

# FOCUS

A JOURNAL FOR  
GAY WOMEN

BOSTON DAUGHTERS OF BILITIS



**AUG. '73**

**\$.50**

FOCUS: A JOURNAL FOR GAY WOMEN  
August 1973

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FOCUS welcomes contributions from everyone. If you want back whatever you send us, please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Let us know possible titles and how you want to sign your name.

Articles in FOCUS reflect the views of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent the views or tastes of Boston Daughters of Bilitis.

COVER: Linda

This publication is on file at the INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY ARCHIVE, 2325 Oak Street, Berkeley, California 94708, and is available on microfilm through Bell and Howell, Drawer E, Wooster, Ohio 44691.

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(this is N.H.D.O.B., but do not address them as such on the envelope.)

Dear Kay Silk,

Your article in the May FOCUS on the "demise" of Ms. Magazine was a well-articulated criticism of many middle-class attitudes which a magazine of this breadth inevitably must encompass. However, we feel that your criticisms regarding the lack of lesbian material is both unfair and unjustified.

The task before Ms. is staggering since it is the first large-scale woman's magazine which speaks to the evolving female consciousness embodied in the feminist movement. The compromise Ms. has had to make between espousing radical feminism and giving in to the format of slick women's magazine has perhaps, in the long run, enabled its greatest service to the feminist movement. While neither extreme has found the magazine satisfactory, it has appealed to a large body of uncommitted women and, thereby, disseminated more effectively basic feminist principles. And, it is upon a well-established groundwork that genuine acceptance of lesbianism and other female alternatives in society will be built.

To accomplish its purpose, equal time has necessarily been given in Ms. to a range of feminist dilemmas--including lesbianism. Fixing sinks, dealing with men, families and each other, dispelling female and male stereotypes, reinforcing professional instincts, and, in general, redefining the position of women in society have all been dealt with. Lesbianism had not been ignored, evidenced by the articles you yourself cited (Ed. Note: and criticised). Lesbian lifestyles have received as much attention as domestic servant lifestyles or stewardess lifestyles. This is only fair in a magazine which hopes to reach a wide variety of people.

The discrepancies in attitude toward lesbianism that you found in Ms. is a subject apart from amount of space given to lesbian material. They reflect inconsistencies which exist within the feminist ideology itself and are the responsibility of the movement to correct. Ms. does not initiate change but supports and gives validity to changing values. Whatever power the editors exercise in

editing or publishing material will probably be stimulated by pressures within the movement.

We are sending a copy of your article to Ms. Magazine because we feel many of your criticisms are valid

In Sisterhood,

Jeanne F. Alleman  
Clara Willing  
and eight others  
c/o J.F.A.  
8228 Broadway, Apt. 413  
Houston, Texas

Dear FOCUS staff,

I have just finished reading my first issue of FOCUS, July '73, and I had to write immediately to say CONGRATULATIONS on a fine publication!! The variety of articles and poems is refreshing, especially with such a small staff. I am equally impressed with D.O.B.'s calendar of events.

My lover and I are planning on moving to the Cambridge-Boston area sometime in December or January and we're both looking forward to getting involved in your organization. We're both willing to work hard and hope to get involved in several of the activities in your area. And, we're especially anxious to meet a group of women who seem very dedicated in the struggle for gay liberation.

Keep up the good work and try not to become too discouraged with those who are not yet willing to act. Our struggle may take a little longer, but it will be won.

Yours in Sisterhood,

S.L.  
New York state

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NOTE: When in doubt we do not print names and addresses. Please let us know what to do or not to do when you write to FOCUS. Thanks!

CORRECTION: If you want to call the SAINTS, the gay women's bar in Boston mentioned last month, call 338-7763.

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Friends,

We'd like to let you know about an exciting project that may be significant at least for academic gay liberation. We have been chosen as guest editors for a special issue of College English, an official journal of the National Council of Teachers of English, to be devoted entirely to homosexual literature, criticism, and teaching. Please see the enclosed general invitation for more details about what we have in mind (ED. NOTE: in the D.O.B. office). We'd really appreciate it if you could spread the word in your area, and could give copies to professors and students who might like to contribute articles to the issue.

Gay peace and love,

Rictor Norton  
604 Eastway Drive  
Lakeland, Florida 33803

Louie Crew, Prof. of English  
Claflin College  
Orangeburg, S.C. 29115

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SISTERS MAGAZINE

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CLASSIFIED ADS  
(5¢/word)

We'd like to be friends, we're gay women in our thirties. Please call 429-1741 area of Tolland, Manchester, Vernon, Storrs, Willimantic, Glastonbury, etc. We're on 44 in Ashford. Ask for Betty. We have each other but we're lonesome for friends and companions.

GAY COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER. Keep abreast of what is going on in the Boston area. Comes out every week. 25¢ on the newsstands or \$1.50 for 10 weeks. G.C.N., c/o Charles St. Meeting House, 70 Charles Street, Boston, Mass. 02114. News can be submitted by writing or by calling 523-8729.

LESBIAN TIDE:

A voice of the lesbian/feminist community. Sisters subscribe now! \$6/ year, 50¢ for sample. Tide Collective, 373 N. Western Av, Rm. 202, Los Angeles, Calif. 90004

An announcement:

In 1970 a group of women started the women's press collective in Oakland, California. We are feminists with widely different life-experiences. For three years we have been learning to run a print shop, as well as to collect materials to publish. We are beginning now to build a broader distribution network for feminist books, with prices most women can afford. Although we still barely meet our expenses, we are working towards supporting some of our group through the press.

We think of the press as a resource of the women's movement...It is a school where we can learn skills and new ways to work together. It is also a tool for spreading new visions of ourselves and analyses that are useful to us. Though financial backing must be found for each individual project, we welcome manuscripts and all forms of feedback.

The Women's Press Collective  
5251 Broadway  
Oakland, Calif.

ED. NOTE: Publishers of Edward the Dyke, Woman to Woman, Lesbians Speak Out, and others.

JOIN THE INSURGENT MAJORITY! Read Majority Report, women's liberation newspaper. Reliable news of women's changing status, full and fair coverage of feminist events, exposés of sexism in high places, humor, irreverent reviews, calendar. \$3/ 12 issues. Majority Report, 74 Grove St., N.Y.C. 10014.

AMAZON QUARTERLY. Lesbian-feminist arts journal with stories, plays, essays, reviews, poetry, black and white drawings and prints. Send manuscripts, graphics, and money for subscriptions to A.Q., 554 Valle Vista, Oakland, Calif. 94610. \$4/year. (Plain wrapper \$5)

## LESBIAN NOVELS IN THE FIFTIES

by Kay Silk

Nostalgia for the fifties is in fashion these days, mostly among those who don't remember what the fifties were really like. It's fortunate for the rest of us that an atmosphere, once vanished, can not be restored. Today's admirers of the fifties can only try to revive the cultural forms, especially the rock music, that flourished in those years.

Except for the music, it was a bland and prissy time. The clothes and the social customs and the interior decoration (beige on beige) were bad enough. Far worse was the public attitude; the repression of anything suspected of being "different", coupled with almost a total lack of concern for social problems. The militance and the violence of the late sixties were the reaction to this head-in-the-sand attitude. Things are calmer now, but certain sections of the population, not to mention the environment itself, are still suffering from the long years of indifference.

The situation of the lesbian was one product of that climate. As women we were disregarded, but once identified as homosexual, we were persecuted. As was so often true in the fifties, it was thought best to remain inconspicuous. In the days before D.O.B., and when D.O.B. was in its infancy, books about lesbians were among the few links we had with each other, especially if we were too young for the bars. Most of the books were poor, but we had to be satisfied with what we could get. Even the trashiest lesbian paperback novel on the drugstore rack was a welcome change from Betty Cavanna and the rest of the fiction in the high school library. Lesbian novels were our assurance that there were others like us. At least vicariously, at least for the moment, they relieved the sense of isolation many of us suffered. It was for this relief that we bought lesbian novels with the money we earned baby-sitting or mowing lawns. We read them with one ear tuned for interruptions, and hid them, between readings, in the back of the closet.

There was a closet atmosphere about these books. Almost all of them assumed that lesbian attachments were forbidden and the lesbian condition hopeless at best. Most were written by men and for men, and they upheld the myth of male superiority. In these novels, the myth took the form that a man was the only possible sexual partner for a woman.

The authors were unconcerned with any emotions not directly related to sex. As Martin and Lyon point out in Lesbian/Woman, the lesbians in these books were one-dimensional beings, with no identifying traits except their sexuality. They gave the impression that the lesbian was no more and no less than a sex machine, and a seducer of innocent young girls.

And the titles! They were sultry, or they hinted strongly at the lesbian's status as outlaw. The plots were simple enough, although the variations could be bizarre. My Sister, My Beloved included some incestuous action for those who were tired of reading about sex between just any two women. Or the heroine might be an unhappy wife who consoled herself with a woman. In one British novel whose title I have forgotten, the main character was shocked back into her husband's arms (and bed, presumably) by a glimpse into the depths, an encounter with a friend of her female lover. The friend, a heavily butch type, wore "great thick clumping boots." God forbid.

But these were special cases, departures from a standard formula. Usually the heroine was unmarried. She was always young and pleasing to the eye, with little or no experience in sexual matters. She tended to be sensitive. (Lesbians, or potential lesbians, were always "sensitive".) As the story unfolded, she would meet and become enthralled by an older and more aggressive woman, a confirmed lesbian. This woman would seduce her.

(Incredibly often, the seducer was a physical education teacher. Athletic women, being active and strong, were the favorite villains.)

After an idyllic interval that might last anywhere from hours to months, the younger woman would be overwhelmed by guilt or disgust or the prospect of spending the rest of her life as one of society's outcasts. Or else she would be "saved" by a man who "understood". In any case, she would undergo a conversion or a return to "normal" ways. That is, unless she committed suicide first. These stories were strewn with the corpses of fallen innocents or of their seducers. Somebody had to atone for the sin of lesbianism.

"Sin" is not too strong a term here. The novels were morality tales, written according to the old formula: sin, suffer, and repent. The morality rested upon traditional male attitudes. What the authors opposed was not the hunter-prey pattern of these seductions by women. They objected because the hunter was female. That phys. ed. teacher was encroaching on male privilege, taking what belonged properly to the male. She was spoiling the merchandise. She might have her temporary pleasure, which would provide reading as juicy as one could find on the open market in the fifties, but she would pay for it in the end. Inevitably she did pay, with anything from loss of face to loss of life. And the wronged heroine, if she was still alive, would return to the straight path. The moral was always the same, and clear enough to fortify even the shakiest male ego: woman must be kept in her place.

This was poisonous stuff, but as an antidote there were a few books written by lesbians or by those with lesbian sympathies. Unlike the male morality tales, these novels spoke to us and for us, expressing in black and white the feelings we had feared nobody could share. The authors' purpose was to examine and explain a life they understood, not to titillate or preach to the readers.

Although these novels cannot be reduced to a single formula or pattern, they have certain qualities in common. First of

all, they are concerned with emotions and motivation. The main characters are involved with the examination and definition of self, in the attempt to come to terms with their lesbianism. A second concern is tied closely to the first: having identified themselves, the characters must establish relations with the society they live in.

Stephen, in The Well of Loneliness, faced exactly the same tasks. Like Stephen before them, and like us, their living counterparts, these women are struggling not only to recognize themselves, but to find their places in the general scheme of things.

The honesty and the continuing work of definition often extend to the heroines' partners. The women's lovers, like the women themselves, are portrayed for the most part as human beings with complexities of their own. The sexual passages in these books are part of the emotional climate; sex is not introduced into these stories merely for its own sake. In general, the merits of the good lesbian novel are those of any good novel about human relationships, in which the greatest attention is given to whole persons, not to bodies alone.

There are no pat endings in the better novels. The endings, like those of real life, are not true endings but stages in the characters' growth, with the suggestion of more change yet to come. We are left wondering and caring what will become of them. They engage our sympathies and our imaginations as the women in the morality tales do not.

Most of these books are almost unobtainable now. The three I was able to find share the qualities mentioned above. They also show the variety that exists.

Diana Frederics' Diana: A Strange Autobiography was first published in hard cover in 1939, but it was reprinted in paperback during the fifties, when it was widely available. The cover illustration on the paperback edition may have helped sales; it shows one woman preparing to remove

another woman's bath towel, her only garment. Still, it is a serious book, though somewhat old-fashioned. Diana is only a step or so away from Stephen. The word "strange" in the title reveals her bias. Throughout the book, Diana uses "normal" as the opposite of "lesbian". She speaks of "the masculine in me," and of her "masculine abhorrence of scenes." A daughter of her time, Diana has accepted without question the prevalent notions of "masculine" and "feminine", although she has come to accept her lesbianism more fully than Stephen.

The account of her struggle for self-acceptance is convincing and realistic. As others have done, she even attempts what was then called a "trial marriage". When this fails, her development as a lesbian can begin. Diana's growth, and that of her partners, are treated with scrupulous attention to motive and character. There are no cardboard figures here, only women who are trying to make peace with themselves and with the rest of the world. Diana herself leaves us with the impression that she will be balanced for the rest of her life on the line she has drawn between her private life and the "careful femininity" she presents to the outside world. Not all of us would reach a settlement like this, but it merits respect as her own, honestly developed, and maybe the only one possible in her surroundings.

If Diana seems antiquated, Claire Morgan's The Price of Salt appears to be ahead of its time. Probably the most popular lesbian novel to emerge after The Well of Loneliness, it was first published in 1952 and reprinted in 1969. Unlike Stephen, who is openly masculine, or Diana, who is secretly so, the lovers in The Price of Salt are simply two women together, with no claims to masculinity. (The protectiveness that the older woman displays toward the younger is not that of a husband. If anything, it is maternal.) In this respect, The Price of Salt foreshadows Patience and Sarah, the most joyously female of all lesbian novels. Another forecast of today's gay pride is to be found in the women's freedom from inner misgivings. Once their feelings for each other are clear, they feel no shame, no sense of abnormality. Their difficulties arise

outside themselves.

The greatest of these difficulties is distressingly familiar to us. The older woman, who is in the process of being divorced, is fighting for the custody of her daughter. The persecution she suffers under the law, and her husband's efforts to prove her an unfit mother, are the same obstacles that confront the lesbian mother today. Even the methods, the spying and the shadowing, are believable, and the end of the story is realistic rather than blissful. Yet, in spite of the pressures and the penalties inflicted by others, or maybe because of them, the women emerge with an undamaged belief that they belong together. No wonder The Price of Salt has been received so well over the years.

But the courage of these women is extraordinary. A final selection is more typical of the time. The following quotation comes not from a complete lesbian novel, but from the portion of N. Martin Kramer's The Hearth and the Strangeness (Pyramid Books, 1957) that deals with one character, Aliciane. The chapter called "The Doors of Astonishment" describes Aliciane's discovery that she is in love with a woman. There is no playing of sexual roles here, and no shame. The women are as contented in their love as they were in the long friendship that preceded it. As before, they continue to follow their own careers and to live apart.

Fair enough. They have made their peace with the world, as we all must. But one passage reveals the cost of this peace:

"Society asked, in return, only this for payment: a particular constant silence, and an occasional trifling hypocrisy. And then of course the small additional fines, the open tax on the hidden tax -- they were to seem amused at jokes they did not find amusing; they must be ready to hear themselves bracketed carelessly in ordinary conversation with traitors one day and with the criminally insane the next and to make on these occasions no protest whatsoever; and above all they must protect at every moment the very prejudice and

ignorance that forced them to deceit.

TO DIANA

"Very faithfully and very skillfully they paid this price. And they never really thought it dear.

Here is the spirit of the time. It is not the adaption to their surroundings that makes this passage a voice from the past, but their compliance, their lack of open protest, their unquestioning acceptance of the need for secrecy. In short, their fear. That "they never really thought it dear" is exactly what sets them apart from us. Our own protest is still new, still young, but the price paid by those women seems already to be too high, even prohibitive, to our way of thinking.

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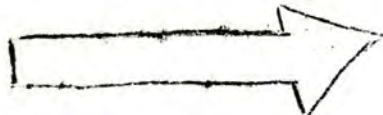
AND SOMETIMES I FEEL LIKE

I am an old woman  
living in a mountain  
cabin alone  
writing passionate  
lesbian history/novels  
trying to remember  
the dates of our marches  
the sound of our laughter  
as we filled Central Park  
recalling images  
of strong amazon sisters  
now crumbling/fading  
in those eternal  
lesbian bars

--Judy Greenspan

#####

Picnic



SATURDAY AUGUST 25

Billie Holliday  
will always  
make me think of you  
and the distance  
you have drawn  
between us  
the days you  
preferred to be alone  
with a paint can  
spraying the words  
of her songs  
on appropriate buildings/  
sidewalks/telephone poles  
sitting in a smoky bar  
listening to Diana Ross  
I've been with you  
when I shouldn't have  
been there  
I've stayed overnight  
when I should have  
slept outside  
you've been good  
only your eyes  
have complained  
I'm getting to know  
the times now  
when I should  
be reaching for my jacket  
heading for the door  
if you had said something  
I would have been gone  
long ago  
that afternoon  
at your farm  
you stood digging  
in the garden  
I sat on an  
old raft  
25 feet away  
you said you  
liked the distance  
between us  
and I smiled  
your breathing  
was back to normal

--Judy Greenspan

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The third monthly D.O.B. picnic at  
Cochituate State Park in Natick.  
Bring your own food--there are fire-  
places--and charcoal if you want that,  
your swim stuff, games, etc. Read the  
calendar for mere details.

SEE YOU THERE!

#####



## STATE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT UP FOR VOTE

On August 15 at 2 pm a joint session of the Massachusetts House and Senate, sitting as a constitutional convention, will take up a proposed equal rights amendment to the state constitution.

The bill, H. 5313, states "equality under the law shall not be denied or abridged because of sex, race, color, creed, or national origin." The sponsors of the bill are women's groups.

A similar equal rights amendment to the U.S. constitution was ratified by Massachusetts but is having trouble in some other states (the federal amendment includes only the category of sex).

A Massachusetts amendment would protect women here if the federal amendment does not pass. It would also bring this state in line with federal law if the federal law should pass.

Supporters of H. 5313 report that legislators detect less interest in the state amendment than there was in the federal one, and they urge constituents to contact their legislators, both representatives and senators.

To pass, the bill must be approved by two separately-elected state legislatures and then passed by the voters in a referendum.

H. 3312, a proposed amendment which would have added the words "sexual preference" to H. 5313, died in the Judiciary Committee earlier this year.

## JOURNAL OF HOMOSEXUALITY

A bimonthly Journal of Homosexuality is scheduled to begin publication in November. It will publish articles of original research and practical significance from all disciplines. The cost is \$15/year. For information write Haworth Press, 53 West 72nd St., New York, N.Y. 10023.

Yes I have many faces?  
But I have only one soul!  
JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES WARN

The June 15, 1973 Watchtower, a publication of the Jehovah's Witnesses, asks its readers "Where Does Your Church Stand on Homosexuality?"

After referring to statements and actions in favor of homosexuality by the Episcopal, Presbyterian, Baptist, and Lutheran Churches and by Methodist (our own Alberts), Catholic, and other ministers, the article concludes, "Yes, eminent religious leaders of the 'mainline' churches do approve of homosexuality. They have rejected the Bible...If the leaders of the 'mainline' churches say such things, can you really be sure that your minister does not feel similarly? Why not ask him?"

The complete article is in the D.O.B. library.

## GIVING BLOOD AS A GAY COUPLE

As a result of the fire in a New Orleans gay bar which killed a number of Metropolitan Community Church and other gay people and injured many more, Boston area gay people gave some 60 pints of blood on July 29 in a special collection. Blood credits were transferred to the New Orleans victims and also used to relieve the shortage in Boston.

Negotiations are underway with the Red Cross to make arrangements so that gay couples can give blood to cover each others blood needs in the same way that married heterosexuals can. Presumably unmarried heterosexuals would also be considered in these negotiations. For more information call Penny Perrault at M.C.C., 266-7491.

## PRINCESS RUBY'S ROYAL BLUEBLOOD BAND

a children's rhyme

by Karen Mitnick

There once was a princess in a wonderful land  
 Who only wanted to have a rock band.  
 "Ruby" her name and a joy to behold  
 To the King and the Queen who were both growing old  
 Except for one quirk they were quite content  
 With the daughter they felt had been heavensent  
 "Our daughter has music too much on her mind,"  
 Said the old King, who although very kind  
 Constantly worried about his young daughter  
 "She just don't act the way that she oughta".  
 For when guests arrived at the castle gates  
 They thought the country was beseege by fates.  
 Loud 'lectric guitars blasted over the land  
 from Princess Ruby's Royal Blueblood Band.  
 The King sighed, "Why can't she like something sweet  
 A harp or a flute that can put you to sleep?  
 This isn't the daughter I meant us to raise;  
 I sure hope this music is only a phase."

But phase or not Ruby's song list grew  
 And Ruby, fancy that, why she grew up too  
 Til the King announced in her twentieth year  
 "Ruby, you must find a prince, my dear."  
 "What a drag," Ruby said, her eyes to the ground  
 "But all I want is to play around...  
 Oh well, if I'm forced to find me a mate  
 As a top guitarist he'll have to rate."

The call went out both near and far  
 And every man got out his guitar  
 Old men played tunes they'd nearly forgotten  
 (Some of which were downright rotten)  
 And little boys barely out of the swing  
 Were given guitars they were told to make "sing".  
 Auditions went on from morning till night  
 And let me say, they were surely a sight:  
 Tall men and short men, stout men and lean,  
 Good men and bad men, unselfish and mean,  
 Two bit guitarists and some who were better  
 Would play in the sun and in stormy weather  
 But no one could fill Ruby's ears with delight  
 Though lord knows they tried with all of their might,  
 And then on the day Ruby's ears begged "no more"  
 A brand new contestant arrived at her door.  
 "I'm here," he announced in a voice slightly thin,  
 "And if this is a contest, I'm going to win."  
 "Not modest," thought Ruby, "well, we'll just see."  
 "All right," she said, "play a tune for me."

She expected him to of course be a flop  
 But once he began you could hear a pin drop.  
 This guitarist was such a rarely heard treat  
 That people forgot to work and to eat.  
 The stranger played such hard heavy rock  
 That even the clock forgot it should tock.  
 Everyone's ears were glued on the sound  
 No question it was the best one around.

"That's it," Ruby said and no doubt she was thrilled  
 As she felt that her body with love for him filled.  
 "At last he's arrived, the man of my dreams."  
 But you know, dear friend, nothing is as it seems.  
 "You're great," Ruby said and put out her hand.  
 "I'll be your wife and you're lead in the band."  
 Imagine the shock for the once smiling crowd  
 When the new prince curtsied instead of bowed  
 And the princess saw right before her eyes  
 The prince was a woman in a man's disguise.

"To jail," said the King with a look quite alarming  
 Aimed at the guitarist who was no Prince Charming.  
 Ruby watched the guitarist led away to her doom  
 And then she proceeded to go to her room.  
 With silence around, Ruby sat on her bed  
 Listening to music that played in her head.  
 How absurd that because the guitarist's female  
 Those notes of sheer beauty are locked up in jail.

So Ruby sneaked down and found the right cell  
 The guitar in the corner was how she could tell.  
 "Who are you?" she asked, "and why did you lie?"  
 To the lady guitarist who now rubbed an eye.  
 "Ruby," she said, "My name it is May  
 I had no choice 'cause I wanted to play  
 And only men were considered to be  
 Good enough for your royal company."  
 "Well, a prince was really my father's idea  
 And if you must know I don't even care".

Ruby took the key and unlocked the door  
 Dreaming of how they would soon go on tour.  
 The King fainted twice when he heard Ruby's plan  
 To make May her guitarist instead of a man  
 But everyone had to admit she was best  
 For lord knows they'd certainly heard all the rest  
 So Ruby and May played together for years  
 And brought heavy rock to everyone's ears,  
 And once on the day that a Prince Charming came  
 He was told, "Sorry Prince, but things ain't the same."

x  
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## LISTEN MY SISTERS

by Andrea

I will presume to say that all of us have experienced some degree of trauma while moving toward acceptance of our lesbian identity. For some it was an uncharted journey that was made alone. For others, more fortunate, it was a trip on which they were guided and advised. Regardless of the course followed, there were always those moments of intense aloneness when decisions had to be made, when self-acceptance really meant self-acceptance.

Often times it seems that when we arrive at a level of self-acceptance, we wrap ourselves in the security of a few new acquaintances and/or a relationship. It is then we begin to forget the pain and fear that accompanied us to the threshold of our first rap, or the loneliness that sent us to the bar alone for the first time. We seem to settle into the comfort of this new little world, and lose sight of ourselves as the neophyte lesbian who once struggled to resolve such minor problems as whether or not to speak up at a rap.

Unfortunately, it seems that this comfort carries with it the side effect of insensitivity. You may remember being the victim of this lesbian insensitivity. Were you ever shunned or ignored by another lesbian while making a friendly gesture? Was the idea of "don't trespass" ever communicated to you by a clique of women in a bar? Did you ever feel lost and alone in a crowd of lesbians? This is the insensitivity of which I speak.

A lesbian travels a long road away from a hostile society, and when she finally arrives at her destination, she finds another hostile society. This hostility is even more difficult to understand because these are people like herself, and this was the one place where she anticipated acceptance. All around her she sees laughing, communicating, and apparently happy women. Self-doubt, which she had seen through to self-acceptance, returns. Again she questions her acceptability.

Many people comment on the unfriendliness of others in the bars, at the raps, etc. I wonder why this is so, and further is it unavoidable? Would it be possible for us to develop a true sense of sisterhood? Can we become secure enough with ourselves so that we are not threatened by a stranger? Can we treat each other gently and be sensitive to another's needs? Does every lesbian have to suffer all the pains that every other lesbian has felt, or can we put ourselves out to spare each other some of the anguish?

I do not suggest that every lesbian be every other lesbian's friend, but I do think that we need to help each other, that we need to accept each other, and that we never should act as an oppressor to another lesbian. There are not that many of us, and we can not afford the luxury of aloofness and separatism. We should create a bond of unity, and we should try to help a sister whenever we can.

We must try to build a society unlike the one in which we were born and conditioned. It is time for us to liberate ourselves and others.

So remember: be kind to lesbians, take a lesbian to lunch, or at the very least, vow never to be cruel to another lesbian.

#####

## PONDERING WEDDING RING

in the pinks  
 in the greens  
     the grays  
 and shades  
 and swirls  
 of shell  
 in the now stretched  
     silver etched  
     design  
 in all these turquoise  
     tangles  
 I look and wonder:  
 are you still with me?  
 are you still my wife?  
 are we still together?  
 what is forever?

## ON BEING A FREAK

If I choose to be a radical woman,  
I'll do it my way.

If I choose success as my goal  
Because I need to achieve;  
Or if I be an intellectual bum  
Because it's my trip;  
If I feel happy in attire of a femme fatale,  
Or a Dirty Old Dyke;  
And if I choose to be a lover of women  
With Sappho in my Utopia -

You can't stereotype me:  
I control me, not you,  
So why bug yourself...

Yes, I have many faces;  
But I have only one soul  
To Be  
To be Me  
To be Free.

--Patricia

## WAITING

If you are slow to arrive  
I will understand,  
because you do not know yet  
and I will not ask you  
to come along.

But you must understand  
why I stay away -  
because I want to be with you.

Because I cannot stay beside you  
while you twitter at my eyes  
and act as if you do not ask  
for that surprise of my return.

--Linda Lachman

As there are  
infinitesimal cracks  
separating parts  
of even the strongest  
rock -  
making it two -  
so am I separated  
from my sisters, my brothers,  
from you.

As every rock is  
an entity unto itself  
yet fractions of an inch away  
there stands another -  
holding it yet barely touching -  
so do I wish for your fingertips'  
touch that supports me  
but could not hold a stone.

--Linda Lachman

## JOY TO MY LIFE

Everything seemed beautiful today  
because I was with her.  
The rain that fell didn't put a damper on  
it  
stopping to pet a police horse  
as I skipped up Chestnut Street,  
telling the cop he had a nice horse  
and smiling as I heard the songs  
my heart was singing.  
Getting wet, but wanting to burst with  
joy  
seeing a K-9 dog and complimenting  
the cop on the dog's beauty  
even the cops look different  
and all because we were together.  
Lady, you're my happiness,  
that song in my heart  
is a song to you,  
my crooked smile as I skip above the  
clouds  
is your love enveloping me in its magic  
spell  
and bringing joy to my too-often lonely  
life.

--Desi Geshen

.....TIDBITS.....  
& Neither rain nor heat nor whatever seems to stop D.O.B. softball; &  
& The raps continue to draw 20 -30 women of all ages/ week; &  
& DOB welcomes suggestions and help with its programs. &

BOSTON DAUGHTERS OF BILITIS  
CALENDAR  
August 1973

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TUESDAYS 7:30 pm RAP SESSIONS ON BEING GAY, FOR WOMEN. Now located in our new big office, Room 323 at 419 Boylston St., Boston, between Arlington and Berkeley Streets near the Arlington MBTA stop. Share feelings about being gay, newcomers especially welcome.

THURSDAYS 9-10 pm GAY WAY RADIO PROGRAM, WBUR-FM 90.9 on the dial.

SUNDAYS 1 pm D.O.B. SOFTBALL. Bring bat, ball, glove, and/or self; informal games. Magazine Beach field, Cambridge, across the Charles River from Cadillac-Olds and along Memorial Drive west of the Boston University Bridge. RAIN OR SHINE!

AUGUST 15, WEDNESDAY, 2pm MASSACHUSETTS EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT will be considered by a joint session of the House and Senate at the State House in the House chamber. See the August FOCUS and write your legislators in favor of it (if you support it)(H. 5313).

AUGUST 15, WEDNESDAY, 8 pm GAY MEDIA ACTION (formerly GAY MEDIA WATCH) MEETING. Concerned with the presentation of gay issues in the media. All interested people invited. Charles St. Meeting House, 70 Charles St., Boston.

AUGUST 20, MONDAY, 7:30 pm D.O.B. BUSINESS MEETING for all members. Others may attend (women). At the office.

AUGUST 25, SATURDAY THIRD D.O.B. PICNIC AT COCHITUATE STATE PARK, NATICK. Rides leave the office promptly at 10 am (call if you can offer or need one). Bring your own food unless you want concession things; there is a fireplace (bring fuel); do not depend on others to feed you. Bring sports things. There is swimming. Turnpike west to exit 13, Route 30 east 1½ miles. Park is on the right. By bicycle from Boston 1½ hours on routes 16 and 30. Admission \$1/car, 25¢/ bicycle, to get into the park. RAIN OR SHINE.

SEPTEMBER 21, FRIDAY, 8:30-11:30 pm D.O.B. DANCE at the office. There will be beer, liquor, and soft drinks for sale. Women only! 75¢ admission.

SEPTEMBER 26, WEDNESDAY, 7:30 pm D.O.B. BUSINESS MEETING at the office.

NOTE: THE HAROLD PARKER STATE PARK CAMPING TRIP was cancelled. D.O.B. is sorry for this change in plans, and would welcome individuals who would like to help with such an event. Please contact Sheri, Lois, or Geri.

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BOSTON DAUGHTERS OF BILITIS, ROOM 323, 419 BOYLSTON STREET, BOSTON, MASS. 02116  
PHONE: 617-262-1592

MEMBERSHIP: Open to all women 18 years old and older. \$10/ year, \$15 for a couple. Includes one subscription to FOCUS. Send your name and address and phone number with a signed statement that you are a woman 18 or over.

FOCUS: A JOURNAL FOR GAY WOMEN. Monthly. \$5/ year, 50¢/ sample.

D.O.B. CALENDAR OF EVENTS. Monthly. \$1 for 6 months.

ALL D.O.B. EVENTS ARE OPEN TO ALL WOMEN REGARDLESS OF MEMBERSHIP STATUS IN D.O.B.

D.O.B. WELCOMES CONTRIBUTIONS OF MONEY AND TIME IN ITS EFFORTS TO REACH OTHER GAY WOMEN, TO PROVIDE RAPS AND SOCIAL EVENTS, TO WORK FOR THE CIVIL RIGHTS OF GAY PEOPLE.



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