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Queen's Feminist Review

Volume 5, 1997



Tara Corless

PLEASE RETURN TO OPIRG

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Queen's Feminist Review

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Preface

It's hard not to wonder sometimes what the point is. The rallies, the protests, the petitions, the meetings, the discussions . . . the organizing for change in the lives of women can all seem somewhat futile. It seems no matter what we do as feminists, there are rarely the desired consequences; no matter how much we are able to accomplish, there is inevitably more to do. The struggle seems endless. However, in expressing ourselves by writing, reading, listening and talking about feminism we necessarily refuse to give in to that futility. This expression is what the Feminist Review is all about.

We believe the Review has the potential to challenge the apathy of those who have become so desensitized to the discrimination and struggles which women continue to face as we look in from the margins. By giving voice to women of all backgrounds and experiences, the Review provides a medium both for personal and political expression.

We as the editors do not pretend that the Review is a representation of all feminism(s). Nor do we presume that it is any more than a collection of artistic expressions by women who identify as feminists. However, the Feminist Review is an important publication on campus in and of itself. There are too many ideas, concepts, and voices which are ignored simply because they do not conform to some pre-conceived notion of academia and/or legitimacy. We have formatted the Review to answer for the disparity which exists as a result. Please take it as such by engaging in this year's edition of the Queen's Feminist Review.

Ari Berger & Angela Cookson, on behalf of the editors.

Uninhibited
Laura Marshall

In the silent dark solitude
Of my nighttime room
I can finally say the words aloud.

Thanks To:

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AMS Social Issues Commission
 Faculty of Arts and Science
 Queen's University Institute of Women's Studies
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 Queen's University Department of Sociology
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We would also like to take this opportunity to thank the many contributors whose work does not appear within these pages.

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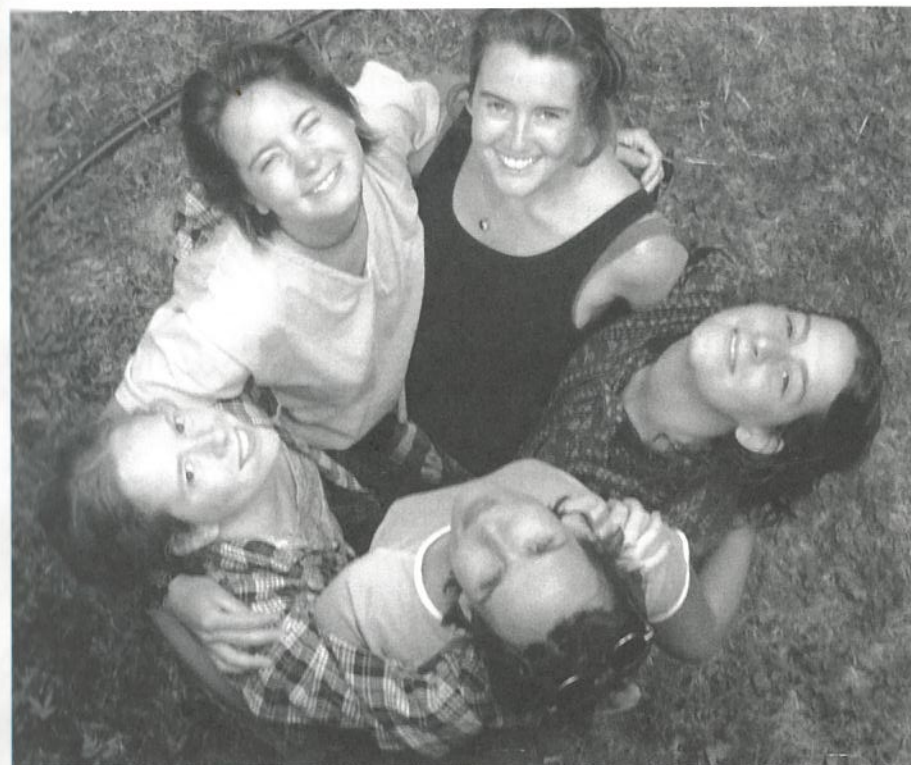
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Circle of Women

Jane Ballingall



A Critique

Rebecca Stewart

For my sister

Sometimes I wake up in the middle of the night
And stand in front of the mirror
completely naked
And I just stand there and admire myself
Until I start to feel ashamed
Because I've remembered that I am to be admired
for my mind.

One

Laura Marshall

She shuts the door and locks it.
Good.
Now they're out there, and
she's in here, and it's
Her. Own. Space.
And then it draws her, even
though she hadn't thought of it
before, and now she's standing before
that mirror.
And her hand is reaching for the hem
of her XL T-shirt,
pulling it up under her arms
to reveal a torso, more bone than torso.
And her hands work faster now,
to unbutton her huge size 3 jeans
- the ones that fit so well a month ago -
and to pull them down to her knees
so that her view won't be obstructed.
Now she looks.
The skin stretched taut, every little rib
fighting to break free, the bony wings
of her hips -
her eyes stare solemnly at every feature
and she thinks, almost perfection.
Almost.
But why is it that
Almost
is so horribly, absolutely
Ugly?

Small World

Trish Dale

for women of size

**The world at size 12
is kind and smiling,
will forgive her anything.**

The world at size 14
is friendly too and
sometimes brings her flowers.

The world at size 16
is getting tighter
like a close-fitting dress.
She is saved only by her bones
and flawless skin.

The world at size 18
giggles when she boards the bus
drops random comments
designed to be overheard.

The world at size 20
is openly hostile
declares its enmity
on her large country
forbids her to be human
conspires for her early death
by dishonour.
Is it any wonder she overeats?

*She is eating her way to heaven
where fat angels with rosy cheeks
are waiting to clasp her
to their own generous bosoms
offering her the soft comfort
not found on earth
among thin mortals.*

Ladies' Dressing Room Artillery Park Pool

Trish Dale

this is a sight for sore eyes
all these irregular shapes
no magazine bods here

Picasso nudes
Cubist bliss with
square breasts
misplaced navels
fused faces.

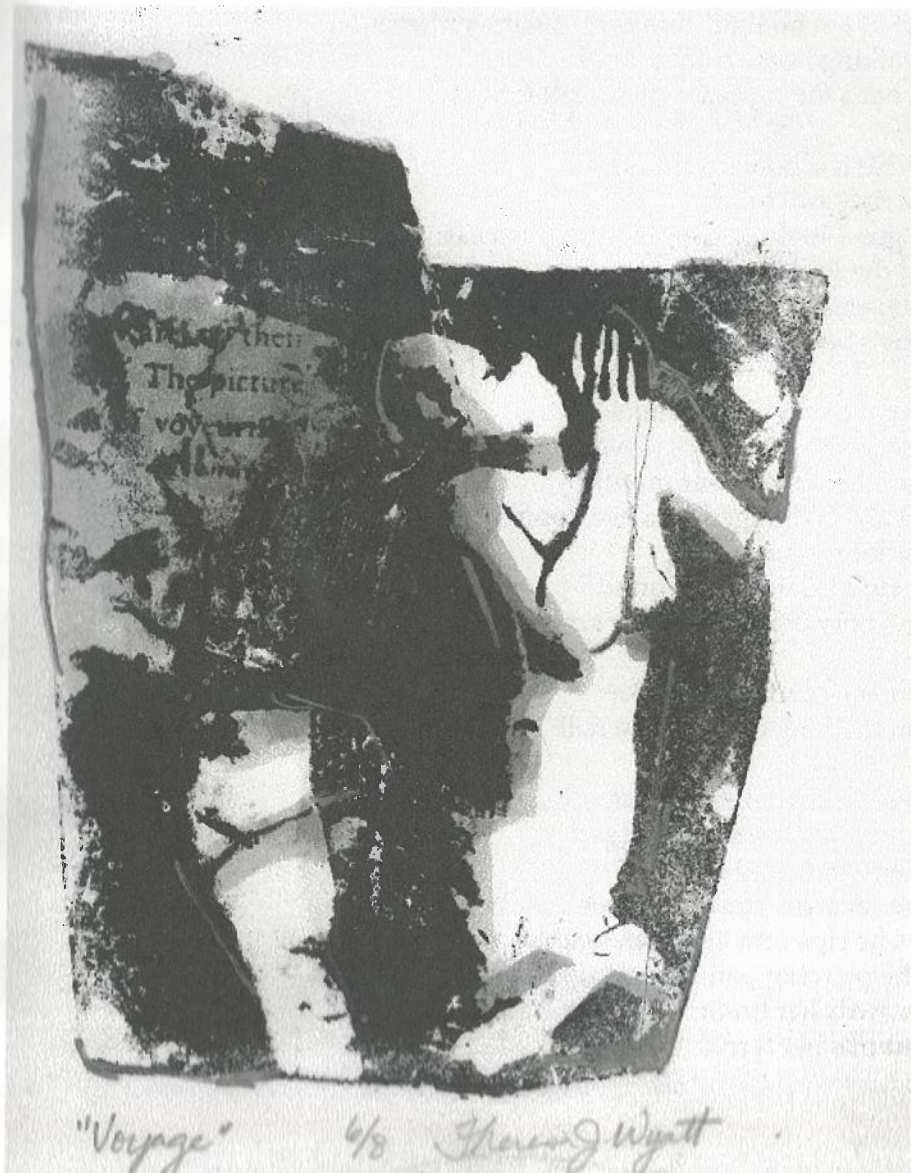
Real wimmin bulge
in strange places
are lumpy, bumpy
rippled, wrinkled
not glossy like
magazine pages.

We're mottled, freckled,
checkered
some plaid
some zippered too—
this ain't the movies.

The ladies' dressing room
at Artillery park pool
is steaming with the energy
of the imperfect
the freedom
of the undressed.

Voyage

Theresa Wyatt



What a Schoolgirl Thinks*

Trish Dale

what a schoolgirl thinks on a sunny afternoon
walking home from school
what's for supper, will he call tonight?

What a schoolgirl thinks
as they call to her
a good-looking couple sitting in a car
in the parking lot of a church
no sense of danger as she approaches
she's been taught to be helpful

what a schoolgirl thinks
as one hand clamps down on her arm
another covers her mouth
as she is dragged into her doom
kicking, flailing
a shoe left on the ground
the only evidence of her struggle

what a schoolgirl thinks
on the long dark ride to hell

what a schoolgirl thinks
when her mouth is gagged
her hands and legs tied
her nostrils sunk in carpet
as he rips into her from behind
the piercing pain travels up her spine
crowds her brain
numbs her terror

what a schoolgirl thinks
when they finally leave the house
as she struggles with the ropes
and in the struggle for her life
she leaves it
a crumpled heap on the floor
what a schoolgirl thinks
on her way to heaven
would make the angels scream.

*On the abduction and murder of Kristen French, an Ontario schoolgirl

STYLE: March 29, 1996

Leah Murray

I do not know how many times I must have repeated myself:

"He was wearing a fluorescent jacket.
It had a fluorescent green collar
then a fluorescent pink midsection
then it was black to where it ended.
It ended at the top of the thigh."

They said:

"Oh. My pencil broke. What colour was that again?"

I do not know how many times I must have repeated myself:

"He looked like he was over 30.
He was wearing acid-washed jeans.
He had a very thick accent
so I could hardly
understand what he was saying."

Just then a man with a moustache came in.
He said:

"I was just about to take a bite of my lasagna
when I was informed about our little foreign
friend."

I do not know how many times I must have repeated myself:

"He said he wanted to practice speaking
English."

The man with the moustache said:

"Looks like he wanted to practice
a little more than English
if you know what I mean!"

Everybody laughed.

The man with the moustache said:

"So anyway, we'll give you a call.

We'll round up some pictures.

Do you think you'd be able to pick him out?

Do you think you'd remember

what he looked like?"

I said:

"I'm not too good with faces.

But I'll never forget that fucking jacket."

Meetings

Michelle Moldofsky

I met a man on the street today.
He said, "Hi, how ya doing?"
I just walked by.
I had somewhere to go.
Perhaps he thought I was unfriendly.

I met a man in the ravine today.
From the bridge above where I was walking
He told me that I have nice legs.
I know.
I use them to walk.
They work well.

I met a man on the way to school.
He was smiling at me.
I smiled back.
As we passed each other
I noticed that his penis was hanging out of his pants.
I didn't feel like smiling anymore.

I met a man in the street at night.
He was in his car and wanted to follow me.
He had to turn around though.
He drove around the corner in order to
Come down a street in front of me.
As I hid in the shadows
I could see him search the street for me
And go back in the direction from which he came
Because that's where he thought I was going.

I met a man at Canada's Wonderland.
He was going to ask me the time.
He came right up to me and looked down my shirt.
Maybe he didn't like what I had in there.
He just walked away.

I met a man at the side of the road.
I was eating a freezie.
He said he had something else I could suck.

I met a man in the library.
He was sitting next to me.
The book he had on his lap
Wasn't as interesting as his hand moving under it.
I thought it best to ignore him.
I suppressed my laughter.

I met a boy in the hallway.
He was younger than me.
He put his hand on my breast then ran away.
I was so angry, I stood still.
After he was gone I thought of something to say.

I met three men when it was dark out.
They said hello.
I didn't respond.
They think Torontonians are rude.
I'm glad they told me so.
Communication is so important.

I met a man on the street today.
I wanted to quicken my step
But then he might know my fear.
I glared at him when he made eye contact.
I wanted to have the street to myself.
Perhaps he thought I was unfriendly.

Rape

Michelle Moldofsky

When I was younger
Sexual assault didn't exist.
I said I was raped
But I wasn't really
So why complain?

Rape was so terrible
Penetration so important
And I remained with my virginity
Intact
As if nothing was disturbed
Because no one could see any blood
Or rip, tear or bruise.

I said I was raped
Because I had no other word.
And even then it was just a story.
Not serious because it didn't hurt.
Not serious because he finally stopped
And said he was sorry.
And I didn't have to see him anymore.

A story I told
Of how I'd gone through something
And how I was tough.
I was strong.
I didn't know it would come back

Again.

Birth

Michelle Moldofsky

When I was eight
Turning nine
I had a crush
On a boy.
He must have liked me
Because on my birthday
He kissed my cheek.

We were at camp
And I was friends with his sister.
My friends teased me
Because I liked a boy
And in the field
They pinned me to the ground
Pulling up my shirt
To deliver the baby
They pretended was in my stomach

And left me there
On the ground
Infantless and upset
Because I was always
Such a sensitive child.

Children

Michelle Moldofsky

I don't want to be a mother.
People think I'm crazy.
They think I'm wrong
As if I don't know my self
Because soon that instinctual
Maternal feeling
Will overtake me.

The miracle of beautiful childbirth
Will fascinate me
And fulfill my
Every dream.

I think
There is nothing beautiful
About hemorrhoids.
And episiotomies
Are not of miracles made.

Besides,
Babies are ugly
They cry and they shit.
I am awkward around babies
Because I'm expected to love them
Even though they are strangers.

I am good with children
When I want to be
But I'm supposed to be good
With children
At any time.
All of my time
Committed to baby faces
And infant smiles.

To say "I don't want that."
Is to rebel.

The pressure to love babies
And to want to kiss them
Talk funny
And eat them up
So precious
Makes me hate them instead.

I am not a mother
And there is no hole
Screaming to be filled up.
No maternal abyss
Inside of me
Waiting for blessed pregnancy.

Bucharest-Poem Part I

Jody Esmonde

On bird-leg bone stilts
she stumbled into the subway car.
Her bare foot steps kept time
to her Romance language chant
for money, food, medicine, shoes.
A jacket. A sweater.
In her arms, a precious package
of immobile child,
wrapped in dirty cloth.
Her real eyes hid
behind fluttering lids_
rolling whites only showed
above her mouth
sharp teeth
working. open. closed.
So tired but still repeating
her memorized speech,
like an automaton, an imperfect robot,
an excuse for us all to turn away
clutching our cab fare.

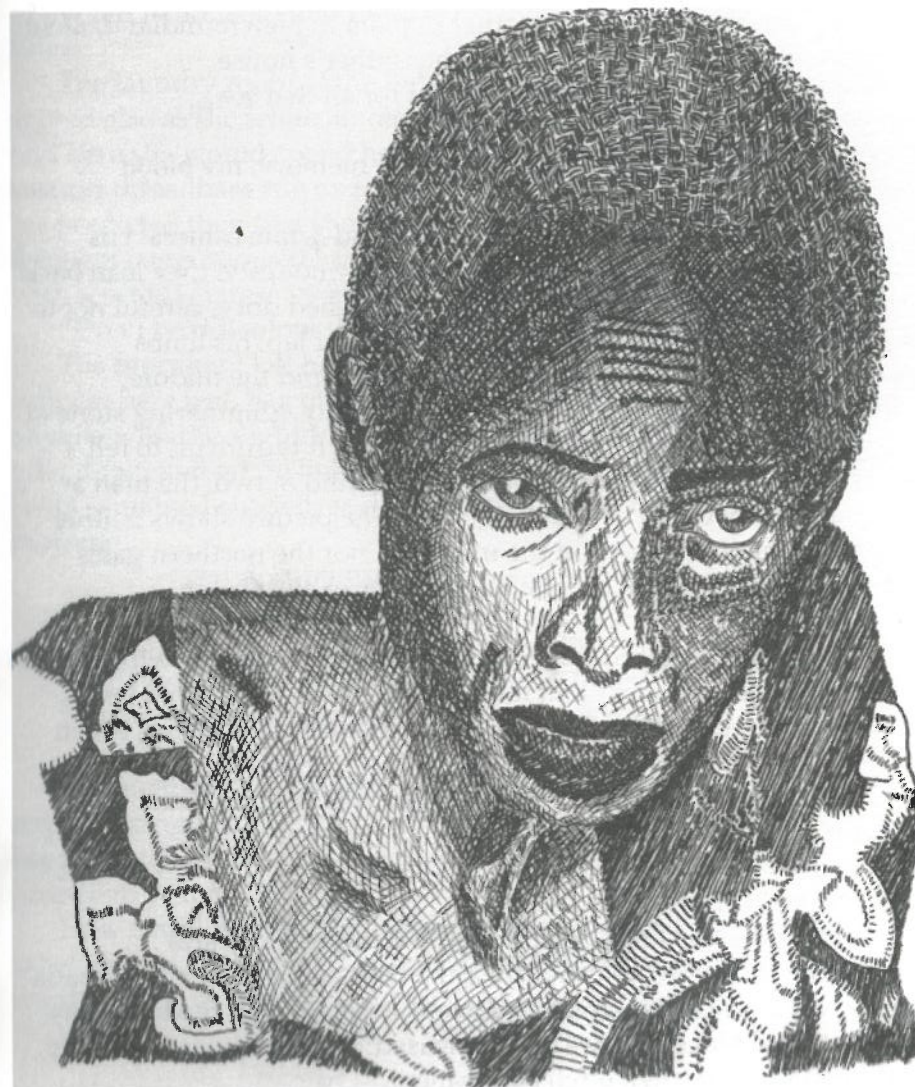
Untitled

Jody Esmonde

and if I could have known my grandmother
when she was young,
I might have ancestors or memories
somewhere, ebbing
I might have a culture, and a song
if I could fiddle, or if I could drum,
I might hear my mother singing inside me
and her grandmother
and if my home were not Toronto and Niagara Falls
and the InsuranceCapitalOfTheWorld.
I could be reassured by the being
of other women behind me,
whispering quietly to me as if
I
were the heroine in a book
or just smiling gently
and I might love this place.

Untitled

Carol Ann Cheff



All That Sea

Amy McCarthy

My grandmother bore my father in pain. In Newfoundland, alone,
she bore him in the ironing room of her father's house.
On his first breath he nearly choked for all that sea.

Boats sail in and out of my history, my memory, my blood . . .

This snapshot was taken with a black-and-white camera. His hands barely even touching her shoulder for modesty, they lean back rather stiffly against the bow of the sun-bleached dory, careful not to capsize. The child is perched awkwardly in her lap, his limbs restrained by her hands which clutch him around the middle, revealing in a pin-head of arrested light the tiny, glimmering stone of her ring. Whether the child grins or grimaces, it is difficult to tell. I guess at their respective ages, pegging the child at two, the man at thirty and the woman at about eighteen. The picture shows neither the indifferent bungalow on the mainland nor the northern gales slicing like blunt razors against their frozen, exposed skin.

I'll not soon forget that spectacular feather headdress, with its stiff green and yellow plumes and magnificent purple-lacquered beads which shimmered and reflected golden light from my sticky, seven year-old brow to the very depths of the black Trent.

"Daddy, I'll be Princess Tiger Lily and you be Peter Pan."

"Peter who?"

"Daddy!"

"O.k., o.k. What do I do?"

"Here, take this knife. You'll need it to fight the pirates . . ."

As long as I wore my headdress the boys could hunt all the toads they wanted and sister could sit up in the cottage and read as many dumb, stupid Nancy Drews as she pleased. I was Princess Tiger Lily, and I had my very own birch bark canoe.

I'm told that old, blind Max dragged me sopping to the shore, gripping my belly in his jaws as though I were driftwood and paddling with me to safety. I was unconscious by the time the

ambulance arrived but revived soon afterward. Still, father grows pale whenever he speaks of that afternoon, which he relates as the most horrifying of his life. Funny how I recall only the mesmerizing dance of shimmering beads, light and water.

There is a burn scar in the shape of a perfect triangle on the back of my left hand; bold and pink, nestled between thumb and forefinger.

The laundry room of the Indian River house was windowless. It served also as the white, linoleum den of our suffering, arthritic cat, and here she would spend her nights and her days, slumped like a cast-off threadbare rug on top of the dryer for warmth. Poor old girl, we predicted then that she was just about ready to kick off. My frequent suggestions that we "help her along" were always answered with scornful glares.

"Don't be ridiculous. We've had her since you were born!"

The morning I left home for university I crept discreetly down the stairs in bare feet, bag of clean laundry in hand, careful not to waken anyone with the slightest creak of the floor-boards. Though it was after dawn and white light flooded the rest of the house, the laundry room remained shaded, as does my memory of the rest of that morning.

A water tumbler

The ironing board

Cat curled in the corner

Dad standing in the door frame

"There is something you must know."

She must have done something to make him do it. I can see her now, draping her long, tanned legs over the side of the boat; running her fingertips seductively up and down the sharp blades of the propeller. Wanna go for a ride?

How could he help his curiosity? He was seventeen, for Christ sake! He had been in B.C. less than a month. They both knew the wind storm was coming.

The blades

Her legs

The blood

Her hand-bag floating on the ocean

If not for the paralyzing pain from the searing I probably would have screamed and woken the entire house. By the time mother came downstairs in her slippers and robe I had the bloody mess all cleaned up, careful to get every last shard of glass. Thank-God the floor didn't stain.

As I let the screen door slam behind me I noticed it was branded with two perfect paw-prints, side by side. How she mustered the strength I'll never know.

When her father died my mother did not cry. Like a pillar of marble she stood over the casket, touching no-one, listening or not listening in stony silence to the service. My grandmother ranted and sobbed uncontrollably, clawing at her black, crepe blouse and gold chains. She fainted twice before they finally took her away.

It was my mother who cast the first handful of dirt- even before the priest gave his final "Amen".

When the phone rang in my Kingston apartment early that morning I almost didn't catch it. Sopping wet, I raced to grab the receiver. Streams of water trickled from my wet hair, the droplets rolling down the curves of my body and collecting in a tepid puddle at my feet.

My mother's frantic voice:

"There is something you must know."

The beatings began as soon as they got off the boat. There was no work. There was no money. There were five daughters and no son. She remembers the way he shouted. The way he kicked her. The way he pulled her hair. And when she told him of the child, he beat it out of her. Later, she slept with a ten pound lead iron between her thighs. He would not touch her again.

I cover my ears and eyes. I protect myself.

This morning I awoke to find a tiny blood-bead hardened on my lower lip. This, an afterthought of the dawn, when my lover kissed me so hard I tasted iron.

Darkness

Jennifer Forsdike

In the dark
I am running, and laughing,
and screaming.
I know you are behind me
and you will not let me escape.
That's why I love this game so
much:
You are in control.

In the dark,
the others hide.
Curious little eyes watch
as you pick me up.
And as you spin me around,
I scream with delight,
for you have conquered me.

In the dark
your powerful hands wrap
around me.
I am yours,
but you free me.
You put me down
so I can run, and scream, and
laugh some more,
and I pretend that I will be able
to escape
from those hands,
but I am conquered forever.

Time has faded my memories,
but when I remember you
and your hands on my body
there is only darkness.
A black veil hides
a truth I can never possess.

I loved you once, but now
in the void of the darkness
I feel anger and hate.
I did not understand
what you were doing to me.
I will never know what
happened
in the dark.

Letter to the Alliance Church

Jennifer Wright

Dear Sir,

My family has enjoyed attending your church for almost two years now and as you know, I have accompanied them whenever I am home from school. I am writing to you because I would like you to know why I will not be attending any Alliance churches in the future. I have struggled with this decision from the moment I discovered the official church policy regarding women, and have finally concluded that it cannot be tolerated or ignored. As you know, my parents are also struggling with the fact that your church does not allow women in leadership positions. They are not allowed to become Ministers or Pastors and they are not allowed to sit on the Board of Elders. Women are welcome and needed to cook, clean and decorate within the church, but they do not have a say in any final decision-making process. In short, there is a hierarchy in your church family, one which openly condones the second class citizenship of women.

I have been told the Alliance policy is scriptural, and that the Bible is very clear on this issue. Take, for instance, the verse "... the head of every man is Christ and the head of every woman is man and the head of Christ is God." (1 Corinthians 11:3) This appears to support the issue of women as subservient. Yet if we read on to verse 6, we learn that "If a woman does not cover her head, she should have her hair cut off..." Why is this verse ignored yet a statement only three verses earlier lauded as God's direct word? How can one be truer than the other? Unfortunately many people have quoted the Bible in order to support blanket policies and personal interpretations. The Bible was quoted from many pulpits in support of slavery and it was quoted by abolitionists as well.

Today, slavery is abolished, but the marginalization of women continues within many churches. I would not have even considered attending your church if it did not allow black people in leadership positions. That would be discrimination, that would be racism, that would be ignorant and wrong. In fact, our whole city would be

outraged at this policy and there would be demonstrations at your church. Yet when there is a policy banning women from leadership positions, people are not outraged. Such restrictions are common in our society, especially in religious organizations – the very institutions that are said to stand for the morality of humankind.

Some argue women should not have leadership positions since Jesus and the disciples are men. If this statement is true, then the same logic would also claim that Jewish people should rightfully be the Christian spiritual leaders because these men are also all Jews. I ask you to remember Paul's words in Galatians 2: 27-28. "All baptised in Christ, you have all clothed yourselves in Christ, and there are no more distinctions between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female, but all of you are one in Christ Jesus." Why is only the sex of Jesus significant if it is so important that religious leaders take after his human characteristics?

I have written this letter in the hopes that I will be heard in the midst of the patriarchy and tradition that surrounds many churches. It is my hope that as time moves on, you will receive more of these letters, until the Alliance church finally allows women in leadership positions. An early vice-president of your church was a woman, and it is my hope that there will be a woman vice-president once again.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Wright

Lace

Danielle Baker

Glancing up from her disinterested position on the weathered couch, Dal watches as the tall stranger looks nervously about the tiny, smoke-filled office. Great, she sighs, it figures a client would enter just as she manages to reach the mental zone which can only arise from too many late night game shows. She listens with only half an ear as the brunette woman seated behind the reception desk gives a familiar speil to their now eager visitor. Eyes focusing across the room long enough to admire her co-worker's full breasts, covered by a tight red, ribbed shirt, she returns her attention to the bells and lights emanating from the black box across from her. Her mind wanders to her worries about school, to her relationship problems, and to irritation with the inadequate mop she used that afternoon in a feeble attempt to restore order to her apartment.

Perking slightly during the exchange of money, Dal rises, propelled by habit, to show the heavily moustached man to massage room number two, uttering in monotone, "You may shower or use the washroom if you wish. There is a clean towel beside the table. Someone will be with you in a minute," wondering why she says "someone" knowing full well it will be herself.

Allowing enough time to inhale a cigarette, Dal makes her way along the corridor to the the second door on her right. Knocking lightly, she hears a response and enters the room. The white and chrome, clinical looking massage table directly to the right is not occupied and she rapidly looks to the chair in the far left corner. There sits the dark-haired, relatively handsome, middle-aged man. He is still fully clothed, jeans complimented by an expensive-looking grey wool sweater. Thrown slightly by this deviance from routine, Dal recovers quickly from her startled entrance and follows with a slight chastisement, "Normally the gentlemen remove their clothes and lie face down on the table . . ." realizing that "normally" need not always apply, and should never be anticipated.

Hopping up onto the table, Dal begins to feel girlish in her 22 year old frame, feet swinging loosely as she makes eye contact and smiles, "What can I do for you . . . would you like to start with a massage?"

"What else are you offering?" the man queries, and Dal cringes, sensing yet another awkward information session.

"Well," she continues, "the entrance fee entitles you to a non-therapeutic body rub. I do accept tips. Why don't you tell me what you're interested in and I'll tell you if I can accommodate."

Sensing frustration and insecurity in the man's face, Dal listens patiently as her client ponders aloud what types of "extras" might be available. Unwilling to place herself in a vulnerable position, and still unclear as to the legalities of her profession, Dal looks straight into his eyes, and replies, "I don't solicit," allowing a slow grin to slide across her lips as his brown eyes begin to sparkle with understanding.

"How much for sex?" he blurts.

In a calm, business-like tone, Dal answers, "The expected tip would be one-hundred and twenty dollars."

The client nods acceptance of this fee and reaches into his back pocket for his wallet. As Dal watches him count out the bills she notices his thinning hair, less obvious upon first inspection given his short military cut. His jeans fit snugly across his thighs, indicating toned muscle underneath. He leans over to loosen the laces of his brown winter boots and slips them off his feet. Standing, he moves across the room to place his footwear beside the door. He turns slowly to face Dal, who is still perched on the massage table, and looks down at his hands, which begin to finger the bottom of his sweater. He glances at her momentarily, nervousness shaking through his frame, and pulls the grey material over his head.

Running her hand along the red lace trim of the black satin garment pulled tight across his chest, Dal doesn't skip a beat, but coos, "You look incredibly sexy." He smiles, looking unsure as to whether to believe this hired slut, but nevertheless proceeds to remove his faded jeans. Appreciation beaming from her eyes, Dal admires the man's black lace garter-belt, straps stretching over his ass to fasten black silk stockings, realizing that this man's choice of lingerie far surpasses her own this evening. Slightly embarrassed by this inadequacy, she wishes she had spent a few more minutes getting ready for work.

Thinking back to the white lace panties and bra that her lover had pulled from the underwear drawer after dinner, Dal kicks herself for not taking her partner's advice. Instead she had spat something scathing to her lover; something about white lingerie and virginity; and suggested her partner wear it to her shift at the women's shelter

that evening. Dal warms, remembering the look of amusement in her partner's blue eyes as they locked with her own for a brief moment before both women rushed to get to their perspective jobs.

Pulled back to the present by a soft touch on her leg, and feeling a surge of irritation, coupled by compassion, toward this bashful stranger, Dal assumes her role once again. Remaining in her seated position, she places her hands on the client's firm ass and, gently at first, then more aggressively, begins to knead his flesh. She spreads her legs and pulls him close to her, positioning him between her thighs. "Honey, I love the way your ass feels in this outfit", she purrs, as he moans, barely audible, and explains briefly that he has never been able to share this with anyone before.

Dal smiles, tells him that she is glad he came in tonight, and senses herself beginning to get wet. Desire building, she utters familiar words which, until tonight, had only been whispered gruffly into her own ear . . .

"Why don't you leave that hot, trappy outfit on and let me fuck you."

Baby (for Janet)

Monica Kidd

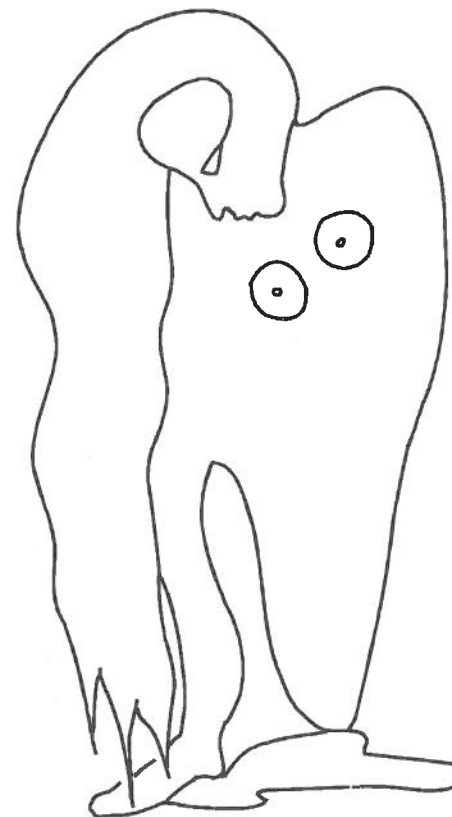
this
flesh
screams
like
thunder
and
dreams
a
tiny
heart
beating
ten
thousand
miles
away

reply
Monica Kidd

Marquez said
the greatest comfort of time is
the grace of forgetting,
a comfortable erasure;
remembrance,
decay by incremental betrayal,
maybe
but i don't believe in the end of history, and
your apologies are
cluttering up the place like
an apothecary's basement
you try: i don't
know any better,
and cry a clumsy, shameful whisper
but
the roaring silence of your last door slam is
all i hear, and
the mercy in the shattering
so
i am drawing circles in the sand
of my last, great wilderness,
building fences you'll never cross

Sitting One

A. A. Terry



For ninety days in 1996, I lived beside an ancient Maya ruin on a steep, wind blown, white chalk hill in Cahal Pech, Belize. I seemed to hold time in my hands then and, like a child, I often interacted dreamily with the clouds and the spirit of place, a sacred place. "Sitting One" is one of a series of five Cloud Goddess drawings. The others depict pregnancy and stages or ages in our lives. One Goddess is very young, one is caught up in trees and two are pregnant. "Sitting One" appears to be the Spirit Guide, the Elder or Grandmother. She is waiting watchfully. I think she is sitting on a puddle cloud reminiscent of 'water breaking'. In this series I find myself, my daughter, and my granddaughter, Georgia Breton (in utero), who was born on the night I returned to Canada.

Domestic Bliss

Janel Bascom

a feast is born beneath loving hands
back and forth across the kitchen
affection and ingredients go

a pot is stirred
a secret shared

advice is given as lavishly
as the pepper is ground into the sauce

feelings steep
as the oil envelops the weight of fresh garlic

a torrent of words fall
as hands punish lettuce

wrists rest on the edges of a bowl, shoulders sag, a sigh
as nodding heads and knowing eyes offer comfort

wise hands seek tired ones
as both salad and woman are rescued in a glance

a keen eye addresses the table,
lining up candle and cloth

a harmony of sight and seating
sharing space

warm plates retrieved from the oven
carried in strong hands

a flurry to take our seats
the food finished with a flourish

breathless
we take each other's hands

and give thanks

over the steamy sink
laughter spills

stories of the meal just finished
already turning into legends

"many hands make light work"

no one is still until
peace of body, mind, and kitchen
is restored

and we retire
to nurse the remaining coffee cradled in happy hands
and to nibble chocolate

decadence as rich as we are

Moon in Sagittarius

A. A. Terry

(dedicated to Susan Musgrave)

This full moon has made the dogs howl
Back and forth across the neighbourhood.
Midnight dog debates, pride of ownership disputes:
She's my bitch; he's my master.
Piss on your backyard disputes.

May 14th and the tulip leaves
Are already splayed, finished.
The world's spring litter of kittens
Has been born.
Youngsters walk new puppies
On light leashes
Up and down the sidewalks.

Bicycles lie out in front yards
While their sleeping owners
Ride wild horses in their dreams.

All this activity and I wait
For Eve
To come home from town
From the clubs and the men and
The ever so sweet fuzzy drinks and
Smoky arms.

My 17 year-old daughter cruises
While the moon is in Sagittarius.
She, a Scorpio, is doubly endangered,
So I lay out the red tablecloth
And wash the sticky chair seats
Preparing a place to wait
Wondering how long mothers do wait
And what it is we're waiting for.

The Secret

Anne Graham

She is a blonde, but could easily be pretending. I know she is because I remember her seven years ago at camp. I was in her cabin, and she was nice enough to me. We didn't eat together at meals. She wore cutoff jeans and put on lip gloss whenever she went to dinner. I wore glasses and shoes I can't remember, but didn't like at all. I had bangs that were straight and chunky and covered my eyebrows. I had bought a tube of lipstick the day before I left for this expensive, new-for-me, boys-and-girls-together camp. It was pink and frosted. I found it at the bottom of my underwear drawer as I packed for university, and threw it out without trying it on. It was old by then. To my disgrace it was almost entirely used up. I don't wear pink any more, and will not again. My lipsticks are red and burgundy. I have also learned about lip liners and lipstick brushes and how to put the eyeliner on in a thin, smooth line, without slipping and winding up looking like Cleopatra. I know the secret of cold cream, too.

But none of that amounts to anything next to this beautiful woman. She knows more than I do. Her hair is the same shape as it was then – long and thick and eternally having been brushed within the hour. Then, it was the same colour as mine – brown – but since then she's found the final beauty secret. She is a blonde.

As I recall, her name is Brooke. Brooke Something Glamorous. I am Anne. Lois Anne. A dull and droning name that no one ever hears properly the first time: "Erin?" and most people spell wrong: A-N-N. I was named for royalty and for my grandmother – the one whose pointing-down mouth I inherited. At the time that Brooke knew me I used to think that perhaps when I grew up I could just go by L.A., L.A. Graham. I pictured it on a brass nameplate in my office, and me, wearing a pink power-suit and shaking hands with middle-aged men and stunning them in a thousand different ways. But I am not L.A. Graham, and then I was lucky if anyone even remembered that I was Anne.

Brooke didn't need to worry about such things. Her name is summer and light and water yabbling over rocks. As a brunette her name was water in the shade, with warm earth and comforting trees.

I'm remembering walking along a wooded path to dinner with Brooke-Then. In the sun her hair matched the forest. She sang "Hang On Sloopy" to me, and I joined in for the chorus. Other times that week she would sing, "I want to be like Harry Houdini/ And be the one who makes the great escape." I'd never heard the song before, and could never quite pick out the tune from the flat and impatient-for-the-next-line way she sang it. Listening to the radio later that summer I heard the song again, and couldn't remember her name.

I remember her telling me about her boyfriend, though. I had nothing to add to a conversation like that, so added my refrains of 'yeah' and 'really?'

Brooke-Now is thin. So was Brooke-Then. Her legs were long and thin and when she shaved them you couldn't still see dark pinpoints on the skin where each follicle hides underneath. My hair is very dark, and my legs are never quite right. Then they were at least thin, but now they aren't. They are muscular, but the muscles are covered by a layer of fat. I have a mustache, too, that I wax; and I pluck my eyebrows into reasonable shapes and my peach fuzz is black where it ought not to be. Brooke has skin like a Barbie doll; I think her arms are bald.

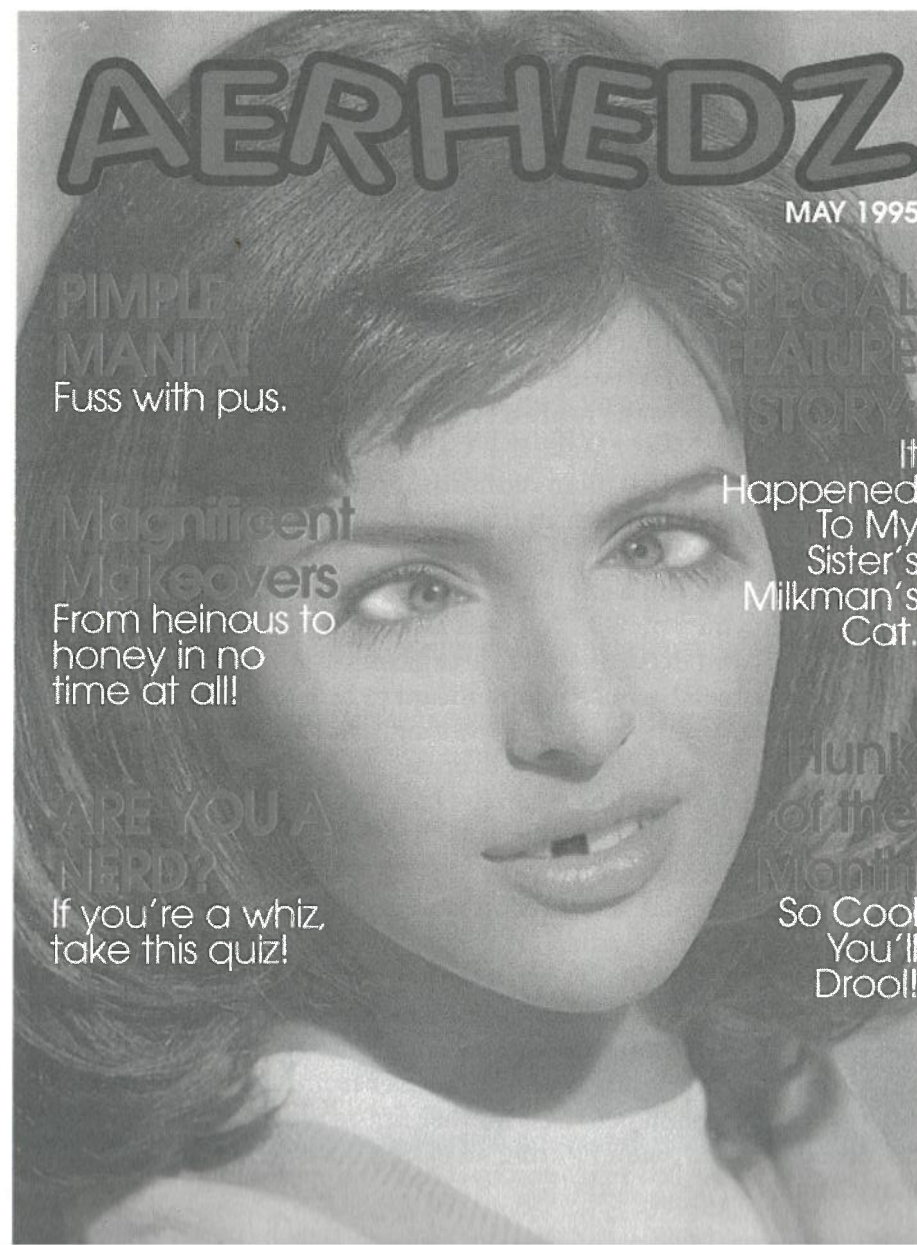
I saw Brooke in the Phys.Ed. Centre once. Maybe even twice. She wasn't sweating, and her hair was still blonde. That struck me as odd, because the yellow golden hair seemed like an ornament, or a crown; the sort of thing you'd take off before sweating.

At nights at camp the oldest sections each of boys and girls were allowed to go down to the common ground and the field to socialize for an hour before Lights Out. I always went along with the girls in my cabin, putting on the pink frosted lipstick. Sometimes I would slip my glasses into my pocket as I followed Brooke down the stairs in the damp darkness. Those nights the world was fuzzy and more dangerous.

But danger is a slippery fear, and where's the danger in being ignored?

Aerhedz

Jenny Hazan



A Jolt to the System

A. A. Terry

In the laundromat, you take one of those magazine tests. Writing on the back of an envelope you find folded at the bottom of your handbag, you record your responses in mostly c's. Then, reading the answer key, you discover you are made for red hair because redheads are headstrong, impulsive, willful, diffident and dynamic. You agree with question number one; you are the sort of woman who, if lost in a foreign city, will find an exotic restaurant, relax and have a quiet meal unlike a blonde whom the test suggests will start to cry and appeal for help from the first attractive male to cross her tearful path. And, unlike a brunette who'll exercise her innate and chilly logic and flag down a cab and go to the nearest American Embassy. Jolt.

American Embassy? Make that Canadian Embassy, please. Make them all Canadian. Canadian redheads, brunettes and blondes doing laundry and writing American magazine tests in a Canadian laundromat.

Someone tells you a jolt is a television bug word, jargon for what you do when you watch it. You seek jolts from snippets of celluloidal sex, violence, and excitement. Little orgasms. But, you don't watch television yourself because you're meant to be a redhead, meaning you can't sit still, remain passive too long, can't adjust to voyeurism for satisfaction's sake. You want to create your own story, to be the subject, to be passion rather than to observe passion, to be violent if necessary, to instigate your own jolts. Anyway, you prefer conversation to television.

In the laundromat, a television hanging on the wall spits out sitcoms faster than Canadian art shops produce imitation Native soapstone carvings in high tourist season. American shows; American jolts. You wonder why Candice Bergman, alias Murphy Brown, passes for a star. A beautiful woman shouting her lines in mean monotone. And the woman you remember from Mary Tyler Moore days as Rhoda pretends to be a mother figure when you know she is a disturbed single woman fighting an eating disorder and preying on Mary's men.

You've been in the laundromat three times since moving back to the city. Each time, alone, you back your small hatchback up to the door and carry the same two blue plastic baskets and the same two nylon laundry bags loaded with your sons' same dirty jeans and socks into the warmish and narrow room. You know you'll find single men and women in pairs loitering around the t.v. while their clothes wash or dry. For the most part, everyone keeps as silent as cats. You pick up the laundry's decorum by the third week's wash: you are not to place anything on the sacred, thin tables centred between the line of washers to the right and the line of dryers to the left unless you are either filling or emptying the machines or folding. An unattractive, nervous man snaps at you once about house rules, and later a soft-spoken woman reinforces his sentiment about placing baskets and bags on the centre tables at the wrong time. The fair woman seems apologetic rather than forceful about it all. Both critics are insistent. Laundromat etiquette. Jolt.

By your second trip to the laundromat, you tire of keeping watch over what the machines will do automatically. You read *Time* and an American women's magazine resembling a British magazine you've read in Canadian hospitals and dentist's and doctor's offices. Cheap rag content paper and weak colour reproduction. Copy that bores the least demanding reader. The magazine displays women's sweater patterns, discusses make-up application, shows thigh toning exercises, and records frank examples of female sexuality – what it should be.

And, there is the proverbial article on how to catch and/or keep your man. Reading the magazine makes you feel voyeuristic, jolted: "Fantasizing is fine and dandy if it helps you reach orgasm, but if you find you can't really do it without fantasizing each and every time, you'll have to tell your mate or change the setting, or change position."

... or change your bloody partner, eh?

And, the latest on the love life of the stars: "Liz is fatter than ever," and "Cher's horoscope says goodbye to her latest lover." Reading the magazine makes you feel depraved and seedy except when you take the hair colour test. You are a natural blonde and know what they're like because you know what you're like. And, way back then, when you dyed your hair black you learned a few things about brunettes. But, surprisingly, when you hennaed your hair red, you realized yourself.

Natural redheads think you're a soul sister, believing you endured the same childhood abuses. Redheaded girls are ugly, have freckles, and are either Pippy Longstocking thin or self-indulgently chubby. They wear braids and are obnoxious. They don't get the best boys. They look awful in red and fuchsia sweaters and worse in mauve. Their breasts arrive by some slow boat from nowhere while the brunettes' and blondes' arrive by courier express. And, their eyes look rabbit because their lashes are albinoish and scruffy. Redheaded girls who make it to womanhood have paid their dues. Vetted in survival, they are free at last to cash in on the torment of their youth and scorch the earth with their deep fires.

You stop practising red headedness for bloneness when you fall in love. Wanting to be closer to your original self, you decide to take it easy and start standing around on pedestals. You weep if discouraged. You moon. You think you need help. You tan yourself in the yard hoping to acquire a copper skin. You wear gold jewellery and stop swearing. You lose weight. You feign innocence. Yet, eventually, you discover the Irish blood of your mother will not submit to the Anglo blood of your mate, so you return to mountain moving, to speaking up, to detesting rude children, to stomping on stupidity and the like. You loathe t.v., scrutinize advertising, earn a living, shout when offended and irritated. Even though you are blonde. All because your Irish motherline made you. And, as to the blonde at your boyfriend's office. Jolt.

Maybe it's because you've read the wrong novels. And the blonde, twenty-five to your forty, inexperience to your wisdom, cherries to your bitters, awakens your jealousy, that high red jolt that thickens your speech and clogs your ears. You taste torment when your lover describes his takenness with the blonde with brains. And when you look in the mirror and see a blonde with brains, you feel confused.

They have business lunches together. They flirt.

So, you dye your hair red in the morning and walk into the restaurant at noon. They are there together; they turn to you in unison. Everyone is wide awake. The restaurant is alive with light. The blonde tells you, "I like your new shade," her voice, silk sails snapping on an emerald sea while she points with practised calm and grace at your livid, old head.

You fail to make your red hair speak. You tremble and walk away. You leave your boyfriend and let go. You see grey tufts begin to lace your forehead and you fade. You ask mature women about

menopause, about how it feels to have married children, about life in an apartment as opposed to an ancestral home. About men who leave. About managing alone.

You do all this until the night you take the hair colour test confirming your red headedness which reminds you of your innate, instinctive, intelligent, intuitive and abject refusal to lie down, bend over or suck up.

You feel a fire burning.

Dear Crabby

Jenny Hazan

Q Dear Crabby,
There is this
really cute guy
in my geogra-
phy class

named Jeremy. I am
dying to talk to him, but
every time I try I get
tongue tied. How can I
get over it? Help!

Too Shy to say "hi"

A Dear Too Shy
to say "hi", If
you can't even
say "hi" to this
guy, why do
you want to be with him
so much? It can't be
because you have such
fascinating conversations
together. Do yourself a
favour - try to tame those
wild hormones long
enough to do a little
thinking.

Crabby

Q Dear Crabby,
I'm going out
with this boy
at school, and
he's really nice
and everything, but I
have a crush on his best
friend. What do I do?

Dilemma

A Dear Dilemma,
Sounds to me
like you're a
manipulator in
the making.

Chicken henry, does the

attention-hungry, soap
opera love triangle
drama for just a minute,
and give a little thought
to whose feelings are
really on the line.

Crabby

Q Dear Crabby,
I went to a
party on the
weekend
where

somebody spiked the
punch. I was feeling a
little woozy and kissed 3
different guys in my
class. Now everyone at
school is making fun of
me. My reputation is
destroyed! What do I do?

Embarrassed

A Dear
Embarrassed,
Wake up!
These are the
'90s! You'll be

lucky if all you end up
with is shame! You can't
go smooching everyone
you see! Haven't you
heard of mono? Next time
it could be AIDS.
Perhaps you should try
going to more classes
and less parties, Miss
Busy Lips. **Crabby**

Q Dear Crabby,
My boyfriend
and I broke up
about 2



months ago, and I'm still
really depressed. I've
tried everything - ripping
up his picture, burning his
hockey jersey, taking the
phone out of my room to
resist temptation,
melting down the ring he
gave me into a coin, but
nothing works. I can't
stop thinking about him.
What should I do?

Depressed

A Dear
Depressed,
Maybe the
reason you
can't stop thinking about
him is because you're
spending so much time
destroying his stuff. Let it
go. He's obviously okay
without you, so stop
being so dependant.
However, if you insist on
being such a clinger,
perhaps if you spent
more time hanging out in
bars and clubs meeting
other people to latch
onto, you would forget
about this guy.

Crabby

The Dog And The Cane

Karoline Al Koura

Look beyond the dog and the cane.

That thing walking down the street,

Across the road, or maybe even by your side in a crowd.

She is a person, you know.

She wakes up in the morning, brushes her teeth,

And drinks her coffee.

She faces every new day just as you do;

Thinking of the bills that need to be paid,

Remembering the garbage has to go out, and the rent cheque is due.

Look beyond the dog and the cane.

You forget that she has feelings too.

She is different.

That difference is baggage carried by her.

Always present,

Unseparated from her, as she is not a person.

What you don't know is that she can feel your gaze on her.

Your superior look.

Your objectifying eye.

The eye that looks through her, but not at her.

The eye that makes you see her as that thing that must be protected

For some reason unknown.

Why?

Protected not for love or passion, but because it is right.

Because society would punish those who would do otherwise.

Look Beyond the dog and the cane.
 You'll find a person there.
 One that loves, cries, smiles, wants to achieve,
 Dreams and has fantasies.
 Wondered if she would be a dancer, a ballerina or a writer.
 Wonders who will be the love of her life.
 You forget to look at her.
 You look at the outside.
 She may not seem graceful;
 She may not speak in verse.
 She likes hockey games, even though she can't see them.
 She feels the action.
 Besides, sitting on the winning side is always nice.
 She looks forward to a life that is fuller and happier.

There is a person there with feelings.
 She wants adventure and can taste it.
 She can fight back.
 Punch back. Talk back.
 So, you don't think talking back is her style?
 You are just so comfortable in your own world . . .
 You are superior to everything?
 Nothing will ever touch you?
 You've got power?
 Sure, she may not be Cinderella, but she is a person.

The Photograph

tanis rideout

The blood runs
 black,
 not the cartoon
 red
 that we all know.

The woman is
 dead.
 Not like one of the beautiful
 victims,
 presented as sensuous
 lying
 snow white
 in the
 rose red
 pools surrounding them.
 She is shadowed in grays,
 and blacks,
 the colour of death
 not the
 red
 of christmas.

The red
 that speaks of the anger and
 the hate of
 the evil that caused it
 is gone,
 lost to us
 and
 all we have is the
 memory

in black
and
white.

Lost to us is the
violence of the
slashing and the
ripping so evident in the
gore
around us.

Lost in the
muted black
is the pain and
horror
and
suffering of both
the victor
and
the victim.

What emotions have we
lost,
what feelings have
escaped,
what horror have we
lost
the witness to?

The photo
speaks
of filth
but not of
blood.

It speaks
of suffering
for
money
but not for life.

What endless suffering
would we see
if her eyes
were the
blue
they were
and not the grey,
we see,
lost in the lifeless
lump of black
and
white
that is given to us
to bear the witness
of the crime.

Would we understand
the horror
more
if we could see the
ivory white
of her bones
through the
ripped pink
flesh,
splashed and speckled
with the
ruby
blood.

The pain that exists in colour
not in blacks
and whites.

Eve

Tara Lessard

I think you know me
 I am your mother
 although you would never admit it now,
 For I have become your disease
 the thief who stole all that you had yet to be given,
 If not for me
 you would be complete
 a child's innocence would still be yours
 you would not have to question
 but could enjoy wine-sopped days and lustful nights
 without a second thought to the whole matter of existence
 and what it all means
 O for blissful, ignorant lives!
 But alas! I was created
 An afterthought of God
 "Who would have the babies?"
 He had to steal a rib
 and fill me full of dirt,
 I was to serve forever.
 I know you blame me,
 You say if it hadn't been for me
 You wouldn't have to burn in Hell,
 You wouldn't be ashamed of being naked
 Sin would be an excuse for fun and
 You wouldn't need a Saviour.
 But you don't know what it is like
 To work alone in a garden
 Soaked in sweat, my back was aching
 And there it was calling to me
 Beckoning with sweet promises of wisdom
 The taste of truth I savoured on my tongue
 I never wanted to share it,
 I was only being polite,
 Your Father did not have to eat.

my thoughts on ulster unionism

Tara Lessard

it gets dark at 5 o'clock now
 as i pass the time at my desk
 words appear then disappear
 i look and another hour has gone
 and it is almost tomorrow
 and i still feel so empty
 the cbc and gerry keep me company
 and i wish i had not eaten ice cream and wine for supper
 my mind drifts to thoughts far from here
 to summer days spent naked and stoned
 mornings reading poetry on the dock
 nights spent with you
 here i am, still at my desk
 although my mind is lost in wanting.

(un)restrained

Danielle Baker

Moving forward as if compelled by desire which had not yet been acknowledged.

Unable to assess with what I was connecting

What energy I had harnessed.

Feeling the wetness between my lips as I saunter

Half shy/half cocky to the front of the crowd.

Approaching the dyke in control of the station.

"I'd like to go for a ride"

I hear these words form in the stillness and feel I should abandon my eyes to the curiosity of so many other pairs as

Heads strain to see from whose tongue these words have been composed.

Yet I can only look inwards as

I

Partially horrified

Entirely Excited realize

I have just started in motion something which I had only subconsciously

Yet Desperately

Desired.

She looks at me slyly Expectantly. Teasing. "A ride?" Questioning in her inflection whether I am asking her to drive

Me

Imagining legs spread

Head thrown back

Hoisted between the trees with only leather to support me

Her fucking me with

Hard cock

Lifting me to orgasm.

"Ride . . . well . . . I'd like to go for a swing" I manage to spit out as she laughs Not menacingly

Comforting, rather.

Letting me off the hook yet also

Daring me to push limits.

We turn our backs to the gathered crowd of women and I feel totally safe

Under the protection of this

So Butch Dyke

Jeans slung low on her hips— held up loosely by a thick black leather belt.

Head shaved shorter than the stubble which grows on her chin

Forcing me to

Once again

Question my desire

Look to her as a reminder that

Gender doesn't always (Does it ever?) = Sex

Feeling my desire build as I glance at the strength in her arms

Wonder if my attraction to her man-like looks would meet with criticism from other dykes on "the land" — other women in "my community".

Sure that they'd have something to say.

Something about her size.

Something about male energy.

Equating my lust for tough women with a lower position on the

Dyke hierarchy of

Political savvy.

Helping me into the swing. Strapped between the trees Stretched out

Inviting me to climb into the entwined leather harness

Connected to four straps at each corner Extending in four directions.

Pulled tight. Secured to the branches.

I lift myself into the seat.

Feeling awkward. Nervous

As the crowd moves closer

Jockeying for position.

Feeling the loose tension which hangs in the air.

A mixture of excitement Desire. Amazement. Wonder.

Tension being compressed with each movement the women make
 Toward one another Toward us. Tension drawing us all closer
 Hanging thick between us.
 I slide my ass back further on the leather straps Feeling them pressing
 into my flesh as she places my feet in stirrups which hang from the
 sides of the swing.
 Leaving my legs parted slightly
 Inviting her to move between them.
 She places her weight confidently before me Staring at me. Lopsided
 grin.
 Playful.

I look down at my exposed belly. Boxer briefs cover my legs and cunt
 Waistband hugs just below pierced navel.
 I run my hands over my stomach and up towards my breasts Unsure
 whether to pull my sleeveless shirt, hanging undone, around me. To
 cover me. Protect me. Or to leave breasts
 Exposed.

I lift my eyes to her grin. She grabs hold of the two straps by each
 ankle which support Me elevated between the trees. I move to stretch
 my hands above my head Allowing the shirt to fall open
 Gripping the leather straps which act to both support my back and
 hold the harness in place.

She begins to move her weight to gently rock the swing – Rock my
 body – asking me “How does this feel?”
 I smile nervously Feeling her energy between my legs.
 Wanting so desperately to feel her touch
 Uttering Whispering
 Barely louder than the sound of the warm wind “Would you touch
 me?” Knowing this comes out scarcely audible.

Her hearing me, but Teasing. Leaning forward Large silver belt buckle
 pressed firmly against my moist boxers. Telling me slyly that no one
 can hear us . . . except the interpreter, who is signing over my left
 shoulder.

We both giggle, realizing the irony of the situation
 Smiling at the realization that for this moment only the deaf women
 in the group are able to engage with our whispers. She asks me to

repeat myself.
 I realize that in this scene I have to be strong that
 I am
 In Control.

“Would you touch me?” I repeat, frustrated with myself for the
 coyness with which this statement is relayed. Wishing that my
 shyness wasn’t so evident. Wondering if I’m coming across
 Too Femme.

She repeats my desire, bringing a blush to my cheeks, as she further
 questions “Where?”
 The issue of mutual consent and respect never before so clearly
 present as I recognize the difficulty of expressing one’s desires
 Thinking back to the ways in which I have hidden from expressly
 stating what
 I want.
 Lying back
 Hoping that my lover will touch where I ache.

“My stomach . . . my chest . . . my breasts”, I somehow find the voice
 to express what I so strongly feel.
 Her eyes sparkling– flirting– respond as much as does the slow
 nodding of her head and the movement of her hands toward my
 erect nipples which she brushes faintly over As she begins to knead
 My body swings back slightly
 Suspended by the harness as
 Her weight between my legs and fingers on my nipples causes me to
 gasp.

Placed in a unique position of Orchestrating my pleasure
 A rush of Fear runs through me.

Her hands begin to caress my upper body Gently. Firmly. Slowly.
 No longer concerned with the faces watching through silence.
 Expectant. Unsure. Cautious.
 Knowing I want progression. Knowing too that it is up to me to make
 this happen.
 Her hands slide downwards, pressing my sides, thumbs moving to
 caress my stomach and then strongly continuing back toward the

softness of my breasts Rotating underneath as I arch my back towards her Feeling at once the pressing of my cunt against her and her fingers again on my nipples.

"Harder", I plead, wanting to feel her pinch.

"Like this?", she asks as she begins to exert pressure Squeezing both tips between her fingers Exerting enough strength to increase the heat between my legs.

I hear myself moan.

This sound enters the crowd and quietly mirrors their own excitement

Watching me surrender to pleasure.

"Harder?" she asks, as I nod

Unable to form more sounds

Desire coarsing through my body

My cunt hidden only by a thin layer of material Covered by her weight

Leaning closer.

Bare breasts lowering towards erect nipples Rising.

Her face inches away from my own. Aware of my shyness. Focused only on my pleasure.

Creating intimacy within a sea of women.

"More pressure?", she asks, as I nod

Gasping as she slowly increases strength of her touch

Sensing my building excitement She expertly asks if I want constant pressure "Like this?"

I let out a slow whine and she nods, understanding she has identified what it is I desire.

Her fingers leave my left breast to run her right hand down the length of my body Simultaneously increasing Pressure and pain Coursing through still fondled nipple.

She runs her hand along my side, sliding across stomach to play with Steel through skin, then firmly grasping

My hip bone jutting as I press my hips up to Meet her force.

I ask her to grab my ass. She rotates her hand past my hipbone and firmly squeezes and releases and squeezes again as the pleasure flows through me, causing me to tighten fists on the straps above my head.

Twisting my body while sighing and moaning.

"We could take these boxers off", she suggests and I shake my head no, but whisper "You could slide your fingers up underneath the material . . . if you wanted" Unnecessarily adding "If you wanted" For a moment lost in insecurity.

Her respose of "Yes, she'd like that very much", and the glint in her eyes quickly relieve any anxiety as she slips fingers underneath my boxer shorts and firmly massages the muscles of my inner thighs.

She looks up into my eyes and I manage to plead,

"Fuck me . . . please"

". . . how?", she asks, running her left hand over the obvious bulge in her jeans

Teasing me with her questions

Imagining her strong fingers inside me

I slowly loosen my grip on the straps above my head and, brushing the tips of my fingers past my nipples, then over my belly and towards my cunt, I place both of my palms over her right hand.

Closing her fingers together, I feel them form a tight fist.

She nods, once again, in understanding, as she pulls a latex glove from her back pocket and I allow my eyes to slowly close

Surrendering to the trust of the crowd.

Cervix

Monie Blevins

Who knows
 at fifteen
 What's love
 and what's happy not to be
 alone
 in grade ten with braces
 And a tendency to make better
 friends with horses than with people
 Comfort in melancholy
 and in knowing the weekend
 is busy
 But I don't know a thing
 sighing
 warm in July from a body
 not the sun
 When he sings,
 and I feel more than hear it.
 You are such a woman
 at eighteen
 without ever having been this way
 before now
 this afternoon
 beside coloured pools
 of wax from wasted candles
 surprised and embarrassed
 to find that funny feeling
 was just a cervix
 And now I can stare for hours
 and think I've seen a lot
 at twenty-one
 when closed eyes see nothing
 but spots from lights
 on the velvet backs of eyelids.

She Is

Kimberley Sanders

Like a limited-edition puppet
 I lived,
 suffocating in a box on shelf . . .
 big hair, long nails, short skirts
 (and shit like that).
 I was a comely package, all right
 neatly encased in cellophane
 broken and denigrated, covered in layers of red dust
 and dried blood. Lots of crusty blood.
 I squandered a measure of my life just so,
 you know,
 in shameful submission to a man-child grown.
 Ordained and proclaimed to be my lord,
 I was his, and not my own.
 And on the great dark day of our betrothal
 (when I was made to take his name, and he was made to take me)
 Holy men anointed us with water, blessed by none other than the
 Alpha god Himself !?
 I cried, hard, as little beads of tap water froze solid upon my skin.
 It was an icy chamber, cleverly cast to repress my essence,
 and my identity.
 Oh, mendacious matrimony, could you not have spared Me the rod ?
 . . . And so, blood was spilt from that day forth,
 and bones were broken, and broken, and broken.
 I welcomed death, once
 but I got sucked back, only to be further encased
 further betrayed
 further belittled and
 further dismayed.
 Just a dumb-girl-puppet, sentenced to perform "The Sick Joke Wife Play"
 (Read it, Proverbs 31)
 Over and over and over and over, that hideous play I performed
 wooden puppet I was, soft kindling for his raging fires, until
 I felt the quickening,

a gentle wind that filled my lungs,
 and gently, wildly, it consumed my cellophane shroud.
 Effortlessly, completely, the theater – and the play – shattered.
 Forever !
 As I listened to my dreams, a forming voice on the wind
 I heard every dream I ever ambitiously dreamed
 (each of my someday emergence to me)
 the song drifted high,
 colouring the sky,
 and it sounded something like this,
 “She changes everything she touches, and Everything She
 touches, changes.
 She changes everything she touches, and Everything She
 touches, changes.”
 Oh, what a sweet, sweet tune!
 “I’m here!” I hollered into the wind, turning North, East, South and
 West
 “Show yourself to Me. Free Me.”
 And there She was, standing in the West. Simply, completely,
 The Superlative She.
 Humbly, I thanked Her and thanked Her.
 And together we stood
 and together we stand
 and together we danced
 and together we planned,
 and plotted my journey to me
 free to flee
 free to be
 free to live
 and free to see all that Her world had for me.
 And the hymns I sang in secret (years of them, not to Him but to Her)
 were the very prayers that rescued me,
 and brought the She (who is three)
 the One who lovingly stands with me.
 Oh, Blessed be to the three! The Maiden. The Mother. The Crone.
 She who is
 She who was
 and She who is yet to become.
 She of the earth
 She of the air

She of the fire and seas.
 SHE IS.
 Merry meet and merry part
 and merry meet again.
 Always look up, always look in
 and Always,
 follow Your heart.

Typographical Error

Laura Marshall

You knwo how soemtimes
 Your fingers seem to ahve midns of their own?
 Liek when you're typign
 And none of the words coem out right?
 Well, that's what happened.
 I meant to say,
 I love you, I miss you, come home real soon,
 But my darn fingers,
 With minds of their own,
 Typed out,
 You hurt me, I hate you, leave me alone.

Hate it when that ahppens.

Eulogy:

tanis rideout

(from the desire to understand why women's
 brilliance
 is destroyed
 so often from within . . .)

drowning Ophelia
 the muse collapses
 icy fluid soothing the lungs.

paper dolls dancing, tossing
 eternally
 a pendulum
 blown by alternating
 boiling and crushing winds.
 now an ecstatic burst of brilliance.
 one

of the tiny lights
 against the lousy cliché
 of the thunderous,
 expansive, terrifying blackness of the sky
 then just as suddenly and as
 hero[ine]icly
 coughing collapsing
 in the smoke
 left over from my
 explosion.
 suffering (in my imagination)
 amongst equals
 joining with the giants
 virginia, sylvia
 admiring the romantic demise of their
 brilliance
 feeling a desperate sisterhood with their
 panic and torture

meeting and devouring
them and their words
until they sit bubbling
in my guts.

and longing for a comparable inspiration
the only

payment
for the wanton annihilation of feminine genius
until an end
to the ceaseless twisting
of mental hurricanes.

time to lie
in Ophelia's soothing waters.