

the open door



A NEWSLETTER FOR RURAL FEMINISTS AND LESBIANS

Published at Sky Ranch

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Burns Lake, B.C.

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WINTER SOLSTICE 1996

This issue will be arriving in your mailboxes early, because I am off on a trip to Germany. Now doesn't that sound cosmopolitan? To be perfectly honest this is the first long holiday I've had for nearly a decade - a big adventure for a stay-at-home country girl like me! I'll tell you all about it in the Spring issue.

I must apologize for the appearance of this issue- the thing that rolls the paper on my typewriter (the platten?) is broken, so I'm advancing each line by hand! My fancy electric typewriter is now an antique, it seems, and it becomes increasingly difficult to get repairs. I can see the writing on the wall- "word processing" will become inevitable. In the hopes of staving off my entry into the computer world (at least until they've finally got the damn things right so I don't have to update every five years, or take a university degree to understand the manuals), I'm making a plea to you all- if anyone has a good, functioning electric typewriter banging about (perhaps someone who has moved on to computers), how about donating it to The Open Door. I'll pay the shipping and give you a lifetime subscription (yours? mine? the typewriter's?) to The Open Door. Please- it has to be one that doesn't need repairs. I will be eternally grateful!

In this issue there are a few articles exploring the issue of erotica. A reader took issue to the content of the Erotica Issue (Spring 96). They don't want to be identified, but I've included some excerpts from the letters we wrote back and forth, because I think it's an important issue. Is it objectification to write about the pleasure we can derive from women's bodies? I'd love it if some of you are moved to submit your opinions on this- it's an ongoing dialogue that feminists have yet to clearly resolve. We all have very strong opinions about sex (usually) and it is a topic that carries many emotional overtones- not surprisingly. So don't be afraid- say your piece- all opinions are welcome in The Open Door.

On the subject of submissions- thank you to all the women who have sent stories, articles, poems and pictures. Keep them coming! In future issues, some special topics are planned (as soon as I get enough submissions). One is inter-generational relationships- friends, lovers, mentors etc. who are far apart

in age. How are these relationships difficult? How do they enrich us? What societal attitudes affect them? Another future topic is "Lesbians in the Family". Sisters, mothers/daughters, cousins etc. who are lesbians. How do we get along with each other? What are the special challenges and rewards of being the family dykes? How do other family members treat us? If you have anything to say on either of these topics, write it down and send it in.

Sky Ranch is already buried under several feet of snow. Either it's the sunspot cycle, or global warming, but the amount of snow up here seems to increase every year. I wonder if in a few years I'll be having to cut a door in the roof to get out onto my glacier. It comes earlier and stays later, or am I just getting too old for all this? Of course there are rewards. Yesterday morning I shared my morning coffee with two moose who watched me through the kitchen window for almost half an hour. They are very curious creatures- more like cows than deer, they like to stand and stare, contemplating the world while they make strange slow chewing motions with their incredibly ugly faces. This time of year my fields are criss-crossed with moose tracks. They dig beds in the snow- sometimes right in the middle of my ski trails! If I ever fall in one it will be hell to get out again. The jays pile up in the tree beside their feeder and on snowy mornings they look like bright blue Christmas decorations. There's a pack of coyotes living in the woods across the road and they tease my poor dog mercilessly. Her job is to protect the chickens and she takes it very seriously. Some moonlit nights I'm kept awake half the night with all the yipping and barking. Anybody who thinks living in the country means peace and quiet hasn't had to deal with howling wolves, barking coyotes, and all the screeching of the jays and whiskeyjacks when I neglect to keep the feeders full. Then there's the snow sliding off the roof- it can sound like a freight train driving through the house. Still, there's nothing as invigorating as a ski or snowshoe through the woods, when the sun is shining and the chickadees are singing and all is well with the world. A Happy Solstice to all of you.

Judith Quinlan

The Eve of Midwinter

By Aurora Borealis Medicine Turkey

'Twas the eve of midwinter, and all through the coven
The Witches were cooking strange things in the oven.
There were mugwort frittatas, and dragon's-blood stew
And mescaline eggnog and mandrake fondue.
There were hot mountain oysters and road-kill paté
And spotted-owl kidneys, and wombat flambé.
The circle was cast and the herbs had been smoked
In hopes that the Goddess would soon be invoked.
When out by the hot tub arose such a clatter
I jumped on my broom to see what was the matter.
And what should I see in the blackberry thorns
but a soaking wet Goddess and eight unicorns!
"I was just sitting down with my vibrating phallus
And a good book," she muttered, "You bitches are callous.
I came when you called, over all my objections,
And got lost in the woods—you give lousy directions.

You turkeys invoked me, now look at my dress

My period's late and I've got PMS."

She cursed and she muttered, she looked like a wreck

The unicorns whimpered and shat on the deck.

We gave her some weed and we got her some grub

We brought her clean towels and she soaked in the tub.

Then she rose, hot and dripping, and gave us her blessing

And jumped in her chariot, without even dressing!

"On Isis! On Eris! Oya and Astarte!

On Ishtar! Inanna! Kali and Hecate!"

We heard her exclaim as she climbed through the air

"Thank Goddess there's only eight sabbats a year!"



THE WOMEN'S MONUMENT APPEAL

Six years ago we had a dream. A dream to forever remember the 14 women who were murdered at L'Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal on December 6, 1989. A dream to create a monument- the Women's Monument- dedicated to all women who are victims of violence. The odds seemed almost insurmountable at first: besides finding a site and choosing a design, we had to raise a lot of money - \$390,000 in all!

We have raised \$352,000 so far! Most of that from individual donations of less than \$100.

The site- Thornton Park in Vancouver- has been dedicated. The Monument- "Marker of Change"- a circular granite design by Toronto artist Beth Alber, has been chosen, and sculpting of the granite is scheduled to begin next spring.

The Monument will have a quiet power and serenity- 14 benches of pink Quebec granite arranged in a 300 foot circle. On the surface of each bench will be a slight indentation to gather rainwater- a small pool of tears. Each bench will bear the name of one of the murdered women. Surrounding the Monument will be the Circle of Donors, consisting of thousands of names of people who helped make this project possible- including yours, if you wish. The Women's Monument Project needs \$38,000 to complete. Won't you please send a contribution to this herstorically significant project?

THE WOMEN'S MONUMENT PROJECT

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WOMENFRIENDS MUSIC CAMP

Venturing forth to Crescent Beach and Camp Alexandra, I found myself again, this October, at Womenfriends Music Camp with 75 other women. Once again I return feeling delight, joy, and yet another awakening.

Women of all ages, stages and styles and disciplines signed up. Is it too late to start singing, playing a tin whistle, jamming with drummers, giving a workshop, storytelling, playing in the hot tub? Never! Being on a natural high for two days and nights was a little tiring for a 68 year old, I'll admit, but well worth the journey and the money. Food was tasty and plentiful, coffee and tea available at all times. Bodyworkers to soothe, a market for our wares. Lots of space to give or receive workshops. You could be audience or participant. What versatility. What talent. Artists culled from our numbers by Hat Bands (you'll have to come next year to find out what they are!). An oboe player, accordionists and guitarists gave us solo performances. As usual I was amazed- but why should I be when such strongly supportive, artist supportive, fun supportive women were able to give their best and be heartfully appreciated.

Penny Sidor did her usual amazing job of pulling it all together. Tracey, one of her many support persons, is a gem. Individually and collectively it was a great time.

I forgot to mention the Dance workshop or the mural created by all of us- hey, a lot happened in 2 days and one night- d'you blame me?

If you don't want to miss this event next year, send Penny Sidor a stamped, addressed envelope to: 311-1771 E. Georgia St., Vancouver, V5L 2B3, or better yet get your name on the mailing list.
See you there!!!

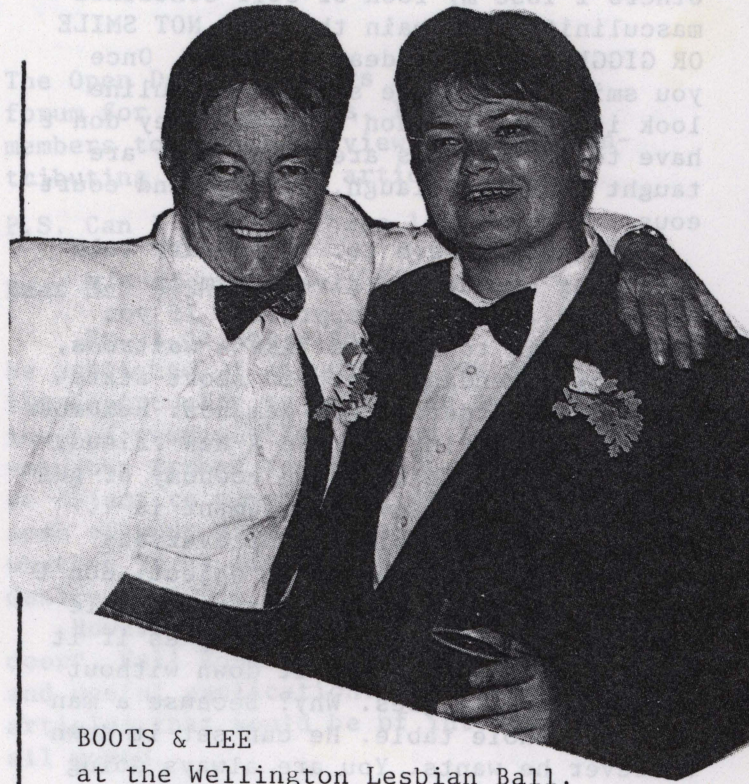
Emma Joy Crone

drag king

I am a 20 year old Drag King, living in Victoria. For years I have been intrigued by the fruity, colourful Drag Queens in the city and in the movies. I have also been quite intrigued with the many gender-bending womyn in Victoria, but to me that simply wasn't enough. I wanted to be in drag. At first I thought how in the world could I ever pass as a male. Sure I am taller than the average womyn. I have broad shoulders and big feet. But I also have a very feminine face, and breasts that I thought would be impossible to hide. I would observe men and practice their style constantly. I could do the walk, I could do the talk. I could do almost everything. Except I could not figure out how to make my large chest disappear. Then one day after a discussion about womyn's attire in the 1800's and the use of corsets, I figured out what I needed. After many failed attempts I discovered a tensor bandage in the bathroom. It worked wonders, wrapping from the bottom up not only squished my breasts flat it also lifted my shoulders and made me look like a football jock. Task number two was my feminine face. After going out in the field of life and again observing the opposite sex, I noticed that all males have a mustache or at least a five-o'clock shadow on their upper lip. Not too many males have the full five o'clock shadow. That task was easy enough to conquer, a little mascara on the peach-fuzz above my upper lip, and presto an instant adolescent mustache! Now with all of the knowledge that I have acquired from being an observer, and all of my natural skills of being a butch, I am no longer Lindsay the lesbian, I am now Mr. Lindsay the Drag King.

I have made a list so that you too can impersonate males in just a few easy steps. Although I do suggest that you try and observe them before trying to be them.

When being a Drag King tightly bind your breasts into an Ace/tensor bandage. Slick back your hair with gel, long hair should be gelled into a thin cigarette-like ponytail. Darken your eyebrows with eyeliner. Shade the area under your eyes by using a cover-up or blush that is slightly darker than your natural colour. Mascara atop upper lip peach-fuzz makes for a good mustache. For older women- scarcely apply mascara to the beard area, then do a light go-over with a liquid cover up to make a five o'clock shadow. Make a fake penis of gauze and cotton (some clean socks folded



BOOTS & LEE
at the Wellington Lesbian Ball,
Wellington, New Zealand.
(courtesy of Lesbian Quarterly)

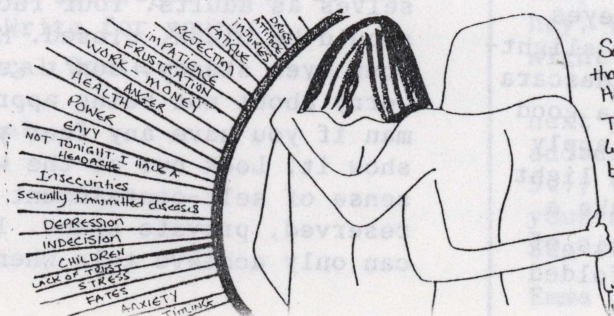
together will do in a pinch). Pin your artificial penis to the inside of your underwear so it is against your skin. You must feel the friction. It should feel like a sanitary napkin gone astray. Keep your shoulders up and slightly bowed forwards. Keep your hips tight, let your movement come from your shoulders atop stiff legs. When walking let your feet move out from side to side. Men take up more room than most womyn. Imagine a three foot perimeter around you, and don't let anyone enter that space. It is your own private space. When walking down the sidewalk or in a crowded room, keep your space, the sidewalk is yours, others will move for you. Your fingers should be carried semiclenched, as if ready to strike out. Remember that as boys they are always available to be hit on by other kids, and that is reflected in how they carry themselves as adults. Your facial expression should be blank, closed. Masculine. Keep your eyes steady, don't gaze around or worry about not being approved of. As a man if you have any fear you must never show it. Look out at the world with a sense of self-containment from your own reserved, private space. I have found I can only achieve this when I focus only on

myself. Once I start to think about others I lose my look of self-contained masculinity. The main thing DO NOT SMILE OR GIGGLE. It is a dead giveaway. Once you smile your whole serious masculine look is gone. Men don't smile, they don't have to. When girls are young they are taught to smile, laugh, be kind and courteous.

Men don't have to. If you are told something humorous, give a simple sly smirk and a grunt of approval. If you have to talk to someone like a waitress, clerk or attendant speak in short statements. Give orders. Make demands. Remember you are NOT trying to make a new friend. Don't placate. There is an economy of gesture in being a man. No movement is wasted, even when picking up everyday objects. When picking up an object, don't look to see where it is, use your whole hand to grab it, and pick it up as if it weighed a ton. Then set it down without seeing where it goes. Why? Because a man owns the whole table. He can set it down wherever he wants. You are always doing something significant, no matter how unimportant it is. When drinking don't sip carefully, swallow the liquid when it hits the front of your mouth. Don't delay gratification for the sake of a neat appearance. When you sit in a chair take up the whole space, rock back on the legs. When sitting on a sofa stretch your arms over the back; claim it. When you stand up again, do it with a sense that you have a great purpose and direction- as if there is a string connecting you directly to your destination and you simply walk along it. Even if you have no idea where you are going. Which is maybe why you can also never admit that you are lost. Remember you are the king and the world around you is your court.

If you have any questions or comments on this article, or if you want more information about being a Drag King, feel free to contact me at...

Lindsay Nelson
#402-2549 Dowler Place
Victoria, B.C.
V8T 4H7



protection

we are
smelly scruffy ugly unnatural
they are
just doing their jobs

we are not real women
striving for youth and beauty
smiling even when harrassed/
abused/ill
teaching sons not to
cry
embrace
talk about their
feelings
teaching daughters to please
daddy
brother
husband
son
boss
relishing bearing sons
knowing daughters are second best
trying hard not to be
dissidents
lesbians
hunger strikers
poets

they are
our defenders against
the russians
the terrorists
the dissidents
the lesbians
the ugly ugly women

how safe we are

-by astra

Sometimes I'm Amazed
that sexual encounters
Happen At All.

The odds ARE amazing...
We strive for closeness
but so much can come
between us.

-graphic by Louise Stephen

Art or Smut?

Dear Editor:

We think that The Open Door is a valuable way for rural feminists and lesbian women to have a forum.

We feel it is important to pass on to you some of the feedback we have received. We are getting pressure from some of our members to cancel our subscription because of the graphic sexual nature of some of the articles. On the other hand, your Fall Equinox 1995 issue had some very informative articles in it, particularly the articles on "Lesbian Abuse Accountability Matrix" and "Gay in the Nineties". This is the type of information we would be interested in seeing more of in future newsletters. Please let us know if such a change is possible and would meet your mandate.

-Name Withheld.

Dear _____

Thankyou for your feedback on The Open Door. I'm sorry to hear some of your members object to the graphic sexual nature of some of the articles. Have you asked these members why they object? Female erotica is an important part of women's writing, I think, and a positive counter-remedy to the usual depictions of female sexuality in male-oriented pornography. I think it's always useful for women to talk about our sexuality- it is so much a battle-zone in the patriarchal world. That some women are uncomfortable with women's erotica doesn't surprise me, because we have been brought up to view our bodies as objects of male desire or as unsatisfactory in this regard- the "beauty" industry makes millions exploiting such insecurity on our part.

I feel it is very much a part of The Open Door's mandate to present positive and powerful views of female sexuality, and this includes women's erotica. So, no, I would not be willing to change this. Perhaps it is lesbian sexuality that makes these women uncomfortable? In this case, such homophobia needs to be confronted and dealt with. I hope you will be able to resolve this problem with your members. If we are to be supportive of each others' struggles we need to overcome our prejudices about each other.

The Open Door is always an available forum for this process. I invite your members to air their views through contributing letters or articles.

P.S. Can I publish these letters?

Dear Ms. Quinlan:

No, I do not wish for my letter to be published. I appreciate you giving me the opportunity to reply. We do like the idea of your newsletter and feel it is a valuable format for lesbian women, however we object to women being depicted in some of your articles as sex objects whether it be for male desire or female desire.

However, your last issue of "the open door", Fall Equinox 1996 was an informative and useful publication. There were many articles that would be of interest to all women.

Sincerely.

EDITOR'S NOTE: I hope I have honoured this writer's need for anonymity by not publishing the name of herself or her group. I do feel, however, that this exchange should be open, because it concerns all of us, and raises some very serious questions. Is it the same thing when lesbians express our desire, as when men do? Is it true that all expressions of male desire are sexist? What makes an expression of desire "objectification?". Is it only OK that we publish articles about the victimization of gays and lesbians, but not about our sexuality, our desire, our erotic feelings? When does erotica become pornography? Is it possible for lesbian sexual writing to be pornographic in the same sense that male sexual writing can be? If so, does this happen in the same ways, or does the power difference between men and women change the nature of what constitutes pornography or objectification? Is this writer homophobic? A puritan? Or is she making valid warnings about allowing lesbian sexual writing become oppressive to women? I throw out these questions to ALL readers- straight, lesbian and everything in-between or beyond. Let's start a good, fruity dialogue on this issue!

Erotica? or Porn?

-by Mira Friedlander

(reprinted from "Girl Cult: A Girl-kulturzine")

The ferocious debate over pornography has split the women's movement as nothing else before it. Not since the rise of suffrage have we sisters been so much at each others' throats.

The difficulty lies, at least in part, in definitions. What is pornography? The Oxford dictionary defines it as "explicit presentation of sexual material in literature, films etc., to stimulate erotic not aesthetic feelings."

If the Oxford dictionary is to have the last word, then maybe the fundamentalists are right when they want to ban such literary giants as D.H. Lawrence. But it's that kind of simplistic view of something as complex as human sexuality and relationships which has made partners of feminists and religious fundamentalists.

The sad (and scary) thing is that this partnership may point to an uncomfortable truth. The anti-pornography movement, despite its fusion with the feminist movement, is by its very nature sexist at root.

How else to explain a movement that denies women the freedom to experience their sexuality freely and openly, that would outlaw sexual stimulation that does not contain "aesthetic feelings"? (Forget the AIDS argument—this fire was lit long before the HIV virus was known to exist.)

And where does that leave the many feminists who choose not to bed down politically with those who would remove the fun from sex, with those who would preach fire and brimstone at natural human expression?

It leaves us confused, betrayed, and searching for ways in which to clarify the historically muddy.

FROM BILL C-54:

"Erotica" means any visual matter a dominant characteristic of which is the depiction, in a sexual context or for the purpose of the sexual stimulation of the viewer, of a human sexual organ, a female breast, or the human anal region."

Those who support erotica but not pornography, use the word obscene for definition. Erotica is not obscene, pornography is. The same dictionary defines obscene as "tending to deprave and corrupt".

The pro-eroticist argument is that explicit sexual material in which two people are clearly enjoying themselves and in which no children are present and no one is being victimized, is not pornographic. Unless one views all sex between consenting adults (except for the purposes of procreation), as pornographic, the worst it can incite is an honest mutual lust.

Erotica, quite simply, is all sexual activity that takes place between consenting adults: pornography is sexually explicit material in which children or non-consensual violence is depicted.

(The distinction around kiddie-porn is easily dealt with because children are not adults and therefore cannot consent. As such, material in which they appear can be classified as pornographic).

But if two adults consent to any behavior that does not involve an unwilling third party or a child, or which includes non-mainstream sexual expressions mutually agreed-upon in private surroundings, it cannot, by the above definition, be deemed pornographic.

The problem, of course, is with the idea of violence as a part of sex, both philosophically and practically. The philosophical argument can be won only by first-hand experience, not a very likely opinion or option in fundamentalist circles (both feminist and non-feminist).

The practical side presents another difficulty in that, if one views a picture of a woman gagged and bound, the photo, in and of itself, can be construed as pornographic because the element of consent is absent.

Perhaps we need a law that demands printed articulations along with the visual in order to make it clear that this woman has given her lover permission to gag and bind her, that she alone holds the power to say "no" and that, within the confines of this particular encounter, she is deriving pleasure.

And perhaps, most importantly, such clarity of language could help in the much misunderstood rape fantasy, which

between sado/masochists does not imply violence but merely a giving up of responsibility.

Take, for example, Pauline Reage's "The Story of O." It is considered a classic of its genre and a careful reading shows why. True, O is a slave, abused and used and eventually discarded by her master. Appalling stuff on the surface. But throughout the story, she is free to say "no" however and whenever she chooses. Her choice is to say "yes".

In fact, the only real obscenity is when her lover deserts her, because that he does without her permission.

In few books, and certainly not in the rabidly sexist books we pass off as children's classics, is there such an even balance of power between male and female. Yes, Sir Stephen whips O, but only after he has asked permission and received it. And throughout the book, Reage painstakingly ensures that nothing happens without O's full consent.

That O does not choose to exercise this power is her choice. And her choice places the book firmly within the confines of erotica. Conversely, all the so-called Avon Ladies books, led by Rosemary Rogers, and most Harlequin books as well, are pornographic. For in them all, whether physically or mentally, the heroine is dominated, raped of her power and choice, and then, worst of all, falls in love with her "handsome, rugged tormentor".

That is the real obscenity. Not the mutual exchange of power which may go beyond individual sexual preferences and therefore shock, but the subjugation of women through misuse of the word "love".

In the case of popular Anne Rice, who also writes under the name A.N.

Roquelaure, a distinction can even be drawn between her own books. In "Exit to Eden" she sets up a kind of S&M Club Med, in which consent is sought at every level and where some wannabe masochists are even turned away because they are deemed psychologically unsuitable for the games.

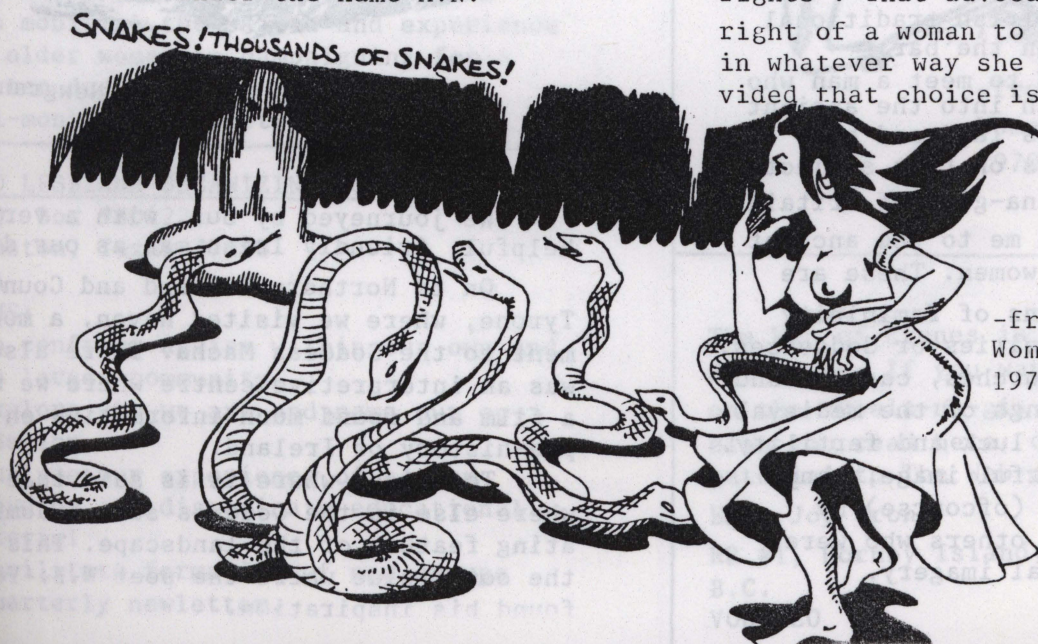
By contrast, her "Sleeping Beauty" series holds Beauty captive without consent and while she learns to enjoy her punishments, the initial premise is one of non-consensual force.

That makes "Eden" erotica and the "Beauty" books pornographic. Setting them in a fantasy world and imbuing sexist fables with a so-called feminist slant makes no difference when applying this definition.

And if, as some anti-S&M advocates claim, there is a psychological basis to the need for violence in sex, then let's place that complex issue in the hands of mental health experts where it belongs and take it out of the moral agenda.

Perhaps, if we did have specific vocabulary to go with the image, and legislated the need to use it, then we could lay some of this to rest, at least among feminists. Then we would not need to enter the ever-buzzing hornets nest of right-wing censorship, which surely is the only outcome of a battle that joins the right and left under the same dirty sheets.

One thing is certain. The pornography issue will never be laid to rest among those who are afraid of their own, or someone else's, sexuality. It does well to remember that a part of feminism, as defined in the Oxford dictionary, is the "advocacy of women's rights". That advocacy includes the right of a woman to enjoy her own body- in whatever way she may choose- provided that choice is clearly articulated.



-from "It Ain't Me Babe"
Women's Liberation Comix
1970

Web of Crone

A WOMEN'S SACRED JOURNEY TO IRELAND

-by Emma Joy Crone

As the plane swept down over the green, green fields of Cork, I held my breath. What a delight- to see only hedgerows, stone walls, cattle and fields stretching beneath me. I savoured the moment. Soon I was to join 12 other women for a two week journey of some of the sacred sites of ancient Ireland.

Cows grazed, magpies called outside the window of Cloghroe House, a Georgian mansion 5 miles from famous Blarney, and 15 minutes drive away from the city of Cork. A very comfortable and wonderful beginning to this journey into the beautiful Irish countryside.

We visited stone circles, some famous such as Tara and New Grange, megalithic monuments to ancient Goddesses- Glendore (a lovely natural harbour) and Lough Ine (a saltwater lake). Rituals were performed, the chakras honoured. Our itinerary included St. Brigit's Well at Kildare, where we gathered her fire and I met a delightful woman, Mag, who burned the flame and blessed those of us who had ventured into her small 'new age' store.

On to the Donegal coast, and Creevy Pier, a hotel facing the ocean. In the evening women playing Irish traditional music entertained us in the bar.

We were fortunate to meet a man who has been doing research into the ancient Goddess Worship of this land and has published many booklets on this subject. A guide to the sheela-na-gigs of Britain and Ireland introduced me to the ancient religious carvings of women. These are symbolic representations of femininity and/or actual female deities or Goddesses. They were placed in churches, castles and other important buildings of the medieval period, promoting good luck and fertility. A very potent and powerful image, many of them were destroyed (ofcourse) by Puritans, and later by others who were offended by their sexual imagery.

A day was spent in Dublin for those who wished to explore and shop.

An aura of magic surrounded the Cairn of Maeve (Queen Maeve or Medb); a massive stone cairn erected by the peoples of pre-historic times. It remained a pagan site, long into the Christian era. Here they worshipped the earth, their Goddess and her seasons.

We modern day pagans performed a ritual of "letting go", made a small fire and jumped over it, affirming the good things in our lives. This cairn was on the summit of Knocknarea, a long hard climb on a very hot day!



-kerbstone at Newgrange

We journeyed by bus, with a very helpful, friendly Irish man as our driver.

On to Northern Ireland and County Tyrone, where we visited Naven, a monument to the Goddess Macha. There also was an interpretive centre where we watched a film and found much information on the pre-history of Ireland.

To Sligo, where it is said that nowhere else is the Goddess such a dominating feature of the landscape. This is the countryside where the poet W.B. Yeats found his inspiration.

The hedgerows were resplendent with wildflowers, birds feasting, the abundance of Fall- a sight not forgotten was the beauty of the Dartry Mountains between Sligo and Donegal.

Then to county Limerick, where we visited the largest and most impressive stone circle at Grange.

Daily I drank my Guinness, walked and was lucky to find two other Crones (age 60 and 67) in the company of 13 women.

We covered a lot of ground in the two weeks and our last visit was to Galway, a harbour town with delightful shops.

I must not forget to mention the feeling of friendliness and welcome I experienced in this land, and in particular our hosts- Mod and Lynne, whose knowledge and insight, humour and expertise, made the trip a joy. Thanks too to Pat Hogan who worked hard in getting this all together. It may happen, in another part of Ireland next year. Those interested should send a stamped, addressed envelope to:

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OLDER FEMINISTS NETWORK

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For information and guidelines, write:
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P.O. Box 1449
Wainscott, New York 11975
USA



-from "It Ain't Me Babe"
Women's Liberation Comix
1970

The Web of Crones is edited by Emma Joy Crone. If you want more information on the sheela-na-gig books, or anything else you read here, or to submit any material to The Web of Crones, contact:
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B.C.
VOR 1Z0

BOOK REVIEWS

"Living in Harmony: Nature Writing by women in Canada"

An anthology edited by Andrea Pinto Lebowitz. Orca Books, Victoria, B.C.

ISBN: 1-55143-060-6 \$15.95 Canada

Andrea Pinto Lebowitz lives part-time on Hornby Island, B.C. and introduced us to her recently published anthology "Living in Harmony".

There are some familiar authors, and, to me, new ones as well. As a countwoman who has never lived in the "true" wilderness, this book has given me some new insights into places I feared or thought of as "empty spaces".

From the wonderful piece "How The World Began", by Angela Sidney, a Tagish and Haida woman of the Deisheetaan (Crow) Clan, we are led into a story I really resonate with "The Lost Salmon Run", honouring girl children and the attitudes of life or un-life.

"Home, Encounters, Place and Gardens" is the story of one plant, its struggles and survival, and a woman's finding this little beauty in an otherwise granite-bound landscape. "An Exercise in Tolerance" is the story of struggles between animals and humans.

Our old friend Emily Carr is included, giving us much still, with her art and words.

This is a book I shall return to again and again. It brought me feelings of excitement and joy and peace.

In the introduction, Lebowitz says: Except for early settlement journals, the work of women nature writers has been hidden from history". Her introduction peaks volumes. Thankyou for this lovely and inspiring recognition of who we are.



THE GOOD VIBRATIONS GUIDE TO SEX

Cathy Winks and Anne Semans

ISBN: 0-939416-84-0

"The Good Vibrations Guide to Sex" offers advice, instruction, definitions, anecdotes, illustrations, and validation for a wide variety of sexual interests and activities- courtesy of two women who have been asked a lot of questions about sex!. The authors work at the San Francisco shop 'Good Vibrations', that sells sex toys, books and videos. For all readers- gay, straight, bisexual, young, old, novices, singles, partnered, multi-partnered, pregnant, disabled, transgendered, to name just a few. Clear, cogent advice with a sense of humour, accompanied by explicit quotes from Good Vibrations customers.

RECONCEIVING WOMEN: Separating Motherhood from Female Identity

Mardy S. Ireland

Guilford Press

In this important work, the author defines a place for women outside the parameters of motherhood. The book draws extensively from interviews with over 100 childless women from various ethnic backgrounds, demonstrating the myriad ways they came to view themselves as complete adults without the traditional defining criteria of motherhood.

VIDEO REVIEW:

A video I'd like to tell you about.

"When Night is Falling" (Alliance, Canada)

This is a story of a woman, studying theology, who meets up with a woman of the circus, in a laundromat, and her subsequent transformation. It displays the homophobia of some "christians" and we watch a video of great visual beauty. The art and music create an atmosphere of tenderness and delight, particularly the scenes of unsurpassed trapeze artistry that blend with the story.

This is not a stereotypical story of women loving women, and if you are squeamish about watching sex (including heterosexual love scenes), you should not watch it. For those others I say, enjoy, enjoy.

PERIODICAL REVIEW:

FEMINIST COLLECTIONS: A Quarterly of

Women's Studies Resources

Women's Studies Librarian

430 Memorial Library

728 State Street

Madison, Wisconsin 53706

USA

Four times a year FEMINIST COLLECTIONS brings news of the latest print and AV resources for research and teaching in women's studies. Recent book reviews have treated such topics as African American women writers, lesbians in popular culture, and women in the international marketplace. There are guides to new bibliographies and reference works, film and video critiques, computer updates, and news of out-of-the-way materials- pamphlets, reports, rare book dealers, microforms, and more. Thoughtful articles by experts explore women's publishing, Internet resources, library organization, archives and other tools for feminist scholarship. New periodicals and special issues in other disciplines are announced in each issue. (Eds note: This is not just an academic publication- the range of books and periodicals reviewed is impressive- everything from obscure writings on specialized topics to Grrl punk-zines. A useful resource for women's centres and libraries as well as women's studies courses)

WOULD LIKE TO MEET a single woman who is interested in quiet companionship. Non-smoker, non-drinker- lives in Terrace area. Reply to: C25, RR3, Site 19 Terrace, B.C. V8G 4R6

VISITING MONTREAL?

I'd be pleased to give advice, show you around, be a contact- in French or English. Tour Old Montreal with an experienced guide. Call Sandra (514) 486-4825

WOODEN FACES

This mask was stolen
from a graveyard

it is a very serious mask
for the dead and those
who bargain with the dead
it does have a price.

Notice how the wood's grain
suggests a mouth turned down
now let me put it on for you
you can still see my eyes; if I smile
you'll think my mask is smiling too.

-by M.A. Eshom

SMOKING THE SACRED HERBS BROUGHT
STRANGE VISIONS TO MY HEAD...



-from "It Ain't Me Babe"
Women's Liberation Comix
1970

According to a recent study of over 4600 women, nearly half with breast cancer, those who did not wear bras, or who wore them less than 12 hours per day, were some 20 times less likely to have breast cancer than those who wore bras at least 12 hours per day.

This is comparable to the reduction of lung cancer risk among non-smokers and smokers (10-30 times).

The authors' theory is that bras, especially tight ones, inhibit the drainage of lymph fluid from the breasts and cause toxins to remain extra long in the tissue.

So it looks like the bra-burners had the right idea!

Source: Dressed to Kill- the Link Between Breast Cancer and Bras
by Sydney Ross and Soma Grismaier, 1995

GIVE

PEACEFUL PRESENTS

WAR TOYS

"War Toys" refers to any toy whose fantacized purpose is to kill or wound, such as toy weapons, figurines that interact through weapons and fighting, or vehicles equipped prominently with weapons.

Say YES to:

- Lego/plane models
- train/plane models
- creative crafts
- musical instruments
- sporting equipment
- books
- magazine subscriptions
- board games
- theatre tickets

Say NO to:

- toy guns and weapons
- violent videos
- military gear
- offensive logos
- sexist toys
- computer battle games
- war toys and games

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MOTHER SAYS, "WHEN BOYS GROW UP TO BE RAMBO, GIRLS GROW UP TO BE BATTERED AND THE THIRD WORLD GETS INVADED!"

EVERY DOLLAR SPENT OR NOT SPENT
INFLUENCES THE MARKETPLACE

SALE OF WAR TOYS:

Australia- RESTRICTS
Greece - PROHIBITS
Malta - PROHIBITS
Norway - RESTRICTS
Sweden - RESTRICTS

European Parliament- Recommends
ADVERTISING BAN

Ask your Member of Parliament why the Candian Government does not enact legislation to prohibit war toys.

Disregulation in advertising in the 1980's resulted in a 600% jump in Candian sales of war toys.



-from "It Ain't Me Babe"
Women's Liberation Comix
1970

FOUR POEMS BY SUZANNE BATTEN

Patron Goddess of Lust

innocence is hurting
when I shed I shed
it all
she is a quick change
artist
she steals my heart
like a bird's egg.
a goddess above
handmaid paradise
in every motion
of her wrist
& flick of tongue
& slight of mind.
'I will cover
you,' she promises
'with my petals'
she is spoiling
for sex.
my layers inside layers
open
for her
like a round, red
seashell.
how can I stand
by & watch ripe
go rotten?

untitled

there was one woman
in particular
i could taste the need
on her skin
time was when
she would perhaps
sweeten the summer
night for me
but i kissed life
at some point
in the night despite
all previous protestations...
some scenes in love
stories begin to fade;
princes are temporary
goddesses immortal
i want & want intensely;
it could almost be
as much fun as adultery.

girls will be boys

i dream her
when i'm lost
and found
angels can't jump
to dance with me
she still turns
the cusp of my life
with sex
and reason;
i blow it all off.

The Tortoise Movement

gender logic in transition
rises and falls.
I can never stop expecting
& trying to avoid it.
wondering waves lap the shore
like nauseating foreplay

last night
a hard-shelled creature
grew in my head.
with a voice
of age
said, "Hurry."
I awaken
to a tortoise
under my pillow.
my thoughts bounce
off its toughened skin.
"Hurry..." repeat "Change."
brown-grey-green surface
of its eyes know
talent for adaptation.
I leave the tortoise
alone
to move in search
for the high
treasure of a race.

I step outside and can see
my breath
getting away from me.
there is nothing I want
to watch
except sky.

IN FLUX

Last night I was a
Werewolf
Howling at the full moon
My fur standing on end
I lpped hiding behind trees.
Sometimes I am a
Vampire
Sucking blood from everyone
Needing, wanting, fearing
Pale faced and bloodless.
Today I am a gossamer
Faerie
All light and transparent
Nestling under sweet scented flowers
Conversing with trees.
Tomorrow I may learn to
Fly
With butterfly companions
Freewheeling and colourful
Into the forest.

-Reva Hutkin

SUBSCRIPTIONS to The Open Door

SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE BY DONATION (suggested donation \$20/yr.)

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

The Open Door is published quarterly, on the solstices and equinoxes. Submission deadline is the 1st of the month of publication (Dec., Mar., June & Sept.) All materials of interest to rural feminists or lesbians are welcome, as long as they aren't sexist, racist, homophobic or otherwise discriminate against any group of women. The Open Door encourages diverse views and opinions. Send submissions and subscriptions to:

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