

FOCUS

a journal for gay women

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Nov. '74

BOSTON DAUGHTERS of BILITIS

60¢

FOCUS: A JOURNAL FOR GAY WOMEN

NOVEMBER 1974

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FOCUS welcomes contributions from everyone,
including drawings. Include a self-addressed, stamped
envelope for return. All letters must be signed, but
names can be withheld for publication.

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LETTERS TO FOCUS

Reference to October 1974 Letter to FOCUS

Dear Sisters:

CONFERENCE '74: AN AMAZON EXPEDITION circulated a pre-registration form in the late summer/early fall which reads: "Because of the limit of 600 (at "Camp Amazonia"), the costs for each child will be the same as a woman's. For this reason CONFERENCE '74 appeals to women to arrange to leave their children with friends or family. We searched for an area with unlimited facilities so that women could feel free to bring their children, unfortunately none could be found. So, whenever possible, children remaining at home would allow another woman to attend."

At the time that "Camp Amazonia" was selected for CONFERENCE '74, which women from the Boston planning sessions had originally scheduled for October 11-14, we recognized the need to share with our sisters the limitations involved with our choice of a country site. Since we knew that women from several locations, including Florida, Oklahoma, and California, wanted to attend, we circulated the above information in the hopes of suggesting to our sisters a way to help as many women as possible attend the Conference.

Now that the Conference has been postponed until the Spring of '75, women are checking into the possibility of countrysites which would accommodate more women and children at a cheaper fee. Minutes of planning session meetings are available upon request. If you have a question, need information, or would like clarification on what you 'hear,' please write to:

CONFERENCE '74
Box 2000
c/o GCN
22 Bromfield St.
Boston, Ma. 02108

In sisterhood,
Women of the Boston planning
sessions (sub. - jb)

Dear Friends at FOCUS and DOB,

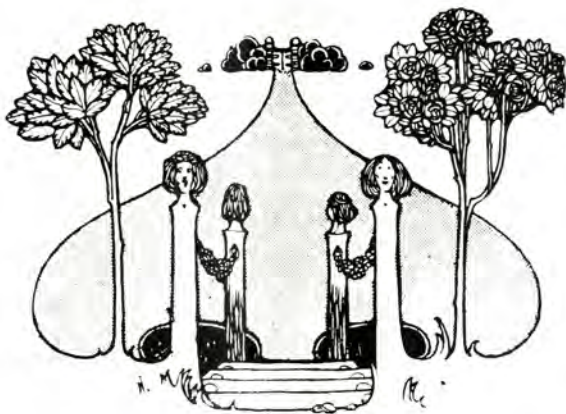
I appreciated Janine Bernier's giving the anthology DIFFERENT a critical going over (FOCUS, Oct. 74). But she missed a key point: only one of the 24 stories is lesbian. That looks like sheer tokenism! With minimal homework, starting with a couple of earlier gay short-story collections, editor Stephen Wright would have found lesbian-theme stories by John O'Hara, Calder Willingham, William Carlos Williams, John Eichrodt, Isabel Bolton, and others. Also, excerpts from novels by Colette, Rosamond Lehman, Compton MacKenzie, Gale Wilhelm, Theophile Gauthier, Mary Renault, and others could have been used as lesbian "shorts." If Wright didn't have the time or interest to look for more lesbian material than a single story for a book of 24 stories, it would have been far better had he left out the one lesbian item and made his anthology one of male homosexual short stories.

Barbara Gittings

A Woman's Lament

i am waiting
 for evolution
 to make me into a dog
 that falls into season
 only once or twice a year
 i am tired
 of all this weeping and bleeding
 for something i no longer do.
 i am waiting
 for nuclear implosions
 to tear down the enigmas
 that clawing, my palms bleeding,
 they pull me from
 and rubbing yeast into the wounds say
MAKE BREAD RISE NOT REVOLUTION
 i am tired
 of this weeping and bleeding
 for something i could no longer do.

— Linda Gregory



Celebration and the Subculture

by J.S.

As we move into the month of November, the holiday season becomes an immediate reality. Thanksgiving, Hanuka, Christmas, New Years: how are we, as gay people, to deal with these feasts and festivals? Overwhelmingly such holidays are associated with family gatherings; subtly (or not so subtly, as the case may be) they reinforce the concept of nuclear family as *the* culturally and emotionally significant human grouping. Traditionally dictated patterns of "going home for Christmas," family dinners, and the like, ignore or exclude gay identity and gay relationships. Not surprisingly, for many of us holidays come to be a time of subterfuge, alienation, loneliness, and resentment.

There is a basic human need to feel part of some larger social whole—to feel connection with the human race. When gay people feel shut out from important ceremonies and festivities, their emotional well-being is clearly threatened. If the gay life style is to represent a meaningful, positive alternative to heterosexual cultural patterns, it must take into account this human need for family and community. If we can learn to give each other the sense of social support and ties which the straight world generally provides through family structure, then we truly begin to be a viable subculture. For this reason I look on holidays as an important challenge.

Even though the straight world is still out there, and we all must deal somehow with the families we were born into, at the same time we face the absorbing task of creating for ourselves an alternative support system.

The key word here is "create"—the chance to *create* new ways of meeting basic human needs is, historically speaking, rare. We find ourselves in the ultimately enviable position of having to take active responsibility for our needs and also to invent good methods of providing for them. Plenty of people—straight people—know feelings of loneliness and disappointment at holidays, primarily because of grandiose expectations: "I should be happy; I should be having a wonderful time; I should feel loved and cherished and cared for." What reality will ever measure up to the expectations and fantasies about holidays commonly carried over from childhood? This is where our gay identity can be a boon. Because we are all too aware that traditional customs and structures do not really include us, we avoid the trap of expecting that somehow, magically and effortlessly, happiness ought to come to us on certain days of the year. Instead we can translate our feelings of exclusion into action and self-help, realizing that if we are to have warm and happy holiday experiences, we ourselves must make them happen.

NEWS

Press Release: Watch for a book entitled *Gay Spirit: A Guide to Becoming a Sensuous Homosexual*. Billed as "a super-spoof of all those 'Sensuous' books," this work by David Lovis claims to be a serious personal statement as well.

The HUNTER FINE ARTS SOCIETY is the first fine arts club for the homophile community, and offers original art, sculptures, jewelry, and posters to its subscription members. A full color catalogue is sent each month to members: for an introductory subscription (6 mo.) and a free \$5.00 gift, write: Conrad Hunter & Associates, inc. P.O. Box 1274, Milwaukee, WI. 53201. Gay artists are asked to get in touch with this address if they are interested in finding an outlet for their work.

The annual convention of the National Educational Association voted in Chicago in favor of a resolution including sexual orientation as a characteristic to be protected against discrimination. This means the organization, which has 1.4 million members, is committed to fighting discrimination against gay teachers. (*Advocate*, Aug. 28, 74).

On July 16 the St. Paul, Minnesota city council amended the city's Human Rights Ordinance to protect homosexuals, after fiery debate at open hearings. Covered are employment, housing, school admission, and public accommodations, St. Paul is 45% Catholic. (*Advocate*, Aug. 28, 74)

Lie detector tests given to prospective state police cadets in Indiana ask about the possible homosexuality of the candidate, in order to eliminate homosexuals (*Advocate*, Sept. 25, 74).

The Gay Activists' Alliance in New York City is trying to raise \$3000 to put advertisements on radio directed specifically to gay teenagers. (*Advocate*, Sept. 25, 74)

The National Lawyers Guild in cooperation with minority groups has started the People's College of Law in Los Angeles. The low tuition law school will train students to return to work in their communities. Tuition is \$350 per semester and four years are required since the school is not accredited. The address is 2227 Seventh St. (*Advocate*, Sept. 25, 74)

An open discussion on "Gays and Alcoholism" occurs periodically at Old West Church in Boston. For information call 523-7664.

An instructor in the New York Higher Horizons program for youth, Martha McPheeters, was dismissed after she was found in bed with her lover in a dormitory room. Legal action is contemplated. Carol Skroebsky was dismissed from the N.Y. City Police Department when peer reports said she was gay. She says she is not and is suing the city for her job. (*Majority Report*, Sept. 5, 74); *Advocate*, Sept. 25, 74).

The Lesbian Tide, which went by the name of *The Tide* for several issues (the idea being that people wouldn't be afraid to buy it in the stores), has reverted to its original title. The magazine is published in Los Angeles.

Ithaca, New York, the home of Cornell University, passed an affirmative action program for hiring by the city, and the program includes gays. The measure was passed Sept. 4 by the common council with no fuss. (*Advocate*, Oct. 9, 1974).

On May 7 by special referendum the people of Boulder, Colorado rejected the inclusion of sexual preference in the city's anti-discrimination law. On Sept. 10 the mayor of Boulder, who had supported the sexual preference inclusion, survived a recall vote by a tiny margin. (*Advocate*, Oct. 9, 74)

A campaign by several national organizations, among them the National Gay Task Force and the National Organization for Women, has begun to get the US Immigration and Naturalization Service to stop discriminating against homosexuals. The Immigration Code presently excludes persons "afflicted with... sexual deviation" (Sections 1182 and 1251 of the Code, Section 8) (*Advocate*, Aug. 28, 74).

Northwestern Bell Telephone paid \$900 in an out-of-court settlement to a man it had refused to hire in 1973 because of his homosexuality. At that time a Bell spokesperson told the Minneapolis Star that Bell did not want to tarnish its image by hiring homosexuals. The reversal in policy was forced by an anti-discrimination clause covering gays enacted in April in Minneapolis, home base of the company. (*Advocate*, Aug. 28, 74)

On election day 1871 Susan B. Anthony and 14 other women voted after they convinced the local election officials in Rochester, N.Y. that the new 15th amendment (blacks voting) allowed women to vote. She was subsequently arrested and tried for the crime of voting. (*Majority Report*, Aug. 22, 74)



LESBIAN MOTHER SEEKS CUSTODY

Another custody test case has arisen this time in Kent, Ohio. Estranged husband Kenneth Townend is suing in Portage County for the custody of three children Larry, Gina, and Brad, ages 10, 7, and 5. The mother, Lorraine Townend, is living openly as a lesbian with another woman and now has temporary custody, awarded Sept. 17. The husband's argument to the court is that his wife's lesbian lifestyle creates an unwholesome, unnatural and unsuitable environment for the children. "They are basing the whole case on my lesbianism," said Lorraine Townend. "The father has even said he feels that other than my 'sickness' I am an excellent mother."

According to Lorraine, her lawyer, John Quigley, feels that this case is a clearcut lesbian issue. He intends to fight not only for custody but also for her right of association, i.e. to live with her lover. He will test the new American Psychiatric Association decision on the classification of homosexuality as no longer a mental illness.

Married for 10 years, Lorraine separated from her husband last fall and moved in with Vicky Dickinson, whom she had known for three years. "The everyday living that my lover took for granted was all brand new to me," Vicky said. "Lorraine and the children and I talked about these responsibilities and how we should share things. Although I made a lot of mistakes, I found so did Lorraine, which made me a lot more comfortable."

Both women are active in gay liberation in Kent and have been interviewed in local papers. Lorraine has become student at Kent State University in psychology, and Vicky

is taking time off from her studies in social work to support the family.

Regarding the case, Lorraine says, "we are committed to fighting without compromise... maybe the doors for others to fight will open." As for expenses in the case, "we have no idea where the money will come from."

Contributions for the legal work in the case may be sent to Vicky and Lorraine's Legal Defense Fund, 570 Harvey Avenue, Apt. #2, Kent, Ohio 44240. Information in this article comes from: *Akron Beacon Journal* (Ohio), June 10, 1974; *The Daily Kent Stater*, April 19, 1974; letters from Lorraine and Vicky.

GAY LIBRARIAN GETS BOOK AWARD

A retired librarian, Jeannette Foster was given the Third Annual Gay Book Award for her study *SEX VARIANT WOMEN IN LITERATURE* by the Task Force on Gay Liberation of the American Library Association during the Association's annual convention in New York City.

Dr. Foster's book, published at her own expense in 1956 by Vantage Press, is a survey of lesbiansim from the earliest records on Sappho and Ruth (Old Testament), thru 20th century writings in English, German and French. It has been out of print since publication but will soon be commercially republished.

Dr. Foster, recovering from surgery at her home in Missouri, could not attend the award ceremony. Her written acceptance said: "I can only repeat my delight and overwhelmed gratitude at being chosen for the award, and my happy surprise that my long-respected ALA is willing to admit the existence—and even honor it—of Gaiety!"

Announcement of LESBIAN HERSTORY ARCHIVES:

The newly-formed LESBIAN HERSTORY ARCHIVES is now in the process of collecting books, magazines, journals, news clippings, bibliographies, photos, historical information, tapes, films, diaries, poetry and prose, biographies, autobiographies, notices of events, posters, and other memorabilia and obscure references to our lives. If you have lesbian materials that you would like to donate to us, please send them to:

LESBIAN HERSTORY ARCHIVES, P.O.Box 1258, N.Y., N.Y. 10001

If you have confidential material, please write to us.

NEWS...

The long promised INDEX to all 16 years of THE LADDER is now available. Copies will be mailed to all those who purchased the INDEX by the middle of August, 1974. If you want a copy of the INDEX, you will need to order at once. Cost is now \$10.00 for ea. copy.

Complete sets of THE LADDER may be purchased at \$100.00 each OR requesting individual photocopies of articles at a set rate of 25¢ per page with a minimum of \$2.00 per article or story.

A very few copies of THE LESBIAN IN LITERATURE, a Bibliography, can still be purchased for \$4.25 each. Write: The LADDER, P. O. Box 5025, Wash. Station, Reno, Nev. 89503.

THE LATECOMER by Sarah Aldridge is the story of two women of unlike temperaments and differing backgrounds who come to recognize their love for each other. Can be ordered from THE LADDER (above address) \$3.00 plus 25¢ postage handling.

DOB NEWS

D.O.B. welcomes the following officers, who were elected on October 20: President - Lois Johnson; Vice President - Judy S.; Treasurer - Peggy Benson; Corresponding Secretary - Laura Robin.

Election of Recording Secretary will take place at the November business meeting: all members will receive a special announcement.

DOB's Halloween Masquerade Dance was a well-attended and successful affair. Thanks to Dance Chairperson Wendy Bauman and her committee, \$294 was raised for the DOB treasury.

NOTE:

Readers in Massachusetts should find enclosed information about the Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts. We are mailing this material upon the request of C.L.U.M. because we feel that civil rights may be of particular interest to many of our readers.



D.O.B. CALENDAR NOVEMBER 1974

419 Boylston St., Rm 323, Boston, Mass. 02116 — 617 262-1592

All events are open to all women regardless of their membership in D.O.B.

All raps are 50¢ for non-members, and 25¢ for members.

MONDAYS 7:30 pm Rap session and phone-in for lesbian mothers (including mothers with grown children.) At DOB office.

TUESDAYS 7:30 pm Rap session on being gay: for all women. Share feelings about being gay; everyone welcome. There are always many new people every week. At the DOB office, near the Arlington MBTA stop, between Arlington and Berkeley Streets.

WEDNESDAYS, 1st and 3rd GAYBREAK radio program, AMHERST, WMUA-FM 91.9

THURSDAYS 8:00 pm Rap session for older gay women. No ages are defined: come if it sounds right for you.

THURSDAYS 9-10 pm GAY WAY RADIO PROGRAM WBUR 90.9 FM

FRIDAYS, Women's Basketball, 7:00 sharp at Cambridge YWCA for rides to Harvard U.

SUNDAYS, 10:30-11 am CLOSET SPACE radio program, WCAS-AM 740.

SUNDAYS, 1 pm SOFTBALL. Bring hat, ball, glove; informal games. Magazine Beach Field, Cambridge, across Charles River from Cadillac-Olds and along Memorial Drive west of the Boston U. bridge. RAIN OR SHINE.

Wednesday, Nov. 6 FOCUS Meeting, DOB office at 7:30 pm. New people welcome.

Sunday, Nov. 10 POTLUCK SUPPER, 5:30 pm, St. John's Church, 33 Bowdoin St., Boston, near Government Center. Bring a casserole, salad, or dessert to share — in a dish or pot it can be heated in and/or served from. Informal discussion about future DOB projects and plans. Dancing to records afterward. (50¢ per person to cover rental of the hall).

Monday, Nov. 18 FOCUS Meeting, DOB office at 7:30 pm. New people welcome. Deadline for December copy!

Wednesday, Nov. 20 BUSINESS MEETING, 8:00 pm at DOB office.

FRIDAY NIGHT, Dec. 20 Christmas Dance, 9-1 pm at Charles Street Meeting House. Donations. A dance for the benefit of the CSMH. Records. Dance for men and women.

III

you were the one I eloped to provided a bed for my
 beginnings invited me to your Vermont woods sun smell
 on us naked running washing our hair in cold streams you
 talked tarots vitamins acid trips I heard only shiny black
 hair big breasts big stomach waited for you to be quiet
 night to come so I could show you what I knew you wouldn't
 let me touch you sexually whatever that means though you
 let every man who picks you up hitching fuck you said Kathy
 you're going to have a hard life noone loves women like
 you noone will know what to do with it

V

I now a counselor in girl scout camp asked you moonlight canoing
 girls on the far island shared their sleeping bags I could not
 touch you enough spoon fashion we slept together always with
 others we fed each other sucked each others' fingers licked
 butter that dripped down our skins didn't say much I wondered
 if you were the first real lesbian I met I ached for you asked
 so many times to sleep with you so shyly you never heard
 one perfect week one year of beautiful letters
 saw you again in steaming NYC chasing through sprinklers rain
 fire hydrants water sucking cherries and smelly cheese from each
 others fingers if I brought it up we'd talk about gayness now
 grew up dykes alike I ached hearing about your lovers asked
 louder this time why must I always ask you took me then when
 my courage failed you don't respond in the street but you took
 me then in bed sure strong hard swift from front back above below
 carrying my body riding a horse you had me absolutely wild but
 yours unrelentlessly like ocean waves crashing I could not believe
 it your firm smooth skin hummed it lead me on we fell asleep
 exhausted still holding tight rare other creature I want more
 wonder what you want

—Kathy Hruby

*(with apologies for misspelling in
 the Sept. issue)*



Three Stars

There was Virginia
a founding mother
one of the greats
immortal magnitude
and Sylvia
much closer home
students consume
her work
like watermelon
and now there's Ann
lovely Ann
from Black Oak road
in Weston
who went inside
the oversized family garage
and gassed herself to death
—no doubt now about her fame,
suicide confers authority—
VirginiaSylviaAnn
their places are secure
within the spangled firmament
of heaven
but what about
those dim and distant women
who each day take
their oceanwalks
their noonday naps
in vain
where do their furies go,
who shudders
at their weariness
or knows
the hard fast brightness
that burns
without reflection
in their pain.

—Paula Bennett

Staying on Alone: Letters of Alice B. Toklas

(Edward Burns, ed. Liveright, 1973).

by Gerry Azzata

For me, Alice B. Toklas always has been the shadowy figure in Gertrude Stein's background—a constant presence and (as most biographers of Stein have limited it) "companion" for nearly forty years. *Staying on Alone*, a collection of Toklas' letters written from Stein's death in 1946, until her own in 1967, is a wonderful de-romanticizing of the whole Stein-Toklas legend. Both women emerge as real people who lived through several decades with the most famous creators of the time as close friends (Picasso, Fitzgerald, Hemingway). Beyond this, Alice B. Toklas makes herself known as a woman struggling to endure old age without falling into self-pity, after losing her lover of so many years. There is no way to separate the lives of Toklas and Stein, even though both were strong and creative women. The forty years they spent together had created the illusion that they always would be together. Shortly after Stein's death, Toklas wrote about the melodramatic fantasy she had had about their deaths—a bomb or a shipwreck, a common ending. Nothing had prepared her for the years she would spend alone.

Toklas says surprisingly little about the personal details of the life she and Gertrude had shared. Instead of clearing up the eternal questions surrounding their relationship, Toklas creates even more. She is intensely protective about any intimate parts of their lives, and deals only in anecdotes. In a letter to an author trying to write about Stein's work and its sexual basis, Toklas stated firmly:

You will understand I hope my objection to your repeated references to the subject of sexuality as an approach to the understanding of Gertrude's work. She would have emphatically denied it—she considered it the least characteristic of all expressions of character (p. 69).

But, regardless of the nature of their relationship, there were the forty years together. Those years and their depth can be judged by the Alice B. Toklas who emerged from them. Gertrude Stein is everywhere for Toklas, and she gives her the will to go on. At 85, Toklas is being besieged by Stein's relatives, who take Gertrude and Alice's private art collection out of her apartment while she is out of town, for "safekeeping." Toklas returns to the home they had shared for decades one day, and finds the walls bare. Soon afterward, she is evicted when the building's owner decides to turn the property into condominiums. At this point, Toklas frankly states, "If there were not still things to do for Gertrude there would be no reason for me to live on." (p. 338). So she keeps working to have more of Stein's writings published, and she keeps writing to their old friends. More and more often, anecdotes of life with Gertrude enter her letters. In these stories, there is a quiet beauty that tells all about their relationship:

We lived on the Calle Dos de Mayo... and had a hound whom I taught to not eat—as he wished—but to smell tuberoses—and who was supposed to chase sheep. He escaped and went berserk. He ran away at night and once we saw him dancing with a dozen more of them in the moonlight... and he didn't recognize us—indeed none of them paid the least attention to us.... (p. 214)

(continued next page)

For Toklas, everything is an anniversary. Every day of their life together had been intensely important, full of meaning. It doesn't surprise me that Toklas eventually becomes a devout Catholic, placing all of her faith in a life beyond this one, where she will meet Gertrude again:

...The past is not gone—nor is Gertrude—life everlasting—It left me in a dither when suddenly it came to me—where was Gertrude. She is there waiting for us. (p. 364)

Staying on Alone is a fascinating portrait of another era and of these two women. For me, it also was a very hard book to read. It reached all of my fears of growing old and how, as a lesbian, that probably will be very difficult. The prospect of growing old without children and perhaps

without a lover is a real fear of many lesbians. It lies beneath our sometimes—desperation to find a long-term relationship, and at the same time it explains the fear we have of growing too close to one person, entrusting too much of ourselves to one lover. Many middle-aged heterosexual couples have only one or two close friends, and are crushed when they are left alone by death or divorce. In today's lesbian community, I see a new type of life-style emerging. Friendship relationships are becoming as important as lover relationships to many people. Hopefully, less of these people will find themselves absolutely alone as they grow old. Some friends and I have a running joke about setting up a commune together when we all reach 70. I wonder if perhaps someday this won't be a joke.



Fantasy

in Maine
 pine wind,
 and jade ocean
 crashing
 into chandeliers
 on seasoned rocks;
 below
 i would wash
 as seaweed
 suncrispd on your shore.

— Linda Gregory

JEHOVAH Asks:

**“Do you want to clean up your life?”
— “Can you be queer for a day?”**

by Janine Bernier

The August 15, 1974 issue of *The Watchtower* includes two articles entitled: “Homosexuality — Is the Bible’s view Reasonable?” and “Is Change Possible for Homosexuals?” — the first article in the series beginning with the personal, thundering note, “Are you a homosexual?”

The in-depth, philosophic, and informative expertise which ensues denounces the perspective of other religious leaders whose arguments claim that the bible is subject to misinterpretations and out-dated with the brilliantly capsulized statement, “It is true that the Bible is a very old book.” (p. 483, Vol. 95 - #16)

According to the enlightened tract in question, Jehovah teaches that the bible’s very age makes it valuable as a moral guide; and, in lieu of the bible, homosexuality is wrong since “Is it not obvious to virtually all persons that male and female are counterparts, opposites sexually? Is it not apparent that their sex organs were designed to ‘fit’ together?” (p. 484) reducing sexual orientation to the simplistic assumption that only round peckers fit in round holes.

The “witnesses”, properly in tune with the times as they have been with the past (since they visualize all time periods as essentially static), claim that homosexuality is “unnatural” - always was and always will be - since homosexuals of necessity have to distort the traditional male/female roles to make ‘it fit’ “... does it seem ‘natural’ to you for two

lesbians to come together sexually? One of the pair must often use some type of artificial substitute for a male organ to satisfy the other?... How reasonable is that?” (p. 484).

Of course the “witnesses” are incapable of perceiving of their so-called biblical arguments as illogical; it is only the homosexual who is unreasonable. And, since homosexuality is unreasonable, you can change. The benevolent Jehovah will help you change. Pray to him (gender identification theirs; small “h” mine) so that you too can make a transition similar to the example cited: “I might have been considered only a moderate homosexual since I engaged in immorality with less than three different men each day.” (p. 488)

The implicit logical extension of the great god Jehovah is - if you too want to become truly ‘gay’ and not just a moderate pervert, you will have to do it at least three times a day, with three different people. Consider too the monomorphic tools involved. And, for you lesbians who obviously need a male substitute, consider your electric bills, the cost of batteries, and the fact that a dildo (no matter how miniscule it can be made and still retain its functional capabilities) might conceivably be more difficult to conceal in the pockets of your leather jackets than your tampon.

Oh be reasonable, be reasonable! The great god Jehovah loves you; and in the face of such pain and expense, how could you possibly want to be queer - if only for a day?

WATCHING T.V. WITH MOTHER

A Tragic-Comic dialogue in four parts

by A.M.A.

- M: "What inspired you to watch this old movie with me?" *(Not that I mind, dear.)*
- D: "You know I'm an old movie fan. Besides, Ingrid Bergman is a great actress." *(If she weren't in it do you think I'd be watching it?)*
- M: "You're watching it because you wish **you** could have a romantic love affair with a man." *(It had better be what you'd wish for.)*
- D: "You know that's a ridiculous assumption." *(To hell with the leading-man-type, Mother ... now if you had said Ingrid Bergman...)*
- M: "Despite all you say, you really want to, don't you? But you know what I think? You're afraid of men." *(Now, what can you say to that?)*
- D: "I'm not afraid; I'm simply not interested." *(Watch it, Mom, just because I don't display any desire to have an MGM-approved heterosexual love-life like you did, doesn't mean I'm terrified of the opposite sex.)*
- M: "To be in love with a man and he with you is the only way a woman can be really happy." *(If you don't agree, I'm going to begin to think that you're 'that kind', and you know it would kill me if you were.)*
- D: "If that's your ideal of happiness, fine. However, it's not mine. I shall be perfectly content without a man's love until my dying day. O.K.? *(Shut up, Mom, let's watch the movie. Oh, damn, Ingrid Bergman just made her entrance and I missed it...)*
- M: "It's not O.K. You shouldn't hate men." *(You just can't be 'that kind' if you are you couldn't be my daughter.)*
- D: "Lack of interest can hardly be termed 'Hate', and I most certainly didn't say anything about hating anybody." *(Oh, God, I know what you're thinking. Please don't make me have to lie to you.)*
- M: "Not in so many words... " *(Please, tell me that you're not 'that kind'.)*
- D: "Then let's watch the movie. Oh, look, there's the leading man ... " *(... with Ingrid hanging on his arm ... oh, well.)*
- M: "He's not my type." *(You sneak, changing the subject like that.)*
- D: "He's not my type, either." *(I'm telling you the truth, Mom.)*
- M: "I'm glad we agree on something for once." *(You've got good taste. You're my daughter after all.)*

REVIEW:

EXCAVATIONS

by Sue Silvermarie

available from: First Things First (a Fe-mail Order House)
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by J.S.

An impressive new collection of poems has arrived in the DOB library. *Excavations* portrays its author, Sue Silvermarie, as a lesbian, a mother, a feminist. Her short, lyric verse has an easy, personal tone which speaks very naturally to the reader, one woman to another. This is poetry which possesses human warmth—a living, real quality—and in addition demonstrates considerable technical subtlety. Language and imagery are strong, precise, and inventive. The humor of self-knowledge is also very much in evi-

dence (take a second look at “So Much For Show” in the October issue.) The book is rich in its range of emotions: we see a woman confronting and accepting her feelings as a friend, a mother, a lonely self, a lover (would-be lover, rejected lover...), a sexual being. One poem that stands out as particularly appealing and effective is “Erotic Is a Word” (reprinted here as newly revised, by permission of the author.) It presents eroticism as a term and a state of being far more complex and inclusive than we ordinarily appreciate.

EROTIC IS A WORD

i loved you last night with more than my body
 so i slip soft now into your presence
 but i needed my body loved it for how it could show you
 wholly
 and be made whole itself one-piece-me
 erotic is the word but not like the pictures that stop
 on the page
 erotic is a word i want to save
 from them erotic
 as the pulse of my wristblood erotic
 as rocking a child to sleep erotic
 as my dreams of flying
 erotic
 as writing with no space between my heart and the paper
 erotic as bare darkness erotic
 as the mountain that tendered me to tears
 erotic as touching as deep as my touch can go
 touching you
 erotic
 as feeling your touch is as full erotic
 as being reached

—Sue Silvermarie



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