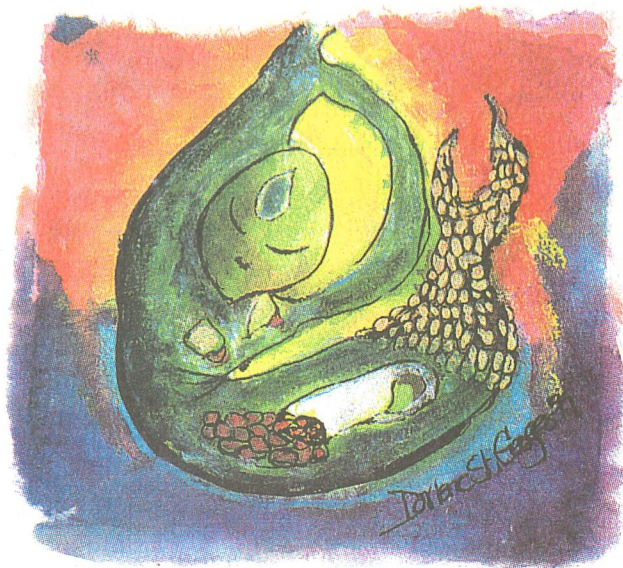
no time for niceties

at fifty-two
something inside
has

sprouted

Barbara Bloom

Bearing Indigo



Artist's statement:

Nature is a temple from whose commingling voices emerge at times.

Here I wander through the forest of symbols which seem to observe me with familiar eyes; Reflections of my journey to discover & explore sensations of my self; my record -- recorded effort -- of (re) creation; living through the power of introspection, breathing through the essence of healing - surviving by ... body of knowledge.

Darlene St. Georges

Remember Baby

Dipping ecstatic
may feel good now
Baby, dream of babies
that grow up to be old men

Honey, think of life
Paying rent in your heat

Two legs or six
A parasite of sex

Rememberrememberremember
'Cause it's so easy to forget

the lives that crawl inside you
when you're dipping ecstatic

Sarah Muir

a
belief

there are times I think
a girl must stop. and end it.
where she must take her hate and her hurt and
her pain
wrap it up in silver foil and cement and chains
tie it and lock it and in the process
use her hands so effectively the fingertips rub
off.
and then she is to pick up this weight
heavy as it is
she must pick it up with all he strength
and in the groaning and the grasping and the
pulling
she will gain muscles she didn't want to have,
wasn't allowed to have
and she will lift that damn weight
sling it over her shoulder
and through her tears and her blood and her
sweat
get made and hate and hurt all over again.
and she will pull that weight inch by inch
crying and screaming and lamenting the whole
way
only to find that in her sorrow
she is not paying attention.
she is not focused.
her head is down and her eyes are blinded
and she will stop. really stop.
and will smile and blink those tears away.
then she will laugh
 rolling laughter
peals of laughter will shake from her mouth
"why couldn't I see?" she will say "how could I
have been so blind?"

and I will turn to her and smile
I will grab the weight and throw it behind me
 it will fly away, light as a feather
 and all the hurt and the anger and the pain
will spill onto the grass.
and I will look at her
I will look in her
and I will not say a word.
I will have no answers for her.
I will only understand
That through strength and courage and laughter and love
she will overcome.

Transaction

Smell me like a rose
 and discard me like a Styrofoam box.
 I won't decompose.
 Lather sorted loves near the
 likeness of soft urges.
 Test your senses.
 Every action helps me grow into
 my skin.
 Breasts, torso, calves.
 Lumps of flesh that tempt.
 Indulge.
 You might enter my shell
 but I keep my treasures between my ears.

Michelle Switzer

Anna's
Sunburn

Anna spent her days at the rented cottage gathering stones. She would swim too, pale flesh in the almost tepid green and brown water. The sand castles never lasted long. The first turret would always have a crack in it, regardless of how wet the sand was or how hard Anna tried to pack it into the pail. There never seemed to be enough concentration, never enough intensity....

The stones that Anna collected weren't even always stones. They weren't even pebbles or rocks - not usually. The ones that Anna liked best were the broken pieces of brown and green beer bottles that the waves had worn down smooth like plastic. She would turn them over in the palm of her hand, rub them between her fingers, marveling at the smoothness, the clearness of them.

She would never entirely clean her feet after having spent some time on the stretch of beach outside the cottage; the pump water was frigid. There was always a thin film of white sand on the pink bottoms of her feet. When she undressed there would be flecks of seaweed trapped underneath her bathing suit. As she left the beach to go read or eat, Anna would make deliberate foot prints along shore, him at work, Mom occupied with Grant. *Has he eaten enough? Slept enough? Is he protected from the sun enough?* She would wade, looking at the folds and creases the waves made on the floor of the lake, the depth, the sunlight in the water. Maybe if she looked long enough she would find an opal ring, elegant and simple, encased in gold. And the ring would turn out

Karen Bourrier

to be her grandmother's, and her grandmother would be alive now. Or it would be the cherished engagement ring of a stately widow who, as it happened, lived in a grand house not far from the cottages. Not far, but far enough to be away. A beautiful old house, fallen slightly into disrepair. A château complete with undiscovered corners, antiquities, oddities, spider webs in the corners...

The waves would lap Anna's feet clean, but the sand would form its film on her soles as soon as she turned to go back to the cottage.

They moved for his job that summer. It was the beginning of July. September was far away, but Anna didn't mind not knowing anyone in the neighbourhood until school started very much. It gave her time. The house he bought was right by a park kept by the city of Toronto. There were flowers of every colour and variety. Anna could only identify the daisies with any amount of certainty, but she stole red and purple petals and pressed them between the Bible with waxed paper. They did an activity like that last year in school, only they pressed fall leaves in the pages of the dictionary and classified the edges and the vein structure. Anna planned on making pictures with her petals to hang in the new bedroom. A sunset in tiny spots of yellow, orange, red, and purple.

Lots of people seemed to take their wedding pictures in that garden. For the first few weeks of summer Anna would watch them carefully from the living room window, or on the street if she felt she would be sufficiently inconspicuous that day. She noticed that the bride's dress would usually drag on the ground at least a little, and that the bridesmaids would eat or smoke or drink bottled water while they waited for the pictures of "just the bride and groom" or "just the family" to be finished. They wore sunglasses, and if they were loud enough and she was close enough, Anna could hear the gossip about who wore what to the ceremony, which old uncle or friend of the groom was likely to make a drunken fool of himself at the reception, and

how ridiculously uptight the bride was being in her efforts to make sure the whole thing went off perfectly. In a fairy tale, Anna had heard a princess' gown described as if she were dressed in delicate flower petals, vibrant with life. These women would sweat underneath their layers of fuchsia fabric and the makeup a professional had caked on. It wasn't like that at all...

Laying in bed that night, Anna was unable to fall asleep. She'd lost all sense of time in her thoughts, other than knowing that it was night. She let the thoughts seep in and out of her mind, tried to envision them dripping down her body in perfect droplets. She wondered what would happen if she lay perfectly still in the top bunk. She turned over on her side to face the wall. She thought that maybe it was the children of the people who owned the cottage who had put the print sketches of softly coloured woods and teepees on the wall alongside the bed. She studied them minutely. Outside she could hear music playing loudly, accompanied by the clink of glass and teenage voices shouting raucously, brazenly, like Anna never felt in the company of those her own age... She listened instead to the strange sound of her own breathing, shallow then deep, imagined, then felt her ribs like long bony fingers contracting.

If she had sex it would be private. The kisses would be private. If she fantasized herself with Joe MacIntire from *New Kids on the Block*, he wouldn't single her out at a concert or come to her house in an ostentatious limousine with everyone on her street gawking like Natalie wished he would. She would picture herself touring with him on the bus. The shy smiles exchanged, warm lips pressed together, his hand slipped comfortably around her waist... They would sleep together in a small dark bunk built into the wall with a curtain over it, pressed together... it didn't seem that there was much more involved than that...

Anna's knee was throbbing with growing pains now; in her mind she could see the bone elongated and grey, cushioned by some sort of red glow without muscles or blood or flesh.... It was dark behind her back, she turned around again, now her

back was protectively facing the wall. She used to see a skeleton chasing into the quiet darkness of the upstairs when she was seven, maybe nine... sometimes even now she could see his blue phosphorescent bones... She curled her knees in tightly to her chest as she fell asleep.

The next afternoon Grant was sleeping inside the small bedroom with dark green and brown patterned curtains. That room faced a wooded area. It was likely that her mother had fallen asleep in the rocking chair beside him. Anna made herself a butter and jam sandwich for lunch. Usually she would have left her dirty knife and jam jar on the counter. If she was allowed to feed herself for half a day, her mother would complain loudly that she could tell exactly what she had eaten by the "pig heap trail" she left behind. Today, she let the yellow lemon liquid soap drip over her plate and knives, one for butter, one for jam, and scrubbed them with hot water and her fingers.

Anna looked at her white flesh under the water. She had paler skin than anyone she knew; she had never been tanned and her mother had ensured that she had never been sunburnt. Her eyebrows were almost white, they made a thin invisible line stretching across her face that was almost transparent, like dental floss, Anna thought with a peculiar mixture of disdain and pride. Outside the afternoon was densely layered like green leaves and light and water. Anna could feel it, could let the rough soles of her feet be covered with fine soil and ferns now. She tramped outside in a bathing suit and T-shirt, barefoot. She allowed the dirt of the familiar trails between her toes.

Submerging herself in the lake, Anna thought about the possibility of being sunburnt with pleasure. She *could* do it, could feel the texture of the burnt skin along her collar bone and shoulder blades. Anna bit down on her lip, if she clamped down hard enough on the flesh part she *could* taste her own blood. She stretched out her fingertips as far as she could and pulled the water back. Her stroke was stiff and narrow.

There are days when Anna would have wished that she still had pajamas with feet on them, like the dark blue ones with Winnie-the-Pooh on them and white rubbery slipper feet she had when she was young. But Anna's skin was hot that night and so was cottage, and she slipped on a clean white night shirt gladly. Once a quiet girl in Anna's class had worn pajamas like that to school, not a night-shirt but the fuzzy kind. Her name was Cassandra and she used to live in Hong Kong; the pajamas were light purple with a little stitching and lace and the front. Anna reasoned that her mother might not speak much English, and could have easily mistaken this for a cute outfit. Anna had always liked Cassandra, and the thought of wearing pajamas to school appealed to her, though she knew she would never do it. Besides, Cassandra's wearing pajamas to school one day wasn't uncomfortable to be around, not like the girl whose father actually did work for McDonalds and whose shoes were falling apart.

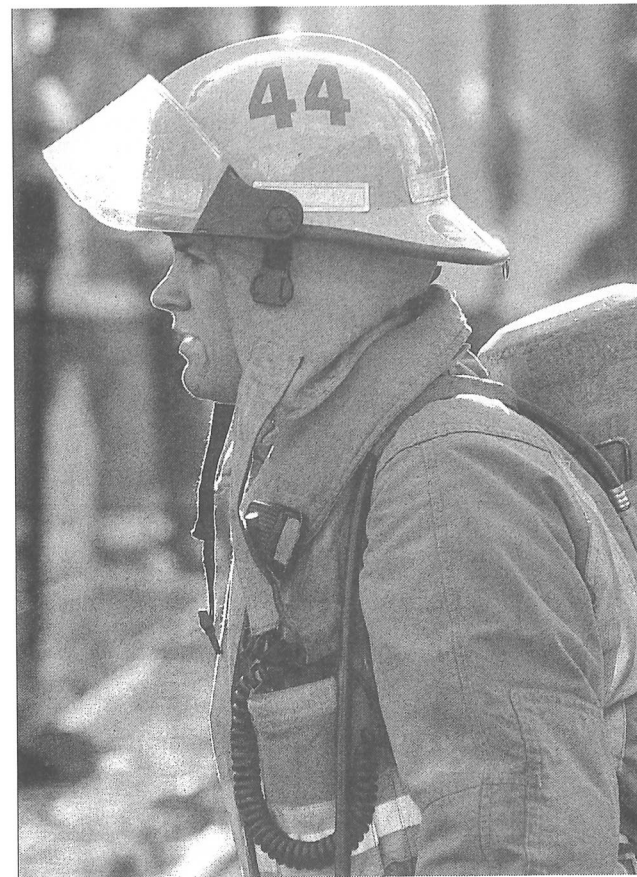
That happened four or five years ago, and Anna was impressed with her own memory. Her mind stumbled over itself. *Do you remember Mom, the people who had the swings in their backyard and I think their names, the names of the kids, were Darren and Julie, and Darren and I wrote our names on my bedroom wall in brown crayon - I had never written on the wall before - but you never knew that I did it, and I was jealous of the other Julie from school because she was allowed to take baths by herself in junior kindergarten. That was the Julie who was my best friend because we had the same birthday. Do you remember Mom, that I cried the day I wore the pale green sweater with the soft lambs on it because I was lonely and it was my birthday but they took us to see the baby chicks, and that I tried every morning to print from zero to one hundred perfectly until I did and I got an Easter egg for it and I asked you every day in the morning before school what day of the week it was because I knew that Mrs. Brown would ask who knew? And Samantha's dad died of cancer and so did Holly and Julia's but my dad just wasn't there anymore and the poem I wrote for Holly rhymed and said that she wouldn't be jolly anymore, so you didn't give it to them at the funeral... Do you remember Mom?*

Of course Anna knew that she did not, at least not the feelings or the sweater she wore on a particular day, and probably not the Easter egg either.

But there was another memory that Anna wasn't even sure if she remembered. In it, she is sitting on the grass right in front of the stage while other people's children amuse themselves plucking the grass and throwing it at one another instead of watching the ballet. Anna can see the stage through her own eyes, and she can also see herself watching the stage, the shape and tilt of her head, her hair long with the clear green plastic headband in it. The ballerinas are posing more than dancing. The scene has been dismembered and put back together out of joint in her head. And because she is sitting so close up in the memory, she can see that the ballerinas are sweating and that their lipstick is dark and their eyeshadow reaches their eyebrows and their buns are kept in place by hairnets. They move slightly in their poses, only one girl is still, a perfect statue. The memory is to be mistrusted; it could have been derived from television or pamphlets. Funny how she's placed shreds of her back and her profile but never her face intermittently throughout her memory. She's never really even had a good enough look to be able to recognize these parts of herself without referring to the clothes. *Did you ever take me to the ballet in a park Mom?*

Anna crept into the room where her mother and Grant slept. Mom was in the rocking chair, and Anna slid herself onto her lap, leaned in and felt the softness of her breasts. When Anna was four her mom used to rock her and sing her the alphabet out of tune to put her to sleep. That night, when her mother stood up to try to carry Anna's lanky eleven-year-old body to sleep a few feet away, she pretended not to wake-up, just like it had been years ago, even though they both knew that Anna had never really fallen asleep in the first place this time...

Firefighter



Melanie Jones, Kingston Fire Department

© Steve Carroll

Toys

i had a caterpillar once
 i kept it in a mayonnaise jar
 tightly covered and sealed away
 i liked to look at it
 orange,
 black,
 soft.

climbing the side of the glass
 squirming in silence
 suffering.
 but i didn't know

dad found the jar
 'he'll die' he told me
 if i didn't let him free
 if i didn't open the glass world
 if i didn't release him

he began to curl up
 he stopped squirming
 and began to lie still

so i didn't like him anymore
 why wouldn't he fight?
 no one likes boring.

i opened the jar on the sidewalk
 i shook it and the caterpillar crawled out
 slowly, slithering - back to freedom
 - freedom lost only for a short while -
 yet forgotten
 where and how to move?

in the morning it was still there:
 baked to the ground.

Megan Winkler

@ 12

Giggling, pulsing
 chests burst like noisemakers
 and hair bouncing on
 thoughts of heaven
 getting caught on
 the tarnishing halo

Selves discovered and awkward
 scared of pieces
 stuck between here and nowhere near there

Think they are so old when
 so young and hips
 push beneath the layers
 skin
 confusion
 wants
 and still tucked in.

Michelle Switzer

Mandy and the Animals

Jeffy was over again and Mandy was pretty sure he was gonna pull the mouse out. Jeffy came over on Saturdays to play with Mandy's brother Darren, but sometimes Darren was at swimming. When Darren was at swimming, Jeffy would talk to Mandy instead. Or else he would sit in the kitchen and dad would ask him about school. Sometimes he'd talk to dad but today dad was napping. Mandy didn't like talking to Jeffy much. He used big words and asked lots of questions, but didn't always pay attention when she answered. Plus there was the mouse. Jeffy and Darren were highschool and Mandy was kindergarten, but she was almost grade one.

"Hey there Mandy-girl, top-of-the-morning to you," said Jeffy, prying off his boots.

"Darren ain't home," said Mandy.

"Darren *isn't* home, eh?," tossing his pack on the sofa. "Ah well, so it goes. So it goes. What about Mandy? What about the clever little lady herself? Has anyone seen *her* around?"

"I'm Mandy," said Mandy.

"Oh, my. Aren't I embarrassed. Well, pleased to meet you then." Jeffy pulled out his hand and Mandy shook it hard up and down and threw it up into the air. "Careful there, lady," said Jeffy. "This hand here is my very favorite." Jeffy wiggled his fingers in front of his face to make sure they still worked.

Mandy giggled then stopped herself.

"Darren's at swimming. I'm playing animals."

"Animals, eh? Like playing God, only

less ambitious. Clever girl. We all have to start somewhere. Where's your old man, the Parental Unit?"

Mandy frowned.

"Dad around?"

"He's sleepy," Mandy pointed to upstairs.

"Well, that's his right, I guess. Grown-ups and Saturdays, eh? I don't understand it any better than you do, I really don't." Jeffy looked for a place to hang his coat, then just put it on the sofa over his pack. "So tell me, Mandy-girl, how exactly does one play this game, 'Animals'?"

"It's easy," said Mandy.

"That's good, Mandy," said Jeffy, "because I'm a pretty stupid boy. Don't forget that. I need everything explained all simple for me. It's true. Say, aren't you going to offer me anything to drink?"

"Nope," said Mandy.

"Well then, have to take matters into my own hands. Sorry, Mandy, you give me no other choice." Jeffy picked Mandy up by the waist and carefully placed her down out of his path. He went into the kitchen and opened the fridge. Mandy followed.

"Don't eat everything," said Mandy.

"Thanks, but I couldn't possibly," said Jeffy, checking the date on the carton of milk and putting it out on the counter. He opened the cupboard with the glasses, took one down and looked it all over. He felt the inside of the glass with his finger, then he ran it under the sink. "Where were we, darling? Ah yes, the 'Animals.' Would you like some milk?"

"Nope," said Mandy. "I'm gonna go play."

"Now, now, hold it there, sweetheart." Jeffy poured the milk into the glass. "Let's not go rushing into anything. There will be time, time for a thousand hippopotamuses and rhinoceroses after the taking of our milk. You can't push the river, Mandy. In fact," Jeffy's voice got quiet, "if you really want to know something -- hmmm, I, well, I don't know if you're old enough. Do you think you're old enough to hear a secret?"

"Yessss," said Mandy. Mandy had heard secrets before, even from Jeffy. Of course she was old enough.

"Okay then: the trick," said Jeffy, "the secret trick to having the best glass of milk in the world not many people know this secret, so pay attention the trick to having the best-est glass of milk ever in the whole universe, is to not do *anything* else at the same time. Don't watch tv, don't talk, don't play 'Animals,' just drink the milk and that's all. Remember that, darling. Best milk you ever had, promise."

Mandy nodded her head, but she thought it was a stupid secret. Jeffy made loud slurping sounds as he drank his milk; Mandy stayed and watched him. When he was done, he thunked the glass down onto the kitchen table and let out an enormous burp. Mandy collapsed in laughter.

"Medic! Medic! There's a Mandy down!" Jeffy reached over and mussed up her hair. Then he took the empty glass over to the sink and started washing it out. Mandy stopped laughing and noticed that Jeffy wasn't looking at her. She stomped her feet three times, crossed her arms and frowned up at him. He turned to face her and raised one eyebrow. "So that's how it's going to be, eh sweetheart? That's a shame. Just when everything was going so nice, too. Well, I guess now I'll just have to turn you into a Mandy-cicle with my cryogenic freeze-o-vision. Remember: you asked for it." Jeffy pressed his soapy fingers against his temples, narrowed his gaze and tried to freeze Mandy. Mandy was strong and didn't freeze. He tried again, but Mandy just shook her head defiantly.

"Zounds!" said Jeffy, "my freeze-o-vision is no match for her superhuman thermo-magnetism!"

"Told ya," Mandy smiled.

"And thus the God of Elijah smote the prophets of Baal. Do you want to know what I think, Mandy-girl? I think it's time you taught me how to play 'Animals.' What do *you* think?" Jeffy dried the glass with a tea towel and put it back in the cupboard.

"Yer too old," said Mandy. She thought for a second and

then she added, "You can watch."

"Now, aren't you sweet. I tell you, Mandy, your kindness could melt bricks. Bricks. Let's go play, then. Of course, I mean you'll do the 'playing' part; I'll stand aside and observe, naturally. You do all the work and I'll cheer you on from the stands: "That's mah man! That's mah *man*!" Jeffy slapped his hands together and barked like a seal. Mandy shook her head in disapproval and Jeffy followed her with a curtsy into the bedroom.

Mandy's walls were bright yellow with purple trim. The carpet was thick and felt soft on their feet. On the wall was a big cartoon poster with the months of the year, showing different cartoon weather for each. Next to it was a wooden sign with the name AMANDA on it, and little pictures painted below each of the letters. There were shiny red Apples under all the A's, and between them, Mittens, a Nose, and a Dog. An orange and yellow quilt was spread out on the floor. In the middle of the quilt there was a little herd of stuffed animals, with more animals strewn across the bed.

Mandy pointed to the bed: "That's the island," and then to the quilt, "that's the boat." Jeffy shut the door and went over to sit on the island. "No," said Mandy. "You go there," and she pointed to a spot of carpet in the corner.

"Banishèd!" cried Jeffy clutching his heart. "Banishèd! O Mandy, the damned use that word in hell; Howling attends it! Say anything but 'banishèd.'" Jeffy fell to his knees.

"Panish-head! Panish-head!" said Mandy spitefully, and Jeffy slumped over dead.

Many looked around her room, trying to remember where she left off. Then she hopped up on the island and started tossing animals down into the boat. All the animals got on the boat except for Peedy the puppy. It was Peedy's job to guard the island, but he didn't mind whoever guarded the island got to eat raisins. Mandy put the box of raisins next to Peedy on the bed, and jumped on to the boat herself, pushing it out to sea.

Mandy and the animals sailed for awhile with a good

wind. Martha, the kangaroo, fell overboard once, but Mandy dove in and rescued her just in time. After the kangaroo dried off, Mandy looked back over at dead Jeffy in the corner. His eyes were closed and his tongue hung out the side of his mouth.

"Jeffy?" Jeffy didn't respond. "Jeffy?" She didn't want to get out of the boat, so she took one of the little animals that didn't matter much and threw it at the dead boy: "Jeffy!"

"Whoah, hey! What's going on? Where am I?" said Jeffy, sitting up cross-legged, scratching the top of his head. "I must have overslept. What year is it? Oh me. I had the strangest dream, you wouldn't believe: there was this girl named Mandy, and she was "

"I'm Mandy!" said Mandy.

Jeffy rubbed his eyes with the base of his palms. "So you *are*! What a coincidence. And in a boat too, oh my. How's life on the high seas, ye scurvy dogs?"

"Peedy's guarding the island," Mandy let him know.

"And the raisins, I see. Doing a good job, too. That's a lot of responsibility for one puppy. Perhaps I'll give your friend Peedy a hand. He looks awful sad up there by himself, doesn't he?" Jeffy climbed up onto the island. "And the Lord God said: it is not good for the puppy to be alone!"

"Don't take my raisins," said Mandy.

"Whatever you say, Cap'n," Jeffy saluted. Mandy watched as Jeffy picked up Peedy and kissed him on the forehead. He didn't take any raisins. Instead he knelt on the island and kept guard. He held his hand over his eyebrows to block the glare from the sun while he looked out to sea. He scanned across the room, and when he saw Mandy out in the boat he waved to her. She waved back and kept smiling.

Mandy pulled the edges of the quilt in to make the boat smaller, like a bag instead of a sheet. The furry animals clustered and bunched around her legs as she held the four corners of the boat tightly in her fists. A storm came and tossed them around

for a bit. One of the rabbits, Ruffles, fell out during the storm. Everyone was really upset, especially the other rabbits, and Mandy had to stop them from jumping in after him. It was pretty sad, so they all hugged.

Mandy heard the sound at looked up at Jeffy. He was looking back at her from the island. The mouse was out. He held it in his lap next to Peedy and was petting them both while he looked at her. Jeffy smiled. "You okay?" he asked her quietly.

Mandy nodded.

Jeffy kept looking at her. Mandy looked back, first at his face, then at the curious little mouse. She thought about sailing off again, but felt she better stay and wait. Jeffy stopped petting Peedy, but him down and picked up Mandy's favorite pillow with the same hand. He held the pillow up to his face and smelled it for awhile. When Mandy held out her hand for the pillow, Jeffy passed it to her and smiled. She wrapped her arms around it and held it tight against her chest as she watched. Jeffy's face jumped into weird expressions a few times but always jumped right back. Then he grimaced hard and it was over. Jeffy put the mouse back, wiping his hands inside his pockets. "You alright, sweetie?" he asked her.

Mandy frowned. Anytime she played with Jeffy he always did the same thing.

Jeffy smiled at her and stood up from the bed. "You're pretty," he said. He wiped his hands some more against the back of his knees, then he wiped the sweat from his forehead off with his wrists. He looked up at the sign that said AMANDA. Jeffy reached up his hand, pretending to pet the dog under the D, but Mandy didn't laugh. He looked at the shiny red apples. "That's a whole lot of apples for one girl," he said. "Myself, I don't know what I'd do with that many apples. One for each goddess, I guess. Could have saved the Trojans a whole lot a trouble." Mandy shrugged, it was only three apples. Three isn't many. Jeffy sniffed under his armpits, then down his collar. He looked at the closed

door and bit his lip. "Mandy, would you like a glass of milk? I'm going to get another one for myself. With your permission, of course." Jeffy bowed respectfully. "May I, m' lady?"

Mandy nodded and Jeffy opened the door. "You coming too?" he asked.

Mandy shook her head side to side. Jeffy left and came back a minute later with his milk. Mandy had unfolded the boat into a sheet again, and sailed back to the island. The animals leapt up on to the land, flying through the air one at a time, making happy noises as they jumped. When the last one was safe on land Mandy jumped up too. She bounced up and down on the island and the island creaked. Jeffy watched from the doorway, sipping his milk. Mandy saw Jeffy, stopped bouncing and kicked all the animals off onto the floor. They didn't mind, they were just animals.

"You are so *pretty*," said Jeffy. "Anyone tells you otherwise, you send them to me."

"You can sit here." Mandy bounced her head against a spot at the foot of the bed, then shuffled back to her side. Jeffy sat and smiled up at the bright yellow walls. Mandy peered over the edge of the bed at the animals scattered on her floor. Jeffy took a pack of Popeye candy cigarettes out of his pocket. He popped one in the corner of his mouth and tossed the pack to Mandy. Mandy took two. Mandy watched Jeffy for a bit to see how he smoked them, but then she just chewed them up like normal candy and that was better. Darren would be home soon; then him and Jeffy would go out. Maybe Mandy would watch cartoons until dad got up. Then dad would fix her a peanut butter and banana sandwich with apple juice.

"Thirsty?" asked Jeffy.

Mandy smiled. He held out the glass of milk and she took it with both hands.

"This cup," said Jeffy solemnly, "is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of

Sane Jane

She was a Dragon Slayer

She was 8, she slayed dragons
And the villagers rejoiced.

She was a Tomboy

She was 10, she climbed trees
and all the boys thought she was pretty fun
And didn't worry too much about her muddy feet.

She didn't like Herself Very Much.

She was 14, the boys didn't talk to her so much
She had limp hair and pimples on her forehead

She was a Slut

She was 16, He told her he loved her
The other girls gave her dirty looks
She wore tight clothes because boys looked at
her body when she did

She was a Partier

She was 18, she got high
She had sex with 3 guys who called her a party-
girl
She was fun to be around
She was fun to be around

She is Sane Jane

She kills dragons
But that doesn't matter much
If you're nice to her she'll be whoever you want
her to be.
(If you're nice)

Beshe
was in
her
bathtub
sloshing
the water
back and
forth
when
the
phone
rang.

She had to put the phone beside the bathtub so it was easy to reach; she was expecting Daphne to call. Beshe had stopped sloshing the water. She shook the bubbles off her hands and then dried them on a little towel, while the phone rang again. She let it ring a third time and then picked it up. Hello. Instead of Daphne it was a woman from the UPS. Beshe had stopped moving her body back and forth but the water kept sloshing from before. Hello, said the woman from the UPS. I'm calling about a parcel, she said and then paused. Together they listened to the water slosh.

Paul Quick

beshe

Faceless cream eyeless
shadow lipless stick
Crotchless panties
Nipple-less bras
Hairless pussy
Erase it all
Forget it all
Wipe it all
away
Spikes
Minis
Straps
Pins
Chord
Cold run vodka gin tonic on the rocks
beyou
beher
beshe

Sarah Muir

Neitherside show

Beshe gives herself birth in a whirl of let's say water and drawing much applause and hoots from the groundlings smacks her multidentivity together with a transcendent click and yes yes please folks for her next dadadialecticdefying feat you can watch her (at mere pennies at glance!) dive headfirst including of course her hair shimmerimmering with apocalyptic glee (if it's a halo you didn't hear it from me) dive like I said from the precipice of popular mental health through the cirrus clouds of ambition the alto-cirrus of economic advantage the stratus and altostratus of primetime and saturdaymorning television respectively the cumulus of the American fertility industry the cumulonimbus of current theories of language and the residual fog of pet ownership finally to cool and hover inconsequentially in the excluded middle of this polished yoni

Paul Quick

Self-Portrait



I'm sick of thinking about, and evaluating, and lending importance to *beauty*. Beauty is too arbitrary for that."

Sarah Banting

'look at these, my childbearing hips' - p.j. h.

Two months

she smells
like war. pomegranate

salt seams
red red
the sheets and
her thighs bloody and maybe
we will sing for you our

voices raised to you. she
stood watching the toilet
flush she kept thinking is
that it?
yes, dark falling out of her
in pieces

he heard her shaking over the phone,
tasting his irritation she
hoped he wanted to help
her catch the blood no

matter that he didn't want her anymore no
matter
that this was her problem not his a
woman's
blood a woman's loss a woman's thighs stomach
clenched cold
watching her

-self her hips empty
into the fucking toilet into
the two and a half boxes of pads she

bled through
and she almost laughed
when she heard *the patient*
is extremely upset, wondered
where exactly
had her self-control left her
alone her feet in stirrups her
belly sore.

courses

She pushes the saucer of salt over the
tablecloth to him. She thinks: You have no
time for philandering. She passes the bread.
She asks him suspiciously: How is it that you
know how to make me happy? Who are your
sources? What have they told you? She blows
air across the turtle soup to cool it. She wants
to find out how he wakes up - gentle and
gradual, or else a sharp shunt into jagged
daytime. The veal comes and they poise their
knives over it. She says: I need more muscle, I
need more muscle. I need more muscle to bear
this. He eats until he is full.

R. Li Wai Suen

Sleuth

-for J.-

There was always mystery
surrounding, I felt sure
Nancy Drew could solve,
as she did so many times,
in lemon yellow books
I read at bedtime

remembering remembering

paint-by-numbers, hopscotch
and marbles, reflecting
a pink skipping rope
that left welts upon her arms

days of schoolyard bullies,
and monkey-bars adrift
in the sand,
I watched her walk home
in solitude, smiling to herself

I did not have the words
falling off my lisping tongue
to call to the magic sprites
the imaginary friends,
my parents denied

once, she lay in front of the
t.v., watching black images
for hours, I counted and
could not see, her world,
made light from within

as a teen, she mused aloud

Catherine Lynn Davidson

behind the postered walls,
as the records twirled
never ending, and she sat
at the edge of the bed,

rocking rocking

I stole her diary (how marvellous
the tiny key) and read of secret
worlds, as if she was Alice
reborn with the grinning cat

she proclaimed herself an angel
speaking to God almighty,
of her immaculate conception
the miscarried baby Jesus
floating in the toilet bowl

I searched for her voices
willing my parents to hear
and caught hell for snooping,
it was never easy Nancy,
at times I felt that it
was my brain,

splintering splintering

my silence self, another bell jar
as she called me wicked,
deluded names and locked
me out of the house

I couldn't tell the neighbours
why I was crying,
the corner store brought comfort
in candy coated wrappings
then suddenly she was gone
slowly poisoned, or perhaps,
eloping, she ran for salvation
with no money for the bus

and told the driver to fuck off
among other things, until the
police escort had her
gowned and identified
naming her, sister

a disjointed life, testimony
picture puzzle pieces
fallen among the bedsheets,
scattered in the waiting room
of the seventh floor ward

where I divided my cigarettes
and ordered pizza after school,
sharing with Johnny, his bandaged
wrists, and Thomas, the flannel
pyjamas and Nike shoes

pacing pacing

I knew that she was lost to me
could never be what I needed
her to be, so I resigned myself
to mystery and recollecting,
the clues that she cannot

Hunger

My mouth closes on the word;
 it is ripe fruit, whole,
 heavy, sweet; I take it all
 in, the whole thing, burst
 of sweetness, exaltation;
 my lips meet
 in a song; it's a poem, a
 mantra, a prayer:
 your name, my love, your name.

 Tara Kainer

Weather

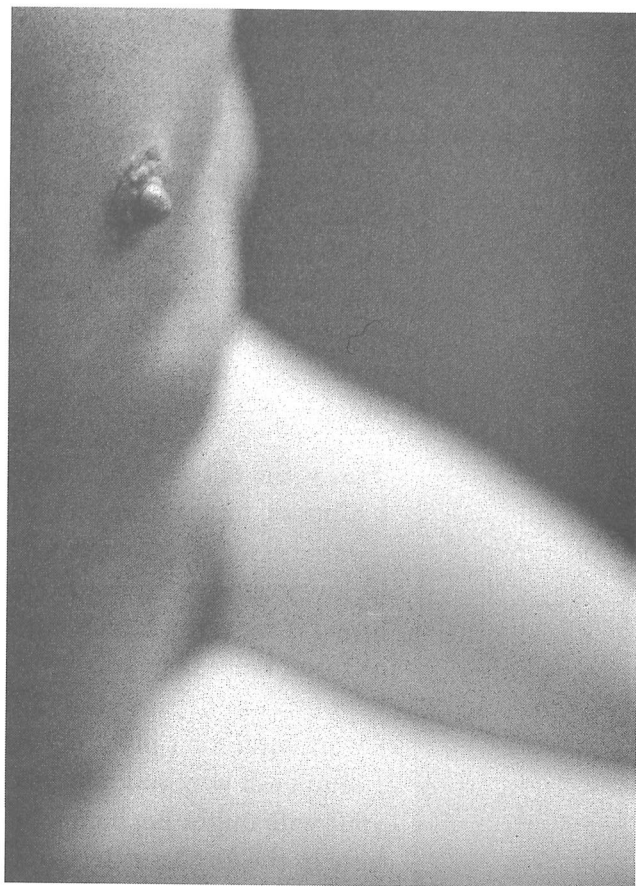
Rain. Finally. Parched trees
 revive a little, grass turns
 from straw-yellow to pale green.
 I breathe a little easier
 for the first time in days, at last
 momentary relief, a slight lifting
 of head and humidity that cloyed
 like an unwelcome lover.
 St. Martin's Bells on the balcony hang
 dejectedly, sodden with
 the insistent drizzle; bedraggled
 cats slouch sullenly in the kitchen,
 and trees, saturated now, shed
 their leaves under the weight
 of falling water.

This is the tail-end of Hurricane Dennis,
 I suppose, forces from afar we can't escape;

like you, my love,
 in my dreams again last night you
 brought me not a bunch but a tree
 of roses, taller than you, roots
 kept fresh in a giant glass of water, and
 a warning: Don't plant it, it won't grow.
 I didn't ask why you appeared, where
 your wife might be, happy to have you
 here in the kitchen, entertaining
 the kids like old times I wear paisley
 silk pyjamas slippery and cool
 against my skin, remembering
 the fit of our bodies generating
 our own weather system a storm
 at first, like Dennis,
 then a gentle blessing,
 like this rain.

 Tara Kainer

Nude #1



© Steve Carroll

Stephen Carroll

I
Just
Wanna
Be
A
Woman
(excerpted)

We giggle like children as we run down to the beach, only a thin towel between our bodies and the fresh night air. I can smell, hear, and taste the summertime.

Warm.

The soles of my bare feet callused from running along the dirt road touch the leaves and needles of trees that have seen many generations of children run by. My toes touch the cool wet dock. The water of the lake is like a sheet of glass, reflecting the soft haunting light of the moon, and of course the stars a universe above and below. Crickets laugh with us as we drop our towels. A gentle breeze reaches my skin. Every cell becomes aware. Five girls five friends stand in a circle on a floating dock, naked, holding hands, star gazing. We do not talk. We make eye contact with each other and every star in the sky, and smile. Eyes... stars... eyes. The beautiful faces of my closest friends silent, still, and magical.

I consider as almost everyone does when face to face with the giant universe how small we are. I wonder if there is a constellation that mirrors our shape.

"This is wonderful!"

"I feel so free."

The water waits for us.

"Shall we?"

We dive in, breaking the mirror.

Oh!

It is wonderful... absolutely wonderful... and yes, so free. I lie on my back and stare at the sky. I am submerged in the universe below; I am the universe below.

Ashley Winning

*We are the night ocean, filled with glints of light. We are
the space between the fish and the moon while we
sit here together
(Rumi).*

We curl into the fetal position and float near the surface of the water. Five girls five friends become five infants in the womb of mother earth. A chance for rebirth?

The bond that we share as females is glorious. We are able to share emotions openly and show affection openly. We can talk about anything.

...masturbation...

What? Where'd that come from?

The concept of masturbation is so repressed in our female society. Boys are 'taught' and even encouraged to masturbate, girls are not. Do we not have the right to understand ourselves sexually?

*As women we deserve to be erotically alive, exploring our
sexual mysteries and yearnings (SARK).*

I wonder why boys are called men and girls are called sluts. I wonder why are we not emboldened to pleasure ourselves as women? I wonder.

I got my period very late, and I feared for a long time that I would never get it. I would hope for it almost every time I went to the washroom after my thirteenth birthday. My peers became women a blessing and a curse while I remained a child.

I adored my first cramps, every second of pain made me laugh, because I could relate to people I understood. My mother

told me that when she was young, girls were so embarrassed to have their period. No one talked about it. It was like they had some sort of disease, and they were ashamed.

Menstruation is still regarded as almost 'shameful' by some, and kept a secret so as not to offend anyone. I'm sorry if "I have my period" is "too much information", but I came here to live out loud.

Why are we afraid of the most natural thing in the world? We show blue dye in commercials because it may disgust someone to see red. Why don't we celebrate our womanhood?

I'm not 'sick' of my monthly reminder that I am a woman, and I hope to never take that fact for granted.

Blood

Woman

Man

Sex

Fire

Blood

so different and no different

Am I a part of you now?

Can I stop lying now?

Am I woman and no longer child?

Goodbye and Thankyou

Every time you gain something, you lose something simultaneously. It's not necessarily a bad trade off; the 'something' may have needed to be lost, but still, you can never go back. You gain experience, you lose innocence.

Simple.

I am concerned that when asked "how are you?", there will only ever be enough time for, "fine thanks, how are you?"

I am concerned that "what do you want to do?" really only means "what do you want to study at University?", and that the only real answer is "I don't know." What do I want to do? Hmm...

I want to run naked through the woods, wash my hair in the moonlight, bite into a ripe mango and let juice drip down my chin. I want to dance in the darkness and paint with my toes... and that's just tonight. Tomorrow I want to read a book, write a song, talk to a friend, hug my dad, dress up in a costume, speak with an accent, and catch a snowflake on my tongue... maybe two.

I want someone to quote me.

I want someone to love me.

I want to flame. I want to live in my body forever. I want to make love to a blind man who paints a picture of my face. I want to lie on a flop bench beside a huge window with a cat on my lap and a cup of tea in my hand flannel jammies still on at 3 p.m., because anyone who comes into my loft must leave their judgement at the door.

I just wanna be a woman.

Simple.

By chance

In my Chinese Brush class
I talk about calligraphy.
Writing calligraphy is like writing a painting.
You move the brush the same way.
You lift and you press.

I write
火 fire
水 water to illustrate.

I write some basic words:
上 up
下 down
日 sun
月 moon
明 bright.

Later in the day
I recite an ancient poem:

牀前明月光
疑是地上霜
舉頭望明月
低頭思故鄉

In front of my bed,
moonlight on the ground.
Is it frost?
Raising my head, I look at the bright moon.
Lowering my head, I think of my native land.

In the poem
明 bright
月 moon
上 up appear.

Lee Pak the poet
likes to use basic words.

nothing
i've been
meaning
to
tell
you

there's nothing i've been meaning to tell you
but even so i seek you out i search the library
the cafeteria your locker your classrooms I
wait by the washroom doors i want to find you
just to see you just to feel the shine of your
smile
burn a blush on my cheeks

no there's nothing i've been meaning to tell you
though i often wonder if you remember the way
we used to walk with our arms linked
you told me "this is how my grandmother
walked with her friends" and i pictured giggling
girls in school uniforms singing and swinging
joyfully through city streets i pictured us and we
were close so close that i could not tell whose
arm was whose

still there's nothing i've been meaning to tell
you
i have no intentions i simply wish to give you
my
life as you once gave me yours when we played
marriage you were the wife and pledged eternal
loyalty i was the husband i wore a hat and had
to kiss you and for a moment there i was no
longer pretending my hat slid off my head long
hair escaped and the game changed but my
stomach did not stop jumping for days for years

afterwards

i swear there's nothing i've been meaning to tell you on my girl
guide's honour i cross my heart and yet
your silence is disbelieving you don't smile or offer your
arm you don't want to play marriage and suddenly i'm
confused hesitant i'm scared because without whispering
one word you make me feel as if i've said too much

Conversation
with
Dorothy
Parker

"November will scorn you"
she said
happy to lick up her smoke.

"but I adore him"
I wailed,
didn't even try to pick up my dignity.

and she
and she
laughed in her maniacal way
and she
and she
turned down her nose
as if to say

"No, no
you
don't."

Amy Bagshaw

Bloody
Knuckles

Punching my fist through a window
would be invigorating.
It would be chivalrous of you
to shoulder the blame -
but (you remind me)
chivalry is dead.
Your wisdom
compels me to banish
the clinking of armour,
the glare of the sun off
a silver plated sword,
and the breathless waiting
for galloping hooves.

Undaunted,
your shadow creeps ahead -
like moss,
dark and romantic,
whispering boldly
about subversion
and manhood,
catching my swoon
as swiftly as it
conceals my
bloody knuckles.

Amanda Betts

Reborn

You my friend, forced to miss your youth
 By folks who cross-crossed their fingers
 Hung garlic between their legs
 To ward off live children and dead marriages
 Years spent locked up in mental wards
 Until you were afraid you really were crazy.

My childhood of fifty years, I lived
 In and out of a secret world
 Loving people who existed only in my head
 Afraid if I stepped one foot out of line
 Loose forever the shallow foothold }
 And slip forever into a chasm of dream.

Real was a paltry dose of T.V. people
 Who awoke, went to bed, ate, slept
 Clearly, cleanly, precisely, automatically
 Normal people never even went to the toilet
 Much less went crazy.

Tonight, you sit still in your overcoat
 Too eager to read your story to care
 I push aside the yellow pages, chicken soup
 Make room at the warm kitchen table.
 Daring to be naked I run to bring my poem.
 We can't even bother to make small talk.

To be swept into a millennia of writers
 Real people who cry out their
 Their stories alive on paper.
 Imagine my surprise to be made whole
 By the written word
 Not all in our head.

Together we sit reading to each other
 I offer you this delicate line
 For your story beautifully written
 For my secret poem
 You gift me with a word
 A perfect exchange my friend
 A new family of fearless Imaginers.

Appreciation For Eros

you say

Ok but
What about those of us
who don't fall into that category with anyone

what about those of us
who still want to believe in real Love
even though
dreams
drop and crash
every day

what about those of us
who feel like there aren't any emotions left
only ghosts
and
jokes

what about those of us who live in the '90s with
the
swallowing fear of AIDS

what about those of us
who don't know exactly what Eros means
what about those of us
who say
ok
lets do it forever
and end up following the beat path to extinction
what about those of us
who don't
appreciate
even the food on our plates
let alone ecstasy?

Mary Elizabeth Thomas

City In Your Heart

Almost got
Inside your head.

Saw a thousand screaming
Warning lights,
You were putting
Them all to bed.
I tried to tell you
Something,
As you covered
Them one by one.
But by the
Time you'd finished
And turned to me
I was already done.

Went looking
For your soul.

Followed a memory to
Our family-room,
And found it
On the floor.
Pleading to
Be let back in,
It said that you'd
Done it wrong.
I laid down beside it,
And we didn't
Make a sound.

*Don't tell me
"These things just happen"
I know
It isn't true.*

Ken Butland

*And when I tell you
"It's all my fault"
I think
It's only you.*

There's a city
In your heart.

People swarm
On familiar streets,
I don't know who
They are.
And when you say
"Make yourself at home, son"
"Help yourself to whatever you can"
All I'm seeing
Are the backs
Of the heads
Of the people
Squeezing in.

better legs

Just because I have glasses and a serious voice, am Asian and flat-chested, does not mean I study math at the U of Waterloo.

I have never been with a white man and not been suspicious of his motives. Does he think I have better legs, does he want sex to be like a lotus blossom, is he waiting for me to tie him up with my hair. Later he hopes I'll spread on the bed, my face expressionless, saying to him, "Colonize me, darlin'."

But I am being arrogant. He doesn't want kinks. Instead he's thinking, "She must be really smart. Maybe she'll do my taxes."

When there are two interracial couples in a room, they deliberately don't look at each other. I'm not being truthful. Once in a Falafel Hut a Chinese man with his blonde date gave me and my Caucasian the thumbs-up sign.

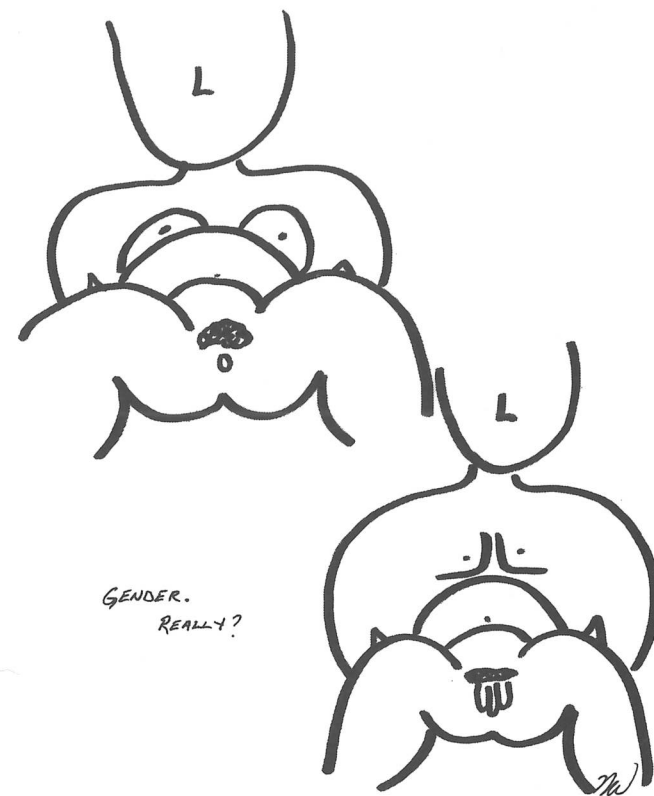
I made love for three months with a man who kept comparing himself to John Lennon. "God," he would gasp, moving above me, "I feel just like John Lennon." "I'm not Japanese," I would reply. "But it's just like John Lennon!" he'd insist.

It's sort of Wednesday and I have a date with John Lennon. Our knees press together romantically under the cramped table. He is eating all the food. I have had one roll and nine glasses of water. I tell him I feel silly saying this, but I've always wanted to do his taxes. I

R. Li Wai Suen

tell him I dream about him at school over my logarithms. I hitch up my skirt because it's a hot summer night, and a thought occurs to me. "Observe," I say to John Lennon, my face expressionless. We both look as I cross and uncross my better legs.

Gender. Really?



Short
Round-
Faced
Women
Can
Be
Dangerous

For a short round red-faced woman
she had an easy way of talking
to men

Unselfconscious
You know, confident
I noticed...

What is it about her?
Did they just feel more relaxed?
You know, not pretty not flirtatious
Not dangerous

Not even at twenty
me
another round-faced
middle-aged woman
I never had an easy way with men
That was only for the very pretty
...so I was told

Today I saw her
no...
first I saw him
tall sleek with shoulder length hair
standing in the wind sucking a cigarette
shouting look-a-me
I looked...

She waved
walked right to him
took a puff of his smoke
more intimate than a kiss

Together they squeezed
into the tiny car
and left

Hey...
we round-faced women
we're not so harmless after all

The
Love
Story
of my
Grandmother

She left me today, but I wasn't there.
I was here, in school, studying about life.

She was young, she was beautiful. She grew up
in full traditional Taiwanese culture.
Humility and suffering were taken as a part of
life.
Joy and happiness were gifts.

She married and gained three step-children.
Later, she gave birth to four more.
They grew up. Fast.
Her sons and daughters had high ambitions.
They wanted to make their parents proud.
When they were old enough, one by one, they
left her to find a greater future.
She said goodbye. She was proud.
She waved. She waited. She locked her tears
behind her.
Her children had moved across the world, but
she was strong.
She was a strong, beautiful Taiwanese woman
with a stronger heart and a stronger mind
than what was sold in the world her children
went to.

She clung to her husband, and her life in
Taiwan. She did what Taiwanese women do.
She worked and she smiled.
Occasionally she would hop on a plane and visit
her children.
They had grown up and had children of their
own. She loved those children.

She clung to them, and her life in limbo
She taught them Chinese, she reminded them of their history
She learned the Western way, and learned English words.
Her life, her tradition - they became second to her love.
She accepted the change. She embraced it
And when she got sick
she moved across the world - away from her home
to be near her children and her grandchildren
She wanted to die near her family.

the family that left her to make her proud
And I laughed with her, and I loved her. She made me whole.
My grandmother was my friend and my hero.
And when she got sicker than sick
she moved to a hospital that had 40 floors
And she depended on doctors and nurses who couldn't speak her
language
And she took medication that she couldn't read
so that she could live her last months with her family.
And I was there. And I watched. And I didn't help because I felt
stupid and helpless.
And I held her hand. And I couldn't make her laugh anymore.
And she told me and everyone in the room that she was ready to
die. And I had no response. I didn't talk much to her when she
was sicker than sick. I just watched and took care of the kids. And
then I left. And then she died.

My grandmother was beautiful. She was beautiful, beautiful,
beautiful.

Unknitting the Cloth

She washes dishes with tear-filled eyes, scours
wounds the frying pan won't unstick.

Next, the colander,

memories call to her,

smells of the city,

hot,

at high noon.

She sniffles, scrubs, then stops.

Shoulders weighted, elbows bend until the
counter holds.

Unfurl the sobbing sounds, forehead pressed
into cupboards near.

Droplets of tears,

The panhandler pleads,

Into the sud-dotted pond,

For Freedom.

Tracy Riley

Innocence



Erin Anne Byrne

Looking for Meaning

Passionate.

That's the word Neil used to describe me. We always joke around in class, writing silly poems about each other, and today he wrote a little poem about how passionate I am about issues I believe in. For some reason his comment is sticking in my head; no one has ever described me like that before. As it sits here, trying to finish my essay for class, I absentmindedly begin flipping through the dictionary on the table beside me.

pas'sion-ate: having or showing strong feelings; intense.

Well, that seems reasonable. How can people live their lives without being passionate? Is there any point in going through the motions of daily existence without feeling excited...motivated...angry... exuberant? I cannot imagine living like that. At every step of life there is something to savour, to change, to believe, to fight, to love, to learn. It is the most all-encompassing emotion, to be energized by that ball of desire that comes from deep inside.

I glance back at the dictionary and my eyes wander past "passionate." It seems ironic that "passive" is the next word.

pas-sive: 1. Inactive, but acted upon 2. Offering no resistance; submissive

Now there is a tricky word. One can be passive as a result of seemingly impenetrable conditions that render action difficult; one can also be passive due to disinterest, complacency, ignorance, insensitivity. As long as I have a

voice, as long as there are inequalities that separate us from each other and the world that we live in, there is no place for silence.

Neil also teases me about the way my eyes "light up" when I get excited. I love that expression it conjures up such images of pleasure, desire, drive, dedication. It conjures up images of a girl I met once, a passionate girl with eyes that lit up whenever she smiled her beautiful smile.

Her name was...is...Ranu. (I can't say "was" because even though I have returned to my comfortable, privileged Canadian life, she's still lying immobile in her bed in Calcutta) I remember the way she would talk...

oh, how she could talk! She would constantly chatter in her sweet, lilting voice as I massaged her aching arthritic joints. We would spend hours deep in discussion, me with my broken Bengali, and her with her limitless patience. I would begin kneading her fingers then move to her wrists, elbows, shoulders, knees, ankles, toes. She would grimace from the pain and sigh from the relief as I ran my fingers over the joints that betrayed her, that refused to move, that prevented her from walking, eating, skipping, playing.

She would always hungrily devour the stories I told her. She lived vicariously through my anecdotes about school, relationships, parents. She would accuse me of lying she had never heard of Canada; she couldn't conceive of flying in a plane to another country. She would always think I was saying "Kerala" (a South Indian province) instead of "Canada." I suppose people cannot have the luxury of contemplating global issues when they do not know where their next meal will come from.

And she would sing! Hymns, children's songs, current Hindi movie hits, anything. Then she'd make *me*, with my horrible voice, sing too. She wouldn't understand a word of my English tunes; she would just close her eyes and smile as I sang "Twinkle, twinkle little star" and every Elvis Presley song that came into my head.

She would tell me about her family, school, friends, all of the things that made up her life until she was twelve. That was

when her body began to metamorphose, when frightening changes began taking place. She watched in horror, her family looked on in despair, her doctor shrugged in helplessness. No one knew what to do...that was when she came here. This bright, vibrant twenty-two year old came to a "Home for the Dying and Destitute" where she was surrounded by fifty elderly, sick, psychologically unstable, abandoned, unwanted women.

Every day that I worked there, I would shudder as I entered the dark dormitory-style room. The flies would be everywhere. On the patients who lacked the strength to swat them away, on the wounds which were poorly bandaged. I wondered how these women survived with such little medical care, impersonal treatment from the staff, and monotonous days. Yet as depressing as the scene was, it was still immensely better than any government-run hospital. At least here they received decent meals, clean clothes, and place to sleep, unlike the dismal standard of care of most hospitals.

I came to realize that although the growing gap between the rich and the poor may be evident everywhere, in a place like Calcutta it jumps out and slaps you in the face. I would walk down the street, studiously trying to avoid staring at the tired faces of the women, the half-naked children sitting on the road, the pencil-thin men in bare feet pulling two large women up a hill in a rickshaw. But there would be nowhere neutral to turn my gaze to...at least not until I entered the relative haven of my grandparents' apartment. That was where the cook would make my favourite dishes, the driver would take me wherever I wanted to go, and my family would give me money for whatever I wanted to buy.

I'm twenty-two, just like Ranu. Why is the one block between my grandparents' home and hers such an unbridgeable distance? Why was I born in the sterile confines of a Montreal hospital and she in a shanty in the slums of Calcutta? Yet, despite the squalor and poverty, there is something in Ranu's eyes, something in the people of Calcutta, in the people of India. It is something I rarely see in Canada.

It is the *passion*.

Where else would a country come to a halt to rejoice in a World Cup cricket win? Where else would an entire country mourn the death of Mother Teresa? (Or just "Ma" as she is lovingly called) Where else can you find a festival practically every day to celebrate some spiritual occasion? And where else would people who have so little material goods, welcome me, with my obscenely overconsumptive lifestyle? They affectionately laugh at my childish words, they guide me through the confusion of lively streets that is Calcutta, they invite me over to share the meager amount of sweets and *chai* they can offer. There is still the grabbing, the hostile stares, the daily occurrences of hatred and violence that cannot be ignored. Yet, good and bad, they constitute the indomitable energy of India.

Only once during all of my visits did I see Ranu cry. (Even though her best friend Bornalee told me that she cried every afternoon when all of the "aunties," as we volunteers were called, went home) The tears streamed down her face as she asked me who would feed her after I left. Usually her meals would remain on the floor by her bed until a staff member realized that she had not eaten. Then the food would be hurriedly administered in a way that made Ranu feel unwanted and alone. I cried with her; however, my tears seemed meaningless. For I was leaving. She was staying.

I turned from her bedside, walked out of the door, past the begging children who knew that all of us foreigners carried more money in our pockets than they would see in a year. I walked past the vendors who thought that they were shrewdly overcharging me: fifty cents instead of the normal ten for the fruit I would unthinkingly pay \$1.50 for in Canada. I walked onto my plane and flew over an ocean, an eternity away.

I take some time to look back to the journal entries I wrote when I was in Calcutta. The pain, sadness, love, determination that would wash across me as I worked at the home. Yet upon return, I quickly became encompassed by the concerns of my immediate

world. Surrounded by the safe bubble of academics, I learn about medical treatments that most of the world will never benefit from. I can feel myself becoming bogged down in details, losing sight of what I want from my life, forgetting what it is that needs to be focused on. How can I use my privileged position of knowledge, power, and money to remove the very structures that granted me my unearned status?

I have to remind myself that I do not necessarily have to go to India or any of those "poor, developing" countries to discover relationships based on power differentials; they exist on every level of society. We are surrounded by human rights abuses in a society where women feel unsafe, children go without breakfast, and nuclear waste leaks into water.

Before I put away the dictionary, I see that the next phrase after "passive" is "passive resistance."

passive resistance: opposition to a government, etc., by refusal to comply or by nonviolent acts, as fasting.

There must be something significant in having *passion* and *resistance* in such close proximity to each other, I think to myself.

The passion to resist. The passion of resistance. Being a passionate resistor. Nonviolently.

That is when the fundamental questions come in...what? how? why? There is such a vast amount of injustice at every step; where should I...*we*...start? Too many questions, I know. That's how my mind works...question everything, look for root causes, work to eliminate them.

There is so much that we, with our "superior" knowledge and financial state, have to learn. We have lost of our sense of community, connection, continuity. We are drifting towards the opposite extreme with our isolation, competition, material values. As this happens, we continue to upset the fragile balance between us and everything else in our ecosystem. And yet we refuse to slow down. This desensitization is the ultimate danger...we must resist so that the passion in Ranu's eyes is not left to wither and die.

why
i cannot
watch
'politically
incorrect
with
bill
maher'

bill maher believes
all men are biologically programmed
to be attracted solely to the
standerrd amairrickin byoudee
known to some as the texas/rhode island genetic
aestheticism

big tits big hair big lips big eyes,
small waist small nose small hips small thighs.

bill maher believes
all men love plasticandersenlee,
and if all men don't love her
they must be biologically damaged.

when a female panelist stated
'women should be able to breastfeed
babies in public'
bill maher retaliated
with his nasal
every-man-is-irrevocably-irrefutably-
irreversibly-biologically-MANLY
machismo:

'men should be allowed to masturbate in
public'
she explained
that
breastfeeding provides sustenance for another
human being,
masturbation satisfies a selfish desire.

bill maher earns

a large *paycheck* in standerrd amairickin dollerz
for spouting what he believes.

i believe
bill maher's second-rate misinterpretation of darwinism,
his irrational irreconcilable irredeemaable machismo,
is the reason why i can't watch
his second-rate interpretation of televised debating.

bill maher proffers
his political incorrectness to the *hoi polloi*
as though
it were amairrickin aapul paihh,
as though
her were breastfed a mixture of
misogyny and misanthropy.

You wouldn't think we would smile. When Ginger told us she had breast cancer, you wouldn't think we would ever smile. But we did. Not then, but later.

Ginger is one of the most direct people I know. So, when she immediately started drawing diagrams of breasts and ducts as she explained the science to us, we weren't surprised. And already we were smiling. Because it was funny. These little cartoons of breasts with nipples that look like erasers. Funny and sad. She tells, us, "I am going to have my breast removed as soon as possible." Hot tears blur my vision; I don't smile. We all think about the fear, so immediate. The she looks through her tears into our eyes, "I know you two are pretty relaxed about things, so if you want to see what it looks like, I'd be cool with that. I think it would be good for you to see it, so you will always know what to look for." So the three of us crowd into the single bathroom stall. Me and my husband looking at her breasts, gently touching it on the side. We all giggle, imagining the people walking by outside will think, hearing the

Ginger



Ginger knows that we have done nude photographs before. So, she asks us if we would do nudes of her, before and after having her breasts removed. We feel honoured by her request.

And so, this night, we take nude photographs of a beautiful woman. A strong and confident woman. A scared woman. Our wish to

capture her beauty and her strength, her femininity and her softness, her fear and pain, her love of life. And again, we smile. We laugh all night long. Ginger is a woman of style and flair, she arrives with a massive bag filled with every accessory she owns. Shoes, lacy things, leather things, jewelry and scarves are heaped in the middle of our living room. I giggle as she enthusiastically rummages through the pile, reminding me of a kid squealing joyfully in a pile of leaves. Finally, we pick out a bracelet that astounds us with how well it suits her. It is burnished metal, fitted perfectly to her wrist...it seems tough and sexy at the same time. Feminine. So we photograph her. Through our feelings of sadness and fear, we laugh. And we smile.

Ginger e-mailed us last month, she's ready for the after pictures now.

Chelsea Elliott

still

my legs
were shaking. jeans
around my ankles I

said i'm still
on my period

a bit.

a boy on
his knees on the
floor in
front of me. he
looked up

and said
what does
that mean? i laughed

and answered
that depends on the
boy.

and his
tongue his
lips i couldn't
stand up

he asked me
what does it
taste

like? i said it
tastes like
blood.

Jane Arbour

We
Don't
Always
Enjoy
It

This pain from inside seeps thru my body and
onto my thigh
I cannot stand to look at him

And sometimes,
Mostly,
I just look at the ceiling and list off my favourite
T.V. shows in my head
How I'd love to be watching them
How I'd much rather enjoy the company of my
converter

Then I hear that oh so familiar sigh
The one that means that I'm permitted to go to
sleep

And he kisses me in thank-you
I force a smile in return

The light has been turned out
And he's cuddling into me,
Sleeping

And I am left still reciting the top ten shows
I might be able to sleep now,
Except for the fact that I don't want to be here,
And I'm lying in the wet spot,

Again.

Anna Anstey-Porter

cailin

for women who fought

for women who starved
to death, who watched their
families die, who
were forced to emigrate during
the potato famine
while food was shipped to
england under armed guard

for the women of the 1916
easter rising

for the women who said no to a border

for women who spoke to
their children in irish so that
at least language could never
be stolen from them

for the women of west
belfast who liberated the people
of the falls road by
walking into the street
past the barbed wire
barricades in defiance of the curfew

for women who lived and
died in poverty in catholic ghettos

for prison women

for the women who banged
bin lids to warn of
approaching british soldiers

for women who carry coffins
past riot police

for the no-wash protesters of the
women's armagh jail who lived in cells
with walls covered in piss, shit and
blood for prisoner-of-war status

for the women who went on
hunger strike

for the women who march for
civil rights, peace and freedom

for women against sectarianism

for women who take up arms

for women who grieve
for women who rage

*go raibh
maith agat*

(thank you)

Here's to the girls

Here's to the girls of my generation,

Who know themselves less than the characters on TV who they confuse with their own lives until fiction becomes reality and reality becomes fiction in the soap opera dramas of everyday. Only that's how they wish it would be. But unlike TV, it hurts when they get raped and they get hungry when they don't eat and there is nothing romantic about the unsuccessful suicidal overdose that leaves them foaming and convulsing in a puddle of urine on the bathroom floor. Sex is exciting and sells things like jeans but to sell their actual body is a crime so it is used and abused for free all in the name of freedom and liberation while trapping them further with pregnancy and STDs that leave them as a kid with a kid or a kid who's no longer a kid as she waits out the last ten years of her life.

So here's to the girls.

Here's to the girls who try and take on the world and adventure and experiment and wind up beaten and naked on a parking lot floor or who wind up as a single mother on Welfare who gets pregnant again because she can get two rooms on it, with a boyfriend who's sixteen and even more of a baby than their own who just wants to get free, when she knows she never can.

So here's to the girls.

Here's to the girls who say fuck the Harlequin Romance but want to be fucked like a

Caley McLean

Harlequin romance but end up getting fucked and fucked over by a boy with pimples and alcohol breathe less sure of what he is doing than even herself to the cheers for him and the jeers for her in her sexually equal school where she gets branded a slut. And still, girls, face to face with the obscene pictures of themselves. In the name of abuse? In the name of beauty? Daily. But they are still made to feel ashamed of their nakedness, though their emotions lie naked to be raped as well. And their nakedness disgusts them.

So here's to the girls.

Here's to the girls who succeed in starving themselves, withstanding food, all in denial of the privilege they've been brought up with. Only they've got to have food in order to take pride in their power to refuse it. In their out of control life it is finally possible to restrict, reduce, contain, control. All for the sake of a facade, an advertising lie that ensnares them in the death trap. Victims of shame, victims of fat, victims of their own bodies that finally provide them with an outlet for their rage. Puking is not pretty, emancipation leaves no substance, as the ultimate achiever once again achieves.

So here's to the girls.

Here's to the girls who grow up never having had a love relationship but merely tested and tasted in random encounters as they tumble through life unsure of the unknown, who have their first kiss in the drunken haze of a coed party on a couch under a blanket where things happen and learn to give blow jobs before they can even hold real jobs, before they can even drive a car, but do it for the first time on the bathroom floor of someone else's house with their head pressed up against the toilet and a line outside the door. Rites of passage. Pain and humiliation then, pain and humiliation some more.

So here's to the girls.

Cheers to the girls

Jeers to the girls

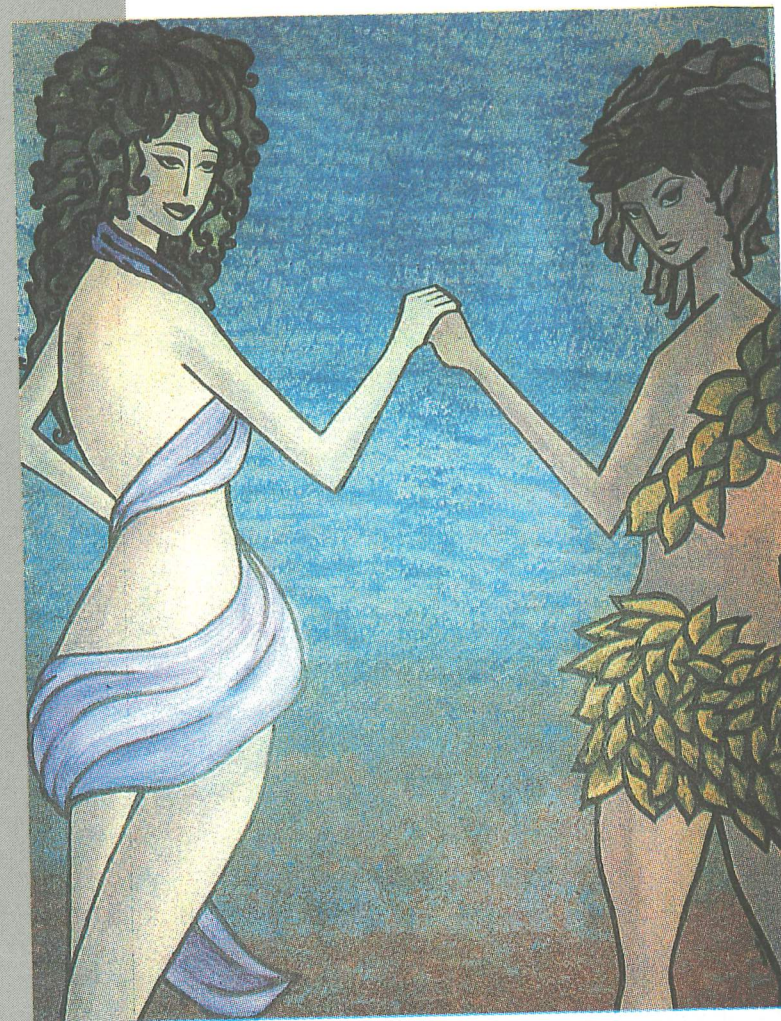
Fears to the girls

Amelia's Dream



Kristy Weber

Lilith & Eve



Kristy Weber

The Future

Look!
A naked girl,
Running wild through the streets
AAAAAAGGGGGGHHHHHHHHH!!!
Where is she going?
The television networks don't know,
Neither do we.

Jennifer Whalen

Bios...

ANNA ANSTEY-PORTER -- Status: no faculty/leaving next year to be an English major at another school, interested in self-indulgence topped with a little embarrassment from publishing at 20 what was felt at 16.

JANE ARBOUR is 24 years old and dances her ass off in Toronto, where she lives.

AMY BAGSHAW I am a second-year fine arts student. I like to swim. I like to nap.

SARAH BANTING Not really knowing how to be a Feminist, but believing in Good Will towards Everyone, I like waving the Humanist banner. I try not to wish to be beautiful.

AMANDA C. BETTS -- I am in my third year of an English B.A.H. I am an avid feminist, an obsessive reader, and a compulsive writer.

BARBARA BLOOM -- After having to end a wonderful twenty year career as a psychiatric social worker due to a disability, Barbara Bloom spends her time with her two children, learning how to use a computer and writing poems and stories. She has been a feminist since the 1970's when she lived in New York City. Her husband was on the Faculty of Education for many years.

KAREN BOURRIER is a first year English major. She is excited to be part of this year's Review.

It's sad to see, really. **KEN BUTLAND** believes he's been doing penance this year for any number of excusable things.

ERIN ANNE BYRNE is a second-year drama student who has been experimenting with black and white photography for 5 years. Her work is featured on greeting cards sold at the JDUC gift shop.

STEPHEN CARROLL began his pursuit of photography as an art form in 1995. What started as a hobby quickly became a passion and is now becoming a second career. Stephen's areas of photographic interest include nudes, landscapes, photo-documentary and portraits.

MAY CHAN is a Queen's graduate and Kingston-based artist.

CATHERINE LYNN DAVIDSON is a women's studies/sociology student with plans to pursue a Master's of Social Work. She feels that her poetry reflects her need to witness and record; a storytelling, so to speak. A committed feminist and activist, Lynn volunteers at S.A.C.C.K., the Kingston Youth Shelter Project, and the Ban Righ Centre for Women.

MONIKA DUTT I am an Indian woman with strong Canadian connections. I love writing, Elvis Presley, oatmeal, sneakers, being vegan, and running at sunrise. I hope that life never ceases to be an adventure, and that I never stop listening, learning, and living.

CHELSEA ELLIOTT grew up in Western Canada. She recently moved to the East, after a fun-filled year in Sweden.

My name is **MARINA HESS** and I love reading and writing to the point where I actually wouldn't mind being locked in a library for a weekend.

TARA KAINER is a bookseller and anti-poverty activist. She is also a member of Cargo Kulture, which organizes and hosts a local reading series, and of the editing collective, Foxglove, which recently published *On the Threshold: Writing Toward the Year 2000*.

CATTO HOUGHTON studies drawing and painting at Concordia, and is very popular among her peers. Her greatest influences include Egon Schiele, Stephanie Earp and Dee-Lite. She once swam over a shark.

REBECCA JAREMKO is a second year Law student with a BA (hon) in Anthropology from the University of Calgary. In her work, she seeks to echo and explore the joy of living.

CAROL LIAO is going to be attending UBC Law. Her AMS job gave her a tough skin, but she is still a dreamer and an optimist. She loves her friends and family for making her laugh.

CALEY MCCLEAN wonders why it is as women we idolize everything/idealize everything -- except ourselves. She realizes that she doesn't really know what she's talking about. That's why she came to school... to know.

SARAH MUIR is in Commerce, and is not particularly interested in anything it has to offer. She has recently become inspired by gender issues and is trying to figure out how to make a living out of it. She enjoys writing and hopes to be published (some day) in a magazine that pays.

PAUL QUICK is damaged goods.

TRACY RILEY -- I am a student in third year psychology. Back-country and beauty nestled in the everyday are my caregivers. With outstretched arms they coddle and coo. I look to the stars, take one more step.

DONNA-MARIE ROMEO I am a third-year studio artist in Queen's Bachelor of Fine Arts program. My themes centre around the female body, as I am interested in the psychological complexity of being a woman in today's world.

ALICIA SACCO Alicia studies English at Queen's, writes poetry, and is interested in being interested in things.

DARLENE ST. GEORGES I found my creative source at the age of 25 and have since walked the path of artist. I seek self expression of the challenges I face in my academic and personal growth. The symbols and images that emerge articulate the rich authentic aspects of my experience as a female, a survivor and a human being.

MICHELLE SWITZER -- Michelle's a third-year geography student who likes it when people analyze her poetry and tell her what it means. She wanted to streak through the Rockies on New Year's but didn't. Much thanks to C, N, V, and A for support and M for making her laugh.

MARY ELIZABETH THOMAS is a first-year film and women's studies major. Ultimately, Mary would like to write and direct films that are oriented towards social justice issues. She is very pleased to be a part of the Queens Feminist Review.

RACHEL LI WAI SUEN is an entertaining complainer, but, this not being challenging enough, also studies law and reads voraciously. Her writing has previously appeared in Books in Canada (1st place, 1997 Student Writing Awards), *éxistère*, *ca met égal*, *Fireweed*, and *The UC Review*.

NATASHA WEBSTER is currently in her third year and studying Geography. Her main area of interest is in gender issues and urban space.

Growing up in Washington state, **KRISTY WIEBER** was drawn to all art forms, but didn't take up painting until her mid-twenties. "When I paint, time doesn't exist and I lose myself in the painting."

JENNIFER WHALEN is a small town girl who came to the bright lights of Kingston to attend university. Presently, she is in her third year studying psychology and health.

MEGAN WINKLER wonders if her passion for the written word in all its forms could be an illness and she is searching for... well, she's not quite sure, but a good start would be an appearance in a 'milk commercial'...

Hmmm.... Let me see... My name is **ASHLEY WINNING**. I am a first year Drama/Psychology major. Amongst other things, I love willow trees and edible bubbles. C'est tout.

Salome



"Catherine Mackinnon says that female sexuality in our culture is contaminated by dominance and female subordination. As a woman and as a feminist, I have been disturbed by the pervasiveness images which equate weakness with woman and attractiveness. My painting, "Salome," is a response to this and to the one place where I have seen female sexuality celebrated as sensual and powerful: belly dancing. I took a belly dancing class last year & went to see some "real" belly dancers. I hope this picture echoes the celebration spoken by every motion of a woman who is proud and powerful and sexy."

Rebecca Jaremkko