

Sinister Wisdom

73

Sinister Wisdom 73



The Art Issue

Summer 2008

\$6

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Sinister Wisdom 73
Summer 2008

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Sinister Wisdom is a multicultural, multi-class, female-born lesbian space. We seek to open, consider and advance the exploration of community issues. We recognize the power of language to reflect our diverse experiences and to enhance our ability to develop critical judgment, as lesbians evaluating our community and our world. Statements made and opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the publisher, board members, or editor(s) of Sinister Wisdom.

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www.sinisterwisdom.org

Submission Guidelines

Submissions: See page 128 for themes. Check our website at www.sinisterwisdom.org for updates on upcoming issues. Please read the guidelines below before sending material. Material should be sent to the editor or guest editor of the issue. Everything else should be sent to Sinister Wisdom, POB 3252, Berkeley, CA 94703.

Writing and Art Guidelines: Please read carefully.

Material may be in any style or form, or combination of forms. Maximum: five poems, two short stories or essays, or one longer piece of up to 2500 words. We prefer that you send your work by email in Word. If sent by mail, material must be mailed flat (not folded) with your name and address on each page. We prefer you type your work but short legible handwritten pieces will be considered; tapes accepted from print-impaired women. All work must be on white paper. Please proofread your work carefully; do not send changes after the deadline. A self-addressed stamped business-sized envelope must be enclosed. If you want acknowledgement of receipt, enclose a separate self-addressed stamped postcard. GRAPHIC ARTISTS should send B&W photos or drawings (duplicates) of their work (no slides). Images sent electronically must have a high resolution of 225 dpi for photos and 600 dpi for line drawings. PDF's and TIFFs are preferred. Please do not send large files electronically – send each photo separately. Include a 3-5 sentence autobiographical sketch written exactly as you want it printed.

We publish only Lesbians' work. We are particularly interested in work that reflects the diversity of our experiences: as Lesbians of color, ethnic Lesbians, Jewish, Arab, old, young, working class, poverty class, disabled, and fat Lesbians. We welcome experimental work. We will not print anything that is oppressive or demeaning to Lesbians or women, or that perpetuates stereotypes. Because many of our readers are in prison, we cannot include explicit sex, obscenities, or art with frontal nudity. No sado-masochism.

Please contact us if you have a new theme you would like to see explored. We are looking for guest editors for future issues.

Sinister Wisdom, Inc. is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. We provide free subscriptions to women in prison and psychiatric institutions (20% of our mailing list), as well as reduced price subscriptions for Lesbians with limited/fixed incomes. * Enclose an extra \$10 to \$50 on your renewal to help cover publishing costs (larger donations accepted). * Give Sinister Wisdom for birthdays, holidays, and special occasions. * Please consider organizing a benefit or subscription drive for Sinister Wisdom in your area.

A Journal by and for Lesbians

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Appreciations:

Thank you to the following supporters for their generous donations to Sinister Wisdom: Aimee B., Diana Cerise, Corey Deckerman, Marianne De-Francis, Dolphin, Emile D'Orsay, Gail Dunlap, M. Gonzalez, Jan Griesinger, Deborah H., Judy H., Tryna Hope, jody jewdyke, Theodora K., Joyce N., Rose Provenzano, Lauren Ravi, Margaret Reilly, Lucinda Sangree, Linda Strega, Irene Weiss.

Notes for a Magazine



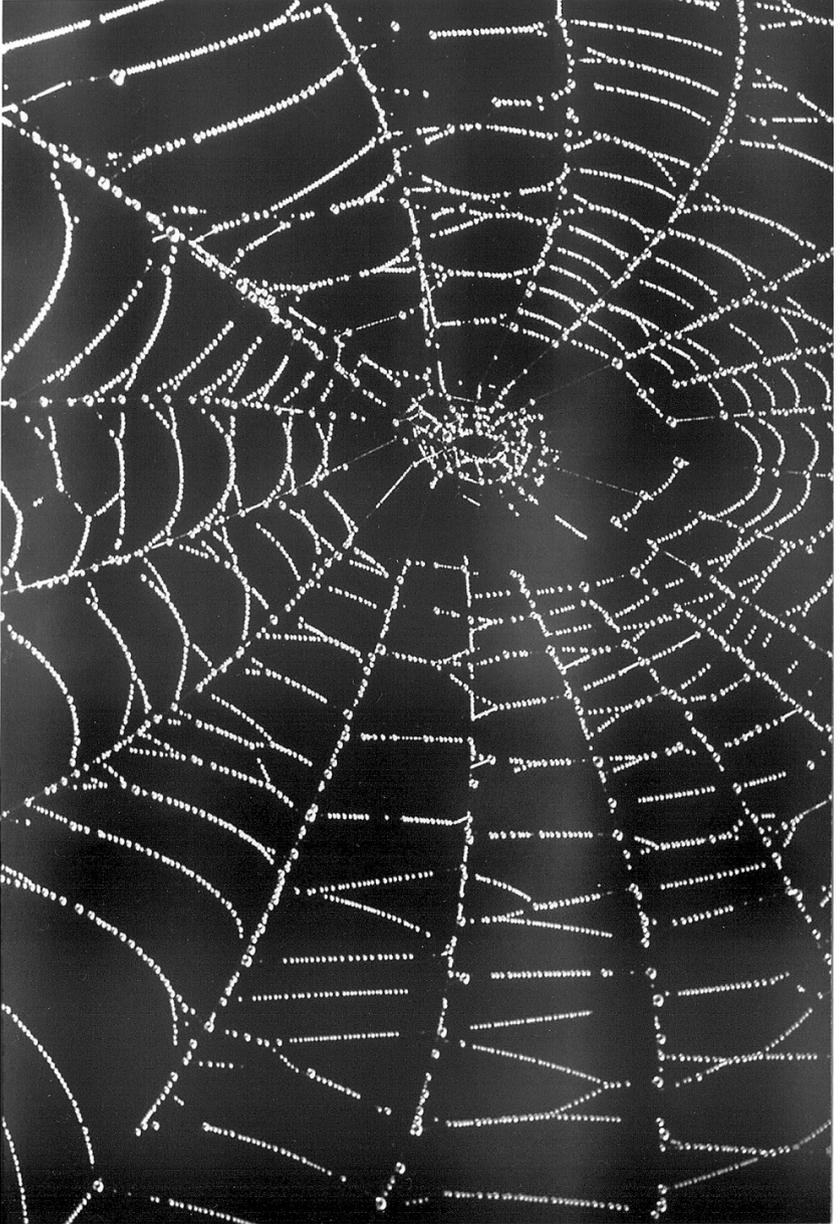
Fran Day
Sebastopol, California

Sierra Lonepine Briano



Los Zapatos. Ink on paper. [Turn 90° CCW]

Dean Brittingham



Untitled. ©Dean Brittingham Photography.

Dean Brittingham



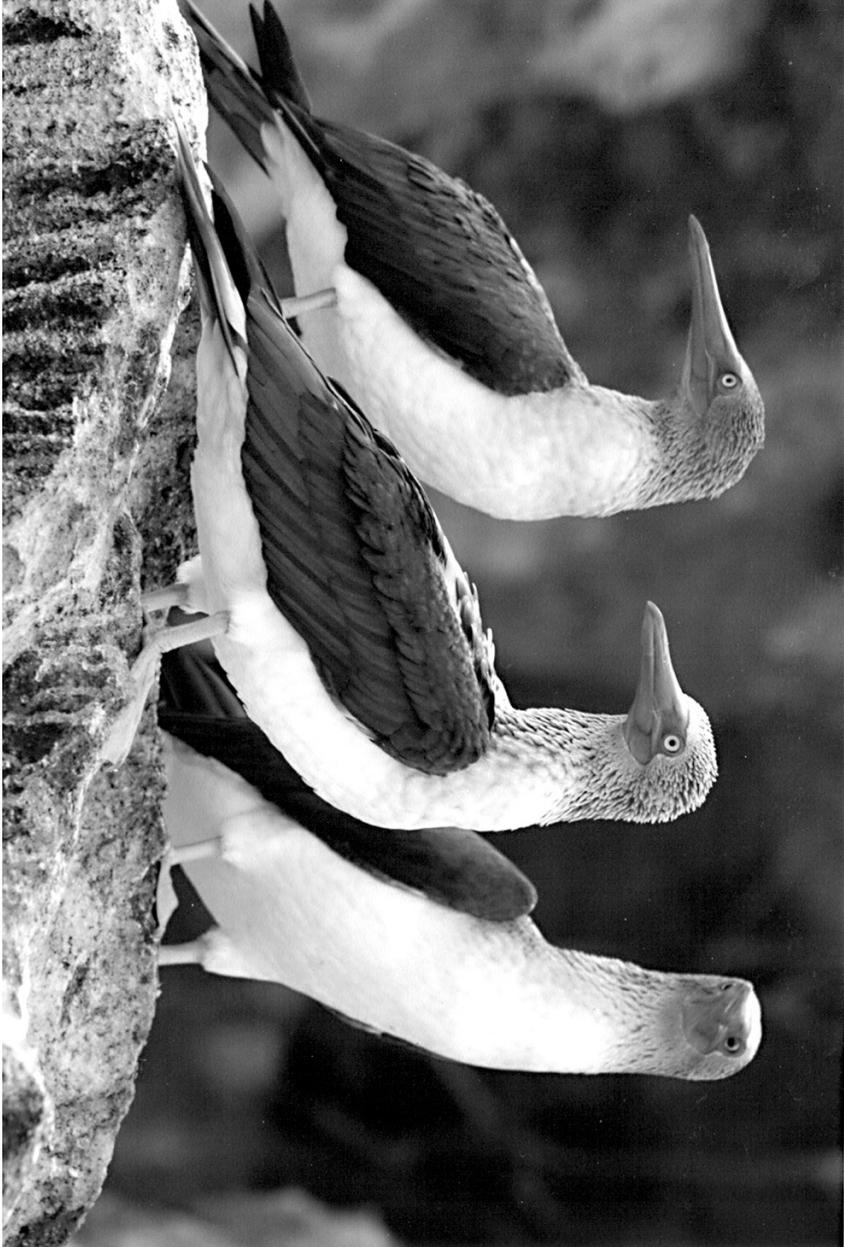
Untitled. ©Dean Brittingham Photography.

Dean Brittingham



Untitled. ©Dean Brittingham Photography.

Dean Brittingham



Untitled. ©Dean Brittingham Photography.

Lynn Brown



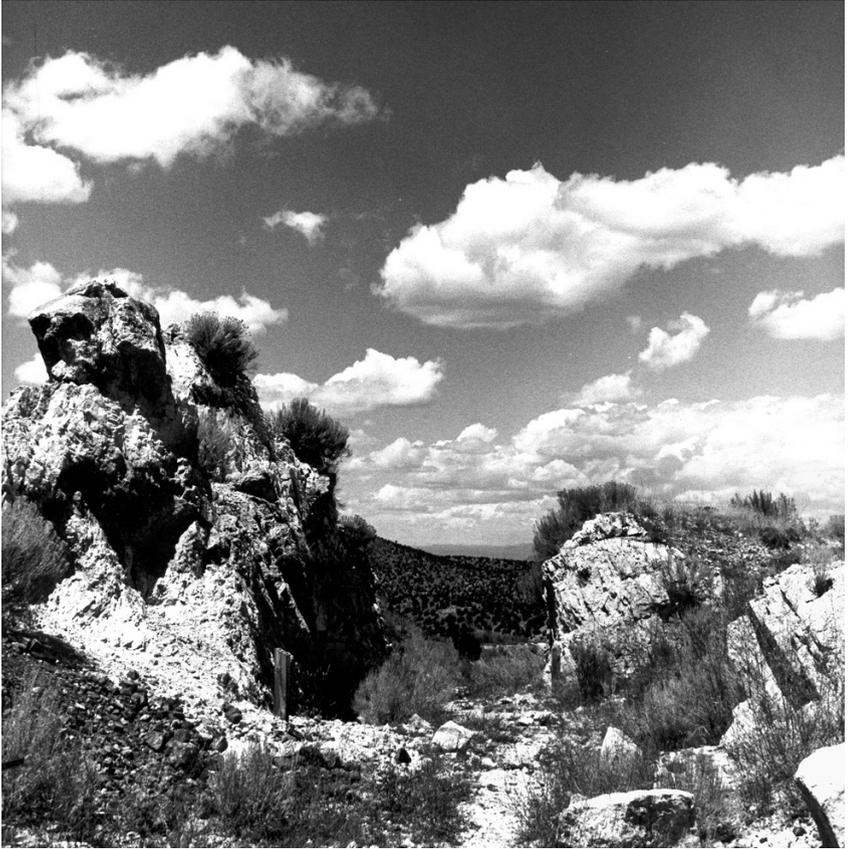
Forest Light.

Lynn Brown



Forestville Tree.

Lynn Brown



Harding Mine, Picuris Mountain.

Lynn Brown



Snodrift.

Cathy Cade



Bus Stop: Sister Comrade: An Evening of Words and Music Celebrating the Lives of Audre Lorde and Pat Parker, Oakland, California.

Lenore Chinn



Jean at Home. (Jean Weisinger, photographer.) Ultrachrome print. ©2003.

Lenore Chinn



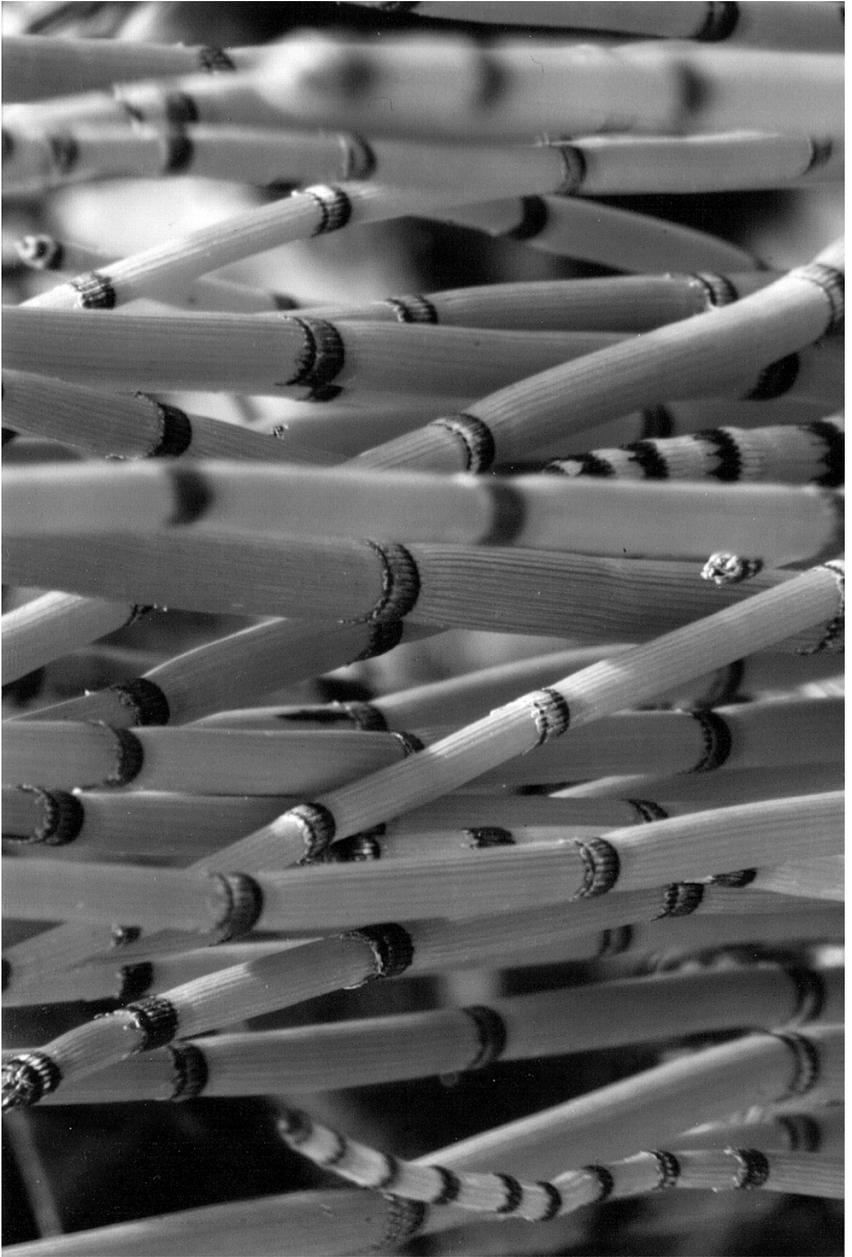
Kenya. (Kenya Briggs, filmmaker/activist.) Ultrachrome print. ©2004.

Lenore Chinn



The Rock. (Teresa Scherzer and partner, poet/artist Victoria Lena Manyarrows.)
36"x48" Acrylic on canvas. ©1998

Karen Cooper



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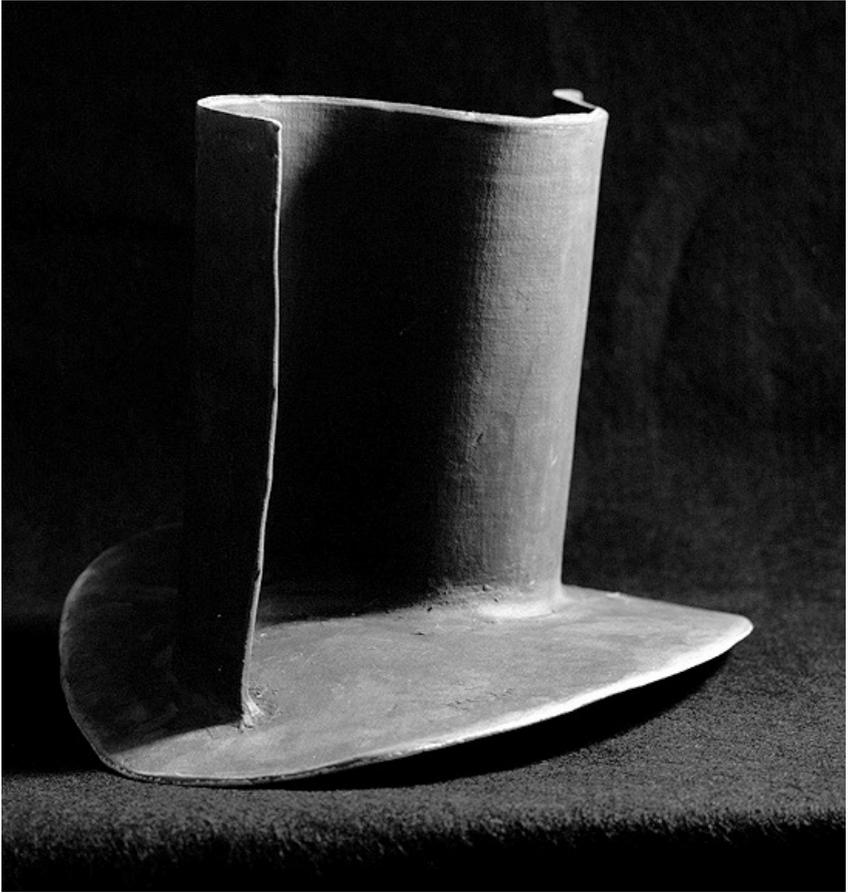
[Turn 90° CW]

Tee A. Corinne



Untitled. “Tee A. Corinne Papers, Coll. 263, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon Libraries.”

Tee A. Corinne



Untitled. "Tee A. Corinne Papers, Coll. 263, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon Libraries."

Tee A. Corinne



Untitled. “Tee A. Corinne Papers, Coll. 263, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon Libraries.”



Untitled. “Tee A. Corinne Papers, Coll. 263, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon Libraries.”

Jan Couvillon



Untitled.

Max Dashu



Amazon Dance, 1979.

Max Dashu



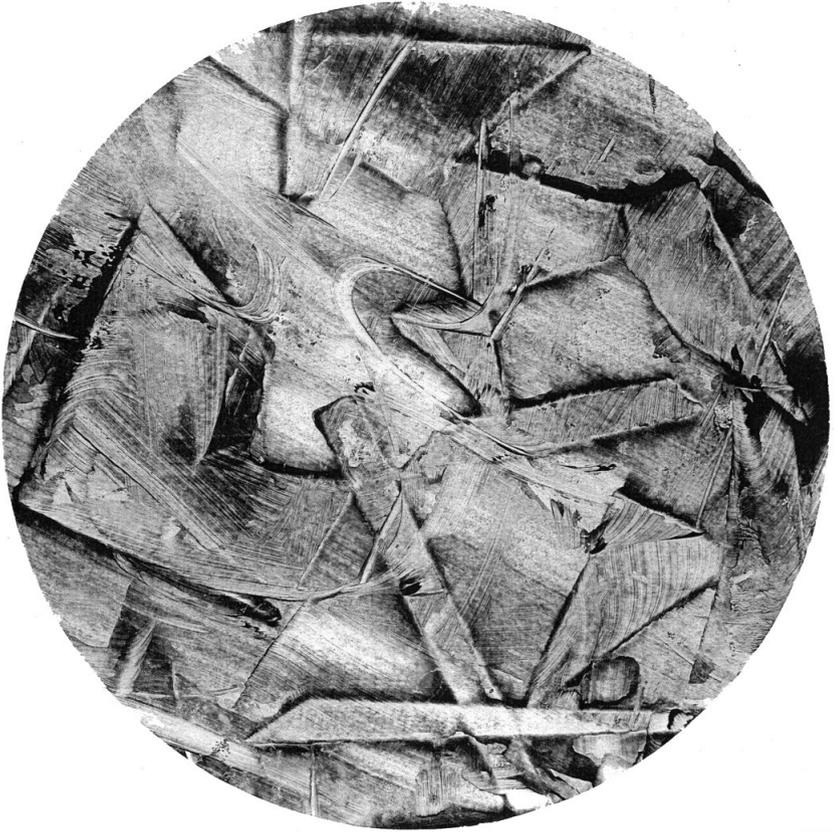
Release. 1992.

Max Dashu



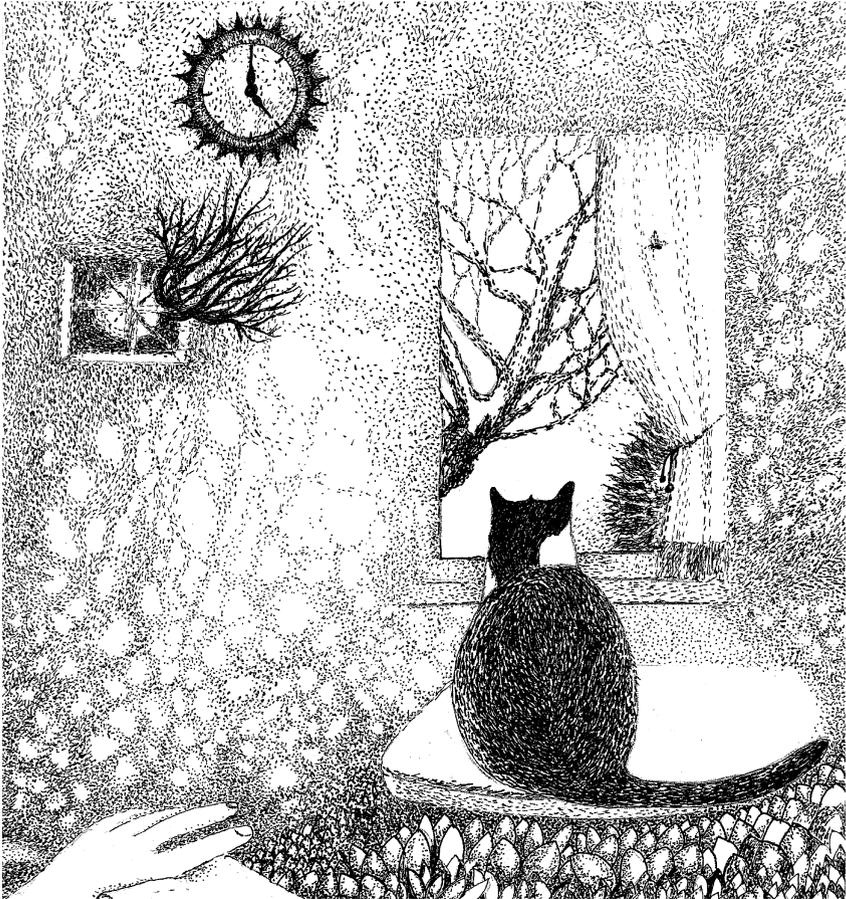
Xi Wang Mu. 2000.

Fran Day



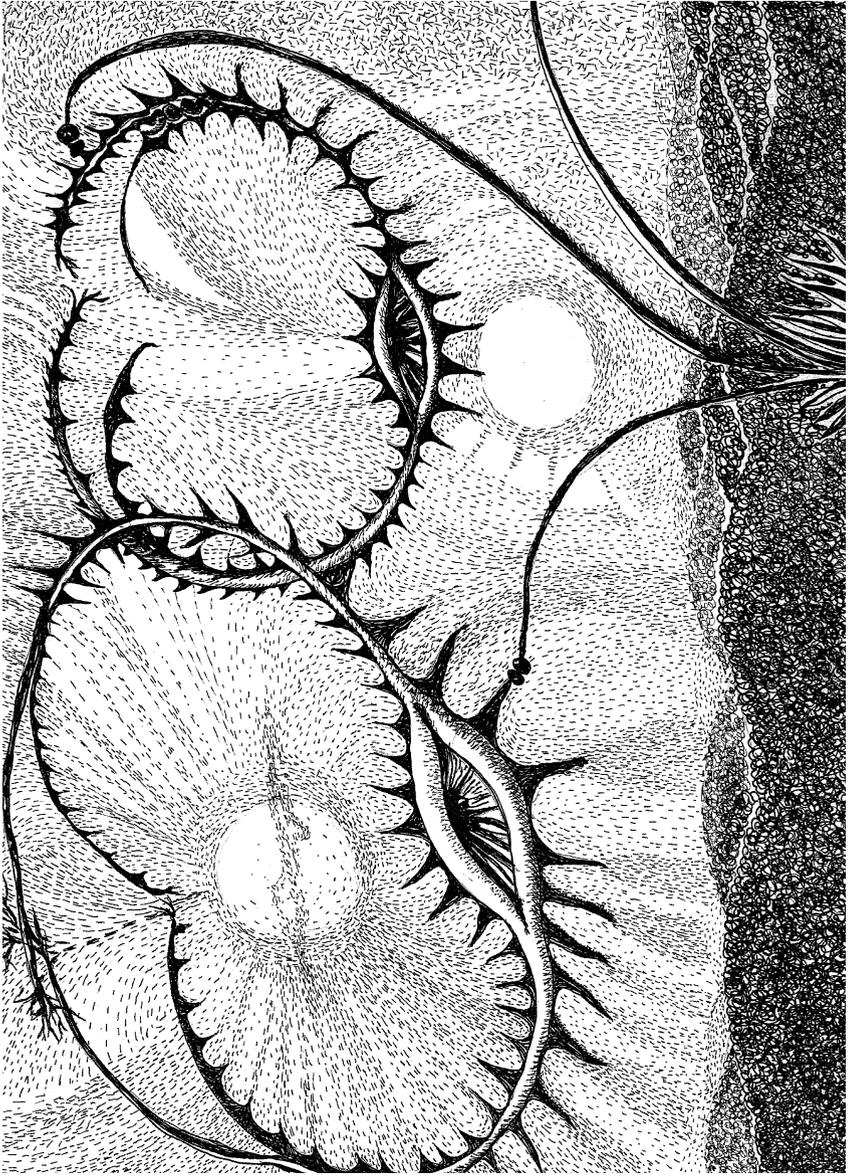
Untitled.

Francine



Untitled.

Francine



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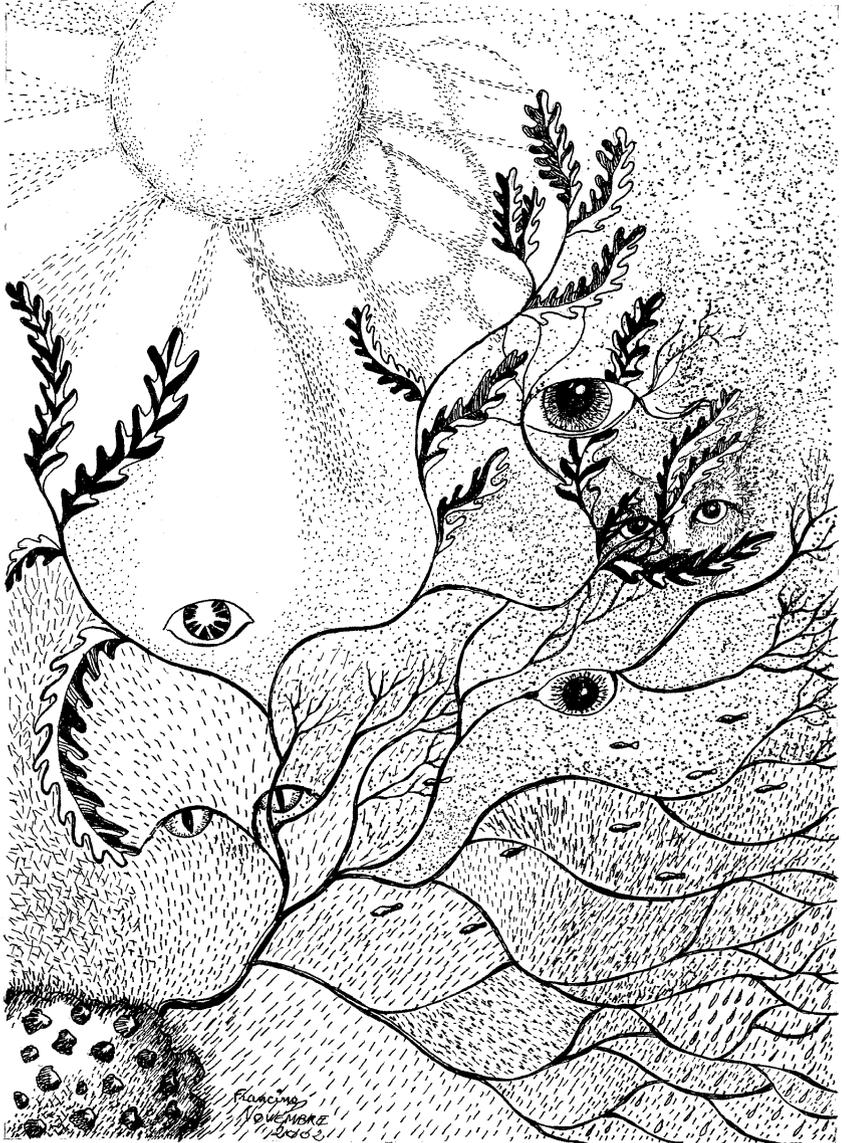
[Turn 90° CW]

Francine



Untitled.

Francine



Untitled.

Francine



Francine
Novembre
2002

Untitled.

Tina Freimuth



Aspens.

Tina Freimuth



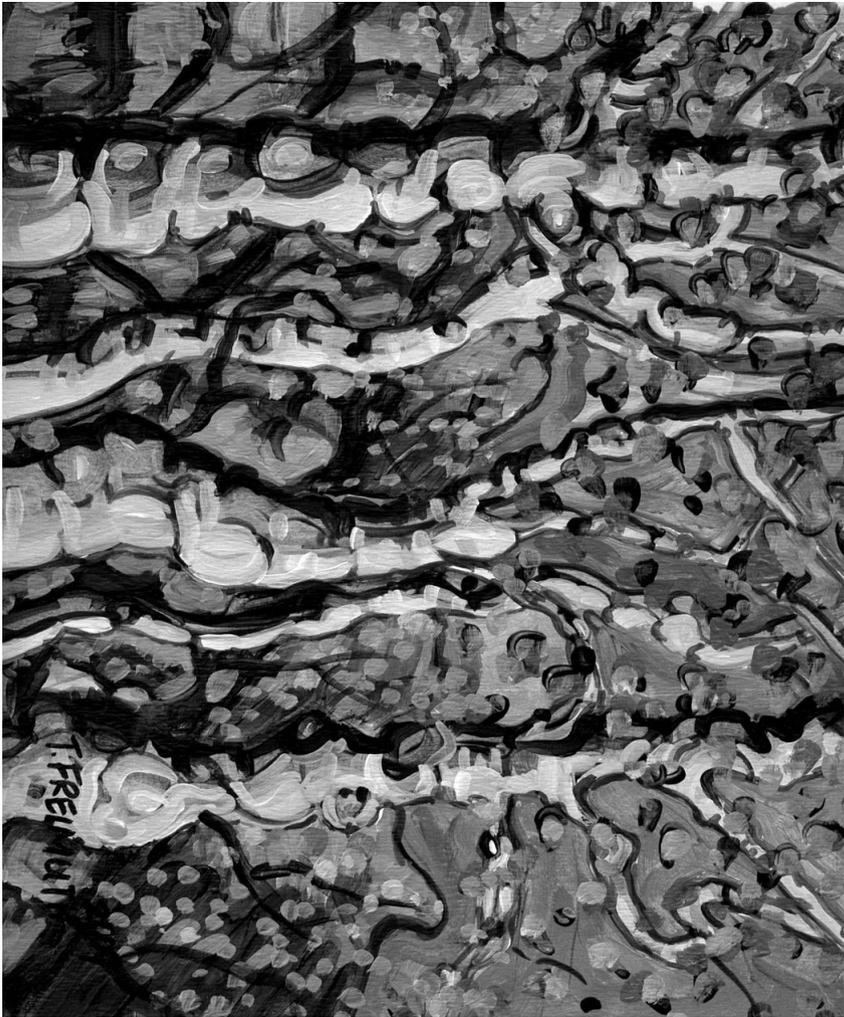
Protected by the Crones. [Turn 90° CCW]

Tina Freimuth



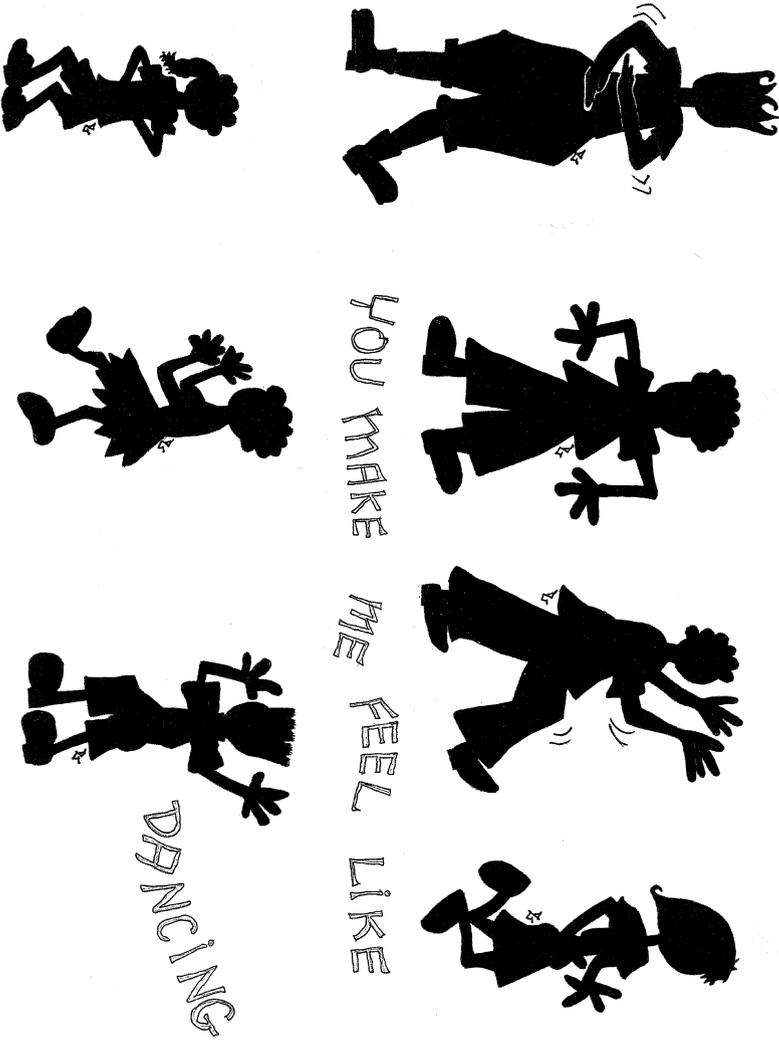
Silent Giants.

Tina Freimuth



Spring 2004. [Turn 90°CCW]

Diane Germain



You Make Me Feel Like Dancing. 2008.

Diane Germain



Outside the Ocean Beach Fire Station. 1978.

Marjorie Greenhut



Grass, 2007. [Turn 90° CCW]

Marjorie Greenhut



Figs. [Turn 90° CW]

Marjorie Greenhut



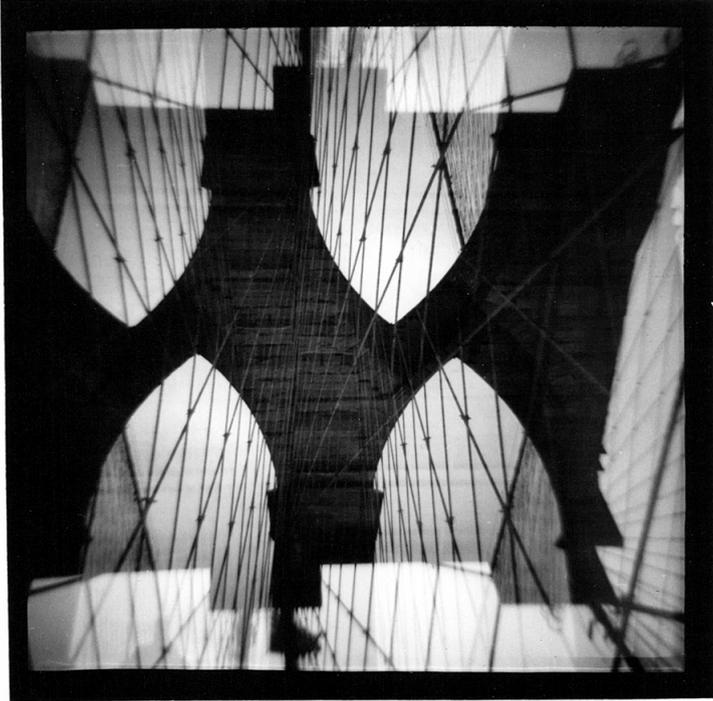
Sunflowers. 2006.

Marjorie Greenhut



Artsprings Winter Ice. 2007. [Turn 90° CW]

Morgan Gwenwald



Brooklyn Bridge.

Morgan Gwenwald



Overlook.

Morgan Gwenwald



Untitled.

Morgan Gwenwald



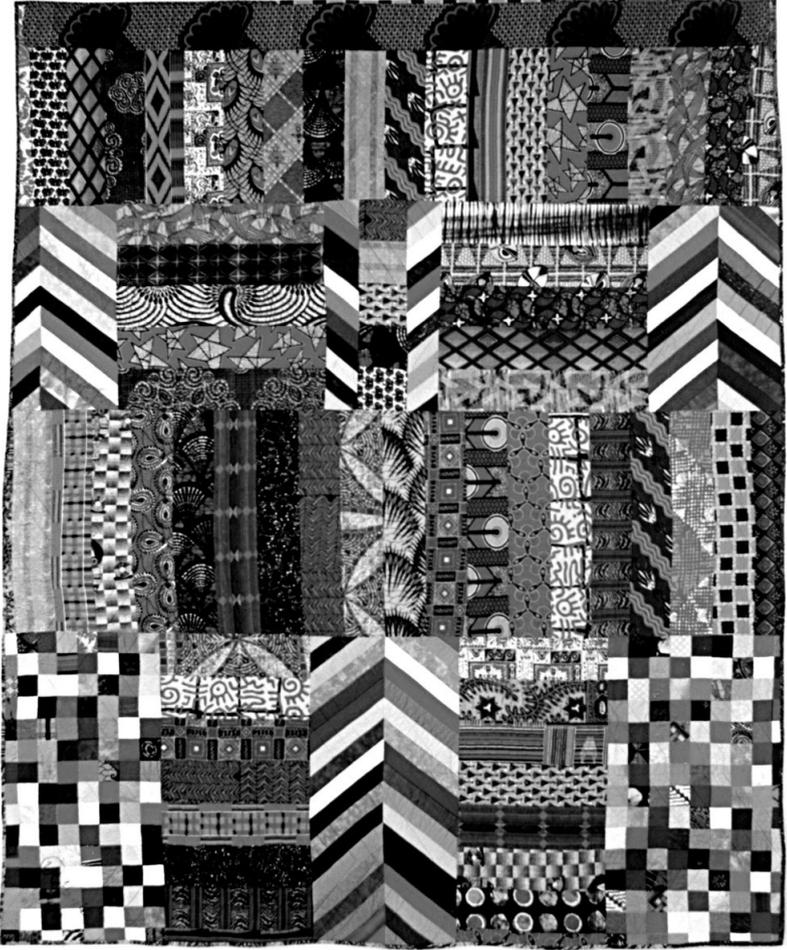
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Virginia Harris



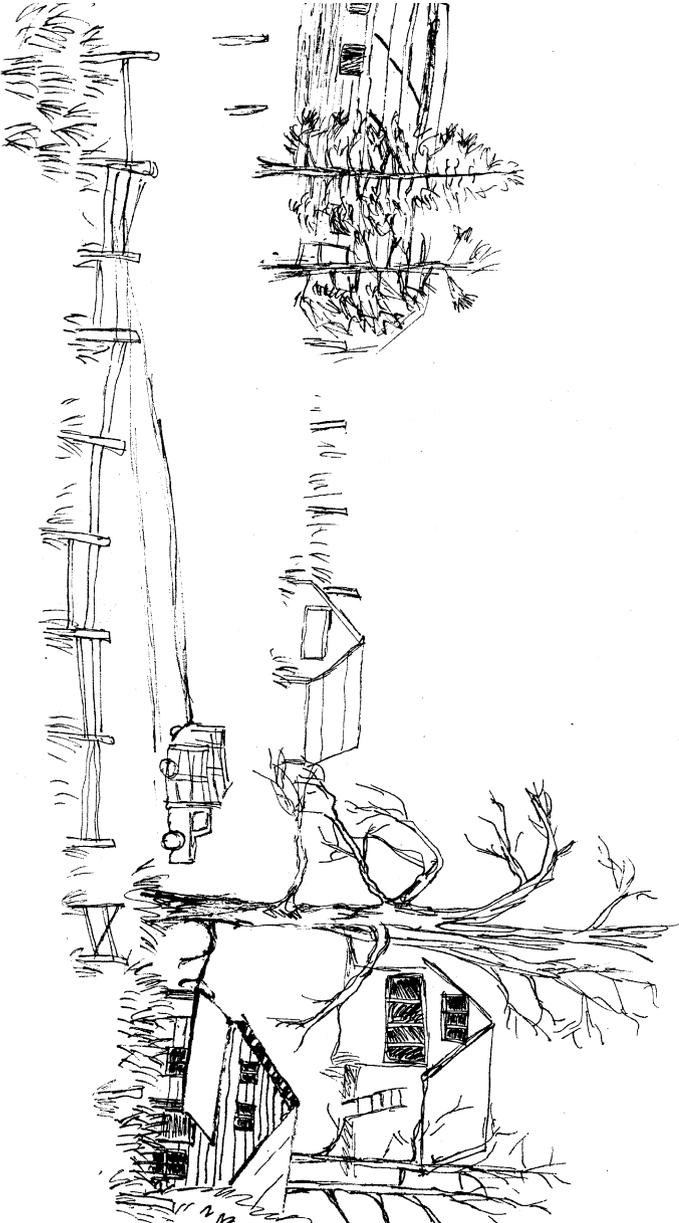
Random IX, Front, Quilt.

Virginia Harris



Random IX, Back, Quilt.

Harvest



Owl Farm, circa 1978.

jody jewdyke



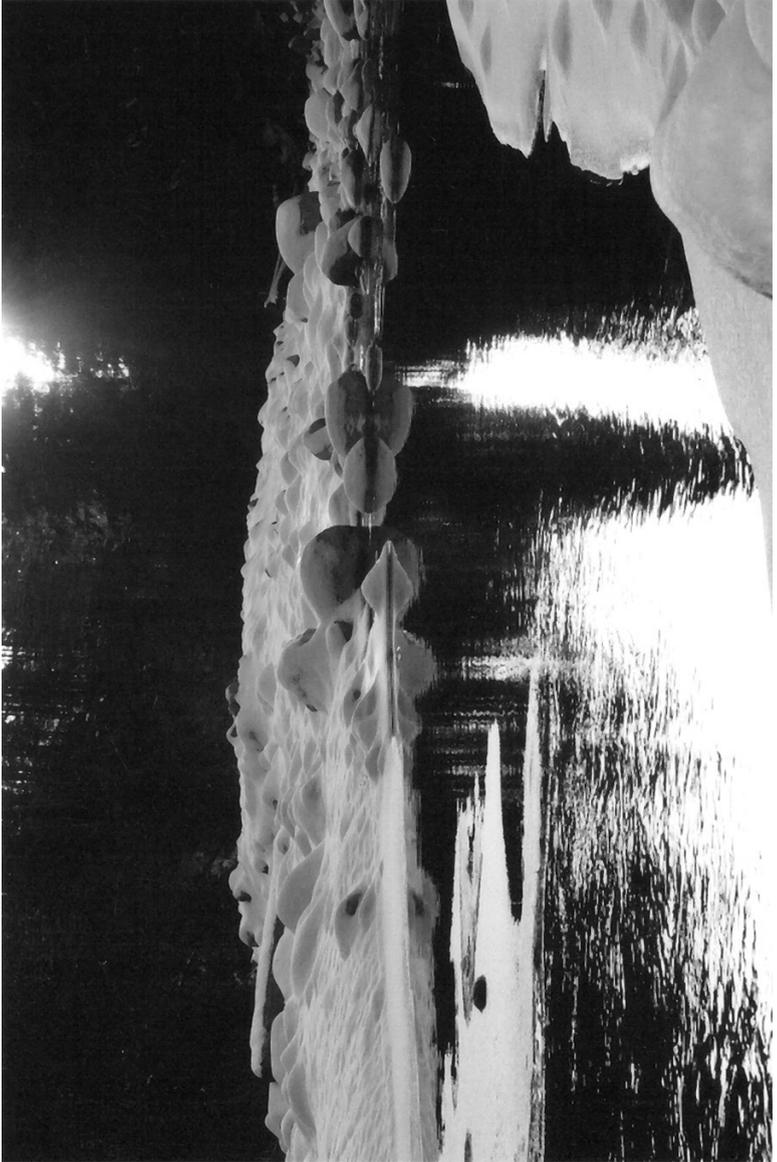
Untitled.

jody jewdyke



Untitled.

jody jewdyke



Untitled.

jody jewdyke



Untitled.

Verlena Johnson



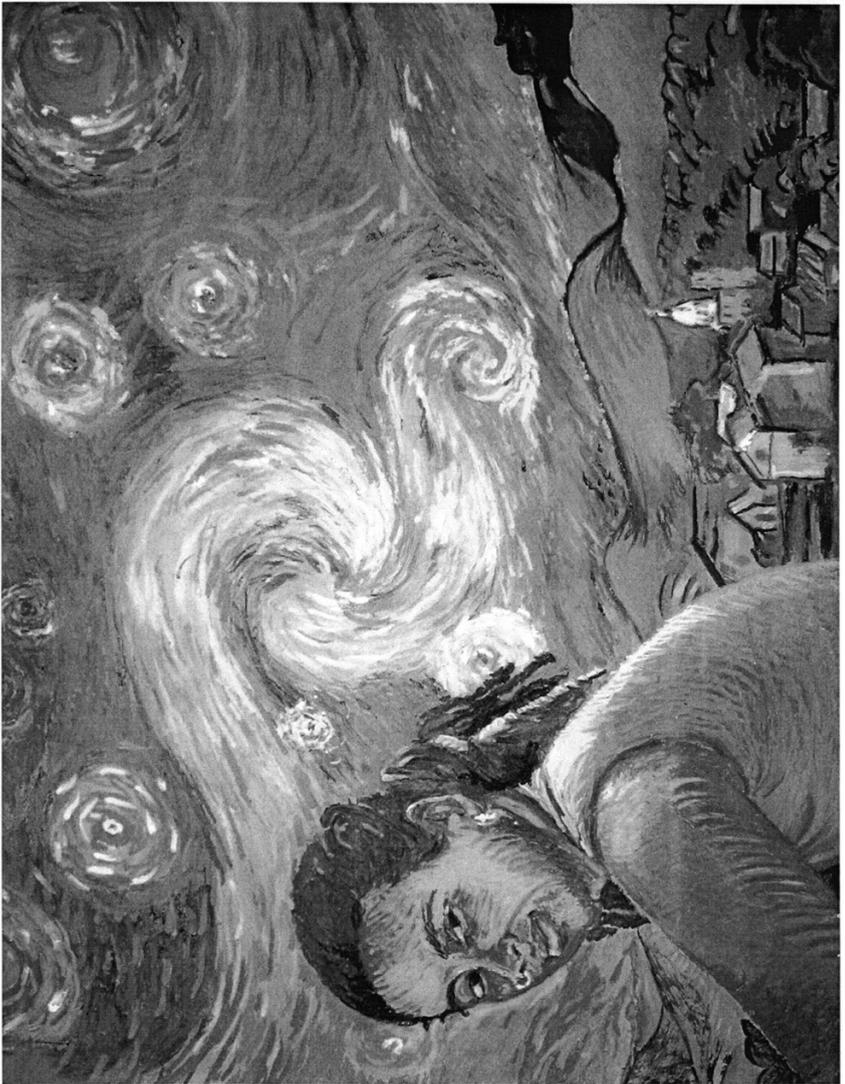
Self Portrait, 1991. Charcoal on paper, 18"x24."

Verlena Johnson



Self Portrait, 1993. Pencil on paper, 11" x 17."

Verlena Johnson



Starry Starry Night (Self Portrait), 2001. Oil Pastel on paper, 20" x 26." (Original in color.)

Verlena Johnson



Self Portrait, 2004. Ink on paper, 11" x 14."

Nancy E. Lake



Santa Rosa Creek.

Nancy E. Lake



All My Critters.

Nancy E. Lake



In Memory of Susie.

Nancy E. Lake



Sunshine Sonoma County.

Sue Lenaerts



Mushroom.

Sue Lenaerts



Ginger Lily. [Turn 90°CCW]

Sue Lenaerts



Astilbe.

Jane Levin



New Zealand Moonflowers.

anna-marie lopez



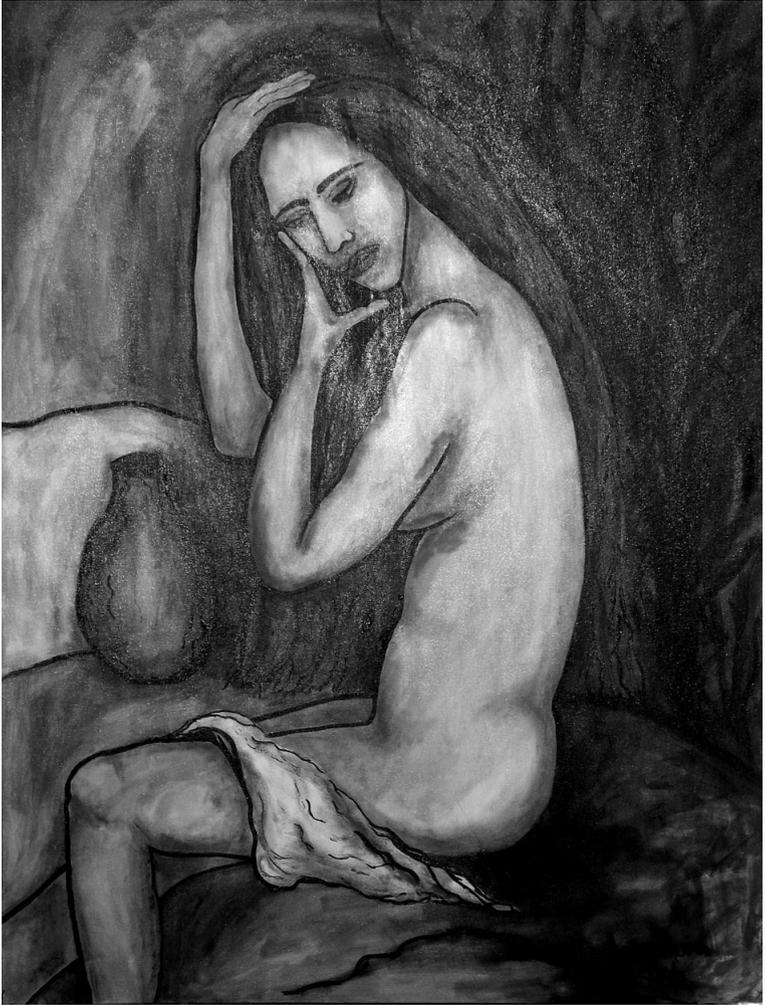
Bath.

anna-marie lopez



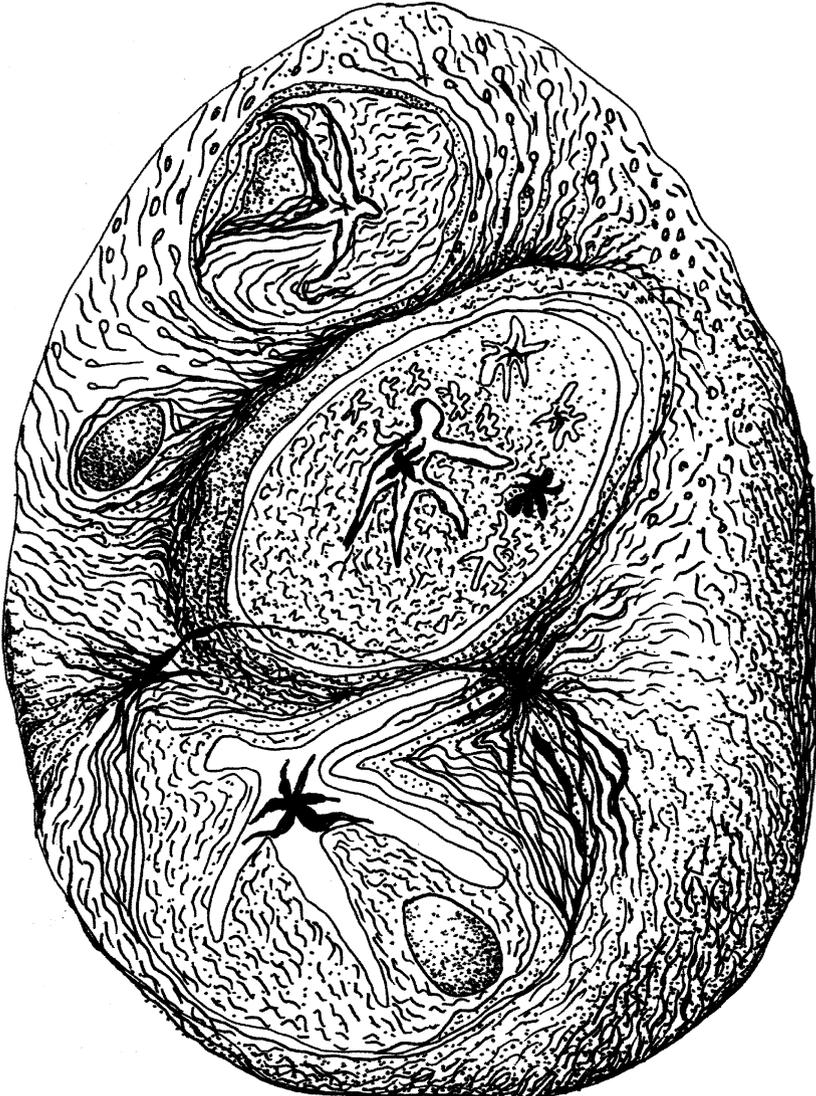
The Plea: A Self-Portrait.

anna-marie lopez



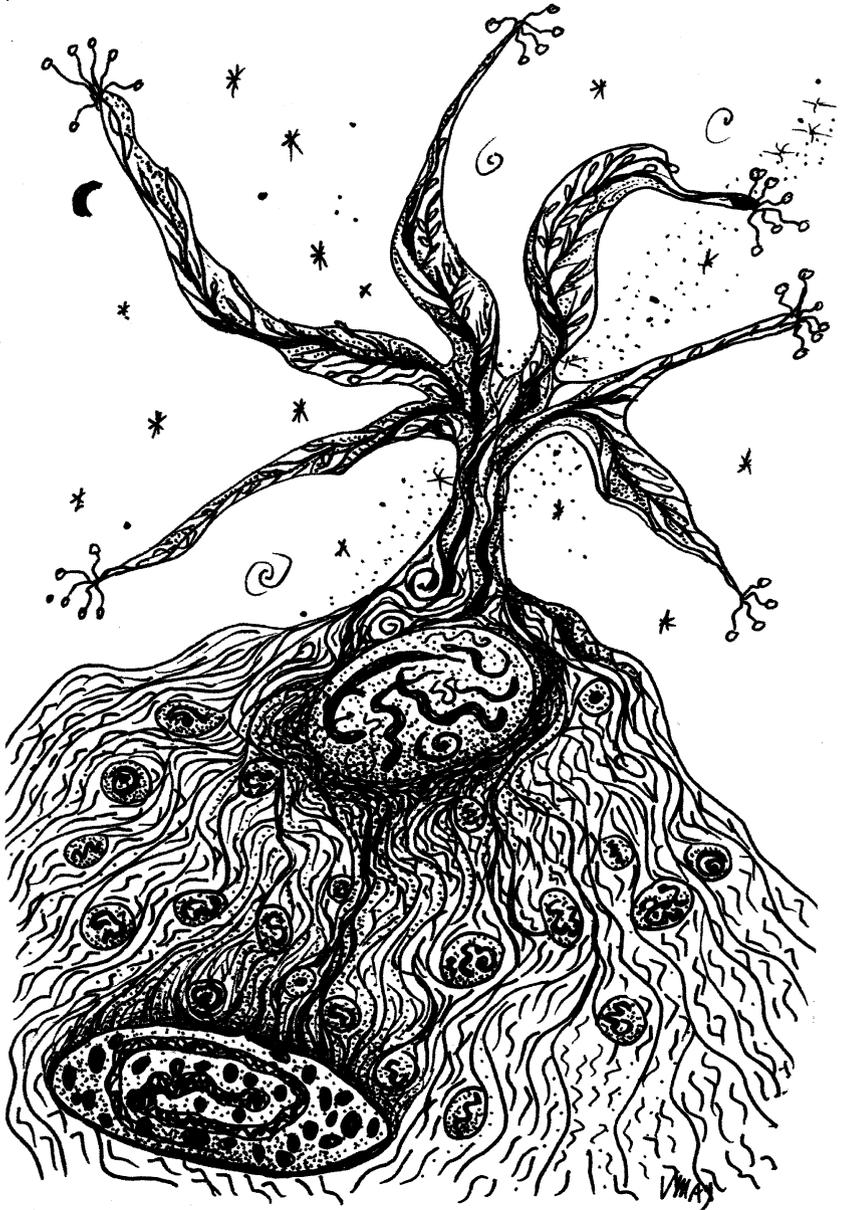
Maiden at Well.

Virginia May



The Egg. Ink on paper.

Virginia May



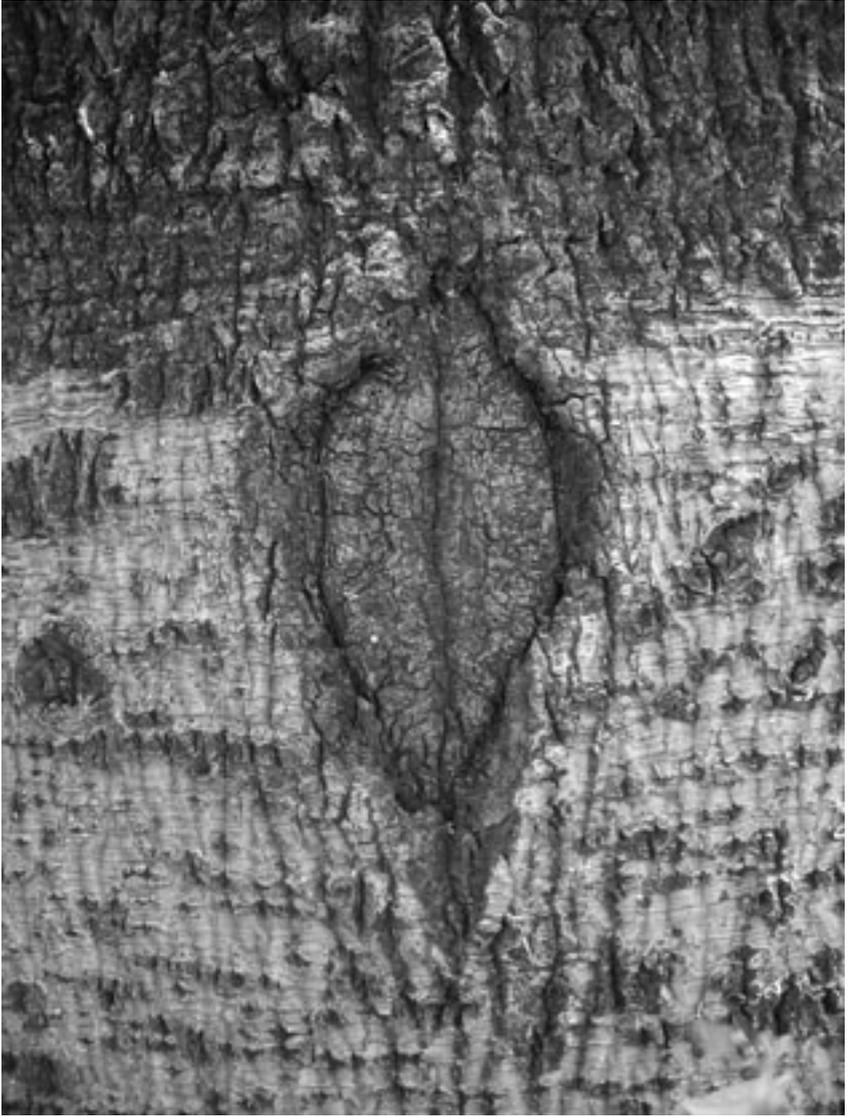
The Tree. Ink on paper.

Stacey McCaig



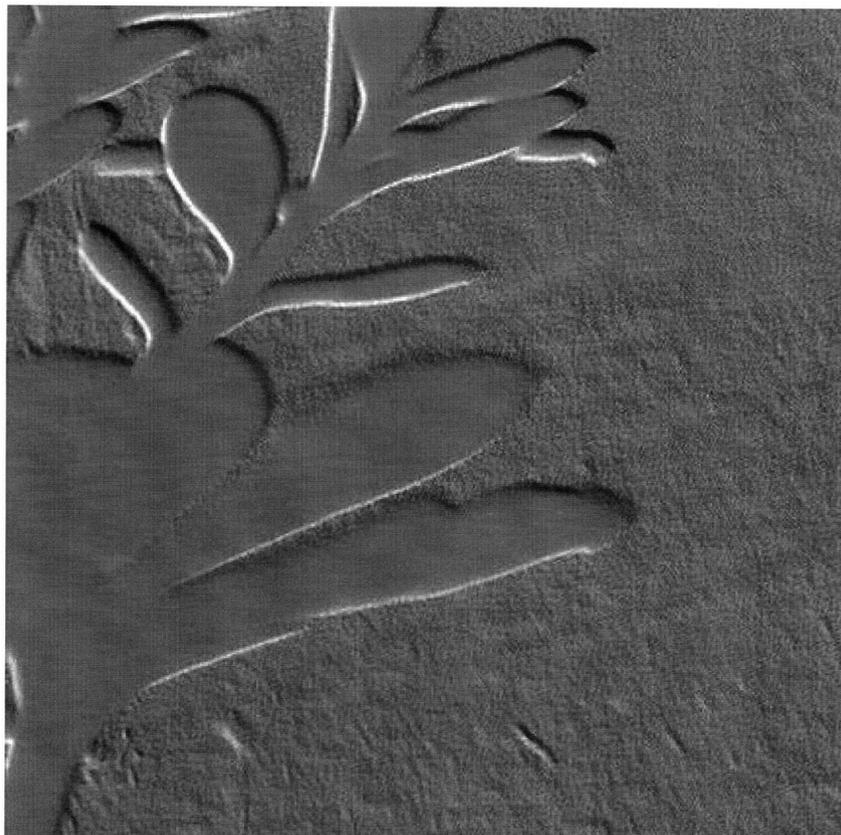
Entrance, Bundaberg, Australia.

Stacey McCaig



Bottle Tree Bark, Queensland, Australia.

Nancy Nau



Untitled.

Nancy Nau



Untitled.

OLOC (Old Lesbians Organizing for Change)



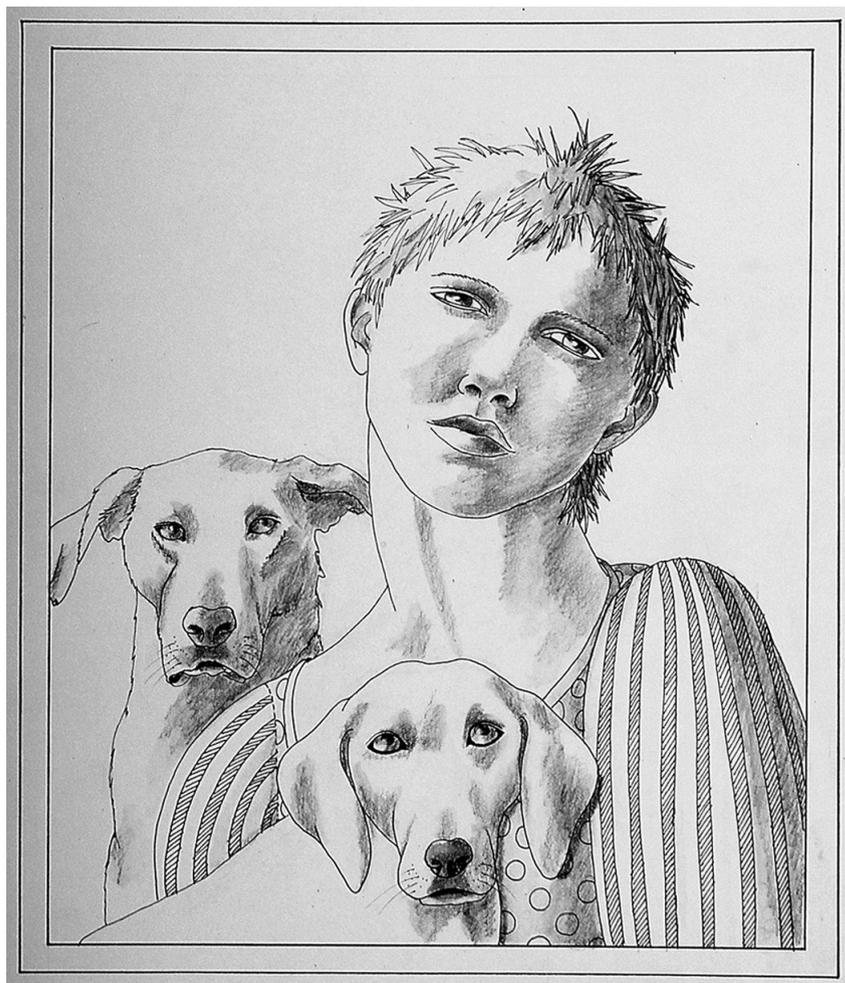
Hands: Shevy Healey and Ruth Silver. Translation of Hebrew inscription on rings:
“You are my beloved and I am yours.”

PGar



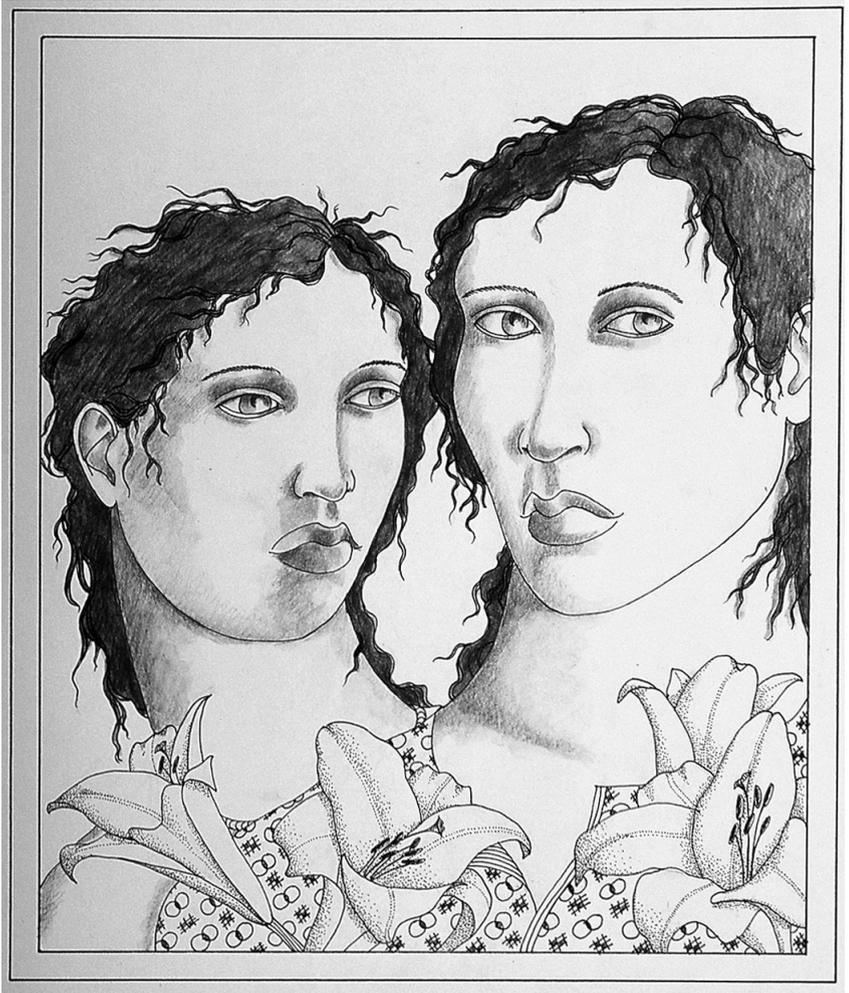
Circle of Arms. Manipulated digital scan of a manipulated silver print.

Sudie Rakusin



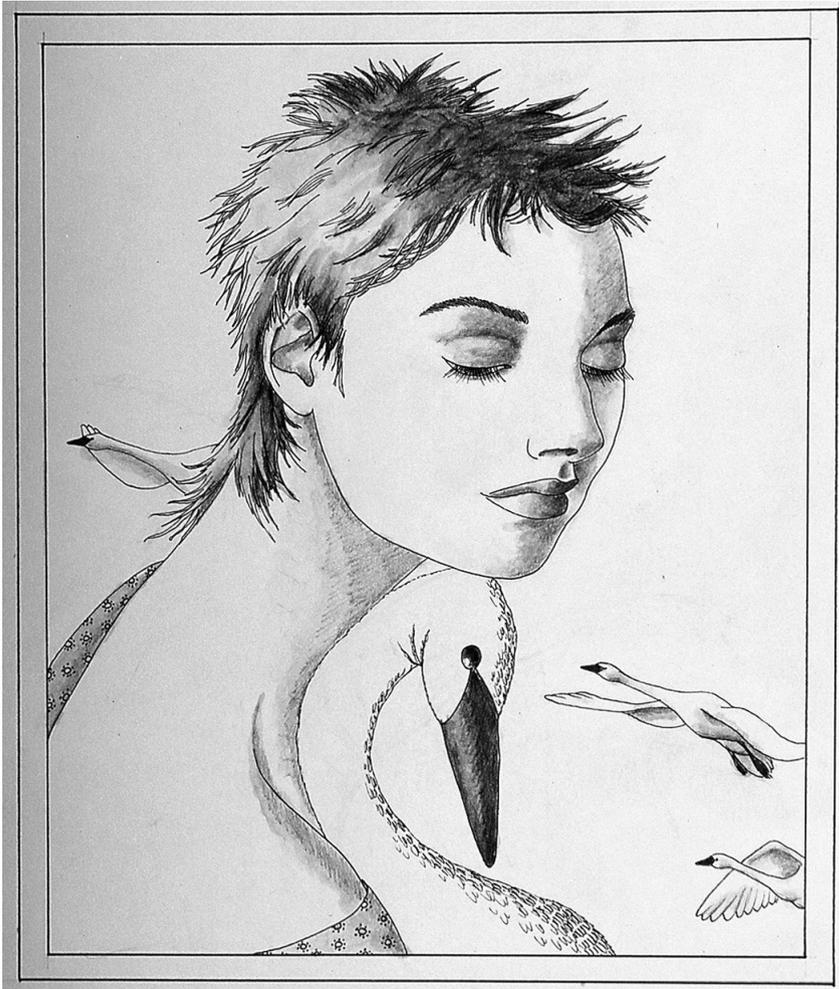
Companions. Pen and ink with water-soluble graphite, 14"x 18.5" ©Sudie Rakusin.

Sudie Rakusin



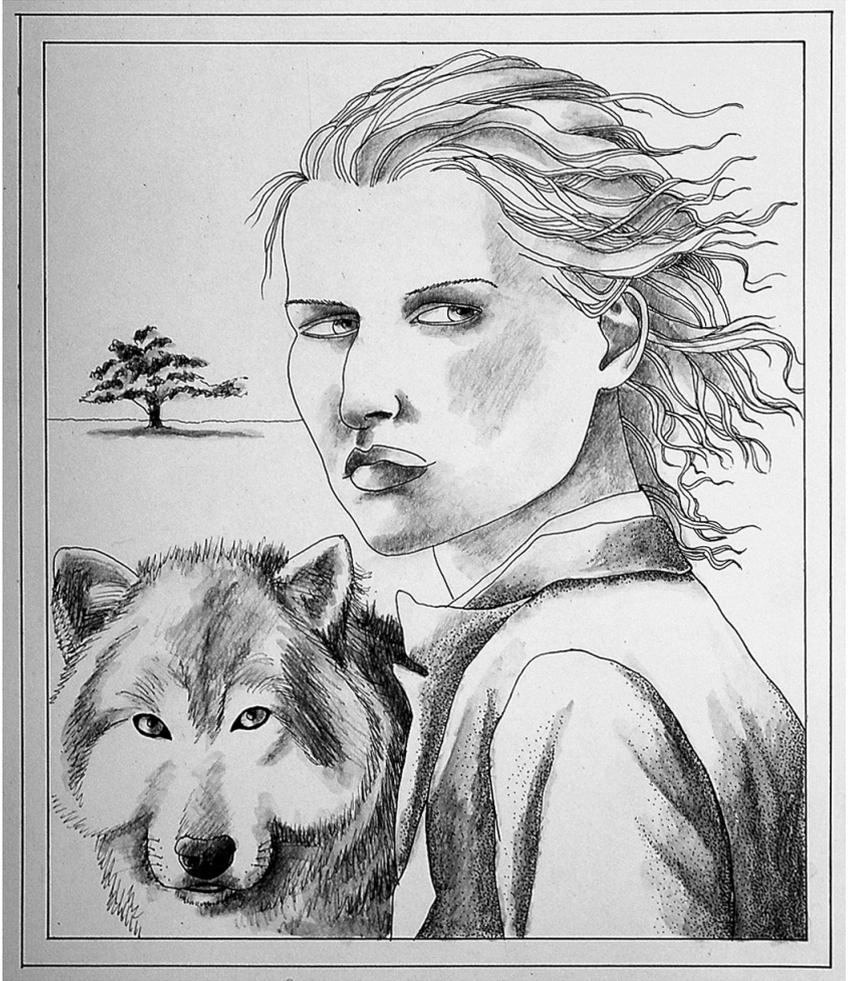
Sisters. Pen and ink with water-soluble graphite, 14" x 18.5" ©Sudie Rakusin.

Sudie Rakusin



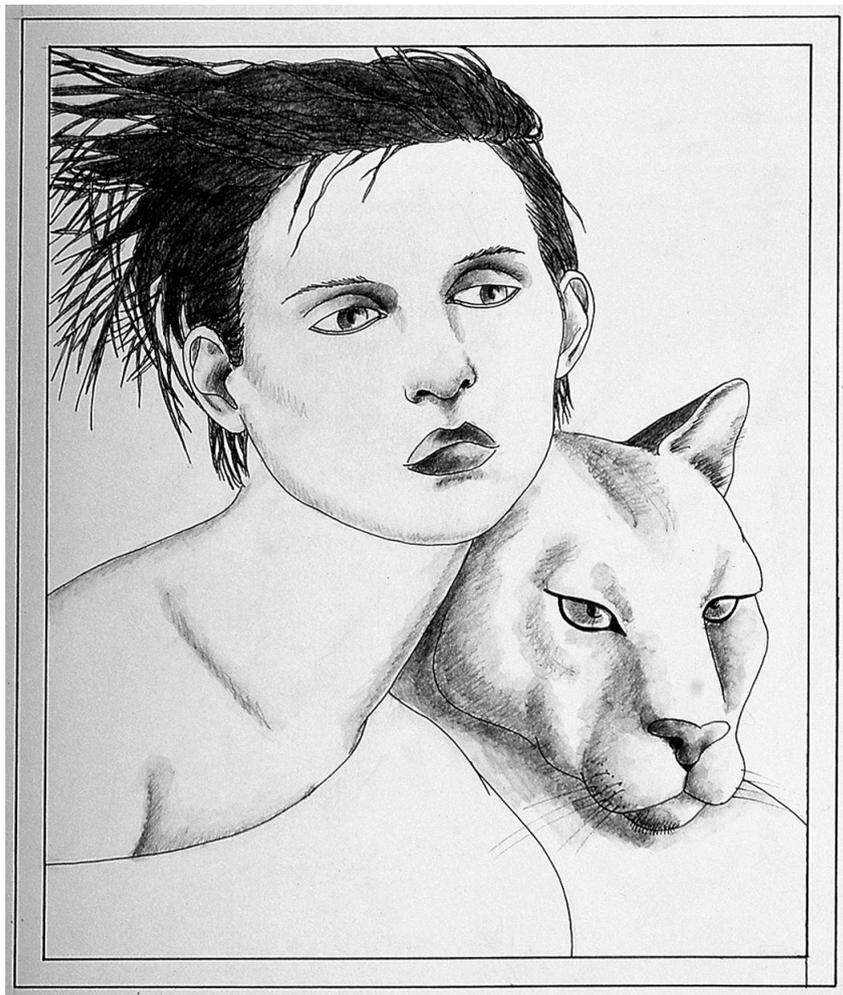
Untitled. Pen and ink with water-soluble graphite, 14”x 18.5” ©Sudie Rakusin.

Sudie Rakusin



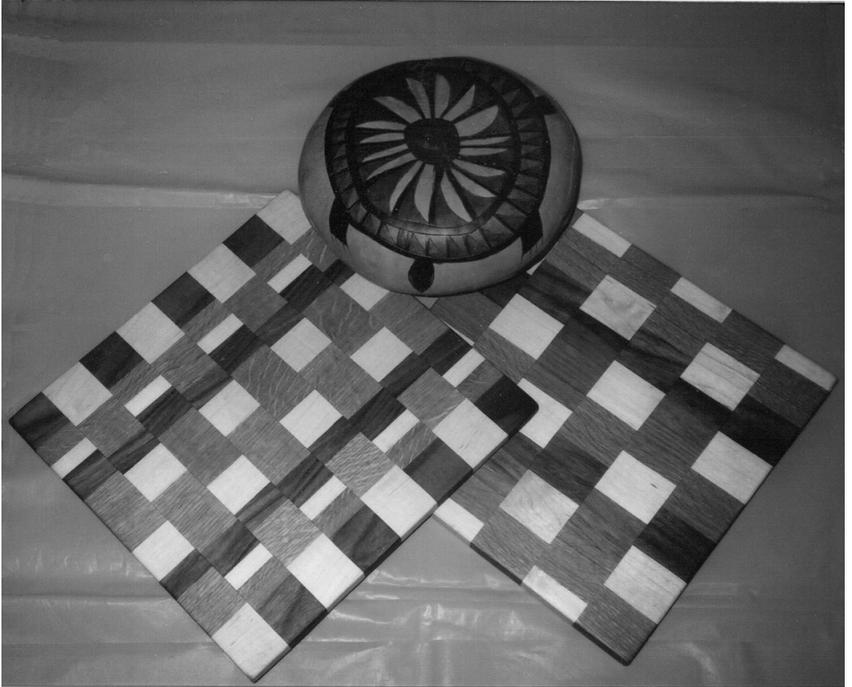
Watchful. Pen and ink with water-soluble graphite, 14" x 18.5" ©Sudie Rakusin.

Sudie Rakusin



Longing. Pen and ink with water-soluble graphite, 14"x 18.5" ©Sudie Rakusin.

Annie Soper



Cutting Boards and Gourd. (Photo taken by Roxanna N. Fiamma)

Linda Strega



Untitled.

Batya Weinbaum



Celebration. Mixed Media.

Melissa West



Lyell Branch of the Tuolumne River, Pothole #2. Ink and acrylic on paper, 2006.

Jenna Weston



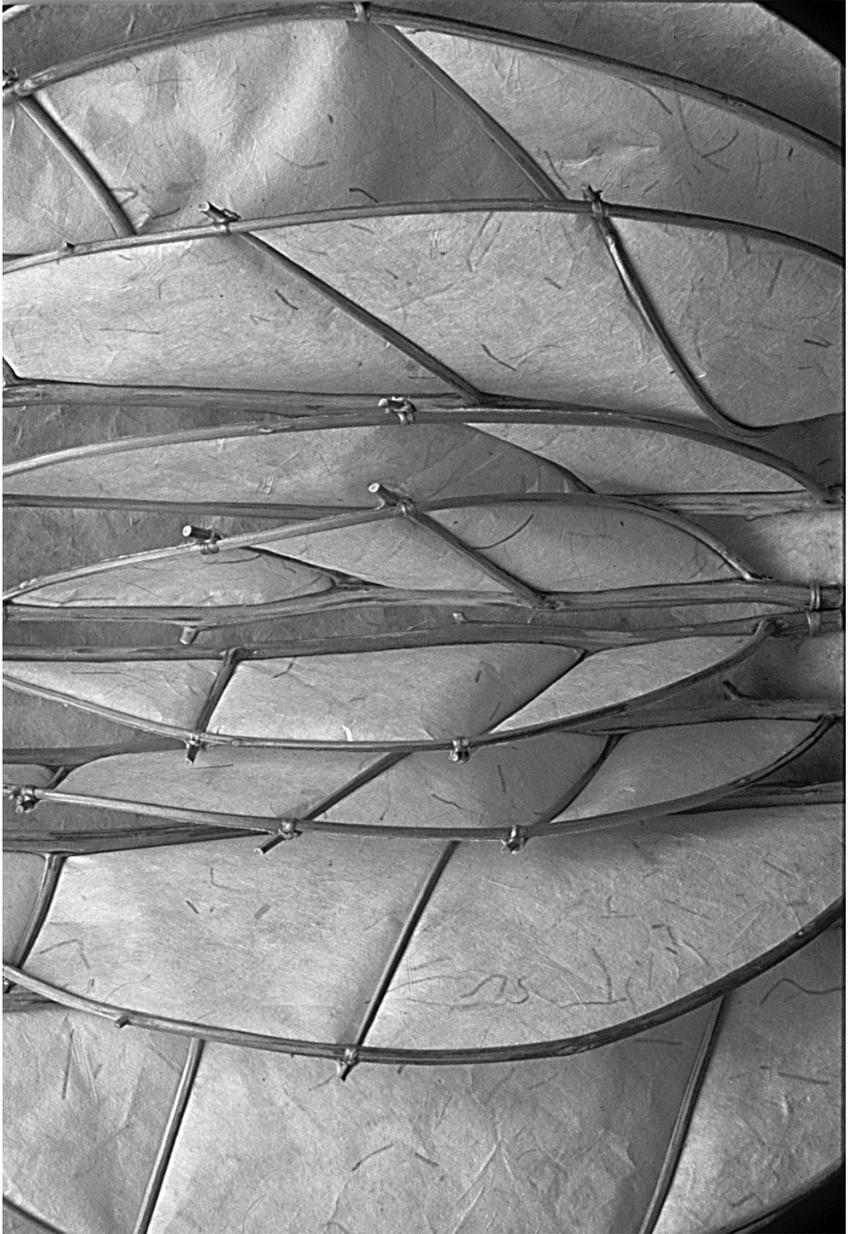
From Inside Out. Acrylic on paper.

Jenna Weston



Lighthold. Wild grapevines and handmade Abaca paper with garlic leaves.

Jenna Weston



Winged Pages (Detail). Twigs and handmade Abaca paper with garlic leaves.
[Turn 90° CW]

Judith K. Witherow



Gray on Gray Butterfly.

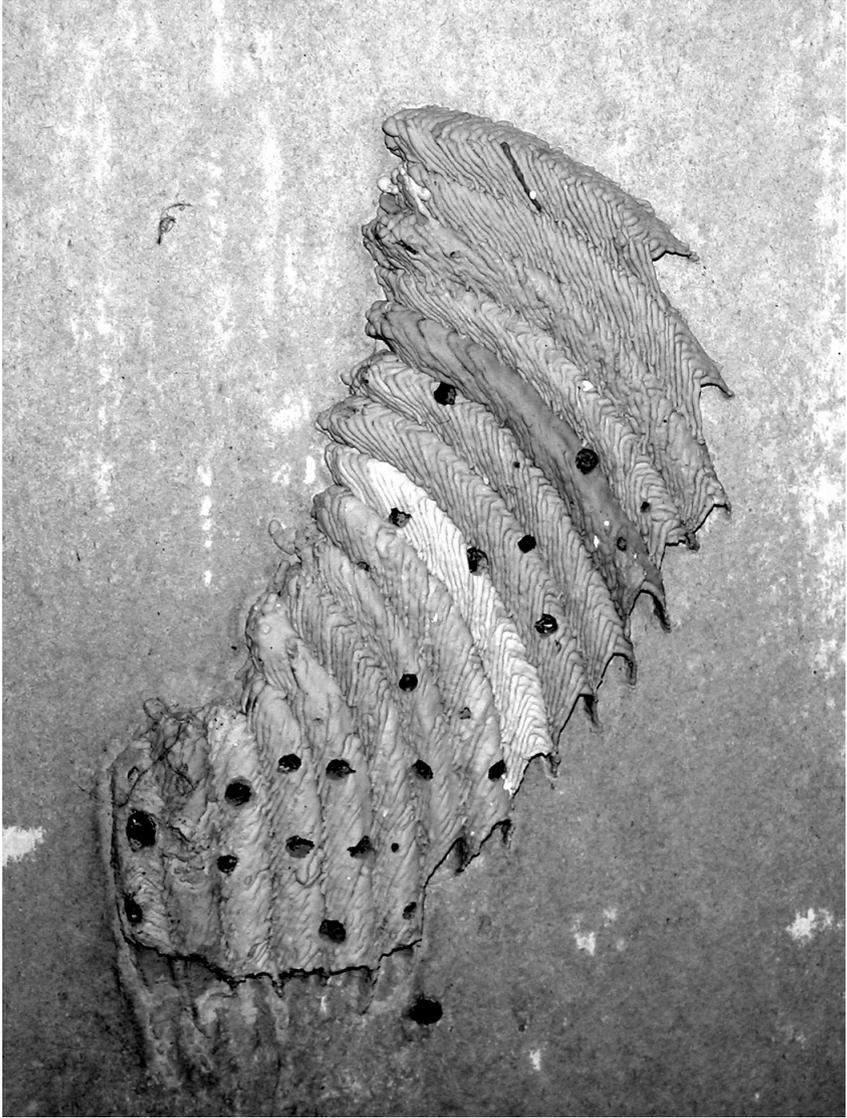
Judith K. Witherow



Spider Web with Dew.

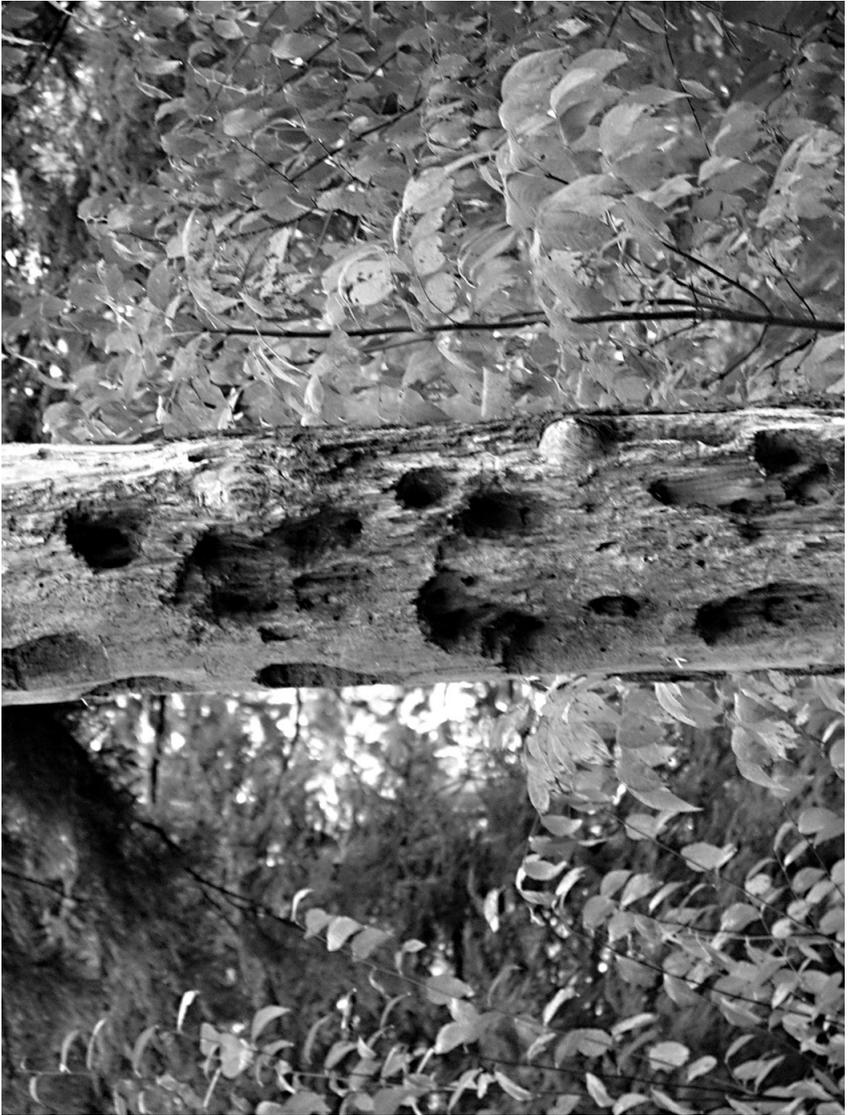
[Turn 90°CW]

Judith K. Witherow



Mud Wasp Nest.

Judith K. Witherow



Nature's Carpentry - Woodpeckers.

zana



Untitled.

zana



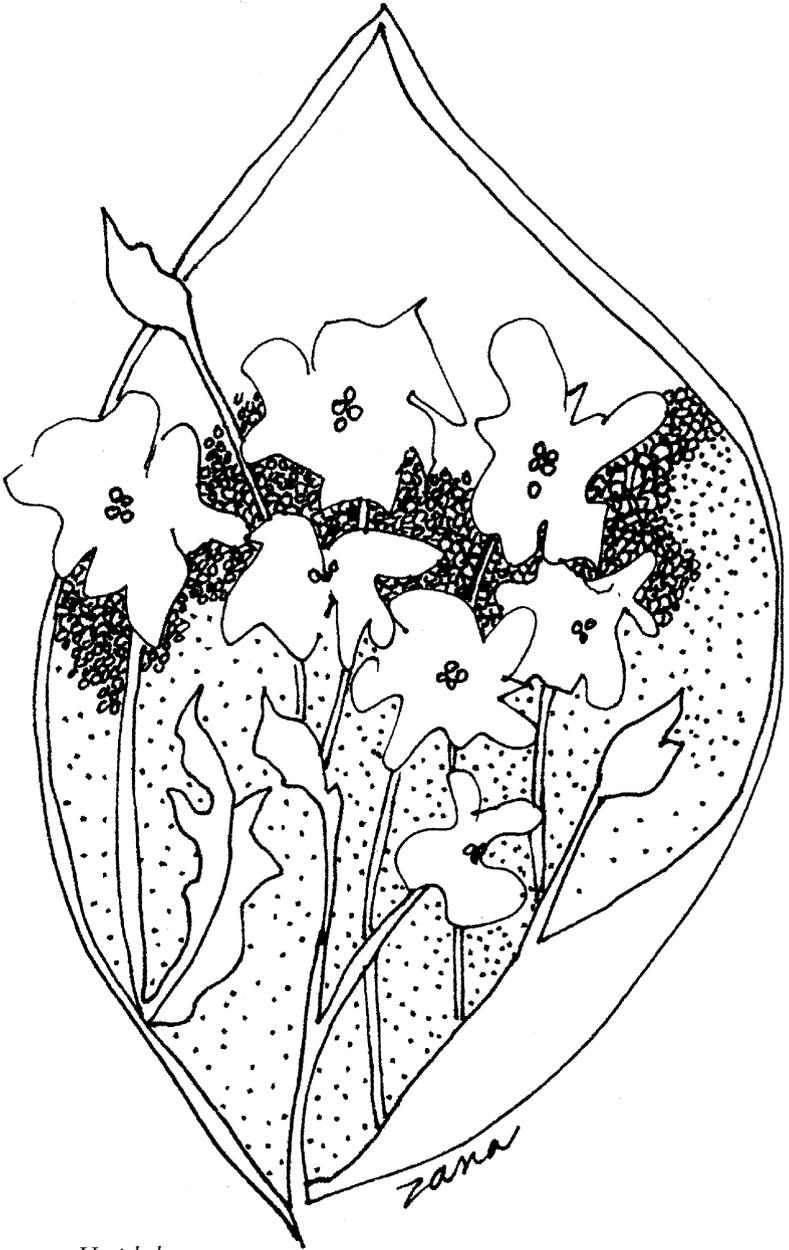
Untitled.

zana



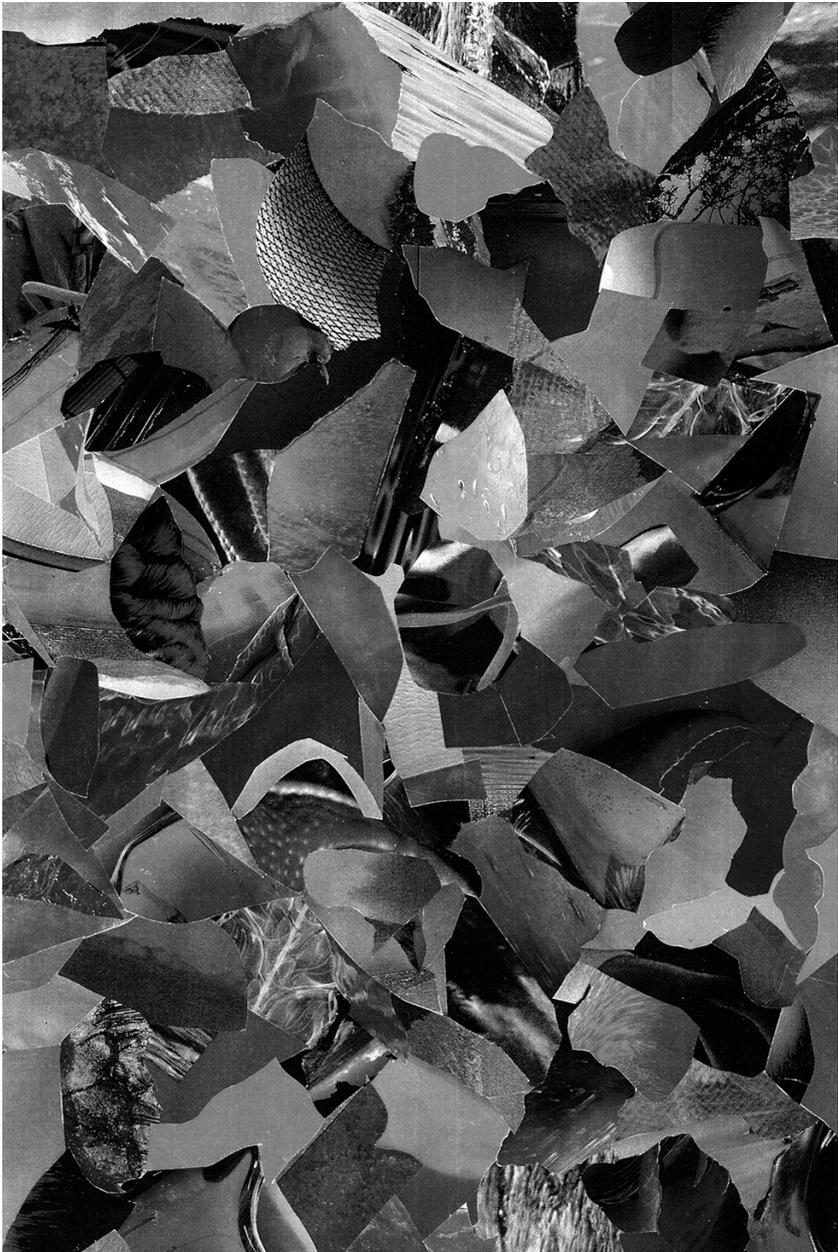
Untitled.

zana



Untitled.

Pandoura Carpenter



Collage #4.

Sandy Calvo

Pandoura's Box: A Tribute to Pandoura Carpenter

Dedicated, once again, to the loving memory of Pandoura Carpenter and all those who knew and loved her.

Prologue

You profoundly changed and shaped my life for over 25 years.

Some people did not know you, Pandoura. Never had the immense joy and challenge of knowing you. They have no context for this telling. They do not know that you were probably the biggest person I have ever met and the most unique, generous, gifted, "the most-fully-yourself" person I have ever encountered.

In being you, you made us all each more ourselves. It is true.

They do not know up close the community now in grief over the loss of you.

All of us: African-American lesbians and lesbians of all colors and backgrounds, heterosexual persons from all walks of life and all places, poets-writers-activists-musicians-singers, spiritualists, persons with disabilities, performers, visual artists, Jews,



Catholics, atheists, agnostics, protesters, painters, drummers, jokers, readers, story-tellers, cooks, teachers, observers of the human condition, champions for social justice, women, children, men, caretakers of the elderly, learners, professionals, undocumented workers, listeners, and deeply human-human beings as, yourself, dear one, once were!

But some. . . . Some do not know this deep loss of you.

1

It is about 2:45 pm, on November 9, 2007, a Friday. Leo Fonseca, the campus aide, in his late fifties, fit, amicable and indispensable to me in my work as an Assistant Principal,

Photo of Pandoura Carpenter by Cathy Cade

and I scour the neighborhood in his huge green Ford truck. Rumor has it that a fight is to break out. And because we are responsible for the welfare of our middle schoolers until they arrive safely home, we drive at a slow crawl, looking for suspects. The “suspects” are our own students—whom we might recognize as potential ruffians “starting mess” in this suburban neighborhood of neat houses, with old dogs lurking in the yards, late roses still blooming, and lawns and shrubs well-groomed by the underpaid Latino gardeners who visit sometimes once or twice a week.

We spy a few young people we recognize close to the elementary school. I leap out of the high truck, a monumental strain on my short legs. Nearly breaking my neck, I stabilize myself and ask, “What are you doing here? Where do you live? And why aren’t you there?” They are used to my multi-pronged questions and reply, “Nothing. Over there. We’re going.” I give them a stern warning of wanting no trouble, they lower their eyes, murmur some kind of acknowledgement that their code was cracked and that the would-be-rumble has been ruined. “Yes, Ms. Calvo. No. We won’t, Ms. Calvo. See you Monday, Ms. Calvo. Have a nice weekend, Ms. Calvo.” I then give them another warning look and nearly break my neck in reverse trying to get back into Leo’s truck. He asks me in Spanish, “*Todo bien?*” I say, “Yeah. I don’t think there’ll be any fights now. We drive back to school, taking a different route. We find other suspects along the way. We give them stern warnings, and they also wish us happy weekends.

After getting in and out of Leo’s truck three or four times, and after a long day and week, I am exhausted. We drive the short distance back to school, but not before hearing on both walkie-talkies, Leo’s and mine, sound off, simultaneously, “The principal wants to see everyone in her office for a short calendar meeting about events scheduled for next week.” I reach for my walkie-talkie and give receipt of the order/message. “I copy,” I say and add, “I’ll be right there. All clear out here. I think we averted whatever was planned.”

When I walk into the principal’s office with my calendar in hand, I sit next to our Program Improvement Coach, Vahn, and one of the counselors, Diane. The other counselor, Kris, and the Principal, Jeanne, sit directly opposite me.

“Are you alright?” Kris asks me, looking directly into my face. “I am not sure,” I reply. “Suddenly I don’t feel so well.” “It’s from chasing kids all over the neighborhood,” Diana suggests. “You’re really dehydrated. Drink some water.”

“Yeah, get her some water, will you?” Jeanne directs Kris.

I sit disoriented for a bit and suddenly a small bottle of Crystal Springs water is placed in front of me, and as I reach to drink, my cell phone rings deep in the front pocket of my pants. I reach in, excuse myself and look to see who it is. “It’s my daughter,” I explain. “She never calls me at work. It must be important. I’ll take it in the other room.”

The details blur now. I don’t recall exactly what Alexis said, but she let me know that my dear friend and her dear godmother, Pandoura, was dead. “We just heard a little while ago. Someone called Judy. Pandoura was all by herself in her apartment.

I don't know very many other details. *How am I going to live without her?*" Alexis asks me this question as my mind is trying to make sense, still, of what she is telling me. I say, "I don't know. I don't know." And I start to cry. And then Alexis is crying too and one of the persons pops out of the principal's office and asks, "Is everything OK with your daughter?" "It's not her," I answer. It is my dear friend Pandoura. She has died."

I leave whoever that person was in the conference room where I had taken the call and walk to my office in tears. The office staff stares at me and then exchange questioning, compassionate glances as I pass. I close the door behind me and try to make sense of the continuing conversation with Alexis, half-crying, half-consoling, but mostly in shock, disbelief, and mounting grief.

2

I see Pandoura in my dream wearing a purple-burgundy hooded jacket like the one she was wearing in the beautiful picture of her that Amy had shown me of a time she and Pandoura had gone to Mount Tamalpais. (Purples, lavenders, and maroons were always Pandoura's colors.)

She is a gigantic spirit (as she always was in life), floating in mid-air.

I understand, somehow, that as a spirit Pandoura has been assigned a job. She is to listen to all these women in bands and single performers and give a recommendation, using a long list of criteria, she obviously has memorized, to the Higher Ups/Higher Up? (God?) as to who is the most deserving of a long and fruitful career and success as a performer. "A kind of 'Destiny Idol'" Marisa offers when I tell her the dream. "Yes, "I say, "Exactly something like that."

Some of the bands are comprised of young women rockers or hip-hop artists. Others are older, solo artists: women performing "mellow" songs or jazz. Pandoura loves this gig, and is happy in the dream: quiet and floating, her full attention given to the performers.

Then I am aware of myself. I am in an audience that is also watching these performances. I turn to the left and see Pandoura. She is still floating, but now next to a table. On that table, there are two tan-brown ceramic bowls, wide at the bottom and narrow at the neck. In the dream, I decipher that one of them is filled with dry lavender and the other with dry fennel. Pandoura indicates them to me and then says, "Burn some of these ..." Or perhaps she said what they were, "Burn some lavender and some fennel." And then I woke up.

3

Marisa is ill. She is a beautiful, large Filipina woman who has been my lover for five years now. Marisa identifies as a "soft butch," something I like to tease her about.... "Emphasis on the *soft*," I like to tell her, because she is a gentle soul, with laughing eyes, and a welcoming way that lets the whole world in with her kindness.

But, now she is coughing next to me in bed. Her books are piled on her night table close to her. Bailey, the beautiful gray-pink and white striped kitten-cat is asleep; stomach exposed and paws in the air next to her head. When Marisa coughs, she wakes up, and then after inquiring how she is, I tell her my dream.

I wonder about the properties of fennel and lavender. I do not know anything specifically about them. I know I could “Google them” and find out. However, there, next to Marisa, I say, “What do you have in that book about horticulture, there next to you?” “Does it say anything about the ‘more spiritual qualities’ of lavender and fennel?”

“Oh, I don’t know. I don’t think much.” We decide to look, anyway. In it, we find out that fennel can “dispel distrust” and that lavender can “diffuse fear” and “promote courage.” “Cool.” I pronounce. “I will get some of each and burn them, just like Pandoura told me to in the dream.”

4

I ask Marisa the next day, “Do we have any fennel in the house?” She says, “I think there may be some in the spice rack.” Sure enough I find some, nice and aged and dry. I wonder how I will get the dry lavender but do not fret over it.

That evening, I am at school late. Everyone has left and being late autumn, it is dark as I emerge out of the school office, car keys in hand. In full stride towards my car, I spy a tall plant in a planter box directly in front of the school office. I smile as I recognize it to be a bush of dry lavender reaching towards the cold night sky. I look around feeling like a vandal and work hard to wrench a good-sized bunch of the woody lavender stems, with their dry blossoms intact.

After dinner, I set a bowl with dry fennel on our altar, which is a small table with a stone top, situated in a cranny in our dining room, created by the winding of our stairs in our condo. I also crop the long lavender stems and set them in an empty water glass on the altar. *They are beautiful, these dry herbs*, I think.

5

Marisa and I continue with bronchitis and colds through Thanksgiving. We decide not to go out and decide to order a pre-prepared Thanksgiving meal from Whole Foods.

Thanksgiving is a particularly emotionally charged day. A day I have always connected with Pandoura and her love for food and cooking.

This Thanksgiving Day it seems the opposite of Pandoura’s way of doing things--that is, to be neglecting the cooking at our house. There is no planning, no shopping, no storing, no cleaning, no chopping, no steaming, no baking, no grilling, no frying. There are no smells. There is no heat. There is no fussing. There are no pans to scour, afterwards. Later the lefts-overs stay in the pre-packaged containers in which they came: neatly lined up in the refrigerator.

I reminisce about all of the amazing food Pandoura had always prepared from scratch, with love and skill: sweet potato pie, greens, cobblers, turkey, muffins, rice, beans, and whatever other delicacies she would “get into her head to invent” from whatever leftovers were in the house. I was missing her food and her generosity with it. But mostly I was missing her companionship that I had enjoyed on many, many Thanksgivings over the years.

Instead, it was a quiet almost sanitized day of being home sick with Marisa, heating up the food that she picked up from the store, and being thankful, not in a sarcastic way, but in a deeply grounded, quiet, and most basic way.

6

The Saturday after Thanksgiving, my nephew, Alerik comes to visit us from Southern California. He wants us to meet his girlfriend, Jessica, and they arrive at our place in San Mateo with another young couple like themselves who are living in Oakland.

They are aware that we are still recovering from our bout with bronchitis and these four young people are gentle, warm, smart, and close with us. The conversation moves through many topics, but mostly there is a concentration on their emerging dedication to social justice and living lives dedicated to progressive causes. They seem young and “in discovery” to me.

Eventually, I get enough energy to cook up a turkey soup made from all of the leftovers and invite them to share it with us. They dig in joyfully, biting at chunks of fresh buttered French bread that I have also offered for the meal, while talking, listening, and sharing.

The exchange during this brief visit is good and deep and I kept thinking Pandoura would have loved to have met these young people who are moving in the world with a sense of purpose.

Alerik and his little crew do not linger and are gone before 9 pm. I decide after they have left to finally burn the dry lavender and fennel on the altar. I sprinkle both of these herbs over the tops of some short votive candles that I have placed on a small glass platter. The lavender sprigs catch on fire and fall into the melted wax, the fennel also catches on fire, falling within the flames and the wax. Soon, a sweet, herby smell fills the air. It feels encompassing and encouraging. We are exhausted after having a quiet “slowing down” for the evening and we have cleaned up, fed the four cats, cleaned their litter boxes, and have closed windows and shutters, and completed all other parts of our nightly routine. I check the lit candles on the glass plate before heading upstairs. Everything seems to be turning off as the candles have very low fires and the sprigs of lavender and the fennel have tiny flames as they float on the melted wax.

I go upstairs. Read my novel in bed, surrounded by the coziness of the cats cuddled on the bed with us. I drift off to sleep. In my sleep I hear some kind of breaking sound and the next thing I know Marisa is sitting straight up in bed

yelling, “Fire!” I come to consciousness right away also sitting up, then bolting out of the bed as I see a large glow from the stairwell, where at the bottom of which, I knew I had left the candles dwindling down to turning themselves off. But this did not happen. They had not turned themselves off. Instead, a large bouquet of flames sits atop of the small table. It is truly frightening.

Marisa has run in front of me down the stairs, but I am close behind. She tries to blow the fire down and it only gains greater force. “No. I think we have to snuff it to get it out,” I direct quietly. “With what?” Marisa desperately asks at no one in particular. “The towels---the towels on top of the dryer,” I offer frantically. The next thing I know, Marisa is throwing a heavy, wet towel on the fire. It works and the towel snuffs out the fire. We breathe heavily and with relief as we become aware more acutely of the smoke alarm that has also been blaring for the last few minutes. Marisa goes from the altar back up the stairs quickly to disarm the alarm. I stand in front of the ashy mess, noting that the glass plate in which I had placed the candles has broken in pieces. The wax has run all over the stony top of the altar, but curiously enough, I note that NOTHING else has caught on fire---not the left-over sprig of dry lavender that had remained in the empty water glass nor the large stems of dry reeds I had also placed on the altar. Only a contained area had caught on fire and was, thankfully,now, snuffed out.

The alarm has quieted. Marisa shouts in a muffled way to me, “Is everything alright?” I say, “Yes. How about up there?” She sighs deeply, and responds, “Yes. Yes, it is.” As I plod up the stairs to meet up with Marisa at the top of the stairs, I think to myself. *“I know Pandoura had something to do with this. I should know better than to mess with the spirit of Pandoura.”*

7

My friend Marty and I write together on a rainy Sunday afternoon about a week after the fire. I begin to write this piece. I tell her about Pandoura’s passing, the dream, the fire....Marty laughs. She says to me, “You don’t think Pandoura was going to insinuate, even in the after life, that obtaining a life where courage, honesty, and dispelling distrust and fear are as easy as burning dry lavender and dry fennel on your altar, do you? That Pandoura has had the last laugh at your expense.”

Annoyed at what seems to be an astute and accurate observation on Marty’s part, I reluctantly find myself agreeing with Marty’s analysis. *“That Pandoura,”* I whisper under my breath with annoyance, admiration, grief, and love. . . *“I miss you. ...”*

8

Judy, Pandoura’s life partner of over 28 years comes over. She brings pictures of Pandoura that Marisa and I have agreed to scan and organize into a power point presentation infused with music for Pandoura’s memorial to be held on January 20th, 2008 the day before Martin Luther King’s birthday is to be commemorated.

I am overwhelmed looking at these amazing images of Pandoura and her family and friends over the years. I am honored to partake in this task of synchronizing these images with music in her memory, a gift to a community greatly suffering her loss.

Later, Judy and I walk around the lagoon that is just in front of our home. It is a gorgeous, crisp late autumn day. We walk in quiet, close grief, as if we are, together absorbing the truth of Pandoura's parting from this life.

Judy asks me, "How did Pandoura impact your life?"

I think for a bit and answer her from deep within me, "I knew Pandoura since I was a young lesbian at the age of 25. For the last 25 years or so she changed and shaped my life profoundly."

"I know, Judy responds, quietly, "But how?" she insists.

Again, I retreat into thought and then reply, "In any way that anyone could have made me feel shame about who I was, Pandoura made me feel pride. If someone thought I should feel shame for being a lesbian, Pandoura did not. When someone made me feel as though I was something less because I was an immigrant who had to learn to speak English, she did not. If someone thought that being a Latina was to be ridiculed or put down, Pandoura delighted in all aspects of my culture teasing about our food, and language, and admiring our customs and ways. If someone thought I "should get a real job" because I was a teacher and worked with young people, Pandoura always saw this as the most worthy work: to touch the lives of youth and bring them to positive productivity; to teach them that they were "young, gifted and Black", or Latino, or whatever they were, was "the highest call," as far as Pandoura was concerned. She believed profoundly in education and the empowerment of youth, not towards their later life as adults, but as youth, thriving and bringing forth all their fresh energy, enthusiasm and possibility. If anyone thought there should be shame in being fat, Pandoura taught me there was the possibility of positive body image and that a large woman can be beautiful and partake fully in everything: swimming, dancing, table tennis, any sport, sex, everything! If anyone were to make me feel shame for having a daughter with a disability or feeling shame for bringing forth a family led by two lesbians of color, Pandoura cheered the effort. She celebrated my forays into the visual arts, complimenting and encouraging my artwork. She loved my writing and we were writers together. Any place that anyone could have ever made me feel shame or discomfort, Pandoura brought forth pride. We all know what amazing hugs Pandoura could give. Those hugs were symbolic, too. She embraced me, but not only me and all of whom I was, but all that each of us was, could be, and wanted to be. . ."

That was my answer to Judy.

9

Marisa and I stay up until four o'clock on the morning the night before the memorial putting together an amazing Power Point that threads together Pandoura's life through images and music.

Pandoura's brother Mark, his son, Mark Junior, and Judy come over earlier in the afternoon to collect the pictures we have been scanning for days. Judy had hurt her knees having taken a tumble earlier in the day and was limping. After allowing her to ice her knees while Mark and Markie-Mark and I take a walk around the lagoon, they soon leave. I feel moved by their brief presence in our home. Something I cannot quite explain.

10

At the memorial, held at the Redwood Community Center in Berkeley, many persons connected with the many sides of Pandoura and from many walks of life come together. Friends, family members representing a wide array of interests, causes, and aspects of Pandoura's life come together in celebration of her life and in grief over her loss.

At the memorial, women tell amazing stories about Pandoura. They highlight her courage, spunk, commitment, her passions, her pranks, her reverence for life *and her* irreverent, indomitable spirit. They all talk about how she changed and shaped their lives with love, humor, grief, memory, pain, admiration, nostalgia. We cannot gather up in a small way all that Pandoura was or represented.

My daughter, Alexis, speaks, haltingly and hauntingly beautifully of her grief. Pandoura had been in her life ever since Alexis was a year old. Now at the age of 25 (the same age at which I had met Pandoura) Alexis stands in front of the group, appearing frail and strong at the same time: this valiant, striking young woman whom Pandoura assisted through many of her challenges with Asperger Syndrome. Alexis makes two points that really stick in my mind, besides the tellings of the "wild Wednesday" excursions Pandoura used to take her on. Alexis offers, "Pandoura lived in an unexpected way. ...and she died in the same way that she lived: in an unexpected way."

Alexis finishes her sharing about Pandoura and how much she will miss her by postulating that "perhaps now Pandoura has a very important role to fill wherever she is as a spirit, because "Pandoura is now an ancestor, and that is a very big role for her to have to fill."

Alexis's comments remind me briefly of my dream in which Pandoura was busy as a spirit, fulfilling her role in choosing the fate of performers as a judge in what Marisa had referred to as "a kind of Destiny Idol."

I, too, speak and tell about how Pandoura changed and shaped my life. The words tumble out of my mouth. I tell about how I heard about her death, the dream, the fire, how I answered Judy's question: how in every way that anyone could have made me feel SHAME, Pandoura exacted PRIDE. I end by saying I agree with Marty's analysis. Though there was always encouragement from Pandoura, she knew that the hardships and challenges of life couldn't be solved in easy, passive ways: No. One could not just burn some dry lavender and fennel and hope that distrust would be dispelled, and courage and honesty would suddenly

flow. Pandoura would have encouraged the burning of these herbs, but would have looked any one of us right in the eye, and told us not to kid ourselves: these things are not so easily obtained but have to be fought for and lived in life, in our own flesh, day to day and wrenched out of the experience of life, itself. "Pandoura," I conclude to the group in grief, "knew this. She would have been amused at any shortcut any of us would have tried to take. She knew the essence of our lives demands that we live out the realities that bring forth courage and honesty. . . She knew this as sure as she was Pandoura."

I hear applause at the end of my words, which startle and overwhelm me as a celebration of Pandoura's legacy and a deep nostalgic missing of Pandoura overtakes me in front of all of these people.

It is real: she is gone. Pandoura has long moved into the sweet hereafter. . .

11

The Power Point presentation follows. The large group of women and men respond with tears, whoops, oohs and ahs, and inconsolable crying from many. We share a saying good bye to this amazing woman together as we watch pictures of her, her family in Rochester, her family and friends in Denver, images that capture her many causes: as a political activist, writer, performer, mediator, director, and jazz aficionado. We delight in the images of her tender, sometimes tumultuous, close, and inspiring relationship with Judy. We see images of her artwork, her photographs (yes, including all those toilets in pastel colors in a heap) and of her dear friends and family in the Bay Area. The music moves all of us as we hear Oscar Petersen, Tony Bennett, Ella Fitzgerald Tracy Chapman, Sweet Honey in the Rock, and conclude with Nina Simone's "I wish I knew. . ." We end with multiple images of Pandoura herself, laughing, standing out in nature, swimming, playing ping pong, wielding a cane as if to hit someone, listening, reading, loving, drumming, playing piano, writing, thinking--being Pandoura.

The one of the last captions reads: *Pandoura: forever in our hearts.* And the very last graphic on the screen with the credit reads: *Marisa Martinez and Sandy Calvo, ©2008.* When the last numbers of 2008 roll up onto the screen, I think to myself, "*Damn. Pandoura did not join us here. Here in 2008.*" That says it all.

Afterwards, we all talk, hug, cry, reminisce, eat, and watch videos of Pandoura's performances with WryCrips. Women make art projects of little boxes assembled with pictures of Pandoura and of her art on them. They select stones to take with them, because Pandoura loved stones and rocks. Women read flyers, converse, and look through publications focused on Pandoura's many, many causes. There are myriads of these: old and new. Copies of Pandoura's artwork and some original work adorn the walls, as do more pictures of our dear Pandoura.

Soon, I find myself saying good-bye to the roomful of people that I have known and with whom I have shared Pandoura for many, many years. As we attempt to exit, many individuals in the room thank Marisa and I for putting together the

presentation and many want access to it, to the pictures, the music, and to the artwork. This is more than what we can take in at this point and arrange to answer these requests, later.

12

The world is a diminished place without Pandoura in it. But it is also a more amazing, truthful, safe place with possibilities for many, for all---- because Pandoura La Rose Carpenter loved us in her time here, and because we loved her.

I miss her dearly, as does all of the community that reveled in all that she brought to us, all that she was, and finally, all that she asked each of us to be . . . individually and as a community.

Pandoura Carpenter (1948 - 2007) was an artist, writer, political activist, mediator, and multicultural maven. She participated in the Oakland Black Writer's Guild, was an early member of the Mexican Museum, co-founded the *Black Lesbian Newsletter*, edited the anthology *Ordinary Women Extraordinary Lives*, supported the Black Repertory Theater in Berkeley, directed a play at Brava Theater, and wrote and acted for Wry Crips Disabled Women's Theater. She was a founding member of Progressives Challenging Anti-Semitism multicultural support group. As a taxi cab driver, she was known as "Pat" and was loved by many of her regular fares. She was currently working on a book about her cab driving experiences at the North Berkeley Senior Center writing class. She has sold her artwork at the Women's Crafts Fair at Fort Mason. Pandoura was a skilled mediator with Conciliation Forum of Oakland where she taught mediation skills to young people. She was a mediator at East Bay Community Mediation in Berkeley at the time of her death. She was a member of Kehilla Community Synagogue in Oakland and a member of Lavender Seniors in Berkeley. Pandoura was a natural coalition builder. In addition to engaging with many African and Caribbean cultures, she embraced her family's Native American (Powhatan) ancestry and supported Native Rights. She attended many February commemorations of Executive Order 9066, which interned Japanese Americans. And also witnessed the testimonies which lead to reparations for those interned. In the wake of the first Gulf War, she spoke up for the rights of Muslims, Arabs, and Jews. She presented at FACING A CHALLENGE WITHIN, a multicultural conference on anti-Semitism in Oakland. Her advocacy for Black, Jewish, Arab, Native American, Asian and Latina/o Rights was melded with her concern for Lesbian, Gay and Disability Rights. And, as a large woman, she fought size prejudice daily.

Book Reviews

Janell Moon, Reviewer

Jeanne Lupton. *but then you danced: tanka*. Raw Art Press, 2006.

Jeanne Lupton's *but then you danced* is a whimsical and serious portrait of the poet's life told from the perspective of her later years in 47 tanka and seven cutouts. Tanka is a Japanese poetic form from which haiku later derived, and this ancient form is well suited to the poet's very current story.

*60th September
honeybees wild
in yellow blossoms
I was born
for middle age*

A reading of *but then you danced* offers an experience of the joys and anguish of this shared life in a body on earth.

*crossing the Bay Bridge
with a friend who fears heights
I do not mention
that once, in despair, I
stopped my car just here, and jumped*

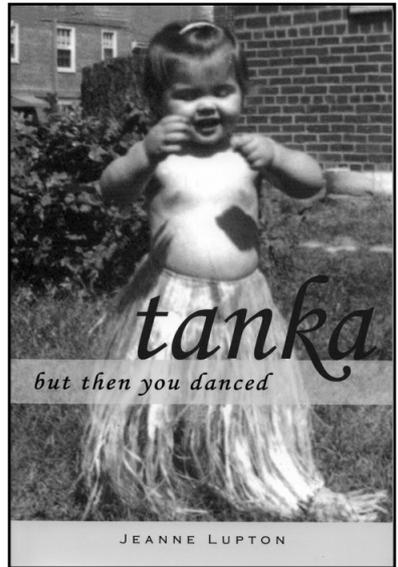
With fresh perception and crisp images Lupton's short poems evoke a life well lived outside conventional stereotypes.

*mondo condo
a neighbor's passionate cries
crescendo
piercing my celibate dream
now I love her too*

There are many well-crafted poetry books on the market. Lupton's book offers, in addition, a bright spark of awareness of what it is to live and love.

*your touch
unshrouds the radiance
at my center
I catch my breath
reborn*

I highly recommend *but then you danced*, available from the author at jeany98@aol.com.



Julie R. Enszer, Reviewer

Lesbian Liberation: Our Past Reconsidered

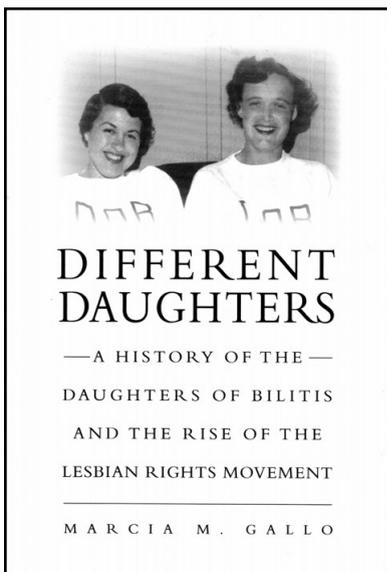
Gallo, Marcia M. *Different Daughters*. New York, NY: Carroll & Graf, 2006. 274 pp. Cloth.

Simpson, Ruth. *From the Closet To the Courts*. Washington, DC: Take Root Consulting, 2007. 176 pp. Paper.

Marcia M. Gallo's *Different Daughters: A History of the Daughters of Bilitis and the Rise of the Lesbian Rights Movement* is an extraordinary contribution to Lesbian herstory. Gallo's comprehensive history of the Daughters of Bilitis (pronounced, I learned for the first time, Bill-EE-tis, and a reference to a mythical female who seduced Sappho, invented by the nineteenth century poet, Pierre Louys) is meticulously researched, engagingly written, and a treasure trove of information and insight. *Different Daughters* chronicles the Daughters of Bilitis (DOB) from the initial organizing in the mid-1950s through its eventual demise in the late-1970s.

This immensely readable book draws on well over two dozen interviews with former DOB members as well as significant archival research including the review of numerous Lesbian publications from the time. Gallo brings to life both the daily lives of lesbians in the 1950s and 60s and she puts the organization and its work into a thoughtful and meaningful historical context.

Many things are striking while reading this history. Gallo demonstrates a clear continuum of activism on behalf of lesbians or "female homosexuals" since the second World War. This continuity is both meaningful and inspiring; prior to Gallo's book, it was in danger of being forgotten. In addition to recounting – and celebrating – the lives of dozens of women who made DOB operate, Gallo also illuminates the ways controversies have been persistent in the Lesbian community. Gallo explores the challenges Lesbians encountered working with gay men in the homophile movement because of sexism – especially as the feminist movement began growing dramatically in 1968 and 1969. She gives appropriate attention to the questions of race in



DOB – a multiracial organization struggling with racism internally and externally during the Civil Rights movement.

Gallo reconstructs the controversy at the 1973 West Coast Lesbian Conference held in Los Angeles. On the opening night, Friday April 13th, Beth Elliot was scheduled to perform. Elliot was the vice president of the San Francisco Daughters of Bilitis and a male-to-female transsexual. When she was on stage, a former friend screamed, “There’s a man on stage,” and, according to Gallo, this resulted in “furor, nearly tearing apart the conference.” By looking at these and other controversies with a clear and inquisitive eye, Gallo provides both historical context to her readers and opens contemporary possibilities for new and different resolutions today.

Different Daughters consistently reminded me of the significance of books like it to the lesbian community. We need books like this: thoughtful, well-researched, well-written histories of our past that are accessible to general readers. We need more of them. *Different Daughters* also reminded me through the stories of the DOB of the importance of books, magazines, and all kinds of printed materials that can be circulated among our communities to talk with one another and engage one another. The stories that women shared in the book about *The Ladder*, the publication of DOB, were passionate and inspiring. Even though we live in an age during which communication is greatly facilitated by new technologies, *Different Daughters* reminded me of the significance of physical printed objects recording our lives.

Another book published recently, *From the Closet to the Courts*, also holds important history for Lesbians. In 1969, at the first meeting of the Daughters of Bilitis that Ruth Simpson attended, she thought, “I have come home to my people.” Simpson became involved with the Daughters of Bilitis and eventually was the President of the New York chapter. In 1976, Simpson’s book, *From the Closet to the Courts*, was published by The Viking Press. It has just been re-released for its thirtieth anniversary.

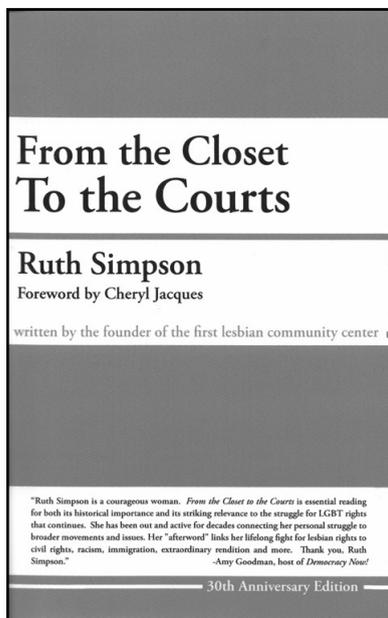
Simpson’s book is an engaging account of her activism on behalf of Lesbians. Some of the most delightful stories are of young women – and their families – calling her and her lover, Ellen, because they were publicly listed as members of DOB. Simpson takes on the issues blocking Lesbian equality head on. With chapters covering families, the church, feminism, psychiatry, and the courts, among others, this is an interesting and comprehensive report on one woman’s perspective on Lesbianism in the mid-1970s.

I wouldn’t have known about this book without receiving a review copy of this new release as a 30th Anniversary Edition, and Gallo didn’t cite the book – or Ruth Simpson – in *Different Daughters*. *From the Closet to the Courts* is a delightful book and an engaging read, but I wonder about the importance of re-releasing books. A quick Internet search told me that nearly two dozen copies of the original printing of this book as a mass paperback are available from various used book vendors around the United States.

While it is a fine edition that has been released on this 30th anniversary, to read *From the Closet to the Courts* beside Gallo's *Different Daughters* is to see the limitations of re-release clearly. There are aspects about the book that are as relevant and timely, but there are also treatments and analyses in the book that are dated, occasionally embarrassingly so. The lens of retrospect is absent as it must be from a reprint, but even Cheryl Jacques' cursory introduction is missing the perspective of history. Ultimately, what excites me about *From the Closet to the Courts* is what the Lesbians who read this book might do with it along with further interviews and research to help us all understand more about our Lesbian heritage.

Meanwhile, for those looking for books from our Lesbian past, if you have exhausted friends, the local libraries, and the interlibrary loan system, I recommend bookfinder.com. By aggregating thousands of listings of used books, I've been able to find some great lesbian-feminist gems from days past. There is much worth reading from the past, but the most important thing, I believe, is to read it and then to build on it. Write yourself; share new perspectives on Lesbian herstory in stories, articles, and books with us all.

Julie R. Enszer is a poet and lesbian activist based in University Park, MD. You can read more of her work at www.JulieREnszer.com.



Contributor's Notes

sierra lonepine briano: i am a 61 year old lesbian, living and working at artsprings retreat for women artists and writers. i also spend as much time as i can traveling and leading art workshops for women in mexico. as a child i liked to make things with my hands and play in the dirt. when i began going to school i was introduced to pastels and did quite well with them. however, my artistic desires were not fostered in my working class first generation italian family. it took about 30 years for me to get to my true passion which is painting. i went to art school at age 35 and graduated with a bfa at 39. i have been painting and showing my work ever since. color is my passion. that is one of the reasons that i find mexico inspiring. i also like addressing unpopular subjects. my latest body of work is entitled "immigration reform." in this work i depict members of the bush administration working in the fields and doing other types of labor that is typically done by immigrants. most of my work is figurative, big, bold and colorful. i want to make people look, not that most artists don't, but i like to create 'in yer face' kinds of paintings. i plan to continue making art until i take my last breath.....and maybe beyond. for information about my artwork or tripout art and adventure vacations for women, contact me at sierrabriano@att.net

Dean Brittingham: Award-winning photographer Dean Brittingham is a longtime radical lesbian feminist living in Sonoma County, California and finding peace and love in the natural world.

Lynn Brown has always been a poet and lover of language, the creation of gardens, vision and touch with the intention towards friendship and healing.

Cathy Cade has been photographing women at work, union women, lesbian mothering, and lesbian feminists in the San Francisco Bay Area since the early 1970s. She has a business helping people tell their stories using their photographs. She lives in Oakland and is working on an East Bay Lesbian Herstory project. Visit www.CathyCade.com.

Sandy Calvo originally from Costa Rica, is an lesbian, writer, poet, visual artist and long time educator. Her writings have appeared in local publications. Her artwork, which has appeared in magazines and publications such as the We'Moon calendar, has been exhibited and collected throughout the Bay Area. Sandy is currently a middle school Assistant Principal in San Mateo where she is living with her partner, Marisa, and their four cats: Cosette, Jack, Bay, and Harley.

Lenore Chinn began painting when she was growing up in San Francisco's Richmond district, focusing on portraiture to explore the super-realistic depiction of a wide spectrum of people of color, lesbians and same sex couples. Employing a coded iconography rooted in a lesbian/gay cultural perspective, these images fuse

an Asian aesthetic of sparseness and clarity with visual narratives that counteract the “magic-truth rituals” of racial and gender construction. Chinn’s inclusion in Harmony Hammond’s *“Lesbian Art in America: A Contemporary History,”* the first study of American lesbian visual artists, vastly expanded her national visibility. Her portraits documenting the historical evolution of San Francisco’s queer community challenge the social conventions that currently constitute the racialized order of things. The artist has been a founding member of Lesbians in the Visual Arts and Queer Cultural Center and is affiliated with the Asian American Women Artists Association. For more information visit:

<http://www.queerculturalcenter.org/Pages/Chinn/ChinIndex.html>

Karen Cooper: retired park ranger 58, spending time in nature with friends, cycling, kayaking and shooting photos.

Tee A. Corinne (1943 – 2006): A regular contributor to *Sinister Wisdom*, Tee Corinne’s artwork has been identified with the journal since her cover and poster for issue #3 in 1977. This beloved photograph was selected for the cover of *Sinister Wisdom’s 30th Anniversary Celebration Issue*. Tee was the author of one novel, three collections of short stories, and several poetry chapbooks. Her most recent book of art, *Intimacies: Photos by Tee A. Corinne*, published by Last Gasp of San Francisco, was a Lambda Literary Award finalist. A gifted and versatile artist, Tee worked with photography, line drawing, paint, sculpture, ceramics and printing, and she also published erotic fiction and poetry and reviews. Favorite cover artist for lesbian publisher Naiad, Corinne’s work is found on bookshelves across the Lesbian Nation.

Jan Couvillon: I began my photo journey over forty years ago as a fine arts photographer, took a side trip in photojournalism and quickly returned to fine art. I not only love to find the delicate beauty in nature and cityscapes but to also portray the quiet strength the beauty holds. I love to write and perform with Mothertongue Feminist Readers Theater and I am a member of Old Lesbians Organizing for Change (OLOC). I served on the board of Lesbians in the Visual Arts (LVA) and am currently Activities Manager for New Leaf Outreach to Elders.

Max Dashu is an independent scholar who founded the Suppressed Histories Archives in 1970. She has built a collection of some 15,000 slides and 100 visual presentations on global women’s history, spiritual traditions, and the origins of domination. See <http://www.suppressedhistories.net>, and for Max’s art, <http://www.maxdashu.net>.

Fran Day is an activist, educator, writer, reader, editor, and vegetarian. She was born in 1942 in Nebraska and grew up rural working class. She has been active in numerous social change movements and was part of the following collectives in Denver, Colorado during the 70s: *Big Mama Rag Newsjournal*, Woman to Woman

Bookcenter, and Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW). She helped organize the first Take Back the Night March and Rally in Denver. She has helped plan and organize many additional gatherings, forums, actions, speakouts, readings, and events. She lives in northern California where she teaches part time at Sonoma State University; she enjoys connecting with Lesbians around the world through her work editing *Sinister Wisdom Journal*. She is passionate about Lesbian culture, community and friendship.

Julie R. Enszer is a writer and lesbian activist based in University Park, Maryland. You can read more of her work at www.JulieREnszer.com.

Roxanna N. Fiamma: I live in Northern California with my partner, Fran. I have been a Lesbian Separatist since the mid 70s.

Francine, born in 1957, lives on land in France with another Lesbian. She is a plant and cat lover. She has Multiple Chemical Sensitivities. Never het, she is interested in Lesbian culture, especially separatist, organic gardening, and connecting with other Lesbian Separatists and Lesbian Feminists.

Tina L. Freimuth, is an ecofeminist publisher, artist and earth activist. She co-founded and publishes the *WomanSource Rising News* with her partner Barbara Dickinson and guides the promotion of the *We'Moon*, through her work with Mother Tongue Ink. She lives on 46 plus acres in Southern Oregon, desiring to create a permaculture design center that provides respite and environmental education and network opportunities to traveling activists. She is a trained community organizer with a Masters Degree in Social work from Boston University, and, an untrained artist. She feels a deep kinship with trees, wondering if she ever was one in a former life. Her oil paintings are bright and expressionistic, exaggerating the wild places on this blessed Mother Earth. Tina can be reached at: treeesong@yahoo.com.

Kim Fusch is a wild Texan and world traveller who came to California to continue her film industry work. Scleroderma nearly felled her and she moved up to Sonoma County to realize her dream of living in the country, but be near big city hospitals in San Francisco. Surviving the disease entailed time which she spent teaching herself desk-top publishing. This led to becoming Layout person for *Women's Voices Newspaper* and later also *Sinister Wisdom* under Fran Day's editorship. She considers herself honored to contribute to these important publications and hopes to do so for a long time. One of her favorite sayings is "Speak the Truth... and run away!"

Pat Gargaetas: I am PGar, photographing since 1967, working nearly exclusively in black and white until 1990, doing portraiture, landscapes, urbanscapes, shapescapes, bodyscapes. Using color, I photographed lesbians' home altars, the subject of a Masters thesis in Anthropology completed in 1993. In 1996, I

escaped urban environs with my life, if not my health, and for the next nine years photographed my cat, the birds, my garden/shrine, the ever-changing daily views from the Ledge on the Edge, 1600 feet up on Kaluna Cliff, Lost Coast, Turtle Island. In 2001, I began learning PhotoShop which gave me back photography, lost to chemical sensitivities in the 90s. I came down from the Ledge last year and am Loose on Turtle Island, gleefully mining images from my files of numerous negatives, scanning projects including the Altar Project, creating CafePress image and commentary shops, practicing new tech skills with a digital camera, and generally trying to fulfill a mission to remain a practicing social irritant.

Diane F. Germain is a French-American Feminist-Lesbian psychiatric social worker who created and conducted a strength group for Women Survivors of Incest and/or Childhood Molest for five years. She was arrested and jailed for protesting the objectification of women in the “Myth CaliPORNia Kontest” in 1986. She was a staff cartoonist for *Hot Wire: The Journal of Women’s Music and Culture of Chicago* and for *Lesbian News* of Los Angeles from 1987 to 1995. She was a collective member of Califia Community, a feminist education retreat. She creates humor as a hedge against the heterosexist phallogocentric patriarchy and to tickle the Lesbians.

Marjorie Greenhut: OUT AGAIN: Here I am a 67+ lesbian, coming out once again! This time it is as an Artist. I am mostly self-taught. Photography has been my main gig; but I also do watercolor and various forms of sculpture. I say, I am “coming out” because for the first time I want to claim the title of Artist over other identities. Through the years, among other titles, I have claimed mother, wife, Lesbian partner, marriage and family therapist, tennis player, landowner and workshop leader. My partner and I own and live at Artsprings, a tranquil piece of land we have established as a retreat for women artists and writers. The year 2008, is to be the year, I claim my creative life to the fullest. I have semi-retired with this as my goal. My photographs have been exhibited off and on and I have shown some of my other artwork in group and solo shows, but never with the feeling that I was truly worthy to do so. I now believe I can claim the ARTIST within and express her without. To contact Artsprings, you can email Marj at m.greenhut@att.net or phone Sierra or Marj at 503-985-9549. We are open to work exchanges, as we have 12 beautiful, wooded acres that always need more attention.

Morgan Gwenwald has been documenting the women’s/lgbtq community for most of her life, compiling thousands of images of events, actions and people, along with a pioneering portfolio of lesbian erotic imagery. Recently she picked up a Diana camera and returned to her roots of fine art photography, finding joy in those deep and complex creative experiences. These images were all created with that \$2 plastic wonder of uncontrolled photography.

Virginia Harris: For many years my creative life was separate from my “real” life. I majored in chemistry in college and went on to get a master’s degree. For 12 or 13 years I worked in nuclear chemistry research and then on a dare changed careers to personnel (now called human resources). Chemistry and personnel were battle grounds that afforded little to no recognition for a job well done. I longed for passion and definition in my life. I found them in creativity – photography, writing and finally quilting and fabric art. Through art quilting I pushed away the substitutions I have lived by and has given me the recognition I never got in the “real world.” One of my pieces was chosen for the permanent collection at the Renwick Gallery, part of the Smithsonian Museum of American Art. In 2004 I received a Sister of Fire Award from the Women of Color Resource Center. Let’s hear it for passion!

Harvest: I had the good fortune to recently have my drawing I made at OWL Farm in the 70s be on the front cover of *Shewolf’s Directory of Wimmen’s Lands* and also in *Maize*. I had not had anything published before that. I am working on recording herstories of Lesbians on land.

jody jewdyke: Joyful Jewish Dyke Separatist, born in 1970. Am passionate about celebrating, encouraging and sustaining our amazing Lesbian connections, communities and cultures. Thrilled to be once again exploring and welcomed into the wonderful Landdyke World where everything is possible! Joy and appreciation to us all. Email: jdwildnfree@gmail.com

Verlena L. Johnson: I earned a Master’s Degree in Afro-American Studies (Art History, 1996) from the University of Wisconsin Madison and a Masters of Fine Arts Degree from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago (Sculpture, 2001). Over the past 15 years, I have sought to express my personal thoughts and feelings in my art, as well as explore larger societal phenomena, such as oppression, race, gender and sexual identity. The style, subject-matter, and medium have varied, but the common threads that run through my work are questions about what it means to be an African American (Biracial) lesbian woman, particularly in a society that does not honor or value blackness, womaness or queerness. I define myself broadly as an artist and express myself in whichever media best lends itself to my ideas and mood. I have rejected many of the binary constructs that seem to permeate every aspect of the art world, such as fine art versus craft; painter versus sculptor; artist versus art historian. See more of my artwork at: <http://www.verlenasroom.com>

Nancy E. Lake: With my work I try to communicate an awareness of natural beauties and the delicate inter-linkage between nature and humans. We should realize that our very survival depends on slowing the degrading of our earth’s vital forces and resources. We must recognize that we cannot conquer nature, but need to live in the best possible harmony with our planet. My pen and ink drawings and

printmaking works are a means to explore, to experiment, to learn and to see the humor of life as my ideas grow into pictures.

Jane Levin is a Jewish lesbian and an eight year survivor of ovarian cancer. Her work has recently appeared in *Coping with Cancer*, *Cosmopsis Quarterly*, *Taj Mahal Review*, *Talking Stick 16* and *Dust & Fire*. She is the recipient of a 2006 Jerome Foundation/Intermedia Arts Mentorship and a 2007 Howard B. Brin Jewish Arts Endowment grant. Jane welcomes your comments at jjkiwi@gmail.com.

Sue Lenaerts, a computer professional and photographer, was the first out Lesbian to serve on the Prince George's County, Maryland, Human Relations Commission. She designs and maintains websites, including www.sinisterwisdom.org, www.faar-aegis.org and www.welfarewarriors.org

anna-marie lopez: i am a lesbian sephardi painter. i have been involved in several shows for lesbian latinas. currently i am in the san antonio QUE QUEER Show and two of my paintings appeared in a new york columbus day exhibit of african/caribbean/latin art curated by the "art off the main" gallery. i was also a part of the first latino/latina queer art show in portland. my website is www.anna-marielopez.com.

Virginia May has been actively pursuing her creative practice in a variety of mediums since the 1970s. She has a BFA in photography from the University of the Arts in Philadelphia and is currently researching the transformative power of art for a PhD at California Institute of Integral Studies. She has exhibited her work and taught 'creativity' workshops in both the USA and Australia since 1982. She is a board member of several art organizations including Northern California Women's Caucus for Art, and owns a gallery in Petaluma that showcases Contemporary Aboriginal Art and Other Unique Visions. For more information see her web site at www.virginiamay.org.

Stacey McCaig: I'm an artist with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity, a disability that greatly restricts my life. The clean spaces of Australia are wonderful places to be for me, now more than ever. I see in landscapes many of the dynamics that affect us as social beings, eg tangled lives, struggling to stay balanced, cracking under the strain etc. I also see beautiful sensuality, lives intertwining and life flourishing.

Janell Moon is the author of ten books of poetry and spiritual nonfiction including her forthcoming volume *Riding Free in a Blue Studebaker* from Main Street Press, available from the author at janellmoon@aol.com or www.mainstreetrag.com

Nancy Nau: Born in California, Nancy has resided in San Francisco for the past twelve years. She grew up in Los Angeles, California, where she attended Alhambra High School. Nancy was a National Merit Scholarship recipient during

the first year of its program. She attended Occidental College, where she earned her Bachelor's degree in English Literature and Journalism. She earned a Master's in Fine Art at CSULA and a Master's in Theology at Claremont Graduate School. She currently works on her dissertation for her Ph.D. in Creative Writing, which she writes in the form of a novel. Highlights of Nancy's career include editor-in-chief of her high school, college and graduate school newspapers. Her twenty plus years of teaching include five years at the university level teaching creative and expository writing. She served for ten plus years in Pastoral Care and Mental Health. Now semi-retired, Nancy works as a web designer and teaches others how to build websites. As a writer, she has published many small works and has kept a journal for 40+ years. As an artist and a photographer, she has exhibited throughout North America, sold paintings, graphic designs and ceramics. In the past five years, several of her photos and computer graphics have been published both on and off the internet. Nancy has traveled extensively. As her most interesting travel experience she spent on a kibbutz in Israel. Even though Nancy has written all of her life, because of her busy life she has never had enough time to submit to publishers until her retirement in 2006.

Old Lesbians Organizing for Change (OLOC) is a national organization committed to empowering old lesbians in their common struggle to confront ageism within our own and the larger community. www.oloc.org.

Sudie Rakusin's love and concern for the Earth and Her creatures influences all of her choices and permeates her work. Rakusin's art has been widely reproduced in newspapers, magazines, and calendars and can be found in such books as *The Once and Future Goddess* by Elinor Gadon, *Seasons of the Witch* by Patricia Monaghan, and *Wickedary, Outercourse, and Quintessence* by Mary Daly. She lives outside Hillsborough, North Carolina, on the edge of a meadow with her Great Danes, surrounded by her gardens and a forest. View her work at www.sudierakusin.com.

Annie Soper is a humorous, working class, life-long Lesbian who has been celebrating life on Lesbian land in northern California for thirty years. "I come from a long line of proud, strong, determined (read stubborn!), hardworking artists and craftswomen." In 1978, Annie became the first woman to be awarded the "Stanley Tools 'Gold Hammer of Merit' for Fine Woodworking." This was the first of many awards. For information about Annie's cutting boards contact her at mistymountaindesigns@hotmail.com.

Linda Strega: I'm a sixty-six year old Lesbian Separatist living in Oakland, CA.

Jean Taylor: As well as being a radical lesbian feminist activist, Jean Taylor also identifies as a working class, non-Indigenous, Celtic Australian who has just been granted the Old Age Pension, much to her immense satisfaction.

Batya Weinbaum is the founding editor and editor in chief of *Femspec*, a feminist speculative journal. She has written psychoanalytic theory about women's liberation and socialism, work place relations, and oral history with women in Israel as well as Jungian explorations of islands of women and Amazons, and contemporary science fiction. She has published poetry, fiction and theory widely as well as numerous reviews, and is working on a play now as well painting from goddess archetypes.

Melissa West: People are sometimes struck by the apparent disparity of subject between my abstract work and my landscapes. To my mind, they are not so very far apart. My abstract work begins with a movement: a circle, a spiral, a sweep of the arm. I believe that certain shapes resonate with us because we recognize at some deep and primitive level that they were made by a human hand. We recognize and even feel that span of arm, that circle of hand and wrist. The line created by hand speaks to us, and says 'human'. It reaffirms that we exist, and that we are not alone in the world. It is a powerful form of magic. Similarly, certain landscapes strike me, and I feel compelled to paint them. The curious thing is that 'landscape' is also a human creation. The land is quite simply the land; landscape is our projection of feelings onto what we see. Again, we think magically, and own the world in which we travel. Over time I'm finding that my landscapes and abstract paintings draw closer together in style. Perhaps some day they will fuse. In either case, the act of painting is a journey and exploration, both of my inner and outer worlds. www.mswest.com.

Jenna Weston: A long involvement with the nature-based Women's Spirituality movement strongly influences my work. Observing the natural world, then taking what I find and transforming it into art is a kind of devotional practice for me. I want my art to remind us of our origins.

Judith K. Witherow is an American Indian, raised in rural Appalachian poverty; she writes about experiences with disability, gender, sexual orientation, race and class. Her book of poetry, *"All Things Wild"* was reviewed by Lambda Book Report. Judith is the winner of the first annual Audre Lorde Memorial Prose Contest for Non-fiction. Awarded "Community Builder for Decades" Pacifica Radio 2007. Website: www.jkwitherow.com

zana: i'm 61, disabled jewish / anglo / cherokee landdyke, living in arizona. i'm thrilled by the resurgence of separatism / connectionism, as i feel so strongly that the more we join our energies together, the farther we go into creating the peaceful, loving culture we desire.

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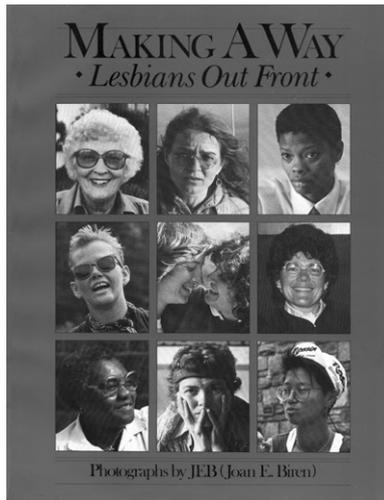
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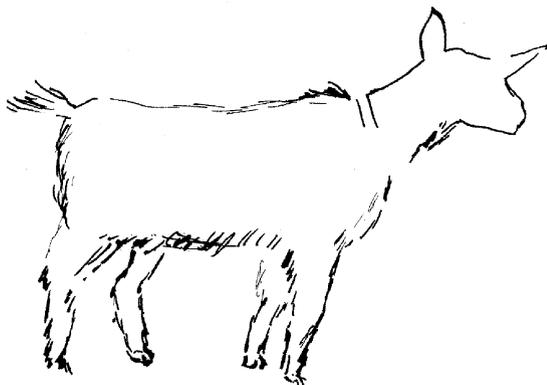
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Feminist Studies: Feminism and the Mass Media. Volume 33, Number 2. Feminist Studies, Inc. (Summer 2007)



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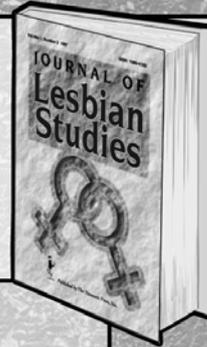
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Guest Editors: Chrystos (Menominee) and Sunny Birdstone (Ktunaxa)
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#75 Lesbian Theories/Lesbian Controversies

Forthcoming

Guest Editor: Julie Enszer: Email JREnszer@aol.com

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Editor: Fran Day fran@sonic.net. P. O. Box 1180, Sebastopol, CA 95473 – 1180

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#77 Environmental Issues/Lesbian Concerns

Due December 1, 2008

Guest Editor: Diane Foster

Mother Earth is at risk! Her soul cries for love, nurturing and protection. The veins of her ecosystem are weakening, the air she provides is choked with pollutants, her nutrients providing sustenance for life are poisoned by those with no regard or respect for life itself. Her travails giving life to this planet have found her weeping polluted, agony stained tears. As Mother Earth Lesbians, the 77th issue of Sinister Wisdom relates to what Lesbians around the world feel concerning Environmental Issues. Topics included, but not limited to are: Lesbian and/or Lesbian groups working in the realm of saving/protecting the environment, what efforts are being done, who and where are Earth-Conscious Lesbians? Does your heart cry out, are you angry? Do you feel there is a correlation between patriarchal dominance and the state of our environment? Do Lesbians and/or Lesbian groups face unique challenges and/or oppositions in their quest to protect and save Mother Earth from environmental devastation? This issue welcomes prose, short story, poetry, essays; from the serious to the lighthearted, but they all must deliver a succinct message.

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#78 Old Dykes/Lesbians II

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#79 Call for Guest Editor(s)

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