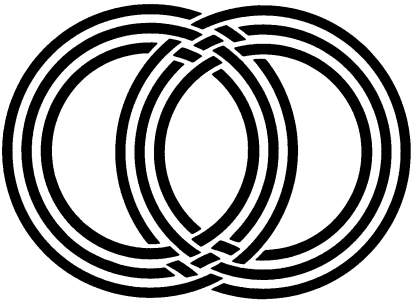
DIALOGUE

A JOURNAL OF MORMON THOUGHT



DIALOGUE

A JOURNAL OF MORMON THOUGHT

is an independent quarterly established to express Mormon culture and to examine the relevance of religion to secular life. It is edited by Latter-day Saints who wish to bring their faith into dialogue with the larger stream of Judeo-Christian thought and with human experience as a whole and to foster artistic and scholarly achievement based on their cultural heritage. The journal encourages a variety of viewpoints; although every effort is made to ensure accurate scholarship and responsible judgment, the views expressed are those of the individual authors and are not necessarily those of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints or of the editors.

DIALOGUE: A JOURNAL OF MORMON THOUGHT, Vol. 23, No. 3, Fall 1990

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Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought is published quarterly by the Dialogue Foundation, University Station—UMC 7805, Logan, Utah 84322-7805. Dialogue has no official connection with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Third class postage paid at Salt Lake City, Utah.

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Dialogue welcomes articles, essays, poetry, fiction, selections for Notes and Comments, letters to the editor, and art. Manuscripts must be sent in triplicate, accompanied by return postage, and should be prepared according to the *Chicago Manual of Style* including double-spacing all block quotations and notes. Use the author-date citation style as described in the thirteenth edition. An IBM-PC compatible floppy diskette may also be submitted with the manuscript, using WordPerfect or other ASCII format software. Send submissions to Dialogue, University Station—UMC 7805, Logan, Utah 84322-7805. Artists wishing consideration of their artwork should send inquiries to the Art Editor at the same address.

ANNOUNCING THE

1991 DIALOGUE Writing Awards

DIALOGUE: A JOURNAL OF MORMON THOUGHT announces over $2,000 in awards to encourage new writing in Mormon studies and letters. First-place awards of $300 for articles, essays, and fiction and $100 for poetry will be made, with the number and amount of other prizes awarded at the discretion of the judges.

Manuscripts accepted for publication in the 1991 issues will be considered for the awards, provided they have not previously been published nor are being considered for publication elsewhere.

DIALOGUE welcomes the submission of creative writing and articles and essays dealing with aspects of history, theology, sociology, scriptural study, anthropology, law, literary criticism, and philosophy as they relate to the Mormon experience.

Manuscripts must be typed and double-spaced throughout, including block quotations and notes, and follow the *Chicago Manual of Style*'s author-date citation style. A summary style sheet is available upon request from the address below. One original and two photocopies of each manuscript must be submitted with a self-addressed stamped envelope. In general, manuscripts should not exceed forty double-spaced pages, including notes. DIALOGUE reserves the right to edit manuscripts in its usual fashion in preparation for publication.

All manuscripts will be judged on the basis of their contribution to their field, clarity and felicity of expression, and responsible, innovative thought. Judges will be selected by the DIALOGUE Editorial Staff from its board of editors, staff, and other qualified persons. Winners will be announced in the Winter 1991 issue.

THE LOWELL L. BENNION ESSAY PRIZE

A separate $350 prize to honor Lowell L. Bennion will be awarded to the outstanding essay concerning the expression of Christian values and gospel principles in thought and action. Essays considered for this prize will be judged on their expression of Christian beliefs and values, insights on their application, exploration of the challenges of Christian living, and gracefulness of style.

Essays considered for this award should be submitted following the guidelines listed above.

MARGARET RAMPTON MUNK POETRY AWARD

DIALOGUE is pleased to announce an endowment for our annual poetry award in the name of Margaret Rampton Munk. We appreciate the creative achievements of Meg Munk and the support of her family and friends in creating this endowment.

Send entries to Dialogue Editorial Office, University Station—UMC 7805, Logan, UT 84322-7805.

IN THIS ISSUE

A women's issue in 1990? Doesn't that smack of tokenism, of division rather than unity, of sexism rather than sexual equality? Perhaps it would if women's voices hadn't been integral and almost proportionate in DIALOGUE for more than twenty years now. Perhaps it would if the landmark "pink" issue of 1971 and the "red" one in 1981 hadn't mattered so much to both men and women.

Beyond this, however, we have felt around us the varied, gifted, and powerful voices of women. It seemed to us that the time was right. Ripe. Within the Church, women are at a point of passage, not without ambiguity, into spheres of influence beyond family. Even those choosing and able to hold to traditional homemaking roles are in a position more than ever before to extend attitudes of nurturing and caring to broader contexts. Moved by their evolving insights and a resulting compassionate dismay, women may be best prepared to undertake the Jewish goal of repairing the world—*likkum olam*. But they are not poised to battle an enemy. Consider the words that appear by chance within the titles of this issue—words like "comfort," "empathy," "rescue," "healing," and "carrying on."

While a women's renaissance may now be taking place within the Church and elsewhere, there have always been women who have found their private renaissance. Helen Candland Stark is such a women. Utilizing extensive interviews, Lavina Fielding Anderson offers us a portrait of Stark as a woman of resilience and multiplicity, traits that could proudly be called especially feminine. Along with the article, we are pleased to reprint Helen's classic essay, "The Good Woman Syndrome," a chronicle of her rejection of the half self-imposed, half culturally imposed quest for female perfectionism. An essay by Amy Bentley, "Comforting the Motherless Children: The Alice Louise Reynolds Women's Forum," gives specificity to the general survey of Stark's social beliefs, tracing the history of a progressive women's organization in Utah Valley, given life by concerned Mormon women, among them Helen Stark.

Two essays discuss questions of particular (but not exclusive) theological concern to Mormon women. Betina Lindsey documents women's participation, past and present, in numerous gifts of the spirit, and Allison Walker examines foundations of patriarchy within the Church.

An essay by Phyllis Barber points to the unique difficulties Mormon women face as creative writers and deftly analyzes the challenge of maintaining integrity as a writer and as an LDS woman. Linda Sillitoe and Anne Castleton call for courage and enlightenment as they offer personal experience with one of the most volatile issues facing us

today: family violence. Veneta Nielson concludes our article section with an insightful tribute to the gifted poet May Swenson.

Personal essays in this issue get to the heart of problems of our time, candidly and compassionately, examining within Church contexts issues of parenting, perseverence, abuse, and abortion. Responding to these realities, essays by Valerie Holladay, Ruth Knight, Sonja Woods, and Helen Beach Cannon call for Christlike understanding.

The unique language of fiction provides another avenue to deeper understanding. Lisa Madsen de Rubilar's "Songs," Lael Littke's "The Chastity Gum," and Helen Walker Jones's "The Six-Buck Fortune" speak to centers, both male and female, and the longing for wholeness and unity.

And from many fine women's submissions, our poetry and art editors have selected eight artists and six poets who express ways to cherish and explore truth.

So this "Women's Issue" chronicles our desired growth as a people toward holiness—a growth that ultimately must combine, not erase, both male and female perspectives.

LETTERS

A Great Teacher and Friend

Bert Wilson's recent article, "The Study of Mormon Folklore: An Uncertain Mirror for Truth" (Winter 1989), was a trip of nostalgia with one of my life's great teachers. I esteem Wilson, my first professor of folklore, just as he values Parley A. Christensen. Though I haven't been a believing Latter-day Saint in well over a decade, when I think of my time "among the Mormons," I think about the decency of people like Bert and the honest, clean, intellectual and material generosity that characterizes them. I sense the rightness of Bert's argument: Mormon folklore, if folklore is the aesthetic fabric that binds people of common values, aspirations, and community, is not Three Nephite stories and pioneer folk medicine. Rather, it is the day-to-day lives, integrated and whole, expressed by a people. I don't know that I ever heard a J. Golden Kimball story told in anything remotely resembling a "natural context" (whatever that is). I do remember parents being gentle with their children, men and women helping each other in kinder ways than I am used to here in Philadelphia and speaking in ways that betrayed strong, centered people. Bert rightly points out that it is ordinary experience that characterizes folklore. One of my later teachers at the University of Pennsylvania, Henry Glassie, puts the goals of folklore scholarship in personal terms.

> Human beings are defined neither by conditions nor by moments of escape. Wishing for frightening comparability, I want to see people as they are: free and stuck in the world. My interest is in the constant interplay of will and circumstance, so I care less about the rare celebration than about the daily round, and I care less about form than about content. I am concerned less with the structure of society than with the quality of social life, less with economic system than with the nature of work, less with genres of literature than meanings in texts. I ask not how people fit into the plots of others but how they form their own lives, not what people do once in a while but what they do all the time. (*Passing the Time in Ballymenone* [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982], p. 15)

Bert Wilson helps achieve these goals.

I am shocked by the foolish and condescending remarks I hear academics make about Mormons and Mormonism. Such prejudices would be grounds for dismissal if expressed toward other groups. Getting the story of Mormon life "right" is no small task. Bert Wilson's folklore gives the best clues I know. I am glad he has been my teacher and friend.

David S. Azzolina
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Sandberg's Spiritual Sophistication

Twenty-two years ago I was the *Dialogue* staff member in charge of having the Joseph Smith papyri translated by Egyptologists. Until now, no LDS apologist has come to serious grips with the devastating results. Karl C. Sandberg's lead article in *Dialogue* (Winter 1989) is a monument to candor (the papyri doesn't translate into the Book of Abraham), esotericism (his thrice-used word "numinous" doesn't even appear in at least one version of *Webster's Unabridged*), and spiritual sophistication. It is about this last area that I wish to comment.

Unlike his predecessors, who sought to give the real problems the slip by deft or even ridiculous maneuver, Sandberg meets the facts head on. While he left out

Klaus Baer's translation of "The Breathing Permit of Hor," it doesn't much matter, for it's not essential either to his stipulation that the scrolls don't contain the words of the Book of Abraham, or to his argument. The argument is really a novel context that allows him to admit every little treasure of the Mormon-baitor and come away an unscathed believer. It works like this:

The facts simply contribute to the evolution of the Prophet's particular brand of spiritual insight. So if Joseph doesn't really translate words from plates or scrolls accurately, or if he copies parts of the temple ceremony from Masonic ritual, or if he sees one God in the Grove but later two—all this is part of Joseph's development as a prophet. It's as if to say that all these ingredients were *needed*—the praiseworthy as well as the suspect—to achieve the inspired outcome.

In response to a 1964 double Christmas issue on the Bible by *Life Magazine*, a reader noted that the sophisticated material on the life and thought of Christ would give notice to many believers that the Bible "had not been dictated by God to King James, who wrote it down." Similarly the Sandberg piece opens the naive Latter-day Saint's eyes to the fact that Joseph Smith did not translate from "reformed" (or any other kind of) Egyptian.

I agree with Leonard Arrington (see the interview with him in the same issue) that, generally speaking, more good comes from revealing historical truths. For example, Lord Charnwood's biography of Abraham Lincoln, critical of the American president, raised the man who had become an American deity to a figure representing human good whom the whole world came to respect. But not every "Saint" can stand this kind of close historical scrutiny. Neither Joseph Smith nor Thomas Jefferson benefited much from Fawn M. Brodie's biographies of them. Jefferson escaped disparagement because historians still aren't sure that Brodie was correct about his romantic involvement with a slave girl. But despite the famous rejoinder of Hugh Nibley, Brodie's *No Man Knows My History* remains (after nearly half a century) the acknowledged best biography of the Mormon prophet. And the orthodox Mormon (like me) who reads it is never the same thereafter, even after putting all the facts into Karl Sandberg's new context.

Joseph Jeppson
Woodside, California

Feeding the Sheep

I often feel gratitude and love for all the brothers and sisters who feed me by sharing their thoughts, struggles, insights, and scholarly research in books and articles in *Sunstone* and DIALOGUE. Do they realize how much they are needed? Do they know that their efforts reach not only fellow Mormon scholars but homemakers as well?

I joined the Church in France in my teens. It was a wonderful time of spiritual and intellectual growth. At the age of nineteen, unable to speak any English, I left my country to follow my American husband. One has to be an immigrant to truly comprehend the pain associated with adapting to a new country. My one and only reason for immigrating was my husband. To be with such a bright and decent man, I would have adapted to a new planet had it been necessary. Thirteen years later, though the pain of change has been very real, I haven't changed my mind. For one who had always loved debating and writing, being unable to communicate in English has been most painful of all. I had taught a Sunday School class for young adults in France six months before my baptism. (Because I wasn't able to obtain my parents' consent, I was baptized at eighteen.) I also took a seminary class and taught it at the same time.

I will never forget our poor bishop in Berkeley puzzling over what to do with a ward member who couldn't speak a word of English. After scratching his head, he finally came up with a perfect calling for

me: taking all the little Moonbeams and Sunbeams to the bathroom each Sunday. It took a LOT of faith on my part to get up every Sunday morning and face the little angels. How the boys kicked and screamed every time I dragged them into the *girls'* bathroom and unzipped them!

I worked hard to fit in with my American brothers and sisters. After Richard, my husband, graduated from his postdoctoral program at UC San Francisco, we moved to Montana. My English had greatly improved, but I still didn't seem to be speaking the same language as my sisters in Relief Society. I felt boxed in, trying very hard to conform but suffocating. I wasn't being fed. I blamed myself and tried to understand and study on my own what had become for me an increasingly complex gospel. Meanwhile, members around me seemed to have easy answers for everything. Too often our class discussions seemed to bring God down to our level instead of lifting ourselves up to his. I grew frustrated and discouraged.

Finally, a couple in our ward shared with us some articles from *Sunstone*. Even with dictionary in hand, many articles were hard to read at first. But what I was getting from these articles was worth the effort. I was particularly touched by the words of Eugene England and asked our little LDS bookstore to order everything they could find written by him. From there I discovered other Latter-day Saint scholars, writers, poets, and teachers. Though I don't always agree with everything I read, I rejoice in the knowledge that Latter-day Saints have an outlet to freely express themselves.

Richard and I share intimate, insightful moments together reading and discussing these stimulating articles and books. Chances are, if you wrote it, we've read it or will read it eventually. We've also finally discovered DIALOGUE. How we love this journal! We've ordered all the back issues on sale and are searching for those no longer available. How can I explain the thrill I feel when I look at these issues lined up on the shelf? I'm like a kid in a candy store. I thank God every day for the privilege of reading such scholarly work. My English is improving all the time, but most of all I am grateful for my spiritual improvement. I no longer feel alienated from my ward, nor from my church. I try very hard to remember that if I hurt someone's feelings by insisting on proving my point, then it's not worth it. I wonder how I would have survived in France without access to all of this. French members too are in need of this dialogue.

As part of our church assignment, some Sundays Richard and I drive as far as 250 miles to attend church in a small, struggling branch and visit inactive members, who live completely isolated in ghost towns. Sometimes driving through the cold and snow in the middle of nowhere (and I do mean *nowhere*!), Richard says, "Please tell me that all of this is for something!" I half kiddingly respond, "We are feeding the sheep, Honey! We are feeding the sheep!"

More seriously, thank you all for feeding me.

Yvonne Williams
Billings, Montana

Drifting to the Left

Readers may remember a group created in 1984 called Progress: Politically Progressive Latter-day Saints. After a few years of visibility, primarily in the Salt Lake City area, the group's newsletter was discontinued and the group quit meeting together because the editor/president disappeared with the mailing list (even the home teaching system could not locate him).

In the meantime, Eugene England published his provacative essay, "Saving the Constitution: Why Some Utah Mormons Should Be Democrats" (*Sunstone*, May 1988). Deciding that Latter-day Saints still need an organization to keep us from drifting to the right of Barry Goldwater, a

group of us decided to come out of the closet. Because most of us were Democrats trying to save the two-party system in the Church, we created a new subtitle: An Association of LDS Democrats. However, many moderate Republicans who want to rub intellectual shoulders with kindred spirits have expressed interest in our group—we may have to change the subtitle again, perhaps to something like LDS Republicans for the Democratic Party!

Anyone interested in being on our mailing list, please send your name and the names of anyone else you think might be interested to:

Scott Smith
2455 Calle Roble
Thousand Oaks, California 91360

The Most Powerful Book

My father, Thomas Stuart Ferguson, devoted much of his life to the study of the Book of Mormon. He gave hundreds of lectures on the book and did much valuable missionary work. *The Messiah in Ancient America* contains much of his history and work regarding the Book of Mormon.

A few years before my father passed away, he, my mother, and I met with a publisher about revising, updating, and publishing *One Fold and One Shepherd*. The year or so before his death, my father cut back on his law practice and began that revision. Shortly after he died, I met with Bruce Warren, professor of archaeology at BYU, who agreed to finish the work. About one-third of *The Messiah in Ancient America* is revised and updated material from *One Fold and One Shepherd*. (See the book's preface.)

Page 283 contains the following testimony, written by my father about a year before his death for the family-to-family Book of Mormon program:

> We have studied the Book of Mormon for 50 years. We can tell you that it follows only the New Testament as a written witness to the mission, divinity and resurrection of Jesus Christ. And it seems to us that there is no message that is needed by man and mankind more than the message of Christ. Millions of people have come to accept Jesus as the Messiah because of reading the Book of Mormon in a quest for truth. The book is the cornerstone of the Mormon Church. The greatest witness to the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon is the book itself. But many are the external evidences that support it.

About one month before his death, I was with him at our home in California when, for no apparent reason, he said, "Larry, the Book of Mormon is exactly what Joseph Smith said it was." Then he bore one of the strongest testimonies of the Book of Mormon I have ever heard. It was a statement of fact as the sun shines. A little earlier, he had borne a similar testimony to my mother.

During his lifetime, my father passed out hundreds of Books of Mormon and was responsible for hundreds of people coming into the Church.

As President Benson stated so clearly in his book, *A Witness and a Warning*,

> We are not required to prove that the Book of Mormon is true or is an authentic record through external evidences— though there are many. It never has been the case, nor is it so now, that the studies of the learned will prove the Book of Mormon true or false. The origin, preparation, translation, and verification of the truth of the Book of Mormon have all been retained in the hands of the Lord, and the Lord makes no mistakes. . . . God has built in his own proof system of the Book of Mormon as found in Moroni, chapter 10. (Deseret Book, 1988, p. 31)

President Benson has made it very clear that the only way to determine the truth of the Book of Mormon is through the power of the Holy Ghost. He also certifies that there are many external evidences of the Book of Mormon. The *Messiah in Ancient America* contains only a small portion of those evidences. Its purpose was to help people understand the Book of Mormon through the histories, cultures,

and artifacts of Mesoamerica and to encourage the consistent study of the Book of Mormon itself. It is the most important and most powerful book in the world.

Larry S. Ferguson
Provo, Utah

A Historical Witness

Stan Larson's otherwise excellent essay on Thomas Stuart Ferguson (Spring 1990) is marred by one fuzzy distinction: "Perhaps Ferguson's case shows the real danger—and futility—[he writes] in trying to use archaeological evidence to prove theological dogma, since religious faith ought to be based on an inner conviction not on external evidence" (p. 86).

Ferguson did *not* seek to use archaeological evidence to prove theological dogma: he more properly sought to use archaeological evidence to test historical claims, certainly one of the clear functions of archaeology, as the mountainous literature on biblical archaeology attests.

While Ferguson would not have used archaeology to "prove theological dogma," he fervently saw the unique claim of the Book of Mormon—as did Joseph Smith—as a *historical* "other witness" to the biblical assertions. It was because the Book of Mormon's claims were purportedly historical as well as theological that Latter-day Saints had the urgent obligation to confirm or discard that unique assertion, he felt. Thus, Ferguson would also have rejected Larson's assumption that "religious faith ought to be based on an inner conviction not on external evidence" (p. 86) since he began by holding firmly to Joseph Smith's testimony that the Book of Mormon was a *historical* "second witness" to the *historicity* of Christ's life and mission.

Alfred L. Bush
Princeton, New Jersey

A Strenuous Business: The Achievement of Helen Candland Stark

Lavina Fielding Anderson

"The evolution of the soul is strenuous business."
—Helen Candland Stark
Christmas letter, 1959

Introduction

Helen Candland Stark, born of hardy pioneer Utah stock, was a thriving transplant in Delaware for most of her adult life with her husband, Henry Stark, a research chemist. Adoptive parents of three, they nurtured the Delaware Branch from its ecclesiastical preexistence until it became the Delaware Stake in 1974, only five years after they moved back to Utah. Many-roled, Helen has been teacher, actress, wife, mother, writer, environmentalist, and feminist, all interpreted in her own distinctive style. Now, almost eighty-nine and widowed by Henry's death in 1988, she is a survivor of resilient spirit. In 1989, a Dialogue team of interviewers, Shirley Paxman and Belle Cluff, using questions composed by Ann Fletcher, conducted an oral history session which Helen herself edited and supplemented with the assistance of Wanda Scott, who transcribed tapes and typed many earlier drafts.

Helen's papers will be deposited in the archives of the Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University. Her candid and witty essay, "The Good Woman Syndrome: Or, When Is Enough, Enough?" was first published in *Exponent II* 3, no. 2 (Dec. 1976): 16, and is reprinted here by permission.

LAVINA FIELDING ANDERSON is president of Editing, Inc., former associate editor of Dialogue, *co-editor with Maureen Ursenbach Beecher of* Sisters in Spirit: Mormon Women in Historical and Cultural Perspective *(University of Illinois Press, 1987), and editor of* My Father, David O. McKay, *by David Lawrence McKay (Deseret Book, 1989).*

A VISION OF A CRYSTAL

At age fifty-six, Helen was diagnosed as having a congenital heart defect, a coarctation of the aorta. Hourglass shaped, it channeled most of the blood into her head and chest under such pressure that her ribs were eroding and she was having retinal hemorrhages. There was a chance surgery could correct it. There was also a good chance that the operation would kill her. She was, at that time, the oldest known person in the United States to undergo such an operation. In making the decision, she says, "I accepted both the risk and the promise. I was not afraid. And yet, the doctor held my heart in his hand." As she came out of the anesthetic, she had an extraordinary experience: "Somebody called my name. In order to answer the call, I had to pass through a field of swords and spears. I don't have a memory of doing that, but I came back with a perception about crystals. The crystal is the central core of an individual. A crystal may be smashed and broken, as by a neurosis, or it may voluntarily yield and melt. If it is smashed and broken, it can be remade by one's archangel, but only into a simpler crystal. But if it loses its identity by yielding and becoming one with the universe, then it can be made into a more complex crystal."

Holding this vision of the reshaped life in her reshaped circulatory system, Helen laughs wryly, "I think I have tried to struggle toward wholeness, but mostly I was trying to get the corn canned or the beds made or the lesson prepared."

EARLY YEARS

Work was the heritage young Helen Candland was heir to. The oldest child of nine, born in 1901, she was much loved. One of her "myths" is her own five-year-old memory of her father, Arthur Charles Candland, holding her hand and skipping with her around the kitchen where the coal range was glowing and the teakettle was simmering. Helen was the only child in kindergarten who did not know how to skip, and her father was working with her "so that I could go to class that morning, a skipper."

Additional memories bear with them some ambiguity. She remembers standing on a stool in her mother's bedroom just after the birth of her brother Harold. "I'm going to fall! I'm going to fall!" eighteen-month-old Helen cried. From the bed, her mother replied, "Then you'll just have to fall."

"I learned," said Helen, "that I'd better look after myself."

The third memory is of accompanying her mother around town with Harold in the baby carriage and listening to the outspoken admi-

ration of passersby for his great brown eyes and thick curls. And then the speaker would add, "And is this your little girl, too?" From this, toddler Helen concluded, "Boys are intrinsically better than girls."

And a darker memory emerged from her kindergarten year at Mt. Pleasant. The Candlands' quarter-block lot lay under a deep blanket of snow, accented by an angling ridge left by a tunneling weasel. Suddenly, a cry went up in the neighborhood: "A weasel! It will eat the chickens." Men gathered eagerly, guns in hand. Helen remembers, "They no longer looked like the good and kind men I knew from church. Their faces were stern, their eyes mean. Even as a child, I felt that change—how good and loving men change when they unite to destroy."

Helen's father, one of the sons of polygamist David Candland, grew up and married in Sanpete County. It was a love match; and although their family was never financially secure, Helen remembers the tenderness of her parents' relationship. Over the dinner table, her father would exclaim, "Isn't your mother beautiful? Just look at her, children." Her mother would go out to the mountains with him to check on the sheep and return "with an arm full of bluebells and her eyes shining."

Lydia Hasler Candland's thirst for education ran deep. When Helen was seven, the family moved from Mt. Pleasant to Provo, a few blocks from BYU. Helen recalls the next several years as "an Eden time." Her mother managed to attend classes in Tennyson, Browning, or Jewish history. The children were enrolled in BYU Training School, returning to the Mt. Pleasant farm in the summers. Lyceums brought Martha Graham, Robert Frost, and Helen Keller across their stage. College Hall overflowed as "students from the boondocks" absorbed the world's classic dramas and appraised sophisticated debates on current topics. "I began to feel the world opening up," Helen recalls. "At BYU, I belonged." In classes with T. Earl Pardoe and Katherine Pardoe, she memorized "quantities" of poetry, whose cadences are still familiar on her tongue.

She recalls feeling "a little embarrassed" when President Heber J. Grant visited the students, generously passing out armfuls of the poetic works of Edgar A. Guest. "I was into Joyce Kilmer's 'Trees,' which I considered to be a step above 'It takes a heap o' livin,' " she laughs. "I now realize how small that step was."

Her mother's nine pregnancies became successively difficult. Helen was in complete charge of the two-year-old after her mother's eighth pregnancy and again had a great deal of family responsibility during the ninth pregnancy. When Helen was assigned to wash out the

diapers and protested, her mother, for the only time she could remember, "spoke sharply to me."

The work was unrelenting. One day, her task was to make a whole bolt of outing flannel into winter pajamas for her brothers. By the day's end, "I was so tired that I started to weep. Mother took me for a walk on our dusty ranch road. She held my arm as we walked along; but what she was communicating to me without words was, 'This is the way it is, Helen. This is the way it is.' You rounded up your shoulders and coped as well as you could."

Helen wrote a sonnet as preface for an album of photographs, a family Christmas present one year:

> How she loved life who gave life in such measure:
> Greens from her garden; shining row on row
> Of prisoned plums and pears, a glass-sealed treasure.
> No money in the bank? Then mend and sew.
> Let resolution cut the coat or find
> The fee that sends us paid again to school.
> Tired? Bluebells against a whitewashed wall are kind.
> Sleep gently, she has turned the music stool.
>
> Now this the ripened grain, the garnered sheaf,
> The harvesting she could not stay to reap
> Is gathered here. Turn us leaf by leaf,
> Nine sons and daughters. Mother, in the deep
> Everlasting where His spirits dwell,
> See us today and find you planted well.

She remembers a time of terror on the ranch during a flood in 1918. Her father was away, her mother six months pregnant with her last child. As the flood waters roared down, Helen and her mother, dragging the younger children, ran ahead of the flood to a high spot about half an acre wide. Above them wobbled a dam, barely holding back the waters, now on all sides. They watched the water sweep away horses, cattle, machinery, and outbuildings. The father of another family, trapped on the same spot, volunteered to cross the raging channel on a pole torn from the fence and go for help. He struggled across, then turned to wave that he was safe. At that moment, the dam broke; and the mud-thickened water swept him past them downstream to death.

The ranch home was uninhabitable, filled with mud. The orchard died, and the family moved into a rat-infested cabin. "My six-month-

pregnant mother made a home for us in that dismal setting," marveled Helen.

Another disaster occurred a little later when a careless farmhand, trying to destroy a wasp nest, left a torch smoldering in the barn. The fire destroyed the barn, killing a whole herd of pregnant ewes.

In sixth grade, Helen caught scarlet fever and spent the quarantine period alone in the parlor, separated from the rest of the house by a creosoted sheet hung across the folding doors. She swabbed her own throat with iodine until it was scarred white. Her food was handed in through the window on a tray. When it was absolutely necessary that her mother enter, she dressed in a long duster, a dust cap, boots, and rubber gloves that reeked of formaldehyde. When her mother, trying to reduce the boredom, sat on the other side of the sheeted door reading *Pollyanna* aloud, "I was so mad I threw the dishes from my dinner at the door. I was not in sync with the 'glad' girl."

When she complained of aches and pains in her joints during her convalescence, her parents tossed in some roller skates so she could get some exercise, but the pain came from rheumatic fever. Helen had to stay in bed six months, missed seventh and eighth grades, and ended up with a heart murmur. She was so weak, she recalls, that when she started to rearrange a silverware drawer, she found it "so enormous" a task that she could not finish it. Reading turned out to be her salvation—all twenty volumes of *The Book of Knowledge* and a compendium of "world greats"—great poems, great episodes of history, great ghost stories, "which haunted me for life." A BYU student tutored her and some other children for a couple of hours every day. Although she learned how to make "sunprints" on blueprint paper, she missed algebra and other mathematical subjects, an academic weakness she always regretted.

Teaching Years

At BYU, she was associate editor of the yearbook one year and editor the next, also student body vice president. She published a story in the literary magazine, learned reverence for all forms of life from zoology professor Martin P. Henderson and cultural dichotomies from English professor P. A. Christensen. After four years, Helen graduated from BYU's English-Speech departments and took her first teaching job in Kanab, an outpost that had to be reached by stagecoach, too far away for Helen to return home for Christmas. Along with the practical gifts like a warm nightgown, her mother sent her a metal box of Whitman's chocolates, an "extravagantly spontaneous"

gift. Helen and her roommate would bundle up in their quilts at night in the unheated bedroom, carefully cut out the bottom of a piece, eat the filling with a toothpick, and then eat the casing. "We made those chocolates last a long time," she recalls.

Kanab introduced her to the overwhelming beauty of Southern Utah, the autonomy of the classroom, and the limitations of life in a small community. Her students presented Gilbert and Sullivan's *Mikado*—"I could do my own thing," she recalled, "which seemed very important to me." When a "spoiled brat," the son of a prominent local citizen, refused to "do his diagrams," Helen gave him a failing grade in English, which would keep him off the basketball team. To her shock, he played the next night, and she discovered that the principal had changed the grade. "What I learned from this experience was that my impetuosity had 'blown it,' " she recalls. "What I should have done was to go through channels."

She taught a year in Jordan (1925–26), then eight years in Bingham High School where her classroom bulged with ethnic students—" . . . Slavs, Greeks, Italians, and Jews. Many of the parents did not yet speak the language and lived in mining company housing on the hills above Bingham. They were all for doing whatever would help their families. The kids knew that this was an opportunity for them to get an education that was better than their mother's or father's, and everyone cooperated. Having them in a play was wonderful. The students were open to learning. We did *Strongheart*, a play about an Indian football star, in which a Greek boy played the lead. He brought the whole football team into the cast. We did debates and a yearbook, too—the full range of extra-curricular activities. In speech classes, I loved hearing them shout lines from Vachel Lindsey— 'Fat black bucks in a wine barrel room' or hush to 'I hear leaves drinking rain.' I never felt safer than I did on the streets of Bingham, because everybody looked out for each other. Many of the students went on to distinguished careers."

When Helen's mother became terminally ill in 1931 with encephalitis, Joseph B. Keeler, stake president and vice president of BYU, blessed her that she would recover and rear her family. "Then she died. This was too hard for my father to accept. He never spoke of her again. She was the center, the glue that held us all together. When she died, our family disintegrated." Her family slipped through the ecclesiastical cracks. "My father, in his grief, decided to move to Salt Lake to a rented and desolate house—to be near a half-sister who didn't really want to be involved. It was the depths of the Depression. No one came from the ward to counsel, 'Don't do this. Stay here in your Provo home where you at least have a roof over your heads and some kind of support group.' He never found work. The younger children

were displaced persons in the big city schools. My sister Louise had no center of reference in her new world as a student nurse. We were left spiritually adrift when we needed help."

Helen was suffering her own crises. "My school closed for lack of funds. I was ill and facing an operation for which there was no money. I was interested in a young man whom I naively believed had come into my life to take the place of my mother." She received a second blow when he bade her goodbye, leaving behind him as a separation gift "a bound volume of blank pages with a farewell poem on the last page." She accepted the implication that it was up to her to fill those empty pages but felt it as a "betrayal that had taken the ground from under my feet. We were all anchorless, locked into our own grief. We were never to coalesce as a family again." Helen wrote this poem about her mother's death:

House Cleaning

School nearly out, my mother used to say,
"Let's all work fast and have the cleaning done
Before she is home this Spring. She has worked hard.
She will be tired."

And so my coming was made festive by the
Shining order of the house. I must
Exclaim at newly painted chair and polished
Floors and gay rag rugs, the red warp
Brightly new.

And I must see how cunningly the curtains
Had been mended, and the worn place on the
Fireside chair, so that one scarcely noticed.
And I must pause by the green bowl of yellow
Buttercups and watch my mother's eyes shine.
She so loved flowers.

Now this year it is I whose hands must bring
The gracious gift of order to this house.
Clumsily I have tried to darn the drapes.
But windows gleam. Lilacs are freshly cut.
And somehow I have saved from here and there
Enough to buy the lamp she wanted so.
The house is flushed and eager, open doors
Expectant. I walk from room to room

Tense and alert. Why does she not come home
To say that it is good?

Helen returned to BYU in 1934 to work on a master's degree. "There I began to realize that each of us is a true original, that each of us has an inner core, and that each of us has multiple facets," she recalls, invoking unconsciously the image of the crystal.

HENRY

While she was teaching freshman English at BYU and working on her master's degree, she and Henry Stark moved closer into each other's orbits. By this time, Helen was thirty-five and he was thirty-six. They had dated each other and written sporadically since BYU undergraduate days. He had served a mission in California and had struggled through his education, dropping out each spring quarter to go home and plant crops, teaching school for two years at Gila Academy in Arizona, earning his Ph.D. in chemistry at the University of Wisconsin, then working as a DuPont research chemist in Wilmington, Delaware.

They met again at a Christmas party in 1935 and experienced "such good vibes" that when Henry took her home that night he proposed. Despite the spontaneity of the proposal, Helen did not see it as reckless. "I felt guilty about leaving my younger siblings and my father," she recalls, "but we both felt that since we were getting on in years and since we had a lot of things in common that maybe we could make a good marriage." Henry returned to his job while she took care of some last business and whirled through a round of parties given by BYU friends. Then she set off alone on the train to Washington. Near Pittsburgh, a flood "marooned" it.

"Henry was coming from Wilmington to Washington, D.C., to meet me the next day, but I had no way to get in touch with him. I planned to stay with Elizabeth Wilson Sears. I couldn't alert her not to meet the train. Finally a small rescue train got us out; but between Wilmington and Washington, it quit, too. Somehow someone flagged down a local from Wilmington to Washington. I stood on the platform between two coaches, wondering whether I should turn to the right or to the left. I turned right, and Henry came from the back of the coach to meet me. I thought that was a good omen—and romantic, too. We were married the next day in the distinguished Washington LDS Chapel, which has been described as having a 'wistful tenderness' about it. It was a meaningful wedding." Helen, sensing "the energy that causes marriages to flower," wrote this sonnet:

A ring and words! The ring a slender thing,
The words half-whispered in the quiet church,
And yet some master-mind bent on the search
For truth might pause, for words and ring
Are latent with a physics of their own.
Where rose no rafters now the beams are broad;
Where lived no grasses, now trees grace the sod;
For that small ring another field is sown.

Garland your acre with the force set free
By words and ring. The pulse strengthens its beat.
Husband your plot in tenderness. As He
Loved out, a garden grew beneath His feet.
Creators now with Him, brush close to death.
Pass on the sacred gift of living breath.

In trying to explain later to their children her sense of family, Helen included this statement from the Pan Pacific Southeast Asia Woman's Association:

The family is greater than love itself, for it includes, ennobles, makes permanent all that is best in love.

The pain of life is hallowed by it;

The drudgery is sweetened; its pleasures consecrated.

It is the great trysting place of the generations where past and future flash into the reality of the present.

And it is the great discipline through which each generation learns anew that no man can live for himself alone.

Their first home was in Arden, Delaware, a single-tax community of professional people and artists that she called "bohemian." She learned to throw pots on a wheel. They admired its weaving shop and its forge, skinny-dipped "once" late at night in its woodland stream that had been dammed for a community pool, explored the East Coast and Canada in Henry's "ancient car," and just "honeymooned." For both of them, driven from childhood by the necessities of work, family responsibilities, and economic pressures, it was "a time to relax, to do what we wanted." For Helen, it was a time to listen to voices from sides of herself that had never had a chance to speak.

They both wanted children, but none came. Finally, tests revealed that scar tissue from an earlier operation had permanently blocked Helen's fallopian tubes. In the hospital, absorbing the news, Helen wrote "Blight":

August is the month of broken dreams:
The amber pear splits in the grass, worm-eaten;
The fish drift sideways in the shrunken streams;
And in the fields the fecund shocks lie beaten
With hail. What are those puny stalks of gray
Seen through a midday dusk of drifting soil?
Listen! The crickets work on stubbled hay,
And canker takes the perfect rose as spoil.

And I who kept my body for this fruiting,
Know now the wandering seed can find no rest—
Part of the waste of August's heavy looting,
Part of the waste of nature's heavy jest.
September, can your gentler hands redeem
The scattered fragments of the broken dream?

With a gentle irony, the answer was yes. Two of their three adopted children were conceived in September. Helen began writing letters to adoption agencies. Finally, they found two children simultaneously, David Candland and Sarah Lydia (Sally). Five years later, Karen arrived. All three adoptions involved spiritual experiences. "When I flew to Utah for Karen, heading toward that panorama of blue sky and white clouds that we never saw in the East and holding the purpose of that journey in my heart, I thought, 'This is what it means to be in the hands of God.' Each of our three children has been a direct, unexpected, and tremendous gift."

WILMINGTON BRANCH

Helen bore no memories—good or bad—away from Provo Fifth Ward. "I can't remember one teacher, one bishop, or one Sunday School class that had any impact on me," she says regretfully. "It was totally bland." Out of that near blandness, however, came one haunting dream. Alone in the ward basement, she saw her father come in, stark naked except for his hat, cocked at a jaunty angle. He was smiling defiantly, but guiltily, and she knew he had gambled away all his clothes. "I don't know how to explain that dream," Helen muses. Did he represent what she was getting from the Church as negative? Had the Church stripped him of something important? Was she angry at him for not being a better provider? She simply doesn't know.

"I do know," she points out, "that for a person born into the Church with pioneer forebears, the Church is the ground of being, a parent figure against which one must push to test the limits." For her, such

pushing early took the form of political activism. In 1922 when she voted for the first time, she was a flamboyant Democrat in a radically Republican family, and she recalls her father, whose cash crop was wool, leading family prayer one morning with the plea that "Helen will be able to see the light and recognize the importance of the Smoot-Hartley Tariff Bill on wool."

There was no unit of the Church in Wilmington when Helen and Henry were married. In 1938, another member "gathered up the few people who were local converts" and organized a small branch. The newly organized Delaware Branch found strength and stability with infusions of western Mormons, "mostly scientists, starting out careers with young families. It was as though the western Saints were sending back their children to their eastern roots," muses Helen. The branch "really took off" after World War II. For the next three decades, Helen and Henry were the generous parents of that "extended family."

"None of us had much money," she recalls, "but our relationship was very close. My children knew branch members as Aunt Melba or Uncle Alton. We owned five acres, so we often hosted parties. Everybody came—whole families. It was heady stuff. Basically, we designed our own meetings. We were free agents."

Even in "dismal, rented quarters" where they swept up cigarette butts and beer cans before meetings, they generated "wonderful programs." For Christmas programs, Helen and Henry cut loads of greens from the thousand trees on their property and toiled up four flights of stairs without a guardrail to their meeting room on the fourth floor of the Odd Fellows Building. They created their own lighting from "yards and yards" of electrical cord and created their own scripts as well.

These years were busy for Helen. She developed an English program for a new high school, teaching three classes, and worked in community theater for several years, including starring as Mama in *I Remember Mama*. She prepared the body of a sister in the ward for burial, wrote a monthly newsletter, taught in every auxiliary. In those days, stake boundaries were miles apart. A stake event involved hours of driving. Helen recalls going through "114 different stoplights between Wilmington and Philadelphia" to put on a stake production of *Promised Valley*. "It was mediocre because we spent most of the time on the road. We learned to do our own thing at home."

It was also a time of wonderful "interdenominational cross-fertilization." Among Henry's professional colleagues at DuPont who had become their personal friends were Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Unitarians, Baptists, Lutherans, and especially Quakers. "A Lutheran artist taught several sessions on finger painting in our Relief Society. A Presbyterian woman taught us how to make hats. I was teaching

literature of the Bible lessons to the Baptists and did a program on the book of Job. The Episcopalians warmly welcomed us as fellow searchers to a lecture series with out-of-state speakers. I participated in a fascinating Quaker conference where we role-played the expulsion of Hagar, some identifying with Sarah, some with Abraham, some with Hagar, some with Ishmael. Each found his or her own meaning. I took the same idea back to our Sunday School and we did an open-ended role-playing of the return of the prodigal son, exploring feelings and meanings. How did the father feel? the prodigal? the good son? Our son David, who was dyslexic, attended a Quaker private school with specially trained teachers. We outfitted our children at the Quaker yearly swap shop and even sold our kittens there. Nobody tried to proselyte us. We didn't try to proselyte them. We just enjoyed each other's uniqueness and contributions."

After the experience with ethnic diversity in Bingham, this experience with other religions was another broadening encounter for Helen, reinforcing both her happy hospitableness and her dislike of regimentation. She mentions in passing a problem with "Salt Lake City bureaucracies when we tried to buy sacrament trays and the fittings; but ordinarily, we were just left alone." The periodic visits from General Authorities were "usually benign" since the men were "almost always too busy or preoccupied to deal with us intimately." The one exception in these bland, busy visits was what she calls her "encounter with the iron fist."

"I was teaching a Sunday School class of bright, teen girls. Their fathers were Ph.D.'s. We could talk freely as mutual friends. During a lesson on the Godhead, we pondered the fact that the Holy Ghost represents compassion, insight, tenderness, and guidance. Someone suggested that if we had a Father and a Son, we have two sides of a triangle. The other side of the triangle should maybe be the Mother. We thought this was a great idea and could even get it confirmed by an authority since a young Bruce R. McConkie was our conference visitor.

"So, naively, I asked him, 'Do you think the Holy Ghost could possibly be the Heavenly Mother?'

"He rose to his considerable height and thundered. 'Sister Stark, go home and get down on your knees and ask God to forgive you. And if you never sin again the rest of your life, maybe he will forgive you.' "

"Alas," sighs Helen, "I did not repent, but I did feel betrayed. When my mother died, we were groping for bread and all that came into our hands was stones. This time, the stone was thrown." A third betrayal, "less harsh and with a redemptive resolution," came when

she was doing research for the history of the Church in Delaware. During the family's two weeks of vacation in Utah, she scheduled a couple of days for research at the Church Archives, taking with her a letter from Bishop Ted Johnson saying, "Please let Sister Stark have any material you have on Delaware and the LDS Church." Very protective of archival material, staff member A. Willis Lund checked his files and told her there was nothing on Delaware.

"What about Philadelphia?" Helen asked. "It's only eighteen miles away, and I know it had an active branch."

"Your letter does not say Philadelphia. It says Delaware."

"Well," said Helen desperately, "I remember a man named Applegate was an early missionary. I know he kept a journal. Is it here?"

"Are you a relative?"

"No."

"I cannot let you see it if you are not a relative."

Helen tried every approach she could think of and came up against the same stone-wall attitude. "When I got through that day of totally unproductive work," she recalls, "I was so tired I did not dare to drive back to Spanish Fork, so I called up Ted's mother-in-law, Nan Bullen, and asked, 'Could I come up and see you and maybe stay overnight?' " Sister Bullen welcomed Helen warmly, heard her story, and said, "I think you should talk with Lowell Bennion."

Helen recalls, "She called him and incredibly, he came over at once. He took me up to another dimension. He did not criticize the librarian, but he helped me to see things from a higher plane. In that one day, I had experienced both the betrayal and the reconciliation. I pondered that. Maybe peacemakers are nearer than we realize."

Quaker Influence

Helen identifies a significant stage in her spiritual development, triggered by her precarious health but rooted in her affinity for Quaker thought. When she was fifty-five in 1954, her blood pressure shot up to 225 over 90. It took several months before her condition was correctly diagnosed as coarctation of the aorta. She wanted desperately to go to Pendle Hill, a Quaker center of learning, for a course on the records of Jesus—"it was almost a prompting"—but she was simultaneously called to be Relief Society president. She agonized over a decision to accept the Church calling until an LDS doctor doing postgraduate study in ophthalmology at the University of Pennsylvania visited the branch, examined her closely, and warned, "You must not do it. You would die." With this medical advice and the mission

president's permission, she said no and went on to Pendle Hill. "It was as if some archangel were guiding me," she says simply.

In the study group was Elined Kotschnig, a Jungian analyst whose remarks "electrified" Helen. Immediately, Helen knew that this woman could help her in her quest, and Elined agreed to conduct a sort of seminar-therapy long distance, by correspondence.

"It was a sea change," recalls Helen. "Elined felt that my long history of busyness had overbalanced me on the masculine sides of thinking and doing. We strove to rebalance the feminine sides of intuition and feeling, working primarily with my dreams. I would divide a page into two columns, record a dream and tell what I thought it meant. In the other column, she would add comments or questions, often filling the margins. With occasional meetings in person, we pursued this method for many exciting months. One simple example of the transformative power of this approach was a dream I had that a bull was charging my little children. I threw myself over the children to protect them and then woke up.

"Elinid said, 'Finish the dream.'

"I protested, 'But I can't. I woke up.'

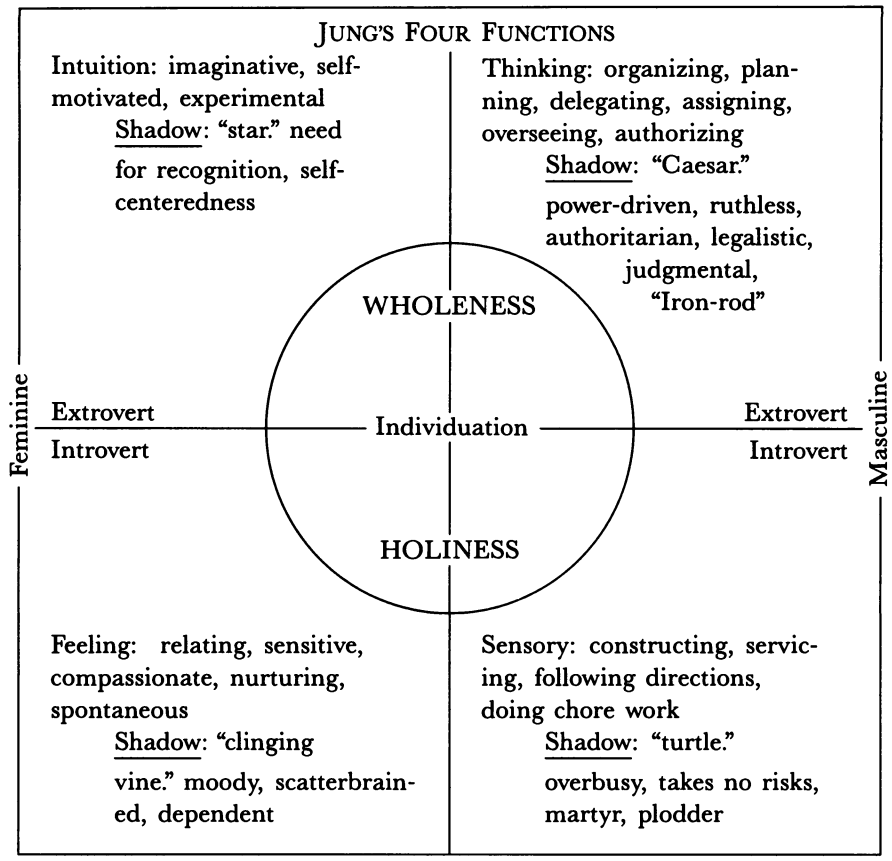
"She repeated, 'Finish the dream.'

"So I put myself back in that situation, huddled over my children with the bull snorting fire and pawing the ground over me. I looked up into its face. It was Ferdinand, the gentle bull from Munro Leaf's children's story! So you see, the authority figure, even in its violence, is not all that bad if you face it. Run from it, and it can gore you. Turn and face it and it may just be Ferdinand.

"A very significant breakthrough came, through my feelings and identification with my female body. When my mother died, I stopped menstruating for three months and did not weep. I had denied my feelings; and for much of the rest of my life since then, perhaps because of my infertility as well, I had also denied my feelings and my femaleness. I can't describe the experience I had, but the imagery came from menstruation. 'Pour the great mother, pour with pain and joy.'

"I attended Elined's annual conferences on religion and psychology at Haverford College in Pennsylvania based on Carl Jung's concepts. They became a great influence in my life. His conceptualization of the human psyche was of four functions—intuition, thinking, feeling, and sensory—polarized between masculine and feminine, introvert and extrovert, expression and repression but ideally finding a balanced wholeness in a circle enclosing the center cross.

"This approach explained to me in significant ways some of the areas I had long resented in the Church's treatment of women. Our whole culture is patriarchal, not just the Church, but I found my



NOTES Centers of consciousness
animus = masculine in woman
anima = feminine in man

Shadow: opposite quadrant which is repressed or projected

examples close to home. The Church mandates that women be assigned the two quadrants of feeling (providing nurture) and sensory (doing chores). Their job is to give, give, give, with little opportunity to fill their empty buckets. The feminist movement has struck back by seizing the masculine thinking quadrant with its management functions, but overbalance—even corrective overbalance—is still unproductive.

"I felt increased wholeness emerging from this experience. I began perceiving life as a mandala with a central core of self. The Church had always provided form and structure; the Quakers gave me openness and experimentation.

"All relationships are relationships with tension in them—marriage, the Church, families, citizenship—but the goal is reconciliation. Reading the quadrants clockwise from the upper right, you have mind,

hands, heart, and spirit. Balancing them and moving within them is what life is all about. The spiritual is the hardest to achieve.

"I would like to be able to move from thinking, doing, feeling, or intuition, as the need arises. In old age, no longer able to 'do' even for myself, the mandala is more a symbol for me than the linear hierarchical chart. I think of such noble lines from the Bible as: 'Be still and know that I am God' (Ps. 46:10); 'underneath are the everlasting arms' (Deut. 33:27); 'the truth shall make you free' (John 8:32), and 'by the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread' (Gen. 3:19). You see, each has to do with one of the quadrants."

With these "two legs to stand on"—the Church and the Jungian concept of the human psyche, Helen survived the aorta transplant in 1954 that gave her "a second chance at life and the time I needed to rear my children." She continued to reach out in many new directions, eventually serving on the governing board of the Friends Conference on Religion and Psychology.

And she remained profoundly committed to diversity—"the need for minority truth." She recalls a family friend who explained his view of prophecy: The prophet is in a tower looking out of the single window and calling down instructions to us about what he sees. Helen challenged this view almost by reflex. She would enlarge the tower to make room for more than just one person and stretch around it a continuous band of windows "so that we could all look out and all see many different visions of the truth. How," she asks, "can you understand a diamond if you never rotate it to see more than one facet or never hold it in more than one light?"

THE RETURN TO UTAH

In 1969, the time seemed right for a return to Utah roots and family. Helen and Henry bought a two-and-a-half acre tract on a little lake in Salem, and Helen gave away all her canning jars and two-year's food supply. The transplant in reverse didn't take well. Salem would later develop into a bedroom community for Provo, but she and Henry were the first "outsiders" to retire there. They got off on the wrong foot in the ward when, exhausted, she was too intimidated to tell the bishop who immediately called her to take over the MIA drama department that she was too tired. Instead she sidestepped. "In Delaware," she protested, "we didn't go into these 'canned' programs. We did creative dramatics." The bishop, she was sure, thought her "an Eastern snob."

Helen continued to alienate some townsfolk by spearheading a drive to stop the city from turning a beautiful little cattail marsh, replete

with wildlife, into a landfill. She failed, "perhaps because my leadership was considered alien by the local residents"; but out of it grew a 1972 *Ensign* article, "Another Kind of Tithe," a plea for responsible stewardship of wetlands. It was the *Ensign's* first environmental article. She still grieves over the loss of the "irretrievable beauty" and mourns the "desolation" inflicted on that one corner of the planet.

Earlier, she had protested in vain as the foxes that frolicked on their meadows in Wilmington were wiped out because of the possibility that they might have rabies. The meadow was turned into another subdivision.

But she did not withdraw into her private pain. As recently as the spring of 1990, while simultaneously preparing a presentation on Mary and Martha for a BYU women's conference, she also wrote a stinging letter of protest to the *Provo Herald* (14 March 1990) denouncing a multi-million dollar scheme to "develop" the Seven Peaks area as a ski resort. Calling the mountains "our primary treasure," she cried shame on the city for approving this scheme "to bring fun and toys to a small minority of largely transient dilettantes" and attacked its plan to "rape our hills, pollute our aquifers, bury gas pipes underground in earthquake-prone territory, commandeer our water, clog our roads, and dump its waste—where?"

She draws an image from her childhood of the damaging relationship humans have established with nature and identifies with Annie Dillard's story from *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*. A polyphemus moth cocoon was brought into the classroom and placed in a canning jar where it emerged, struggling. As its six-inch wings dried, they could not expand; it could never fly. Annie Dillard will never forget seeing it put down beside the road where it struggled along with wings that could not open.

Helen and her children once found a cecropia moth cocoon and hung it above a jar of water to keep it moist. When the moth emerged feebly from the cocoon, it dropped into the jar. They fished it out, and its wings dried. Then, sensing the air current in the room, it flew instinctively to the fireplace, but the screen kept it from reaching freedom.

She recalls "luna moths, wonderfully green with elegantly shaped wings, clinging to our outside screen doors. They are all gone now. We have destroyed them, mainly with pesticides. We need to awaken to our responsibility for other creatures that share this earth with us."

Helen's return to Utah also brought her a fuller entrance into the intellectual life of Mormonism. Her bishop in Delaware, Ted Johnson, had returned from general conference in 1966 beaming. "I have a treasure for you, Helen," he said. "This is the first issue of DIALOGUE." Helen thus became a charter subscriber and, years later back in Utah,

put together her almost complete set and donated them to DIALOGUE as a fundraiser for collectors. "That was something I could give back, when it has given me so much. I feel that DIALOGUE has been on the cutting edge. I have enjoyed seeing the *Ensign* become more sophisticated, largely, I think, because of the therapeutic effect of DIALOGUE and the other magazines. There has been a cross-fertilization as people have published in the *Ensign* and also in DIALOGUE. I think it's a sound reconciliation of Liahona and Iron Rod. *Sunstone* has freshened a stuffy climate, and its symposia are courageous and insightful, a forum for minority voices and their portion of the truth, a needed religious component.

"And dear *Exponent II*. What a desperately needed vehicle it is for women writers. It is like the mythical phoenix, rising from the ashes of the destroyed *Relief Society Magazine* and *Young Women's Journal*. It is hard to kill a living need."

Helen was among the liberal Mormon women attending the International Year of the Woman conference in 1977 when thousands of bishop-assigned attendees, uninformed, suspicious, and hostile, jammed the sessions. "It was a terrible, terrible experience," she says. "Hordes of Relief Society women sabotaged the sessions. The hate at the conference was palpable. I feel that the far right had been marshalled to humiliate, discipline, and defeat a reasonably benign minority stance. For many thinking and progressive LDS women—women who had been leaders in ward, stake, and community affairs—the Church's adamant stand against the ERA was not only baffling but vindictive. Although women like Beverly Campbell conceded that pro-ERA women had free agency, the reality was that discrimination against ERA advocates resulted in some women having their temple recommends withdrawn, being released from ward or stake positions, and certainly suffering many, many instances of ostracism and disapproval."

She was one of a group of Provo women, who, alarmed at the widening gap between traditionalists and the new Mormon feminists, wrote to President Kimball. The exchange of eight letters was not healing (see Amy Bentley's essay, "Comforting the Motherless Children: The Alice Louise Reynolds Forum" in this issue). These excerpts reveal the tone:

> We desperately need to know whether, after serious consideration, soul-searching, and prayer, you indeed and in fact find us unworthy, a minority open to attack, and ultimately expendable. If not, *can the word get out* that Mormon feminists are not to be subjected to intimidations, rejection for Church assignments, loss of employment, and psychological excommunication. Every difference of opinion or sincere question should not be answered with a threatening indictment of one's testimony. We are women who love the Lord, the Gospel, and

> the Church; we have served, tithed, and raised righteous children in Zion. We plead for the opportunity to continue to do so in an atmosphere of respect and justice. For decades we have been part of the solution, whatever the need has been; we are saddened to now be considered part of the problem.

President Kimball did not reply, but an undersecretary's brief note, requesting permission to send the letter to the women's stake presidents "for their comments" was disheartening. Another letter brought the same intimidating results. It was Helen who wrote the final despairing phrase that closed the exchange, "As we now fall back on our own resources for solutions, these words come to mind: 'Sometimes I feel like a motherless child.' "

In the aftermath of the defeat of the ERA, Helen comments, "The moderate center on both sides must feel ashamed of the radicals who went too far. Even moderate General Authorities may regret some of the individuals and groups they enlisted." For her it was part of a sorry and desperate battle that inflicted "deep wounds on our sisterhood." The gulf of mistrust and suspicion created between traditional and feminist Mormon women "has not yet been healed."

Although Helen speaks approvingly of policy changes that allow women to say closing prayers, she summarizes, "I think that the Church is doing a great PR job about accepting women, but that's all it is. God still runs a single-parent universe."

Yet for Helen, ordaining women to the priesthood is no solution: "Many men have been wounded by patriarchy as well as by their own fathers. They are numb, naive, and passive. The archivist who refused to disturb his stacks on my behalf, the General Authority's anger at my mention of Mother in Heaven, the cold secretarial response to our emotional letters—these are all hollow reactions of men who lack full feeling. They require healing in the feminine quadrants of feeling and intuition, but they must heal themselves. Women are irrelevant in this quest. Men value thinking, delegating, planning, assigning, overseeing, and authorizing, reserving those functions for themselves. In the Church, women are assigned to feel and nurture for men. But moving women into the management quadrant, by giving them priesthood, without having men make a corresponding shift into the feeling quadrant will only create a new set of problems. *Women's power should arise from its own creative center.*

"It doesn't bother me that women do not stand in the circle for the blessing of babies. I enjoy this as an all-male rite, a movement from closedness to openness, a blessing that affirms accepting fathering responsibility. I enjoy watching the deacons and responding to the silence during the sacrament. You can use that silence if you wish."

A revitalizing moment for Helen came at an early Sunstone symposium where Linda Wilcox gave a paper on Heavenly Mother and Grethe Ballif Peterson was the commentator. "I don't like thinking of myself as a mentor," confesses Helen. "It makes me feel uncomfortable and inadequate. But this experience was different. Sitting in front of me were many of the wonderful young women I admired whose paths had crossed mine because of the women's movement—Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, Jill Mulvay Derr, Mary Bradford, Lavina Fielding Anderson, and others. It was a 'gathered' group. At the end of the paper, which was enlightening, and the commentary, which was moving, as we rose and began talking, I felt, 'Now I can die. I know they will carry on.' I felt that they were my spiritual daughters. Into their competent hands I could safely leave my causes. It was a moment of transcendence in which I bonded completely with them. And they have all gone on, sometimes by end-runs, to make real contributions. There is a yeast in them which cannot be punched down by ecclesiastical battering. Alas, the Church has not taken advantage of this energy source."

Another turning point came in 1988 with Henry's death. All of the children were home for the Christmas of 1987 with their exuberant grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Before his two daughters finally left, Henry gave them a father's blessing, speaking "deeply and tenderly. We were a small but precious microcosm in God's great universe." A few weeks later, he died of a ruptured aneurism. Helen recalls her gratitude for a home teachers' blessing which "rebuked the pain, allowing him to die in peace." The ward has been a constant support.

CONCLUSION

Helen speaks of her marriage and Henry's companionship on their "singular journey" with relish and tenderness. "We worked hard—perhaps too hard. We had dreams that seemed slow to be fulfilled. We had immediate joys that we took for granted. Henry's protection for me was solace after years of economic competition."

She brims with gratitude for the sources of spiritual enrichment—"nature, prayer, music, art, family, poetry, BYU, the Church, other churches, and friends." True spirituality for her appears in two components. The first is an "everyday spirituality like kindness and compassion and openness. This is sort of the dailyness of spirituality that keeps our relationships going, a kind of corporate goodness." But the second kind is "a private spirituality which you feel in your awareness of beauty—the mountain and the shadows, the moments of transcendence. They come as a gift, unplanned. I had one riding horseback

alone through the Kaibab forest before a gathering storm. I took off my hat, shook down my hair, and leaned over the horse's neck as it sped down a pine-needled path. I felt one with earth forces in a moment of belonging. Another one came in a Quaker meeting when, in the silence, I lost consciousness of myself as a person and seemed to be part of a great tenderness, a universe that was humming and radiant.

"I think that when we can arrive at some reconciliation of the opposites, when they are held in creative tension, then we are not either/or, but are both. Maybe even something better than both.

"Mine has been a rebellious spirit, and it has come hard to accept authoritarian directives, but God's crosses, as Fenelon says, carry with them their own healing. The crosses of my own making I am still learning how to lay down."

In 1976, at the age of seventy-four, she wrote: "I stand at this point in time overwhelmed by the beauty, the mystery, and the complexity of life. Searching for my own set of values, I have known something of the dark night of the soul. Out of that struggle there emerges a sense of awe at the goodness of God. I have sensed what it is to be in his hands. The great wonder of religion to me is that God can turn darkness into light. This power of redemption is at the heart of the universe."

The Good Woman Syndrome Or, When Is Enough, Enough?

Helen Candland Stark

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When a third big kettle of beets boiled over, I stared at the bloody mess and asked myself if this were mere happenstance. Perhaps here was a Freudian slip trying to tell me something. Perhaps I had better sort out a few feelings, the one uppermost being: When is enough, enough? I also wondered if I am a solitary case, or whether other women find themselves in a similar bind.

It goes back, of course, to childhood. I learned early that grandmothers differ. The culinary skill of my paternal grandmother never rose much beyond a cooked glob of flour and milk known as Mother's Mush. On the other hand, my maternal grandmother had a flair for everything from herbed dumplings to delicate Swiss pastry. Since my mother proved to be a dutiful daughter, I also strove to follow the tradition. So it was understandable that when I first read *Silas Marner*, I took note that in the Lammeter household they "never suffered a pinch of salt to be wasted, yet everybody had of the best, according to his place." Food in our home, too, was regarded thankfully, expertly, and above all, providently.

Since I was the eldest of nine children, with no sisters until after four brothers, I naturally fell into the role of Mama's little helper. In addition, Mama had a legitimate escape hatch—she liked to work in the garden. So I manned, or rather, womanned the kitchen. Third-generation girls in my day were well-indoctrinated into the virtues of waste not, want not. Potato water and a little sugar zinged the yeast start in a two-quart jar. Our "drippers" filled the oven with cheek-by-jowl loaves. There was the separator to wash, the cream to churn, the astrachan apples to strain through a jelly bag, and always, supper to serve when the men came in from the evening chores, famished and tired, and usually after dark.

Perhaps it was this last round of dishes that sowed a small rebellious seed. To the long day, was there no end except bed? Something in me cried for some time of my own. Especially at dusk. In an adolescent burst of self-pity, I scribbled, "The canyon breeze comes floating down, / A perfume-laden stream. / The tired housewife only knows / It's time to skim the cream." Needless to say, someone quickly pointed out how lucky I was to have cream to skim.

So we fed thrashers, tried out fat for soap, made headcheese, dried corn, processed in a three-quart old pressure cooker croakers from Utah Lake (the bones softened admirably), and dunked the old hen into boiling water, the better to de-feather it. I pondered with awe the unlaid eggs in its viscera.

Pending the subsequent arrival of the clan from the ranch back to Provo, in the fall, I was sent ahead to "take care of the fruit." Five bushels of peaches, eight bushels of tomatoes, three bushels of pears. A copper boiler with a wooden rack in the bottom yielded up dozens of quarts toward the goal of an ultimate 800. One autumn, I flunked the wood-chopping test, almost severing a finger. But one learns to make do with splint and bandage when the kitchen floor is strewn with bushel baskets.

And I did collect brownie points. When she checked the laden shelves, Mama always said I had done well. She died young, and we tried to carry on as we had been taught. We couldn't have done otherwise.

Eventually, belatedly, and gratefully, I married, and went East to live. I was determined to be the best wife known to man. During the honeymoon, simply heating up a can of beans was unthinkable. I had to do intricate and tedious things to it. This zealous kitchen activity was taken in stride by my husband, reared in the same pioneer tradition.

Consequently, our first joint project in a rented apartment was to find a spot for a tomato plant. From then on, things developed fast in the food department—a house accompanied by a ready-made orchard and yards and yards of garden space. When our first child turned out to be two, my mother-in-law came back to lend a hand by salvaging culls from the apple trees and filling bowls and kettles with applesauce. There was never a free moment nor an empty stove.

Soon we were growing more produce than even we could use, so we picked, bagged, and gave it away. Our large place was the natural center for our struggling and still homeless branch. From our stove flowed great pots of spaghetti; MIA groups roasted corn and wienies inside or out, depending on the weather. As their building fund contribution, a military couple from a base forty miles away offered to host a Chinese dinner. On a frostthreatening fall day the food arrived late, packed in boxes and frozen solid. We blew the fuses with rigged-up hot plates, electric roasters, and the like. But we managed.

In the struggle of our small LDS group to earn money for a chapel, our family raised and sold corn, raspberries, apples, and squash. I operated a bread route. With a laden basket, once a week one of the children delivered loaves to the neighbors. I also made and peddled jam and jelly.

But my specialty lay in salvaging borderline produce. Seventeen split cantaloupes in the morning became seventeen jars of cantaloupe butter by night. The celery that could not freeze but did became quarts of puree for soup. A blender and assorted ingredients turned overripe corn into pudding. Salt water routed the bugs in broccoli. And the cat found no comfort in our turkey bones, long simmered for every calorie.

And again, all this was not without recognition. The grand tour of the house ended in the basement where our astonished Eastern friends were expected to make appropriate cluckings over the marvel of row on row of filled jars. Guests at dinner were regaled with how much of it we had grown ourselves. And always, at the end of a hard day's canning, the output was counted and approval bestowed. If someone in the community fell heir to a lug of kumquats, I was the expert to call. I wore the good woman halo so well polished that why should I think about writing poems? Hence, the summer that I had my fancy heart operation, I dared not admit my secret relief that a drought had curtailed production, and there could be a respite while I got my second wind.

So year after year, plied with goodies, my men remained svelte, but not the purveyor thereof. There came a time when my doctor, on call at the slightest emergency, wondered sadly what more she could do for me if my weight continued to climb. I was suddenly ashamed. I had expected medical science to keep me alive, although I was not willing to do my self-disciplining part. Now I faced two equally gruesome alternatives: On the one hand, I could die; on the other hand, I would become a nobody, a non-person, a cipher. My entire image as a good woman was tied up with food. Without a canning lid in my hand, would anyone even like me any more?

Guilt-ridden, I remembered an article in the *Ensign*, in which the author said virtuously that there had been a benighted time, when, for their travels, "I used to stow in anything easy, ready-made and grabbable." However, she repented, and now has learned to spend "as much time and imagination on our portable meals as I would at home." This concept prompts her to deep-fried chicken wings, to be served with a whipped-cream dip ("if you don't mind a bit of a mess"). With a can of salmon, there is no mere opening to toss together with a little celery, mayonnaise and pickle. She begins by rolling a crust of defrosted patty shells, to surround a complex filling using a dozen ingredients.

Or consider the advice in the *Era* on "How to be a mother ten feet tall." You bake cookies every day; even, presumably, on Sunday, for seven recipes follow. "Mothers and grandmothers," admonishes the

author, "have cookies for their medals of honor. So for Mother's Day, and for the other 365 days of the year, fill up the cookie jar and receive acclaim."

To stay alive, I must abandon this highly esteemed cultural pattern?

Men do not deliberately keep women over a hot stove, although this adds to their image as good providers. In their defense, I do not think they consciously plan that women be so busy with food that they have no time for bridge, shopping, politics or other forms of mischief. In fact, I don't think they object if a woman has assorted strings to her bow, so long as she can keep her priorities straight and can rev up to fulfill the exacting requirements of Superwoman. What they basically want is a continuity of mothering. No break in the comfort of chewing at the breast. When one of my more sophisticated students brought his bride to call, he said, "I want you to meet the woman who bakes the best bread in the state." Thud! Here I had thought he valued me for our deep literary discussions and that he found me wise and witty. Instead, I was just another earth-mother.

I am pushing this too far, I know, but as a third-generation pioneer woman is there a legitimate way out? We moved back to Utah in the fall and found everyone "in the fruit." The pressure was strong to buy bottles and begin again. When I thought I had canned enough, someone said, "But you're surely going to do some for the girls." So I did. Perhaps I did it sullenly, and that tarnished the gift, but one recipient said, "The way our family eats fruit, this is just a drop in the bucket." And another is reported to have said, "No, we haven't eaten it yet. My family doesn't really care for it. But I take it because it makes her feel so good."

I realize there is possibility of famine. I know that waste not, want not is practically a divine principle. "Better belly burst than good food waste." And I know, too, that for all my carping, I am deeply committed to the scripture, "She looketh well to the ways of her household and eateth not the bread of idleness." An untried recipe is still often preferred reading.

But I want to pull a little in the other direction. I am also Chloe, Cora, or maybe even Carmen, each wanting some small place in the sun. Unburdened by inner guilt or by outside imperative, I should like whatever I do to be a free-will offering, arising from some deep instinctive source. And so, I wonder if there might be a few other sisters out there who would join me in trying to:

1. *Simplify*. The overladen table may be against my particular Word of Wisdom. After teaching a Relief Society lesson on Thoreau, I brought

to the pot-luck luncheon a bowl of apples bearing the sign, Simplify, simplify, simplify! I don't think anyone got the point, since no one ate the apples, surrounded as they were by elaborate dishes.

2. *Diversify*. Buy store crackers and take a child for a nature walk. Perhaps the laden cookie jar is not the only answer to delinquency, as pie may not be the only way to comfort the bereaved.

3. *Risk shattering the good woman image*. "I don't like it. What's in it?" complains a picky grandchild. So I don't play the game of finding what will please. I have other irons in the fire.

4. *Solve problems more deeply*. Is a chocolate cake the best way to handle a crisis, as I have so well taught my daughters, who must now fight the battle of the bulge?

5. *Accept responsibility*. I cannot shove this problem entirely onto the culture. In the long run, I must make the decisions. So far I have gone along with the "lakes of soup, the hills of meat, I'll have to eat before I'm dead." As I ponder choices, I must accept the consequences for writing this article instead of stirring up a batch of salt-rising bread. Maybe some women can do both. For me, it is either-or.

Ultimately, it is my option whether I shall rise obese on Judgment Day, so addicted to squirrelling away food that I can be at home only in the terrestrial sphere. According to my cultural lights, I have tried to be a good woman. But only I live inside my too-tight skin. I must decide when enough is enough.

Comforting the Motherless Children: The Alice Louise Reynolds Women's Forum

Amy L. Bentley

ON 24 SEPTEMBER 1977, a group of fifteen Latter-day Saint women met for a luncheon at the home of Anna Taylor in Orem, Utah. The group, including Taylor's sister-in-law Fern Smoot Taylor, Wanda Scott, Florence Mitchell, Alice Jensen, Helen Candland Stark, and sisters Algie Eggertsen Ballif and Thelma Eggertsen Weight, gathered to show support for Jan Tyler after her disastrous experience as chair of the International Women's Year (IWY) Utah state convention. Anna Taylor, Fern Taylor, and Algie Ballif had taken pains to invite a cross section of Utah Valley women with feminist leanings. The women ranged in age from under thirty to over eighty and included high school and college teachers, social workers, law students, writers, and homemakers—single, married, widowed, or divorced—most meeting each other for the first time. Forming a circle, the women poured out their frustrations, heartfelt confessions that resulted in both tears and laughter. By lending moral support to Jan Tyler, these women were also consoling themselves (Taylor n.d.).

Tyler had chaired the convention held in the Salt Palace in Salt Lake City the previous 24 and 25 June. The purpose of the Utah IWY convention had been to elect delegates to the National Convention in Houston for the following November and to discuss and vote on important women's issues such as child care, equal rights, women and the law, and abortion. The Utah convention proved to be as hot as the ninety-five-degree June heat. A crowd of predominantly Mormon women flooded the sessions just to vote "no" on every proposed plank in the platform, including such innocuous measures as improving con-

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sumer information and protection; non-Mormon women resented the Church they assumed had directed its members to sabotage the convention. Mormon women who had participated in the planning for the convention were left dazed, feeling betrayed, ashamed at the actions of their sisters, and offended at the level of hysteria in the meeting (Huefner 1978; Sillitoe 1977).

Jan Tyler, doctoral candidate in educational administration at the University of Utah and previously a BYU women's studies professor, was both a Church member and an open advocate of the Equal Rights Amendment. At the convention, Mormon women who adamantly opposed the ERA constantly harassed her. One woman, assuming that she was trying to make some kind of a subversive monetary contribution, screamed and prevented her from approaching a registration table. Other women followed her to her car at midnight after an exhausting session to make sure she did not sneak back and try to pass a resolution they opposed. In a later interview, Tyler related: "I've never had an experience where I felt so alone—completely alone" (in Sillitoe 1977, 14). Tyler, raised in an orthodox Mormon home in both Idaho and Washington, had first learned about the ERA in the late 1960s at Arizona State University, where she was pursuing a master's degree in counseling psychology. The amendment, then a solid plank in the Republican party platform, made sense to Tyler, and she decided this was worth supporting. "My decision . . . was not a political one," Jan said, "but a deeply spiritual one; it felt right inside of me" (1989). Having learned early in her Church training to search for answers in a personal, spiritual way, Tyler was shocked when the Church came out so strongly against the ERA. She had come to support the ERA precisely because it made moral and spiritual sense to her, because it seemed to be in harmony with gospel principles. Now she found herself at odds not only with the Church as an institution, but with many of its members as well.

Four months after their September luncheon, on 21 January 1978, the group of Utah Valley women met again, this time in the Brigham Young University cafeteria. Again they exchanged feelings about the relationship between their feminist concerns and the Church. Wanda Scott, long-time administrative assistant for Congressman Gunn McKay's Utah County office, talked about being released from her Relief Society teaching calling after expressing her support of the Equal Rights Amendment. Helen Stark, living just south of Provo in Salem, Utah, expressed alarm over the growing censorship of books in the nearby school districts and volunteered to begin an investigation. Stark recorded in her journal that another participant, Rachel Heninger, recounted hearing conservative Utah legislator Jayne Ann Payne, mother

of twelve, characterize what she saw at the IWY convention in Houston as "only lesbians making public love." "What a distortion!" Stark wrote. "We felt almost subversive to be meeting as feminists, a dirty word. I had thought the group might just 'fold,' and maybe that would be best, but there seemed to be a felt need for it and it took off with renewed vigor" (1978).

The group that met that day did not "fold." Between January 1978 and April 1981 they met regularly as the Alice Louise Reynolds Women's Forum to discuss feminist issues, particularly the Equal Rights Amendment, in the context of Mormonism. Reba Keele, associate professor of organizational behavior at BYU, suggested adopting the name of the Alice Louise Reynolds Club, a long-standing ladies literary and cultural club organized originally in the 1930s in honor of a beloved BYU English professor, Alice Louise Reynolds (Ballif n.d.).[1] Although the group included many younger women concerned with feminist and social issues, many "old guard" members of the original ALR Club now in their seventies and eighties were represented in the new organization, some, such as Algie Ballif and Thelma Weight, having been students of Reynolds. The women decided to modernize the chapter's name to the Alice Louise Reynolds Women's Forum.

The early years of the Forum, 1978–81, were a time of change in traditional male-female roles—a social revolution whose impact some have likened to the Industrial Revolution's. It was during these years that the slogan "the personal is political" became a maxim of the feminist movement. Theorists and historians of the female experience, and individual women attempting to understand their own lives, explored ways in which political and social values affect personal experience. Consciousness-raising groups in the 1970s, for example, enabled women to discover that others shared their concerns about the role of women in society. These therapeutic encounters allowed women to explore the connection between individual experience and public concern. Members of the Alice Louise Reynolds Women's Forum were no exception. Although these Mormon women sought each other out under the umbrella of a traditional ladies' club, to designate their reorganization a "women's forum" rather than a club is telling.

Traditional literary clubs originated in the nineteenth century to teach women "culture" through studying great works of literature and art. At the same time that high culture, or the appearance of it, helped women maintain their position as moral guardians of society, it was

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[1] Reynolds' own story is a fascinating and important one, but too long to include here. For an interesting and informative sketch of Alice Louise Reynolds' life, see Reba Keele, "Reynolds Dedication," *Exponent II* (June 1977), 4.

also thought that women's brains were inferior to men's and that too much intellectual stimulation would make women weak and thus unable to bear children (see Welter 1966; Smith-Rosenberg 1971, 1975; Smith-Rosenberg and Rosenberg 1973). Thus, in nineteenth-century America, such clubs were significant because they were exclusively women's organizations—organized, planned, and conducted by women. Women-only organizations were a significant step toward self-determination for women. Many of these "club women" were early supporters of women's suffrage and advocates of progressive social causes.

Like other members of women's groups in the 1970s then, Forum members changed the focus of an established form for organized female interaction from self-improvement through high culture to self-actualization through involvement in social and political issues.[2] As Forum meetings continued, a clear pattern of procedure emerged. Fern Taylor describes it this way:

> For the first four or five meetings, when our group was small (15 or 20), we formed our chairs in a circle where we could discuss our problems informally, with Anna Taylor or Fern Taylor as moderator. After the public was invited (this included men) and the attendance increased (30 to 100 or more), we used a conventional seating arrangement, with officers and speakers seated on the front row. For the first year, the meetings were chaired by either Anna Taylor or Fern Taylor. At later meetings, turns at conducting were extended to Loneta Murphy and occasionally to Jan Tyler. (n.d.)

Anna and Fern Taylor were middle-aged school teachers living in Orem. Few in Utah County would have guessed that the two white-haired, conservatively dressed women were committed liberal activists, always willing to post a sign on their lawns for the current Democratic candidate. Working behind the scenes for the most part, they were especially committed to women's rights.

Algie Ballif, a long-time active supporter of the Utah Democratic party, remembered the Alice Louise Reynolds Women's Forum as "a very loosely organized group. We never elected a president, we had no membership except [we] phoned members that we wanted to notify

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[2] For an account of women's clubs as progressive and concerned with women's rights, see Karen J. Blair, *The Clubwoman as Feminist: True Womenhood Redefined, 1868–1914* (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, Inc., 1980), especially pages xii, xiii, 5, 15, 37, 117. Though she may overstate her case, Blair uses some significant and illuminating points to challenge the stereotype of the WASP upper-middle and upper class clubwoman as anti-feminist and only concerned with "selfish" endeavors. See also Theodora Penny Martin, *The Sound of Our Own Voices: Women's Study Clubs, 1860–1910* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987).

about meetings. We had no dues. It just seemed to spontaneously grow; the need was there for women to get together and discuss their problems and, of course, men too if they so desired" (n.d.). And men did join with them—an indication that both the men and the forum women were questioning and seeking to redefine traditional gender roles.

Forum meetings were scheduled the second Saturday of each month at two o'clock in the afternoon, but the otherwise informal structure was in direct contrast to the formality of the original Alice Louise Reynolds Club. The original ALR Club had a constitution and bylaws, took attendance, and established rules as to how many meetings one could miss before being dismissed from the club. The chapters collected annual dues, restricted membership, invited guests, and had elected officers and formal luncheons. (At its peak the club had fourteen chapters along the Wasatch Front and in Hurricane, St. George, and even New York City.) LuRee Porter of St. George, secretary of the Club's still existing chapter, remembered in 1988 that in its heyday the Club even had club colors, a club song, and a musical number for every meeting. In recent years, she remarked, the tenor of the meetings had relaxed considerably.

In setting an informal tone, Forum members seemed to be influenced by the therapy groups of the 1970s, or perhaps they were reacting to the strict hierarchical nature of the Church organization itself. Here were women coming together in a nurturing and supportive atmosphere to console themselves and each other and to confirm their beliefs. Many, if not all, had some criticisms of the patriarchal structure of the Church with its emphasis on ordered progression up the leadership ladder. These women resented what they perceived to be an excessive emphasis on rules and regulations. They felt the spirit was being correlated out of the Church by so much emphasis on the letter of the law. Forum members felt that such demonstrations of ecclesiastical power as the Church's decisions to cease publication of *The Relief Society Magazine* and to assume the Relief Society's financial operations came at the expense of women.

Possibly because of their strong opinions on these matters, Alice Louise Reynolds Women's Forum members made an unconscious, if not deliberate, attempt to minimize the formal aspect of their meetings. Although Algie Ballif and Helen Stark, among others, were looked to as women of experience and wisdom because of their age and accomplishments, the group had no president, no dues, and no refreshments, although sometimes after a meeting, women interested in continuing the discussion were invited to Algie Ballif's large, comfortable, Victorian home next to the BYU campus, where as a gracious hostess she

served light refreshments (Ballif n.d.).[3] After the first few meetings, Forum members felt such a sense of mission that the charter members opened the meetings to the general public, printing notices of meetings in the Provo *Daily Herald.* A *Herald* reporter often attended, writing articles about Forum activities for the next day's edition.

Algie Ballif, her sister Thelma Weight, and Helen Stark were the main force behind the Forum. Algie and Thelma, especially, grew up in an era when graciousness was a carefully cultivated art. They wore lovely dresses, carried handbags, sat with their knees together, and bore themselves with dignity. Both wore their long hair pulled back in a bun or braided in a wreath. Though always cordial, the "Eggertsen girls" were assertive and efficient. They came from a large family of strong Danish heritage, a family accustomed to hard work and active participation in both Church and community affairs. The children were encouraged to participate in discussions, to ask questions and offer opinions (Kadar 1989; Peterson 1989). Both women were active churchgoers, both were married to prominent men in the community, and both raised their children in Provo.

Algie, the elder, was the "idea woman," the director. Although Thelma was interested in politics, she let Algie take the lead. She was more interested in art and literature and often quoted bits of memorized poetry or scripture. Algie had a knack for "graciously coercing" people into doing things. Nancy Kadar, a younger member of the group and also a committed activist, recalled in 1989 that Algie would call her up and say something like, " 'Nancy, dear, did you know that so-and-so is attempting to pass this particular legislation? Why don't you take a minute to call his office and voice your concern—and get five other women to do the same?' There was no way you'd ever say no to Algie," laughed Kadar.

Helen Candland Stark, the third in this trio of women, was cast from the same mold as Algie and Thelma, but was a bit more emotional, less decorous than the other two. Also a committed feminist

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[3] It is interesting to note, however, that in 1985 the organization, now known as the Algie Ballif Forum, did draw up a set of bylaws outlining a purpose ("to provide for the community a forum which will serve to enlighten and inform its supporters about issues of the day, particularly those pertaining to women"), meeting time and place, and format (a board of directors, acting officials including the executive committee, publicity chairman and assistant, archivist-historian, secretary, membership chairman, treasurer, and members ("the public is always welcome"). The exact reason for the need to have written rules governing the club is unknown, but my guess is now that the stalwart members are getting older, not many younger ones are filling the ranks, and the group's future is somewhat uncertain. The bylaws, then, are an attempt to legitimate the Forum and assure its continuance, if only on paper.

and supporter of the Equal Rights Amendment, Helen was an avid poetry and essay writer. After having lived in Delaware for years with her family, she and her husband Henry had moved back to Utah to retire. Helen read voraciously, as did all of them, and was especially interested in Jungian psychology. Her study of eastern mysticism led her to think of the world in terms of balance and harmony. To her an excess of patriarchy in the Church upset this balance of yin and yang (Stark 1988).

All three women were firm in their support for the ERA. They remembered the suffrage movement in the 1920s and were of the opinion that the ERA should have gone through at that time. To them this amendment was not a new issue, but unfinished business. Though all three were upset when the Church began actively to oppose the ERA, it was never a choice for them between leaving the Church or staying. They set out to deal with the Church in a very pragmatic way instead of giving in or giving up. They were Latter-day Saints through and through. Mormonism was their religion, their heritage.

From 1978 to mid-1981 the Forum's monthly discussions addressed, with a clearly liberal slant, social issues concerning the group as women and members of the LDS church. Congressman Gunn McKay, one of the first invited speakers, discussed the political threat of the Far Right. According to Helen Stark, McKay took the women into his confidence as fellow victims with political horror stories, such as Cleon Skousen of the Freemen Institute distributing right-wing literature in the chapel at a Church meeting in Huntsville, Utah, and claiming that he had been set apart by President David O. McKay to follow in the prophet's ministry. Representative McKay also told of a flyer appearing in Moab claiming the congressman was pro-abortion and pro-Communist. "It was evident he is running scared," wrote Stark in a report of the 29 March 1978 meeting. "However," she went on,

> this group was interested in his stand on the problems of women. Reba Keele asked why we should support him when he had no women in any key position (his male first aide was also present, David Lee, and had managed to project a chauvinist image that had raised the hackles of many). McKay was further attacked for his anti-ERA vote, his anti-consumer legislation bill, etc. He tried to defend himself on his even-handed approach to problems, he became quite defensive. I wondered how [Senator Orrin] Hatch would have come off. The discussion became quite heated, and the meeting broke up on a discordant note.
>
> Some thought he was unnecessarily beleaguered and that [he] responded with reason. Others thought that he waffled. He certainly knew he had been confronted.

Although more liberal than most men in the Church, McKay had still come across to Forum members as a "typical" male, whose con-

sciousness had not been raised, who perhaps wanted to appropriate the group's issues for his own political gain. To explain their confrontational behavior, the women later wrote McKay a letter of decidedly mixed tone and mixed metaphor.

> Dear Mr. McKay:
>
> After your meeting with us at BYU, we were oppressed by the feeling that it had not gone well. Somehow we had slipped into an adversary relationship which was the last thing we intended.
>
> However, our concerns are real and deep, and our frustration level has unfortunately been building for some time, which may account for our sounding shrill. Nevertheless, as educated, thoughtful, creative women, we think that we do represent a wave of the future. Therefore, we increasingly resent being swept under the rug. We consider we have gifts to offer of time, energy, money, and especially new insights. These are gifts which none of Utah's Congressional delegates seems to want. We had hoped that you would. . . .
>
> Apparently we worry and alarm you. For this we are truly sorry. We may be prickly and thorny, but we had hoped, that, taken under your fatherly wing, our detractors might discover that the ugly ducklings were indeed swans.
>
> We empathize with you in your precarious and embattled position. Life seems not to deal to either of us its certainties. We consider you a man of sincereity [sic] and integrity (albeit perhaps somewhat rigid). You likely consider us rabid feminists (which we think we aren't). Nevertheless, we want to cheer you on your way to success in the upcoming battle. With all our hearts we wish you well.
>
> Sincerely,
> Committee for BYU meeting

By calling themselves "ugly ducklings" waiting to be taken under McKay's "fatherly wing" with the hope of being changed into swans, the writers were either inserting a barb in an otherwise polite explanation, or they were unaware of the distinct images of control and domination they evoked and thus undermined their primary aim in writing the letter—presenting themselves as independent and credible. Gunn McKay had become an image of benevolent control, and these women had unknowingly bought into that image.

In taking pride in having "confronted McKay" through argumentation, the women had employed the tools endemic to the fundamentally male-dominated Western system of rational thought: persuasion through confrontation and argument with a winner and a loser at the end. Despite the deferential language of the letter, the women were proud that they "scored one" over Gunn McKay. And if one were to ask these women today if it is necessary to use the rhetoric and tactics of the dominant group to gain an advantage, which I did, they would answer yes, emphatically.

Though liberal in their outlook, these women clearly were not radical feminists. Whether active or inactive, they identified strongly with the LDS Church and concerned themselves with "family" issues. To

overthrow the religious and political institutions of which they were a part was not their agenda. They were seeking social advances and institutional changes "within the framework," as historian Claudia Bushman termed it at a 24 March 1979 meeting (in Stark n.d.). Although the Church might have perceived this kind of social thinking as a threat, Forum members did not consider it a threat at all, but rather a healthy attitude towards change within a heavily bureaucratic organization.

The topics the women discussed in their meetings show their serious concern with current issues affecting women: sex discrimination, depression among Mormon women, political lobbying, the rhetoric of polygamy, female bonding and networking, a history of sexual equality in Utah, growing up black in Utah, suicide, rape, planned parenthood, historian Juanita Brooks, the legitimacy of responsible dissent, the John Birch Society, and the pamphlet "Another Mormon view of ERA," a tract written by Mormon men and women supporting the passage of the Amendment.

For their planned parenthood session, they invited a panel of four qualified women—a high school counselor, a mother of teenage children, a registered nurse, and the director of Planned Parenthood in Utah—to debate the issues. A large group of women, all carrying babies, attended the meeting to protest providing contraception information for teens and to denounce abortion. One woman kept interrupting the panelists, shouting "Abortionists! Murderers!" At the end of the meeting, each left a dirty diaper on her seat in protest (Kadar 1989; Stark 1988).

Sonia Johnson visited twice. One speech had the title, "Obedience to Authority or the Miss Jane Pittmans of the Church Are Marching Steadily toward the Fountain Marked 'Men Only'." In her other speech, she discussed her congressional testimony in Washington on the ERA. Loneta Murphy, active Forum member and president of the Utah League of Women Voters, recorded in the minutes of the 12 August 1978 meeting that the group agreed with her "with only a few exceptions."

The issue of the Equal Rights Amendment eventually proved to be the most significant for the Forum. In 1976 the Church had issued a statement against ERA as a moral rather than a political issue and warned that the Amendment "would strike at the family, humankind's basic institution" (in Sillitoe 1979).[4] Members were urged to align

[4] Another letter, issued 12 October 1978, six days after the extension for ratification of the ERA, reiterated this point, emphasizing the Church's concern for women, advising that protection against discrimination should be addressed through

themselves with groups who opposed the Amendment. In spite of this official opposition, both a Church spokesman and President Spencer W. Kimball later made statements to the effect that the Church had never excommunicated anyone for merely supporting the ERA. When the time limit for state ratification was extended in 1978, there was more heated rhetoric and less civility both nationally and within Utah. Pressure on Church leaders increased. Many wanted them to do something to quell what was perceived as opposition to Church edicts. A group of approximately one thousand Mormons for ERA, headquartered in Virginia and represented by Sonia Johnson, seemed to be a thorn in the side of the Church. Johnson readily became a symbol of the movement. Her lively and emotional spar with Senator Orrin Hatch before a Senate subcommittee quickly polarized Church members, and many came to equate a pro-ERA stance with anti-Mormonism, and vice versa.[5]

The Forum had been organized in part because most of these women supported the ERA and wanted a vehicle for education and publicity concerning it. But all Forum members supported women's rights in general, and feeling remained friendly within the club. But the notable thing about the group was that it was composed of prominent Mormon women—many whose families had been members for generations, who had raised their children in the Church—and they

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"special laws" and "specific legislation," but again warning that passage of the Amendment could lead to the diminuation of women's status and the nuclear family (in Sillitoe 1979, 12).

[5] For a general history of the ERA, see Mary Frances Berry, *Why ERA Failed: Women's Rights and the Amending Process of the Constitution* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986); Jane J. Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA* (University of Chicago Press, 1986); for a look at women who opposed the ERA, see Rebecca E. Klatch, *Women of the New Right* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987). For Mormon perspectives, see Mary Lythgoe Bradford, "All On Fire: An Interview with Sonia Johnson," DIALOGUE 14 (Summer 1981): 52-58; Janet Thomas, "Barbara B. Smith: Woman for the World," *This People*, Summer 1980, 13-17; Lucinda A. Nightingale, "Susan Roylance: Mother Politician," *This People*, Summer 1980, 50-54; Mary L. Bradford, "Beverly Campbell: Dynamic Spokeswoman," *This People*, Summer 1980, 50-54; N. Eldon Tanner, "Happiness is Home Centered," *Ensign* 8 (June 1978): 2-5.

See also the "Front Page" sections of *Utah Holiday*, Mary Gaber, "Houston Wasn't Camelot—But There Was a Shining Moment," January 1978, 6-7; David Merrill, "Burying the Status of Women—Another Casuality of the IWY Wars," March 1978, 6-9; Karen F. Shepard, "Which Path for Women: The Noisy Highway or Tree-Lined Boulevard?" June 1978, 9-10; Linda Sillitoe, "The New Mormon Activists: Fighting the ERA in Virginia," March 1979, 12-14; and "Fear and Anger in Virginia: The New Mormon Activists, Part II," April 1979, 9-11.

were actively opposing a statement of the First Presidency. Church leaders undoubtedly believed their counsel and guidance was correct, and given the Church's emphasis on following authority, it is probable that they questioned these women's devotion to the Church and looked on them with suspicion.

All in all, eight Forum meetings dealt directly with ERA: four in 1978, two in 1979, two in 1980, and many others included the topic in passing. Jan Tyler gave a tribute to Alice Paul, a Quaker woman and the mother of ERA. Dixie Snow Huefner of Salt Lake City spoke on the making of the pamphlet "Another Mormon View of ERA," and Loneta Murphy outlined early Church support for women's rights in a talk entitled "An Historical Perspective of Equality in Utah." Sonia Johnson addressed the group twice, while Linda Sillitoe and Kathryn MacKay spoke of their experiences concerning the Johnson excommunication.

The general feeling throughout these discussions was that the ERA was the best way to bring equality to women in the United States. Further, these women felt the Amendment—and its underlying notion of equality under the law—to be in harmony with gospel principles. Indeed, they cited early Church leaders—both men and women—who supported women's suffrage at the turn of the century. Many of the older women's mothers had campaigned for the right of women to vote, presumably with Church approval, since in many cases their activities were supported by Church authorities and never questioned. Helen Stark remembers that her mother went door to door on behalf of the Relief Society to garner support for women's rights. So now, in the 1970s, when Church authorities seemed to turn sharply, to oppose an amendment that appeared to endorse genuine equality between men and women, Forum members could not understand or accept their reasoning. Convinced that equality was right and desirable, they intended to make themselves heard even if their actions were perceived as defiance. Sonia Johnson's crusade for the ERA had become her crusade against the Church. The Forum's support for Johnson—someone many feminists in the Church doubted was the best spokesperson for equal rights—only made the Alice Louise Reynolds Women's Forum seem more radical and dangerous.

In the spring of 1979, Forum women, headed by Helen Stark, decided to take their grievances to President Spencer W. Kimball. An interesting series of letters resulted—not an exchange between the Forum members and the President of the Church, but between the women and Francis Gibbons, the secretary to the First Presidency. The first letter to President Kimball, dated 10 March 1979 begins as follows:

Dear President Kimball:

We speak for a sizeable minority of LDS women whose pain is so acute that they must try to be heard. Does the First Presidency really know of our plight? We cannot believe that anyone deliberately seeks to destroy us; nevertheless that is the signal we are receiving. We feel that we are the victims of a deliberate and punishing ultra-conservative squeeze to force us out of fellowship. In a classic example of guilt by association, Mormon feminists are being linked to the destruction of the family, homosexual marriages, and abortion. We are accused of rejecting family responsibility and of abandoning moral values. Women who work are publicly labeled as selfish and worldly. Suddenly many devoted Mormon women are being treated like apostates.

The letter goes on to list a number of incidents around the nation where Mormon women with feminist leanings had been discriminated against and then ends with this paragraph:

We desperately need to know whether, after serious consideration, soul-searching, and prayer, you indeed and in fact find us unworthy, a minority open to attack, and ultimately expendable. If not *can the word get out* that Mormon feminists are not to be subjected to intimidations, rejection for Church assignments, loss of employment, and psychological excommunication. Every difference of opinion or sincere question should not be answered with a threatening indictment of one's testimony. We are women who love the Lord, the Gospel, and the Church; we have served, tithed, and raised righteous children in Zion. We plead for the opportunity to continue to do so in an atmosphere of respect and justice. For decades we have been part of the solution, whatever the need has been; we are saddened to be now considered part of the problem.

The women received the following reply dated 28 March 1979:

Dear Sisters:

I have been asked to acknowledge your letter of March 28, 1979 to President Spencer W. Kimball, and to inquire, as a basis for considering it, whether you would have an objection if a copy of your letter were to be sent to your stake presidents for their comments.

The brethren also asked me to extend their best wishes to you.

Sincerely yours,
Francis M. Gibbons

The bureaucratic formality of Gibbons's reply was alienating. Devoid of any real warmth, its formal jargon and request for referral to stake authorities might be perceived as a threat. Rather than attempting to address the content of the women's letter, Gibbons only established a level of authority through which to communicate, perpetuating the same kind of impersonal authority that the women sought to bring to the prophet's attention.

Helen Stark, the primary author of the 10 March letter, wrote a response addressed to "Dear President Kimball"—disregarding the fact that Gibbons had written the response. Since Forum members feared repercussions and saw the harassment to be a universal problem in the

Church, Stark indicated in the initial paragraph of the 14 April letter that "we see no advantage in zeroing in on our particular stake presidents." She went on to explain:

> We are not radical feminists. But we have a real fear that in today's climate our credibility and present contributions could be jeopardized by a confrontation with our beloved and respected stake presidents. We realize that you have many demands on your time and judgment. We assure you of our devotion to you personally as well as to your great calling, which must weigh heavily. We appreciate your concern for all of us, and we are sorry to add to your burdens.
>
> Nevertheless, our letter came to you privately out of pain of some sincere daughters of Zion. We *do not* wish to involve other authority figures. If you do not consider our plight merits further action on your part, at least we have spoken what we feel to be our truth and you have heard.
>
> Sincerely,
> Helen C. Stark

Despite her claim to sincerity, some elements of the letter were clearly overdone considering Helen Stark's talent as a writer. It may be that their stake presidents were "beloved and respected," but it seems just as possible, given their confrontational attitude toward Church leaders, that the women looked upon them as part of the problem—that is, the male-oriented bureaucracy of the Church. The women were trying to be civil about the whole issue, though, and their willingness to open the dialogue with the brethren is certain.

Again Gibbons responded, on 25 April 1979, that he had been asked to address the charge that Church leaders had been persecuting feminists. Again, rather than respond to the content of the letter, Gibbons resorted to Church protocol by asking whether copies of the letter could be sent to appropriate stake presidents, with names of the signers left off "to avoid any hint of 'confrontation.' " Using the same kind of distant language, he closed with "President Kimball again asked me to extend his best wishes to you." One wonders whether President Kimball—if he ever saw the letters—truly thought that familiarizing the appropriate stake presidents with the women's grievances would stop the discrimination.

The issue finally came to a head on 12 May 1979. The Forum had scheduled a meeting in the Alice Louise Reynolds Room at the Harold B. Lee Library at BYU, where they had been meeting for several months. Many of the Forum members had been responsible for naming the sixth floor conference room after Reynolds, for raising funds to have her portrait painted and hung there, and for planning and participating in the dedication ceremony, where Reba Keele gave a moving tribute to Professor Reynolds. The room was an appropriate place to meet.

The Forum's announced topics for that May were Jan Tyler and Loneta Murphy's report on the National Women's Party commemoration in Washington, D.C., and also an update on the status of the Equal Rights Amendment. The meeting, topic, time, and place were all announced in the Provo *Daily Herald.* All interested were invited to attend. The day before the meeting, Algie Ballif got a phone call from Marilyn Arnold, professor of English at BYU and then special administrative assistant to President Dallin Oaks. Ballif recalled that

> she [Arnold] said, "Algie, I have been asked by President Oaks to call you and tell you that it will not be possible for you to use the Alice Louise Reynolds Memorial Room because of the subject matter which covers a description of the National Organization of Women and various other ERA ideas by these two women as it was so publicized in the *Daily Herald.*" Of course, I was taken aback and almost shocked by it. But I accepted her kindness. She was most gracious, and I had a feeling that it was most difficult for her to tell me this. I told her of our predicament in a very careful way. But it was the beginning of a problem we had felt could never happen—but it did. We notified the women who were in charge of the meeting, and they were most kind and helpful and sympathetic and they went to work finding another place for the meeting. (n.d.)

The women were outraged and felt betrayed. They were being banished from the campus, forbidden to meet in the very room that bore the same name as their organization. The meeting was hastily moved to the Provo Public Library, where attendance was heavy (Murphy n.d.). They were told they could use the Reynolds room if they consented not to discuss the ERA, but on principle they began meeting in the Provo High School cafeteria and choral rooms or Provo City Hall. Algie wrote:

> After that, it became very difficult for us to even consider going to the Alice Louise Reynolds Room because invariably the Equal Rights Amendment was mentioned with dignity, with respect, and with a degree of conversion on the part of some and questioning on the part of those who were not in favor of the passage of the Amendment. . . . an awareness that the attenders of the meetings understood and respected, because in our society which is a democracy our decisions should be openly arrived at. (Ballif n.d.)

On 18 May, six days after their ouster, the women wrote again to President Kimball asking, perhaps with understated sarcasm, that the letter be sent to "assorted stake presidents, including some in Florida, Nevada, and Virginia." It is interesting that the women now submitted to communicating with the prophet through established and impersonal hierarchical channels—never meeting face to face and feeling each other's spirits—one of the inevitable problems of a large, fast-growing organization. The following paragraph ends the letter:

> Our decision to write to you stems, in part, from advice often put forth in Relief Society lessons: In the event of great anxiety, seek counsel from wise and understanding authority figures. This sharing eventually, with God's guidance, leads to a positive resolution. At this time we need to have faith in the validity of our own feelings, or to be shown empathetically why we are in error. As we now fall back on our own resources for solutions, these words come to mind: "Sometimes I feel like a motherless child."

Where once these women appealed to authority by asking to be under a "fatherly wing," their imagery now switches gender with an image of a nurturing, understanding parent—a mother—who will accept them as they are instead of one who will transform them from ugly ducklings into beautiful swans.

Gibbons's 23 May letter to Helen Stark states that it is not possible to send the Forum's letter to assorted stake presidents and again asks "whether you and the other sisters who signed your original letter would have an objection if copies of your letter (without signatures, if so desired) were to be sent to your stake presidents." Gibbons closes the letter, "President Kimball again asked me to extend his best wishes to you."

The final letter in the correspondence is an angry, caustic letter from Helen Stark, dated 30 November 1979, which begins:

> Dear Brethren:
>
> One of the criticisms leveled against Sonia Johnson is that she erred in going public with her concerns. She should have taken her complaints directly to the Church Authorities. As one of the group of women who tried to do just that, I report with pain that this does not work. We now possess a six-letter file of correspondence, the official response of which is to belittle our plight and to suggest we be dealt with by our various Stake Presidents, some of whom we now consider to be harsh and rigid men.
>
> So, humiliated and frustrated, we have been tempted to go public ourselves with our little sheaf of correspondence. In fact, we went so far as to share it anonymously for the article in the Sept. 1979 issue of *Utah Holiday*. We think the tone of these letters points up the heavy-handed hierarchical attitude which is alienating many Mormon women.
>
> Communication is cut off. We are presumed to have nothing of merit to say.
>
> Guardedly,
> Helen C. Stark

In the September 1979 *Utah Holiday*, Linda Sillitoe focuses on this exchange:

> A group of faithful, mature women who raised children and grandchildren in the LDS church, contributing significant time and money to the culture, have been particularly pained by their sudden alienation on this issue (having supported the ERA as "good Mormons" for 30 years). Carefully drawing up a letter for President Kimball's eyes alone, they intricately planned for it to be hand-delivered to him. The letter was intercepted and answered by Francis Gibbons,

> secretary to the First Presidency (two desks removed from Kimball, with Arthur Haycock, Kimball's personal secretary, in between). A [half] dozen letters have now traveled between the women and Church headquarters, but each of the letters has been answered by Gibbons and the suspicion is sharp that the man they support as prophet has seen none of them.

Sonia Johnson was excommunicated from the Church on 6 December 1979. The night of her Church court, several Forum members attended a vigil held in her honor in Salt Lake City, where Loneta Murphy addressed the crowd.

The Alice Louise Reynolds Women's Forum continued to hold its monthly meetings focused on gender issues and Mormonism. A transcript of a 30 September 1980 Forum meeting poignantly illustrates the group's shared sense of sisterhood. About twenty attended, including two men. Mary Bradford, then editor of DIALOGUE, requested that the group meet to generate ideas for the tenth anniversary of the first women's issue of the journal—also known as the "pink DIALOGUE." The edited introduction to the transcript describes it as a "happening: a sense of bonding and trust [which] generated deep sharing. So much pain surfaced that almost everyone present was deeply moved." It also described the year 1980 as being "in many ways a crisis year for women. As a result of an ecclesiastic directive, the LDS sisterhood appeared to be split into two hostile camps—those snugly within the framework, and those who felt confused, angry, and outside." Many of these women saw themselves as unique, outside the pale, and in many ways in confrontation with more orthodox Mormon women. So sensitive was this particular Forum meeting that it was stipulated that "until 1986 no part of THIS MATERIAL MAY BE USED OR QUOTED WITHOUT THE WRITTEN PERMISSION OF THE SPEAKER OR SPEAKERS" (Transcript 1980). In fact, Bradford intended to publish the edited transcript in DIALOGUE but pulled it at the last minute because some participants did not want their names published (Bradford 1989).

Helen Stark introduced the program and asked for a few minutes of silence "as the Quakers often do, . . . that in this silence we can be guided to speak our truth wisely and lovingly" (Transcript 1980). Everyone who wanted had a turn to speak. Almost all expressed love for the group and for the opportunity to meet together. Many reflected on their heritage, their roots in Mormonism and the strength it gave them. Some bore testimony in nontraditional ways. Others related the changes in their spirituality over the years. Some expressed disillusionment and disbelief, and one woman even read the letter she was planning to send to her bishop requesting excommunication. Some expressed concern over the radical and questionable tactics of those working to pass

the ERA. One told of being given a temple recommend and then of having it revoked because of her support of the ERA. One talked of the devastation caused by the IWY meeting.

One woman, a professor, expressed her anger and frustration about the ignorance and lack of sensitivity among Church members. "I am concerned," she said, "that a 'fine young priesthood holder' can raise his hand and seriously say, 'since we know blacks and women aren't as good at their jobs as white men, aren't we justified in not hiring them?' "

> When we are told that the reason Relief Society isn't succeeding is because we're failing as individuals, that is called by psychologists "blaming the victim." It's a common event, and we're doing it all the time to women, to singles, to questioners. When millions are spent on Reader's Digest ads that say that Mormon women are cherished and armored and (trapped) on a pedestal . . . I wonder about my tithing. One of the most touching experiences of the awful IWY experience in Utah came when I went into the hall of the Salt Palace, having been just told by a woman with garment lines under her blouse that the state would be better if people like me left it. I was hurt, disillusioned, and heartsick. (Transcript 1980)

She then told of a woman down the hall at the convention, not a member of the Church, who threw her arms around her and said, "I haven't been able to do anything these last few days but to think how painful this must be for you."

The difficult history of the Alice Louise Reynolds Women's Forum illustrates the dilemma of women torn between loyalty to a church and heritage they loved, on one hand, and devotion to the cause of equality for women on the other. It is not difficult to comprehend their anger at the Church they loved. As an institution, it refused to acknowledge their point of view on issues important to them. Right or wrong, they felt abandoned by the Church that had carried them through so much and to which they had devoted so much. The Forum women experienced real pain, emotional turmoil, and frustration. The "us against them" mentality was just as strong for them as for those leaders or orthodox women who were suspicious of them. Fear too was exhibited by those on both sides of the spectrum—fear the institutional Church had of the radical results social change might bring, and the opposite fear these women had that such change would not occur. Battle lines were drawn quickly and rigidly and thus decreased the constructive diversity of opinion that might have led to compromise and understanding.

Yet at the same time—and perhaps because they perceived a common foe—they delighted in and drew tremendous sustenance from like-minded sisters with whom they could share their feelings. It was

an exciting and rejuvenating era, one which stimulated thought and action among men and women.

Motivated by their experiences in the women's movement, Forum women sought out in the Church the same kind of sharing and honest reevaluation of women's roles that existed nationally. While some women officially or unofficially separated themselves from the Church, many still wanted and needed to talk about the issues with those who could empathize. Also, as time went on, many interested non-Mormons began to participate in the Forum. Considering themselves to be an important chapter in Church history of the late 1970s and early 1980s, Forum members deposited their records in the University of Utah archives (rather than the BYU archives, a result of the ALR Room experience).[6]

A group such as the Alice Louise Reynolds Women's Forum is not unique in either our national or our religious culture. Women in general and Mormon women in particular have always sought other women for support and nurturing. Women have placed great importance on friendships and opportunities to learn and express feelings and ideas, whether in formal or informal settings. And it is significant that these women decided to transform a rather tame (though by no means unimportant or unintellectual) ladies' literary club into a feminist consciousness-raising group, the catalyst in part being the swirling controversy concerning women and the Church.

Where is the Alice Louise Reynolds Women's Forum today? The Forum still meets the second Saturday of every month at two o'clock in the afternoon in the Provo Municipal Building, except during the summer when they have only a June tea. In January 1984, the group not only dropped "Women's" from its title but changed the name to the Algie Ballif Forum, representing an appropriate passing of the candle to another great woman, who died that year, whose memory was still fresh in the minds of the members. The Algie Ballif Forum retains elements of the old ALR Women's Forum—participants still discuss topics of social interest and controversy—but meetings seem to lack some of the "fire," for lack of a better word, some of the urgency and excitement at being involved in issues of social importance. As one

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[6] The Alice Louise Reynolds Women's Forum Collection contains the exchange of letters between the women and Everett L. Cooley (assistant director for Special Collections, University of Utah Archives) negotiating the donation of the collection. See also the transcript of an interview with Helen Candland Stark by Amy Bentley for the Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, LDS Family Life Oral History Project (BYU), for Stark's version of the ouster and subsequent negotiation for the Alice Louise Reynolds Women's Forum Collection.

ALR charter member expressed to me, "I no longer attend the meetings because I've found other ways to experience that same kind of communal sister support" (Keele 1988). But the meetings are still well attended by both Mormon and non-Mormon women, and some men, I'm happy to report. The Forum members are concerned, however, that younger women are not joining the ranks to take the place of the older ones. They wonder about the future of the Algie Ballif Forum and hope that it continues after they are unable to carry it on.

I see two main sets of questions when considering the legacy of the Alice Louise Reynolds Women's Forum. First: In our era, thought to be by some "post-feminist," have we transcended the need for genders to meet separately? Have we lost the desire to grapple with issues of social importance, and if so, is that a strength or a sickness? Is it time to do away with separatism and decide that the only way we can confront discrimination and misunderstanding between genders is by integrating all aspects of life? My response is yes and no.

Although in many ways, differences between male and female roles have decreased, women have not lost the need to meet together, although some may think the urgency has lessened. Women today meet together formally and informally, struggling to define themselves and deal with the same sorts of questions, whether at an Exponent retreat, a professional women's society, a high school sleep-over, a Relief Society homemaking meeting, or a scholarly conference on feminism.

Although there have always been Mormon women, progressive in their respective eras, who have thought, written about, and acted on their strongly held beliefs concerning the place of women in the Church (the founders of *Exponent II* come to mind), the women's movement within mainstream Mormonism has only recently gained a solid and respectable foothold. Because of the conservative nature of contemporary Mormonism, the feminist movement within the Church is progressing a decade or two behind the rest of American feminism, in part because the growth of Mormon feminism has had to proceed without the blessing of the established Church organization for women, the Relief Society. Although it fulfills many needs for many women, generally Relief Society rewards consensus and cheerful acceptance of prescribed duties of women as outlined by Church leaders—not diversity of opinion, anger, or despair.

In this relatively early stage of debate, Mormon feminism seems to consist of two main schools of thought. The first is a more mystical feminism, celebrating a Mother in Heaven, women holding the priesthood, spiritual gifts of prophecy and healing, and great women in Mormon history. This mystical feminism welcomes the idea of Woman

as closer to nature, whose essence is unique from Man. The other school of Mormon feminist thought, though interested in these ideas, concentrates on structural issues of inequality in the Church and seeks change primarily through established channels. It sees itself as more rational, less emotional than the mystical feminism. For "the rationalists," the idea of "woman as nature" carries an implicit inferiority to men. In both camps, though, patriarchy is the problem to be reckoned with, and both actively work to enlighten Mormon women and men to effect change. No matter what the orientation, Mormon feminism is made up of individuals whose personal, heart-felt experiences have persuaded them to enter into the dialogue of the feminist community. With this intense personal experience at its base, Mormon feminism will continue to evolve in both breadth and depth.[7]

Although it is primarily women who are entering into the Mormon feminist dialogue, many men are also actively taking part. The inclusion of men should be a welcome addition. Female-exclusive groups are important, but if we truly want to dispel all myths and misconceptions about each other, much can be accomplished by including both men and women in as many ways as possible. I find male friends to be concerned with gender issues, for they too are interested in and affected by the current reordering of social roles and practices.

This leads me to my second question: How do younger women feel about gender issues? Because mothers and older sisters have forged the way, do women in their twenties feel a need to discuss feminist issues and meet together as women with similar concerns? Some younger women undoubtedly do not feel the need to think about feminist issues. Either they are simply not interested, or they take for granted the multitude of choices open to them. Many do find it easier to "focus," to direct their energies—as men have been culturally conditioned to do—toward one project, be it career, school, or some other type of self-improvement. They do not seem to feel the need to be everything to everyone all at once in typical female fashion, as Mary Bradford feels women of her generation do (Bradford 1989).

However, until we resolve the "binding paradox" described by Lawrence Foster (1979), the dual role models of the strong self-sufficient pioneer women and the passive Victorian lady, there will always be frustrated and overextended Mormon women who seek strength in meeting together. Our role models are fundamentally at odds with each other. However, fewer *younger* Mormon women may feel this "binding paradox." Many women I have talked with say they did not begin

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[7] I am indebted to Dorice Elliott for her insights on contemporary Mormon feminism.

to feel dissonance until they were older, married, and had children; the many obligations of their new situation forced them to rethink their lives and social roles, something they felt no need to do when single and childless. Many single women confronted feminist issues only when they passed their early twenties or felt the strains of divorce.

Perhaps the world has moved beyond the women's liberation movement of the 1970s, and women must deal with other more pressing issues—such as staying afloat in today's tight economy. Working outside the home, for instance, is most often now a necessity rather than a luxury to debate about. Feminism in the nineties must be put into a larger context: that of control and authority—who has it, who wants it, and who needs it—and the phenomenon of a large, conservative institution faced with an expanding and diversifying population in the modern world. Not only must the Church confront issues of gender, but other issues that could challenge its way of defining and delegating authority: a soaring world population with serious effects on the environment and adequate food supplies, the dramatic political upheaval occurring on nearly every continent, and a growing non-English speaking, non-Anglo membership that soon will be in the majority. Change comes at a dizzying pace. It will be both exciting and disturbing to see what the twenty-first century brings.

Although there is no catalyst today like the Equal Rights Amendment struggle that brought the ALR women together in the 1970s, women, including younger women, are meeting together in small numbers; there is a void to be filled. Many younger Mormon women do want to discuss feminism with reference to Mormonism. The Mormon Women's Forum established in Salt Lake City in 1988—ten years to the month from the establishment of the Alice Louise Reynolds Women's Forum—is one such proof that younger women want to be involved in feminist discourse. The monthly newsletter it publishes is a version of *Exponent II* aimed at a younger, more frustrated female audience. Both the newsletter and Forum meetings address the issues the Reynolds Forum took up: women and the priesthood, Mother in Heaven, equality of the sexes in all facets of life. These once rather shocking topics are discussed with more openness and acceptance than they were a decade ago; there is not the subversive air in these meetings that some of the Reynolds women noticed. Younger women (and some men, too) are attending the meetings in substantial numbers, discussing these ideas for the first time. In April of 1989, the new Forum invited Jan Tyler to speak on the history of the IWY convention and the Reynold's Forum.

The old guard Alice Louise Reynolds Women are delighted by these generations of women's groups. "I can die now and feel someone's

picking up the reins," one remarked (Tyler 1989). It remains to be seen, however, what kinds of institutional obstacles these groups will face when they gain a substantial following. There is evidence already of suppression by authorities (Beddinger 1989). As Mormon feminism continues to grow in both size and strength, it is likely that the dialectic of Church suppression of Mormon feminists will once again occur as it did with the Alice Louise Reynolds Women's Forum.

Helen Stark, now nearing ninety, wrote me a letter in which she asked might not a better title for this article be "Who Will Comfort the Motherless Children?" I sense that even in the twilight of her life, she still feels alienated in the Church because she is a feminist and wonders if women like her will ever find solace and comfort within the Church fold. Perhaps, but perhaps not. Maybe it is time for all Latter-day Saints to rethink these questions, find ways to comfort each other, and then look outward to all the children of the world who need comfort. I admire and appreciate the legacy of women like those in the Alice Louise Reynolds Women's Forum, a whole host of past and present sisters from whom I can draw inspiration when I too feel like a motherless child.

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I Can Wait For

Holly Welker

I purposely forget what you look like
so each time I see you I am surprised
again by your beauty. Your name is the
charm I offer nervous cats instead of
plates of milk. You walk toward me and I
am not God, for he taketh not pleasure
in the legs of a man. This half is now.
The other half, I can wait for. You are
not the ghost who haunts my house, but you will
be. I will know the wall you lean against
to watch me put up my hair. I'll smell which
pillow you sleep on. I'll find your finger
prints on books, on flowers, and recognize
the echo of sounds you make asleep. I
will never forget what you look like. Your
name will be the charm I offer all life.
I will love you because you surprise me.
I will love you because you breathe.

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Woman as Healer in the Modern Church

Betina Lindsey

> I went to my bishop to discuss some things that had happened in my life, and I asked him for a blessing. There were circumstances in my family—my husband was inactive, and I had an unusual position in our home. The bishop said I should call upon the power of the Melchizedek Priesthood to bless my family and those whom I loved and served. Not too long after, my son, who has serious attacks of croup, woke up one morning coughing. Within about five minutes, he couldn't breathe. I ran into the bathroom [carrying] him, turning on the shower to create steam, but he was turning blue and couldn't get any air. Someone called the ambulance. Meanwhile, my son was sitting on the toilet seat and I sat in front of him on the bathtub edge. Suddenly, in a natural, instantaneous response, I laid my hands on his head and said, "As E____'s mother, I call on the power of the Melchizedek Priesthood . . . " and I blessed him. I had always prayed desperately for him during these attacks, but this was the first time I had ever laid my hands on his head and invoked the priesthood. While I was speaking, his head slipped forward from under my hands and fell on my lap. He was asleep! His breathing was even and relaxed. By the time we arrived at the hospital, they questioned why we'd brought him at all.
>
> I'd given blessings before—with women, to other women—for infertility, alcoholism, and depression; but I'd never quoted priesthood authority until that morning with my son.[1]

I CONSIDER THIS WOMAN to be a pioneer; but rather than exploring new terrain, she is rediscovering the vast landscape that was once the

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[1] I personally collected all of the accounts used here from the individuals who were directly involved. However, because healing blessings are officially assigned to men who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood and because many Mormon men feel uneasy about autonomous action by women, many Latter-day Saint women feel vulnerable in speaking openly of giving and receiving blessings from women. To preserve their anonymity and to respect their privacy, I use no names in any of the contemporary accounts of healing blessings by women which I quote.

freehold of Mormon women—the domain of woman as healer—and from which, for three generations, women have been exiled.

Evidence from Mormon women's journals, diaries, and meeting minutes tells us that from the 1840s until as recently as the 1930s, LDS women served their families, each other, and the broader community, expanding their own spiritual gifts in the process. Even now, the ward fast and the temple prayer circle symbolize the union of our spiritual community; for by uniting together to seek healing for others, we heal ourselves and our community.

But because the Church now defines blessing the sick as a function of priesthood authority, we all suffer from the loss of women's boundless potential as healers. One woman told me of her concern when her son needed an operation. Because her husband was "very private where the family was concerned" and apparently did not understand that he could pronounce a blessing alone, he refused to ask another elder to help him give the child a blessing, saying, "Let's just wait and see how it goes." The woman commented, "I would have felt better if my son had been given a blessing beforehand, but my husband wouldn't and I couldn't."

In the last decade or so, a growing number of LDS women are refusing to accept this externally imposed limitation. They not only desire to exercise such a gift but discreetly practice it. If women were authorized to exercise this gift openly, we cannot foresee the transformation that would come to them as individuals and to the Church collectively.

But I am not arguing that the General Authorities should grant women this authority. I affirm women's right to do so. I urge those who feel the desire, either to bless or to be blessed, to claim their right as a member of the "household of faith" and to lay hold of that gift.

This essay argues four points: (1) There is clear historical and scriptural precedent for women as healers. (2) The process and gift of healing are ungendered. (3) The Mormon health blessing contains ritual elements that resemble elements in the healing rituals of other cultures. (4) The Church could benefit collectively by officially recognizing the resource that women healers represent. I conclude by urging a broadening of women's service.

THE PRECEDENTS FOR MORMON WOMEN HEALERS

Since the founding of Mormonism, women have constituted an important spiritual and community resource through exercising the gifts of healing. I commend Linda King Newell's (1987) well-researched

"Gifts of the Spirit: Women's Share," which traces the LDS tradition of women's spiritual gifts, particularly speaking in tongues and healing the sick. Indeed, our nineteenth-century foremothers give their sisters an unparalleled heritage of spiritual activism. It is a sacred tradition with which we should all become more familiar.

It begins in Nauvoo when the women of the Relief Society frequently pronounced healing blessings upon each other. Elizabeth Ann Whitney remembered receiving her authority to so act by ordination: "I was . . . ordained and set apart under the hand of Joseph Smith the Prophet to administer to the sick and comfort the sorrowful. Several other sisters were also ordained and set apart to administer in these holy ordinances" (in Newell 1987, 115).

The April 1893 *Young Woman's Journal* describes the healing gifts of Lucy Bigelow Young, a plural wife of Brigham Young and a St. George Temple worker:

> How many times the sick and suffering have come upon beds to that temple, and at once Sister Young would be called to take the afflicted one under immediate charge, as all knew the mighty power she had gained through long years of fastings and prayers in the exercise of her special gift. When her hands are upon the head of another in blessing, the words of inspiration and personal prophecy that flow from her lips are like a stream of living fire. One sister who had not walked for twelve years was brought, and under the cheering faith of Sister Young she went through the day's ordinance and was perfectly healed of her affliction. (in Newell 1987, 124)

Nor did these women consider themselves to be radical innovators. Instead, they hearkened back to the scriptures to find the exercise of such gifts promised in abundant measure—and, what is more, promised upon condition of faith, irrespective of gender.

Women as Members of the Household of Faith

The promise of healing power comes directly from Jesus Christ to anyone born of the Spirit:

> And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues.
>
> They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. (Mark 16:17-18)

Moroni corroborates that "all these gifts come by the spirit of Christ; and they come unto every man [or woman] severally, according as he [or she] will" (Moro. 10:17).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote in *Mormon Doctrine*, commenting upon gifts of the spirit: "Faithful persons are expected to seek the gifts of the Spirit with all their hearts. They are to 'covet earnestly the best

gifts' (1 Cor. 12:31; D&C 46:8), to 'desire spiritual gifts' (1 Cor. 14:1), 'to ask of God, who giveth liberally' (D&C 46:7; Matt. 7:7–8). To some will be given one gift; to others another" (McConkie 1966, 314). "And again, to some it is given to have faith to be healed; and to others it is given to have faith to heal" (D&C 46:19–20). Women are clearly included within this injunction to "seek the gifts of the Spirit with all their hearts."

Although the contemporary Church does not theologically exclude women from healing—because all believers in Christ have access to the same gifts—they are excluded from performing the ordinance. This exclusion, as Newell carefully documents, is not a theological sanction but rather a matter of evolving Church policy (1987, 111–50). Because the Church has, since the 1960s, defined and correlated itself as a "church of priesthood" in what I believe is an effort to make men take their responsibilities more seriously, it has systematically excluded women from many gray areas, equating "adult male" and "Melchizedek Priesthood."

Healing by the laying on of hands brings together three sources of power: (1) God's power, transmitted through the conduit of human action; (2) faith, exercised both by the recipient and by those participating in the blessing; and (3) the healing power of the healer, a gift which is apparently an act of free grace from God to certain individuals who, in their turn, are free to exercise or withhold it.

There is no indication in Mormon theology that priesthood is, in itself, the healing power; rather, it is an avenue for exercising that power. Quite obviously, in earlier days of the Church, Melchizedek Priesthood was only one avenue. Women's faith was still another. It is difficult to estimate how many priesthood holders possess the gift of healing; but it seems that any worthy priesthood holder can serve as a conduit for God's power. It also seems likely that even when the priesthood holder is not worthy, a blessing pronounced upon a faithful member of the Church may still be heard and answered, due to the faith of the recipient or a loved one.

Restricting healing blessings to Melchizedek Priesthood holders only is a limitation on women's spirituality. One husband observed, "If one of the kids has a sore throat, I don't think it's time for a blessing. If they were in the hospital with a serious illness, then it would be different." His wife, however, felt differently: "I think a blessing can be a preventative to worse things to come. He says I worry too much. I feel helpless sometimes; and because he's the one with the priesthood, I'm put in the position of nagging him into giving a blessing he doesn't feel is necessary."

Another woman expressed dismay at the "routine" nature of priesthood blessings. When a woman in her ward became seriously ill, the

first sister's husband administered to her but "for the next weeks, I and the other Relief Society sisters went into her home and nursed and took care of her and her children." When she recovered, this sister mentioned the event to her husband who gave her "a blank look because he didn't even remember the sister's name or administering to her." She concluded, "I think it was the prayers and nursing by the sisters in the ward that healed her."

To my knowledge, there has never been a suggestion that women's faith is not efficacious, individually or collectively in healing; or that a woman's supplication for healing herself or another is inappropriate. Thus, contemporary Mormon women are not officially forbidden to heal; rather, they are forbidden to engage in the rituals of healing.[2]

An interesting example of the Church's uneasiness with women's exercise of the gifts of healing was an instance reported by David Miles Oman during the question-answer session at a Mormon Women's Forum lecture 8 June 1989. During his mission in France in 1972, he and his companion taught the gospel to a woman who "had the gift of healing":

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[2] The exclusion does not specifically forbid women's participation. Rather, women are silently excluded by the instructions of who may participate and how. The current policy on blessings of healing and blessings of comfort and counsel appears in the *General Handbook of Instructions* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, March 1989), pp. 5-4 and 5-5:

> Normally, two Melchizedek Priesthood holders administer to the sick. A father who holds the Melchizedek Priesthood should administer to sick members of his family. He may ask another Melchizedek Priesthood bearer to assist.
>
> If no one is available to help, a Melchizedek Priesthood holder has full authority to both anoint and seal the anointing. If he has no oil, he may give a blessing by the authority of the priesthood.
>
> The ordinance of administering to the sick should be performed at the request of the sick person or someone who is vitally concerned, so the blessing will be according to their faith (see D&C 24:13-14). Elders who are assigned to visit hospitals should not solicit opportunities to administer to the sick.
>
> A person need not be anointed with oil frequently for the same illness. If a priesthood holder is asked to give a repeat blessing for the same illness, he usually does not need to anoint with oil after the first blessing, but he may give a blessing by the laying on of hands, and by the authority of the priesthood.
>
> The ordinance of administering to the sick is performed in two parts as outlined in the *Melchizedek Priesthood Leadership Handbook*. That handbook also contains specific instruction on other ordinances, including conferring the priesthood and ordaining to a priesthood office, setting a member apart in a calling, dedicating graves, and dedicating homes.
>
> Father's Blessings and Other Blessings of Comfort and Counsel
>
> Fathers (for their families) and others who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood may give blessings of comfort and counsel. Fathers may give their children blessings on special occasions, such as when the children go on missions, enter military service, or leave home to go to school. A family may record a father's blessing for family records, but it is not preserved in Church records. A father's blessing is given the same as any blessing of comfort and counsel (see *Melchizedek Priesthood Leadership Handbook*).

> The gift first manifested when she was a child, and she had laid her hands on a pet and it was healed. We gave her all the literature about the Church, and she read everything and joined, becoming a faithful member. The mission president visited her in regard to her gift of healing; and though he recognized her ability to heal as a spiritual gift from God rather than [from] Satan, he requested she not use or demonstrate the gift for now.

We can speculate on the mission president's motives: a desire not to confuse members by having two sources of healing authority, a concern about the inevitable questions of appropriateness that would arise, even a desire to help the woman fit more swiftly into the conventional roles assigned an LDS woman. I wish I knew whether this woman accepted the limitation imposed upon her and whether she is still an active member of the Church.

Another woman I interviewed had been promised "the gift of healing in your hands" in her patriarchal blessing. She said, "I use the gift mainly for my own children and family, drawing out the pain with my hands. Afterwards, I sometimes feel drained. I haven't used the gift outside the family, though I find when I visit the sick I can talk with them, and my voice, in some part, soothes and helps them." I think with longing of the blessing this woman could be to her ward.

Church leaders emphasize "spirituality" and "worthiness" in calling upon gifts of the spirit; but for Mormon women, that emphasis becomes a double bind when the symbol and avenue for spiritual manifestations within the Church is priesthood. In essence, Mormon women become spiritually dependent on male priesthood holders for healing ordinances, even though Mormon theology gives them equal access to God's power. It is particularly ironic, in light of recent statements by Church leaders about the spiritual "superiority" of women, that the Church allows no official avenue for women to exercise this superiority.

THE MORMON HEALING RITUAL

Virtually every society has created a ritual for attuning an individual with a divine source as a channel of healing or other important spiritual gifts for the community. Ritual use of language and symbols is central in such empowerment rituals, because symbols both represent and objectify power.[3] Within Mormonism, consecrated oil and the ritual language of the ordinance occupy this important place. Sacred-

[3] In a recent study of contemporary healing in America, Meredith McGuire points out that "power is a fundamental (if not *the* fundamental) category for interpreting healing. . . . [E]ach type of healing group has distinct beliefs about the loci of the power to heal (or to cause illness), as well as different ideas about ways to channel or control that power" (McGuire 1988, 227).

ness attaches to both the oil and to the language. They communicate power, awaken faith, and enhance the individual's sense of personal empowerment.

Mormon healing prayers do not have a rigid form, although they must contain important ritual elements. The instructions in the Melchizedek Priesthood Personal Study Guide—which were identical in each manual I checked between 1980 and 1988—did not give exact wordings or sample prayers, probably to avoid an over-reliance on terminology in and of itself. The first step is consecrating the oil:

> Olive oil should be consecrated before it is used to anoint the sick. A good grade of olive oil should be used. No other kind of oil should be used. Those holding the Melchizedek Priesthood should consecrate it and set it apart for its holy purposes. One man alone can do this.
> - Hold the open container of olive oil.
> - Address our Heavenly Father as in prayer.
> - State the authority (Melchizedek Priesthood) by which the oil is consecrated.
> - Consecrate the oil (not the container), and set it apart for the blessing and anointing of the sick and the afflicted.
> - Close in the name of Jesus Christ.
>
> In administrations to the sick:
>
> This ordinance is done in two parts.
>
> **Anointing**
> One Melchizedek Priesthood holder anoints with oil as follows:
> - Anoint the head of the sick person, using a small amount of oil.
> - Lay your hands on the person's head.
> - Call the person by name.
> - State the authority (Melchizedek Priesthood) by which the ordinance is performed.
> - State that you are anointing with consecrated oil.
> - Close in the name of Jesus Christ.
>
> **Sealing the Anointing**
> Two or more Melchizedek Priesthood holders lay their hands on the head of the sick person. One of them speaks as follows:
> - Call the sick person by name.
> - State the authority (Melchizedek Priesthood) by which the ordinance is performed.
> - Seal the anointing that has already taken place.
> - Add such words of blessing as the Spirit dictates.
> - Close in the name of Jesus Christ. (*Lay Hold* 1988, 153–54)

Within Mormonism as with any religious or cultural tradition, the ritual effect of using traditional language is an empowerment; the person speaking words that have been spoken many times in similar settings is also putting himself or herself in touch with the power that has operated in those previous settings. I would argue that priesthood mediates power from a divine source to the human setting by distinguish-

ing key structural symbols and moving them into a proper relationship to allow power to flow through them. In other words, an ordinance creates order. In healing, the priesthood power to establish order through ritual lies at the root of the healing process. (See McGuire's discussion, 1988, 213–39).

This priesthood ordering or alignment was often extended through the use of physical objects when the healer was distant from the source. We see a scriptural example of such "portable charisma" in Moses' brazen serpent, which had the power to heal any Israelite bitten during the plague of serpents (Num. 21:8–9). A modern example occurred in July 1839 in Nauvoo and Montrose during a malaria epidemic. Joseph Smith, who had been healing the sick, was waiting to return to Nauvoo when a father asked him to heal his three-month-old twins:

> Joseph told the man he could not go, but he would send some one to heal them. He told Elder Woodruff to go with the man and heal his children. At the same time he took from his pocket a silk bandanna handkerchief, and gave it to Brother Woodruff, telling him to wipe the faces of the children with it, and they should be healed; and remarked at the same time: "As long as you keep that handkerchief it shall remain a league between you and me." There were many sick whom Joseph could not visit, so he counseled the twelve to go and visit and heal them, and many were healed under their hands. (HC 4:4–5)

In his book *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, D. Michael Quinn cites additional examples of healing handkerchiefs, including those of Lorenzo Snow, Newel Knight, and Caroline Butler. Quinn also notes the fascinating incident of Joseph Smith consecrating the cape belonging to Caroline Butler's husband "for healing purposes, and several generations of the Butler family regarded the cape as having power in itself to heal" (Quinn 1987, 222).

Consecrated Oil

Consecrated oil, which is usually blessed for its healing function in quorum meetings as a semi-private act of a united brotherhood, is the only ritual object currently involved in healing. Women, by being excluded from priesthood meetings, are not witnesses to the consecration.

Some faithful Mormon men regularly carry oil with them in tiny pocket-size vials. Women may be responsible for seeing that the family medicine chest contains a current supply of consecrated oil; but because they were barred from using oil at the same time they lost the privilege of giving blessings, they are also distanced from the close proximity that some men retain to this holy object. Consecrated oil is part

of the washing and anointing portion of the temple ritual for women, as for men; but the increasing strictness surrounding anything temple-related has made the use of oil for women even less accessible, rather than more comfortable and familiar.

The Laying on of Hands

The second part of the ritual is the laying on of hands and the pronouncing of the prayer of administration in which, even though the wording is not specified, certain elements must appear, as cited in the handbook. Laying on hands is an important part of the healing ritual. To the best of my knowledge, all Mormon prayers outside of the temple are pronounced with arms folded and hands clasped except for four: confirmations, ordinations to the priesthood, settings apart, and blessings of healing. Women, as non-priesthood-holders, participate in none of these, so even the ritual posture—a circle of men with their hands on the head of the recipient—is associated with male priesthood functioning.

Many of the women I've talked to express hesitancy about laying hands on someone's head because they are afraid that assuming this "priesthood posture" will be seen as inappropriate. Some of them avoid the problem by establishing physical contact in other ways during the pronouncing of a blessing: hands on shoulders, holding hands, etc.[4]

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[4] The practice of laying on of hands is not uniquely or distinctively Mormon. The practice is known worldwide and across time. Its sources are unquestionably the intuitive and instinctive gestures of comfort that we offer a hurt child: laying a palm on a feverish forehead, kissing a scrape well, patting a weeping child. The formal laying on of hands is the oldest form of ritual healing, known to virtually every religion. Rock carvings in Egypt and Chaldea (Iraq) and cave paintings in the Pyrenees that are 15,000 years old depict individuals in a formal attitude of laying both hands on another. The Roman emperor Vespasian (A.D. 70–79) had the reputation of healing blindness, lameness, and mental illness with a power in the palms of his hands. The Spanish conquistadores found Native American shamans and brujas of both genders laying on hands (Stein 1988, 116–17). North American Pentacostal congregations practice the ritual widely today.

Nor is the role of physical touching excluded from modern healing. In a recent *Deseret News* article, physician Lynn Fraley stated, in language borrowed from Alvin Tobler's *Future Shock*: "The more the world becomes 'high tech,' the more the world needs 'high touch.' I consider touch the most undervalued, most effective tool we [physicians] can use." Fraley regularly uses touch with her patients, not only during examinations but also to relieve pain, to reduce anxiety, "and sometimes to provide something that is hard to measure in terms that modern medicine understands" (Jarvik 1989).

A precious twentieth-century document for Mormon women is a written form of the blessing to be pronounced in a washing, anointing, and sealing before childbirth. It was recorded in the minutes of the Oakley (Idaho) Second Ward Relief Society between 1901 and 1910. This excerpt combines the use of consecrated oil, ritual language, and the laying on of hands:

> We anoint your back, your spinal column that you might be strong and healthy no disease fasten upon it no accident belaff [befall] you, Your kidneys that they might be active and healthy and preform their proper function, your bladder that it might be strong and protected from accident, your Hips that your system might relax and give way for the birth of your child, your sides that your liver, your lungs, and spleen that they might be strong and preform their proper functions, . . . your breasts that your milk may come freely and you need not be afflicted with sore nipples as many are, your heart that it might be comforted. (in Newell 1987, 130–31)

The blessing continues, in what could be a revelatory tradition for women in modern times. Nineteenth-century blessings—and obviously this one as well—involved the anointing and blessing of the area of the body mentioned in the blessing, a depth of ritual that now exists only in the temple. The question of propriety is no doubt one reason why male leaders of the Church accepted the administration of women to each other and why laying hands on only the head of the recipient accompanied the narrowing of pronouncing blessings to males. (I have no information which change came first.)

Authority

The portion of this prayer quoted by Linda Newell does not specify the authority of the women. Some contemporary women who give blessings circumvent the problem by developing another category of blessings: the "mother's" blessing. One woman, a single parent to whom the idea of women holding priesthood seemed "spooky," admitted giving her son a mother's blessing. A guest speaker at a Young Woman's values night in my ward, said, "My husband travels a lot on business; and sometimes when he's gone, if a child is sick, I give a mother's blessing." She quickly added, "It isn't like a priesthood blessing."

Alternatively, some endowed women have blessed others by invoking "the authority with which we were endowed in the temple" or "by the power of our united faith in the Lord Jesus Christ." Still others invoke the priesthood of their husbands. A friend of mine who is a gifted healer reports, "I've given my husband a blessing, and I lay my hands upon him and cite his priesthood authority, which I share." The

mother who blessed her croupy son invoked the Melchizedek Priesthood without specifying who held it.

Modern Consequences of Women's Healing

Imagine with me a scenario in which LDS women could serve each other with the spiritual rituals of healing blessings—important in physical health—and blessings of comfort and counsel—important in mental health.

An immediate result would be to strengthen the Church at large by increasing the spiritual autonomy of more than half its members. One single woman expressed her frustration at the "inaccessibility" of blessings, due to the inaccessibility of priesthood holders. She describes her ward's demographics as "180 families which are mostly single women" and "about twenty priesthood holders." She has had no home teachers during the five years she has lived in the ward. The "home teaching" is done by visiting teachers, by special permission. "And if you're sick, it better be on Wednesday night because you can only catch the bishop on Wednesday."

A second immediate result would be an increase of faith because women would be released from the very real and very crippling fear that they are "doing something wrong" and may be punished by the community. It breaks my heart to hear of beautiful experiences like the two that follow where, even as the women experience the unquestioned outpouring of the Holy Ghost, they still draw back fearfully.

One woman told me about a time when she was twelve and her father was dying from Lou Gehrig's disease. Early one morning, her mother called her awake—her father had quit breathing. She ran downstairs to be with him while her mother called the bishop and the family.

> Somehow I felt I could do something about it. I held his hand in mine and sincerely prayed as best a twelve-year-old could do. After a moment, his eyes opened. He looked at me and asked, "What did you do? My lungs lifted and I could breath again." He said he'd been fighting to live all night and felt like he should give up. It was a very humbling thing, and we both knew that the Spirit had worked through me. A few months later, he did die; but we were all better prepared for it by then.
>
> I hadn't labelled it as a healing blessing until years later when I was listening to a lecture about experiences like this in the Church. I've always felt a need to "heal hurts" of others. I would like to have the option to use that power, but I'm not sure what makes it okay to call on it. It seems the natural thing to do. I would like to have that permission.

In the second example, a Relief Society president, concerned about some sisters with serious physical and emotional problems, asked if they would like some of the sisters to come and pray with them.

> They all thankfully agreed. I called sisters in the ward who were close to them—friends and visiting teachers—and arranged for baby-sitting for a half hour or so. The sisters made every effort to be there. Some left work. We knelt in a circle, and I said the prayer. It was a deeply spiritual experience for everyone involved, and I would have liked to have put my hands on their heads as I prayed; but I felt we were on the edge as it was, with no priesthood [holder] present.

BROADENING WOMEN'S SERVICE

It is ironic, given the tradition of Mormon women's healing, that the new tradition makes women apprehensive and fearful about using their spiritual gifts. How can we encourage Mormon women to cross the borders of timidity and comfortably use these gifts in the service of others?

While the ordination of women would remove objections to women performing the ordinance of administration and overcome the hesitancy many Mormon women feel about practicing healing, ordination is not an event they can control or bring about. Rather than wait for women's ordination, I think it is wiser to concentrate on what women themselves *can* do.[5] I would hope that women who feel drawn to healing would "earnestly seek" this gift and prayerfully exercise it, appropriately uniting with those who have the complementary gift of faith to be healed and strengthened by those who have the gift of faith in the Savior.

I would also hope that women would break the silence of the last three generations regarding the exercise of this gift and share their experiences with each other and with selected men in appropriate ways. We need to tell each other stories, not only the stories of our foremothers and their healing experiences, but also our own.

Some may feel that if such sharing becomes "public," it will be seen as a "publicity stunt." I have talked with literally dozens of women about this topic. Although many—not all—feel disappointed at their exclusion from the Church's official healing rituals and some who are aware of the history resent the injustice, none are angry at the Church or inclined to use a healing occasion to try to embarrass the Church or

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[5] An alternative solution—having ecclesiastical leaders set certain women apart as healers—has serious problems. In this case, the choice of seeking and exercising a spiritual gift would still be removed from the woman's own area of autonomy. A male leader would be making the choice. Thus, healing would still be limited and excluding. A second solution, having both men and women participate in prayer circles for healing outside the temple, has the same problems with selection and exclusivity; also, it is a highly unlikely solution, since prayer circles outside the temple have been discouraged for some time.

put public pressure on it. In fact, I would suspect that anyone prompted by such a motivation probably would not be a successful healer.

Moroni promises: "All these gifts of which I have spoken, which are spiritual, never will be done away, even as long as the world shall stand, only according to the unbelief of the children of men. . . . Wherefore, there must be faith; and if there must be faith there must also be hope; and if there must be hope, there must be charity" (10:19).

Unbelief is not the reason Mormon women no longer practice the gift of healing. Rather, there exists much faith but no legitimate avenue to exercise it. Even though the Relief Society motto is "Charity Never Faileth," the Church's distancing of its women from blessing circles has diminished Moroni's vision of faith, hope, and charity to plates of chocolate chip cookies and tuna casseroles. Mormon women are trained for private charity, Mormon men for public priesthood power. Those in one realm are required to close their eyes to the other realm. The disconnection of charity from power, unfortunately, ensures that charity is powerless and licenses power to be without charity.

The instructions in Doctrine and Covenants 46:7–9, which preface the list of gifts given to the members of the Church, contain important cautions. One of these cautions is against sign-seeking, self-aggrandizement, or other unworthy personal motivations. But the other important caution is against being deceived "by evil spirits, or doctrines or devils, or the commandments of men." I agree that these cautions against self-deception and temptation are important; I wonder if the warning against "the commandments of men" may also be a caution against our own traditions that may unnecessarily limit and restrict us. For certainly, the rest of that introduction is a celebration, a promise, and an encouragement to exercise spiritual gifts:

> But ye are commanded in all things to ask of God, who giveth liberally; and that which the Spirit testifies unto you even so I would that ye should do in all holiness of heart, walking uprightly before me, considering the end of your salvation, doing all things with prayer and thanksgiving. . . .
>
> . . . And that ye may not be deceived, seek ye earnestly the best gifts, always remembering for what they are given;
>
> For verily I say unto you, they are given for the benefit of those who love me and keep all my commandments; and [her] that seeketh so to do; that all may be benefit that seek or that ask of me. . . .

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Theological Foundations of Patriarchy

Alison Walker

MOST RESEARCH BY MORMON FEMINISTS has been historical in nature. Proponents of greater power and privilege for women cite as precedents the lives of Huldah and Deborah of the Old Testament, the treatment of women by Jesus Christ, or the activities of pioneer women in the early restored Church, including blessing the sick. The strength that many women have found in history has been helpful, and I do not seek to trivialize it. One of my greatest personal experiences of empowerment—a realization that the first to know of Christ's resurrection were women (Luke 24:1-10)—came from history. However, feminism's opponents also cite history: God's ancient covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, not Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel, for example; or the maleness of Jesus and his twelve apostles; or the former practice of the principle of polygamous marriage. Indeed, the problems of a historical focus on feminist issues are several.

History, by its very definition, relates to a particular people in a particular social and cultural setting, rather than to universals. The implications of any historical occurrence, and even the "facts" of an incident, are always colored by the perceptions of those who have recorded it and those who interpret their records. Implicit in any analysis of history, however uplifting or empowering, must be a question of its applicability to present circumstances.

A more productive approach to Mormon feminism might be a theological one: How does feminism fit within the theological tenets—the unchanging universals, the eternal truths—of Mormonism? Upon what

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theological tenets is our system of patriarchy based? Simply stated, *why* the patriarchal order? Perhaps a theological approach would lend rational support to what many of us have long known spiritually and emotionally: that patriarchy is not good, that patriarchy is not right, that patriarchy, in the words of feminist and former Latter-day Saint Marilyn Warenski, is "discrimination in the name of God" (1978, 277).

I will direct my analysis to explore the primary foundations of patriarchy in traditional Judeo-Christian thought and to discover why these principles are unacceptable justifications for patriarchy in Mormondom.

First we ought to define patriarchy. In *Mormon Doctrine*, Bruce R. McConkie called the patriarchal order the nature of the Lord's government, a system with the family at its center (1979, 559). Dean L. Larsen, of the presidency of the Seventy, expounded on that idea in an article in the *Ensign*:

> [The patriarchal system] places parents in a position of accountability for their own direct family, and it links these family kingdoms in a patriarchal order that lends cohesiveness to the greater kingdom of God of which they are a part. . . . In the Lord's system of government, every organizational unit must have a presiding officer. [God] has decreed that in the family organization the father assumes this role. (1982, 6–9)

Quoting Stephen L Richards to make his point, Larsen continues:

> Where is the personality more perfectly endowed by nature and divine ordinance to receive and exercise authority in his own household than the father of that household? (1982, 11)

Larsen's discussion also links the father's presiding position to his priesthood authority: "He bears the priesthood ordination. He is accountable before the Lord for his leadership" (1982, 9). Carolyn Wallace, in researching the Church's priesthood, summarized: "The patriarchal chain . . . establishes an order on earth as well as in heaven, an order that both expresses and depends on priesthood authority" (1986, 122).

In *The Creation of Patriarchy*, feminist Gerda Lerner defines patriarchy as "the manifestation and institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance over women in society in general [implying] that men hold power in all the important institutions of society and that women are deprived of access to such power" (1986, 239). In linking male dominance over women in the family to male dominance over women in institutions, Lerner completes our definition. In the Church, the priesthood's administrative functions also tie the hierarchy back to ordination.

Patriarchy, then, is more than just husbands and fathers presiding in homes, more than simply an all-male priesthood, and more than

only male hegemony. The patriarchal system consists of and encompasses all three. Now, what theological foundations underpin such a system?

Dualism of Spirit and Body

One foundation of patriarchy in traditional Christianity is the concept of dualism. In *The Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion*, Sterling M. McMurrin explained "that the mind-body problem, the question of the nature of the soul or spirit and the body and the relation between them, has been a major metaphysical issue in occidental religious thought since the earliest Christian centuries" (1965, 7). Dualists answer this question by postulating that "minds are immaterial, unextended, simple conscious substances, and bodies are material, extended, composite, nonconscious substances" (Wolff 1981, 331). In the words of Rene Descartes, the modern Western philosopher most closely identified with the dualist view, "It is certain that I, [that is, my mind, by which I am what I am], is entirely and truly distinct from my body" (in Halverson 1981, 173). As Truman Madsen explains this distinction, "The soul has none of the qualities of the body and vice versa. Mind or soul is really real, the body is unreal or less real. The soul is eternal; the body temporal. The soul is good; the body is evil" (1970, 44).

Feminist theologian Rosemary Radford Ruether explains that in traditional Christian thought, "the relationship of male to female is analogous to the relationship of spirit to matter"; femaleness is correlated with "the lower part of human nature in [this] hierarchical scheme of mind over body" (1985, 64; 1983, 93). Ruether further notes that "femaleness is both symbol and expression of the corruptible bodiliness that one must flee in order to purify the soul for eternal life. Female life processes—pregnancy, birth, suckling, indeed, female flesh as such—become vile and impure and carry with them the taint of decay and death (1983, 245).

Traditional Christianity's dualism originated in part in ancient Greece from the metaphysical theories of Plato and Aristotle. Says Rosemary Radford Ruether,

> The influence of . . . Aristotelian biology on Christian theology . . . can hardly be underestimated. Aristotle's biology gave "scientific expression" to the basic patriarchal assumption that the male is the normative and representative expression of the human species and the female is not only secondary and auxiliary to the male but lacks full human status in physical strength, moral self-control, and mental capacity. This lesser "nature" thus confirms the female's subjugation to the male as her "natural" place in the universe. (1985, 65)

Centuries of Israelite tradition also influenced Christianity's dualism. Ruether offers this example of female subjugation from the time of Moses:

> In the story of the giving of the law at Sinai, the people are told to assemble and prepare themselves for the great revelation that will be the charter of their life as a nation of God. Yet, we are startled to read that the "people" are told to keep strictly away from women for three days in order to be ready for the revelation. Suddenly, we realize that the author simply assumes that the "people" means males. . . . Women are not only invisible, but they are also seen as sources of pollution inimical to the receiving of divine revelation. Male sacrality is defined by negation of the female sexual body.[1] (1986, 44)

In the first century, Philo, "the foremost Jewish philosopher of antiquity[,] . . . attempted a reconciliation of the dominant Hellenistic metaphysics of his time with the Hebrew scriptures" (McMurrin 1965, 19), contributing to the dualist view of the relationship of body to spirit and female to male adopted by the Christians. Judaism, and subsequently Christianity, was affected, too, by Persian dualism. The tendency to call the body evil was manifest most sharply in Manichaeism, named for its founder, Mani, a Persian who lived in the third century. Manichaeans believed that "because human beings [are] made of matter, their bodies [are] a prison of evil and darkness. . . . To achieve salvation, humans must . . . abandon all physical desires" (Kagan 1983, 236).

Mormonism has rejected the principle of dualism with such modern-day revelations as D&C 29:34 ("All things unto me are spiritual") and D&C 131:7 ("There is no such thing as immaterial matter; all spirit is matter"). As Truman Madsen clarifies, in Mormon theology, "mind, spirit, and body are all material, in varying degrees of refinement. They have equal status in spatio-temporal existence and are, in their perfected state, of equal worth" (1970, 45).

Furthermore, as Carolyn Wallace has written, "the physical body, which is considered the temple for the spirit, is necessary for the perfectibility that LDS church members strive to attain" (1986, 119). In direct opposition to a fleeing from bodiliness to purify the soul, in Mormonism the soul cannot be purified without the body. "Spirits cannot attain spiritual maturity unless they live in the embodied state" (Wallace 1986, 119). Mormonism's "conception of God as a material

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[1] See Exod. 19:14–15. For an additional example, see Levit. 12:2–8 for the law of purification of women after childbirth, noting that "a woman is polluted for twice as long if she bears a female child than if she bears a male child" (Ruether 1986, 44–45). Ironically, even Mary, the mother of Jesus, was deemed unclean after giving birth to the Son of God (Luke 2:22).

being existing in space and time" reinforces its view of the body and the spirit, further "distinguish[ing] Mormon theology from the traditional Christian theology which . . . adopted the established Greek theory of the nature of reality as immaterial in its higher forms" (McMurrin 1965, 41).

At times, having spent my life as a female in Mormonism's patriarchy, as I have searched for answers to my numerous questions about the blatant inequalities in the system, I have tentatively concluded that the Church's devaluation of women and things female must result from the inherent lesser worth of femaleness compared with maleness. I have occasionally thought that my lower status on earth comes from a relegation to femaleness in this life because I was not quite as "noble and great" (Abra. 3:22) in the premortal existence as those who have earned maleness. It has even occurred to me that the entire sphere of existence permitted women under the patriarchal order seems to spring from the fact that we are capable of bearing children.

Fortunately, such thoughts are not consistent with the theological tenets of Mormonism regarding dualism (and happily, my sense of self does not allow me to entertain them for long). Because Mormonism has rejected the traditional dualist view of the qualitative nature of spirit and body, Mormonism's patriarchal system cannot be justified by the corresponding dualist view of the value of maleness and femaleness.

God the Father

A second theological justification for traditional Judeo-Christian patriarchy is the belief of God as male. Today, Rosemary Radford Ruether observes, "few topics are as likely to arouse such passionate feelings . . . as the question of the exclusively male image of God. Liberals who have advanced to the point of accepting inclusive language for humans often exhibit a phobic reaction to the very possibility of speaking of God as 'She' " (1983, 47).

Gerda Lerner has written, "For over 2500 years the God of the Hebrews was addressed, represented, and interpreted as a male Father-God. . . . This was, historically, the meaning given to the symbol, and therefore this was the meaning which carried authority and force. This meaning became of the utmost significance in the way both men and women were able to conceptualize women and place them both in the divine order of things and human society" (1986, 178). Feminist theologian Mary Daly summarizes the situation: "As long as God is male," she says, "the male is God. . . . If God in 'his' heaven is a father ruling 'his' people, then it is in the 'nature' of things and accord-

ing to divine plan and the order of the universe that society be male-dominated" (Daly 1973, 19, 13).

Merlin Stone, in her book *When God Was a Woman*, writes of ancient Near and Middle Eastern societies that worshipped female gods. In those societies, Stone theorizes that the status of women paralleled the reverence of the female deity. Similarly, in *The Chalice and the Blade*, Riane Eisler looks to the prehistoric worship of the Goddess to assert the existence of an earlier egalitarian age that she calls gylany.

Proof for such societies is little more than subjective and tentative reasoning. Rosemary Radford Ruether regards the surviving texts of the "ancient religions that revere Mother Goddesses" as "not fully 'feminist' but . . . more or less androcentric. The power of the Mother is viewed from the perspective of males who wish to defeat or harness this power to seat themselves on it as their throne." As for a gylanic society "lost in the mists of time," Ruether writes, "Perhaps it once existed. Perhaps it did not. In any case, it is 'prehistoric,' which is to say that it does not exist as a part of our historical experience" (1985, x). Writer John A. Phillips bluntly claims that "there is a notable lack of convincing evidence that there ever was a period of general worship of the Mother Goddess, let alone a correlated stage of equality between the sexes" (1984, 176).

These discrepancies reinforce the problems I have noted about a historical focus on feminism. Still, I am convinced that belief in the existence of a female god, a Mother in Heaven, can be a great endowment for women. In the words of radical feminist Sonia Johnson, "I know that Goddess ritual, insofar as it generates reverence for and celebrates that which is female, which is *us*, is fiercely empowering, and that her image in our minds—images of ourselves as deity—is necessary as a blueprint for a more authoritative mode of being in the world" (1987, 6).

In 1835, mystic Rebecca Jackson, pursuing an itinerant preaching mission, recorded her vision of an Eternal Mother as the empowering revelation that allowed her to resist and triumph over the hostile reception she was receiving by the African Methodist Episcopal Church who wished to silence her: "I saw that night, for the first time, a Mother in the Deity. This indeed was a new scene, a new doctrine to me. But I knowed when I got it, and I was obedient to the heavenly vision—as I *see* all that I hold forth, that is, with my spirit eye. And was I not glad when I found that I had a Mother!" (in Ruether 1985, 7, 18).

As Latter-day Saints, we too have knowledge of the existence of an Eternal Mother. Even as we sing "O My Father," we are reminded that "truth eternal tells [us we have] a mother there" in heaven, as well

(Snow 1985, 292). A 1909 First Presidency statement made the doctrine official: "All men and women are in the similitude of the universal Father and Mother and are literally the sons and daughters of Deity" (in Wilcox 1987, 69). Believing as we do, in contrast to traditional Christians, that our "Father [and Mother have] bod[ies] of flesh and bones as tangible as man's [and woman's]" (D&C 130:22) enriches for us the benefits of seeking a female god: while others believe "that all language for God is metaphorical and not literal and that the authentic God/ess is beyond gender" (Ruether 1985, 8), our Mother is literally a woman. Abraham 4:27 states: "So the Gods went down to organize man in their own image . . . male and female to form they them." In Mormonism, more than in any other religion, "to be in the image of God is to be male *and* female" (Weber 1987, 58).

Yet, official Mormondom has little to say about Heavenly Mother. Melodie Moench Charles contends that in orthodox Mormonism she "is a nothing at best, and at worst is a housewife. . . . Our theology has allowed her no authority nor power; she gets no acknowledgment for her distinctive contributions, whatever they are. She has no self apart from her husband" (1988, 84–85). Specifically *because* official Mormondom makes few definite statements about the nature and place of God the Mother, however, I will argue that Mormonism's patriarchal structure is not validated by its theological convictions about God or Goddess; rather, the orthodox presumptions about our Eternal Mother stem *from* the patriarchal structure.

Mormon feminist Margaret Toscano explores the concept of the Mormon goddess: "If she were allowed to emerge from obscurity and if there developed around her a body of teachings that could be harmonized with our existing beliefs, they would result in a theology that could, perhaps, provide the basis for a reevaluation of the Godhead in terms of the sacred marriage of the Heavenly Father and the Heavenly Mother" (1988, 54). Such a reevaluation would necessitate the transcendence of "cultural prejudices" (Charles 1988, 86)—including those of the patriarchal system. Then, and only then, could the sacred marriage be viewed not as a male-focused, male-led, and male-dominated Mr. and Mrs. God, with Mrs. God nothing but a helper to her husband, the Supreme Being, but as Rosemary Radford Ruether interprets some of the ancient Goddess myths, lacking even "the concept of gender complementarity," where "the Goddess and God are equivalent . . . images of the divine" (1983, 52).

While we lack information about our Mother and her place in the universe, at least as Latter-day Saints we are unable to justify patriarchy based on the exclusively male image of God. In the meantime, perhaps we ought to pray with Lisa Bolin Hawkins:

Another Prayer

Why are you silent, Mother? How can I
Become a goddess when the patterns here
Are those of gods? I struggle, and I try
To mold my womanhood to something near
Their goodness. I need you, who gave me birth
In your own image, to reveal your ways:
A rich example of the daughters' worth;
Pillar of Womanhood to guide our days;
Fire of power and grace to guide my night
When I am lost.
My brothers question me,
And wonder why I seek this added light.
No one can answer all my pain but Thee,
Ordain me to my womanhood, and share
The light that Queens and Priestesses must bear.
(in Wilcox 1987, 73)

THE FALL OF EVE

Perhaps the most pervasive theological rationale for patriarchy in traditional Christianity comes from what Gerda Lerner has called the most powerful metaphor of gender in the Bible (1986, 182), from a narrative that for over two millennia has "influence[d] the Judeo-Christian view of the roles of the sexes and their part in creation" (Collins 1974, 65)—the story of Eve. As James E. Talmage tells it: "Satan presented himself before Eve in the garden [of Eden], and, speaking by the mouth of the serpent, questioned her . . . and sought to beguile [her]. . . . [B]eing eager to possess the advantages pictured by Satan, she disobeyed the command of the Lord, and partook of the fruit forbidden" (1982, 64–65). Eve then urges Adam to eat of the fruit also, and he does. "Adam was not deceived [however], but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (1 Tim. 2:14). Punished for her disobedience in the garden, Eve is told, "In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (Gen. 3:16). Further, all women (since Eve is the symbol of all women) are made subject to the rule of their husbands as the result of God's decree.[2]

Of Eve's blame, one Christian woman wrote, "When Eve listened to the serpent, representing temptation, she followed, not the will of

[2] Some analysis ties the Eve and Adam story back to the dualism of the body and spirit: Eve "lacks the moral discipline and reasoning skill to keep from being victimized by her senses. She has no intellect to hold her passions in check. She is the less rational, the more sensual of the pair. . . . Man symbolizes mind, and woman symbolizes sense" (Phillips 1984, 61; also Ruether 1985, 63).

God, but the path of evil. . . . [E]ve fell far short of the ideal in womanhood" (Deen 1955, 5–6). Art historian Merlin Stone wrote of her personal experience with the Eve account:

> Even as a young girl I was taught that, because of Eve, when I grew up I was to bear my children in pain and suffering. As if this was not a sufficient penalty, instead of receiving compassion, sympathy or admiring respect for my courage, I was to experience this pain with guilt, the sin of my wrongdoing laid heavily upon me as punishment for simply being a woman, a daughter of Eve. To make matters worse, I was also supposed to accept the idea that men, as symbolized by Adam, in order to prevent any further foolishness on my part, were presented with the right to control me—to rule over me. According to the omnipotent male deity, whose righteousness and wisdom I was expected to admire and respect with a reverent awe, men were far wiser than women. Thus my penitent, submissive position as a female was firmly established by page three of the nearly one thousand pages of the Judeo-Christian Bible. (1976, 5–6)

This submissive position of women is likewise firmly established in Mormonism. In fact, based on Eve's choice in the garden, Mormon women, married or single, until recently have been required to covenant to obey the law of their husbands as part of the temple ceremony, whereas men are required to covenant to obey the law of God. Melodie Moench Charles draws the only logical conclusion: "males are linked directly to God, and women to God only through their husbands—even women who have no husbands. . . . husbands, on some level, act as god to their wives" (1988, 79). In *Paradise Lost*, John Milton similarly describes the relationship of Adam, Eve, and God: "He for God only, she for God in him" (in Phillips 1984, 72). Yet, in addition to violating my idea of what God or Goddess ought to be to people—women *and* men—such patriarchal elements of the temple blatantly contradict Mormon theology concerning the Fall of Adam and Eve.

First, in Mormon theology, the Fall is not the disastrous event other religions view it. As Eve herself explains, the Fall was necessary for the development of human souls: "Were it not for our transgression we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient" (Moses 5:11). Although it is only speculation, I and others choose to view Eve as "an 'intelligent, sensitive, and ingenious' woman who weighs carefully the choice before her and then acts out of a desire for wisdom" (Toscano 1988, 41). President Joseph F. Smith's vision of the spirit world in the Doctrine and Covenants confirms that "among the great and mighty ones who were assembled in the vast congregation of the righteous" was "our glorious Mother Eve, with many of her faithful daughters" (D&C 138:38–39).

Mary Daly explains the positive direction of such a belief: "In [the Fall], women reach for knowledge and, finding it, share it with men,

so that together [they] can leave the delusory paradise of false consciousness and alienation. In ripping the image of the Fall from its old context . . . its meaning is divested of its negativity and becomes positive and healing" (1973, 67). John A. Phillips, in studying the myth of Eve, reaches the same conclusion, calling the Genesis narrative "the story of the beginnings of human consciousness, human history, human civilization. . . . The Fall is not a curse, but a blessing. It is the story of humanity becoming human" (1984, 91). Didn't Nephi of old write: "[Eve] fell that [wo]men might be, and [wo]men are, that they might have joy" (2 Ne. 2:25)? Why should Eve, and thereby all women, be punished for making a commendable choice?!

Further, the second Article of Faith states that "men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression." Indeed, historian Jan Shipps makes the following observation:

> A fundamental theological tenet that separates Mormonism from traditional Christianity is its rejection of the power of original sin. The LDS doctrine of individual salvation rests on a passage in the Book of Mormon which indicates that, since the atoning sacrifice of Christ redeemed the children of men from the fall, men are free forever, having the right to choose good over evil, liberty over captivity to sin and death, and so on. . . . [But] while LDS men may be free so that in Adam's fall they did not all sin, LDS women continue to suffer the curse of Eve. (1987, xii)

Yet if, as Latter-day Saints, we really believe that men are punished for their own sins, we must also believe that women will be punished for their own sins and not for Eve's transgression. In rejecting original sin, Mormonism must also reject the subordination of women derived from Eve partaking of the fruit first. Even if Eve was punished for her actions, that punishment should not extend to anyone else.

Analysis of the Fall in the context of Mormon theology presents a wide discrepancy between what we claim to believe concerning Adam and Eve's transgression and the concept of original sin and what we claim to believe concerning women's obedience and submission to men. Using the Fall of Eve to justify the patriarchal order is not consistent with basic tenets of Mormon theology.

So what of the "curse"? Some see the fall of Adam and Eve as a carefully designed myth created by men exercising power over women. When male supremacy was "written into the Bible as one of the first major acts and proclamations of the male creator . . . male domination was explained and justified . . . as the divine and natural state of the human species" (Stone 1976, 217–18). Rosemary Radford Ruether calls the story a "rather odd folktale" and notes that "Hebrew thought itself, in the scriptures and early Rabbinic writings, did not take [it] very seriously" (1983, 166). Even the temple ceremony invests the

Eden story "with mythical dimensions" as it "instructs participants to consider themselves to be Adam and Eve as the drama unfolds" (Norman 1988, 93).

Others view Eve's subordination to Adam not as a divine decree of what should be, but as a prophecy of what would be. As Hugh Nibley has asserted, "There [was] no patriarchy or matriarchy in the Garden" (1986, 93). Jolene Edmunds Rockwood explains:

> Whether the man's rule is righteous or unrighteous in mortality, the fact that it is mentioned at all presupposes that man did not rule over women before the fall. No elements of the judgments are in existence in the prefallen state. Fallen man must work an unyielding earth by the sweat of his brow; before the fall he was not subject to death. Fallen woman must bear children in pain; before the fall she could not understand pain nor have children. Fallen man rules over fallen woman; before the fall, they were equal companions. (1987, 21)

I concur with Ida Smith, founding director of the Women's Research Institute at Brigham Young University: "Our goal as a people should be to emulate the equal partnership of Adam and Eve before the Fall, not to perpetuate the spiritually blind, unequal relationship that resulted from the Fall" (1987, 103). In the words of Hugh Nibley, "All have fallen, but how *far* we fall depends on us" (1986, 93).

To conclude, I again quote Rosemary Radford Ruether: "The critical principle of feminist theology is the promotion of the full humanity of women. Whatever denies, diminishes, or distorts the full humanity of women is, therefore, appraised as not redemptive [and] what does promote the full humanity of women is of the Holy, it does reflect true relation to the divine, it is the true nature of things, the authentic message of redemption and the mission of redemptive community" (1983, 18–19). Mormonism does much to reject nonredemptive aspects of traditional Judeo-Christianity—the principle of dualism, the exclusively male image of God, ideas about the Fall and original sin—and thereby reflects truth. Why must we persist in reinforcing patriarchy with its denial and distortion of the full humanity of women?

Gerda Lerner contends that "the system of patriarchy is a historic construct; it has a beginning; it will have an end. Its time seems to have nearly run its course—it no longer serves the needs of men or women and in its inextricable linkage to militarism, hierarchy, and racism it threatens the very existence of life on earth" (1986, 228–29).

But what about patriarchy specifically within the Church? In her book *Patriarchs and Politics*, Marilyn Warenski wrote about the manifesto of 1890 terminating the practice of polygamy—Official Declaration 1 in the Doctrine and Covenants—and asserted that "change can only be expected to occur when the Mormons once again are so out of

tune with society that their divergence constitutes a serious threat to the kingdom" (1987, 274). Was the denial of priesthood to the blacks such a threat? Shortly after the publication of Warenski's book, revelation as Official Declaration 2 extended the priesthood to all worthy male members of the Church.

"We believe that [God] will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God," states our ninth Article of Faith. I am certain that another of these "great and important things" will be the forthcoming condemnation of the "perversion" (Nibley 1986, 93-94) that many of us consider patriarchy to be. "Mormon women [are not] destined to continue the game of 'Father, May I?,' receiving permission to take only a series of baby steps toward solving a giant problem" (Warenski 1978, 276). Official Declaration 3 or 4 or 5 will finally transform our perception of the Lord's government "from patriarchy into something that never existed before—into [something] radically new" (Daly 1973, 13).

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Speaking Out on Domestic Violence

Anne Castleton

I WAS A TRUE INNOCENT when I was married for time and all eternity in 1975. One month later, pregnant and exhausted, I spent the evening enduring my Eagle Scout, returned-missionary, medical-student husband bouncing up and down on our bed, reading to me from his ob/gyn textbook. He was making sure that if I wouldn't have sex with him, at least I wouldn't be sleeping. This began my twelve-year experience in an abusive marital relationship.

Abuse has been defined in a multitude of ways (Gelles and Straus 1988). For the purposes of this essay, I will define abuse as inflicting harm—verbal, physical, or psychological—on another person. Behavior in many marriages falls under the umbrella of this broad definition of abuse, at least at times. When the harm becomes ongoing and/or cyclical, and the offending partner refuses to acknowledge it and change, an abusive relationship exists. I am excluding sexual abuse from this definition; although serious and common, the dynamics and treatment of sexual abuse are more complex.

The term domestic violence, however, refers to the use of physical power, either as threat or actual force, to ensure compliance. Abusive relationships may or may not involve physical force. If psychological and verbal abuse control the victim, the abuser may never need to resort to physical violence. But scholars have yet to see a physically violent relationship that doesn't also involve psychological abuse (Horton 1989).

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Spouse and child abuse have only been recognized as social problems within the last thirty years (Pagelow 1984). Women and children had to be recognized as something other than men's property before the concept of abuse could surface. Until late into the nineteenth century, men were the legal and physical owners of their families. The term "rule of thumb" came from English common law and meant that a man could not beat his human "property" with a rod thicker than the width of his thumb. As society has moved toward valuing the rights of all humans, the already existing realities of marital rape, incest, and child and spouse abuse have become "seeable."

Patriarchal ideology supports the legal precedent for ignoring family abuses, a precedent that stems from the medieval doctrine of *coverture* articulated in English common law by the respected legal scholar Sir William Blackstone. Wives were "under the cover" of their husbands (Micklow 1988; Pagelow 1984; Weitzman 1981). Upon marriage, a husband and wife merged into one legal identity—the husband. As recently as 1966, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the implications of *coverture*, which decreed that since the "very being" (Blackstone's term) of the woman is suspended during marriage, a wife has no right to sell, sue, or contract without her husband's approval. Taking legal action against a spouse was tantamount to suing yourself in the law's eyes.

The consequences of this tradition to women and children still appear in such diverse arenas as credit ratings and applications, expectations for women's surname changes upon marriage, political rhetoric about family privacy that often protects the supremacy of the patriarch while leaving vulnerable the wives and children, and the assumption that what is in the best interest of one member of the family (the father) is in the best interest of all.

Feminists brought the problem of battered women to public visibility, identifying major inequities in the distribution of physical, economic, psychological, and socio-cultural power within relationships (Martin 1976; Dobash and Dobash 1979). Feminists also helped protect and rehabilitate abuse victims by establishing shelters and by working to educate legal and public officials, change laws, and generate funding.

However, none of these measures has been particularly effective in preventing abuse. This is partly because abuse is a relational situation, occurring when two people interact. As yet there is no adequate way of dealing with the issues of individual accountability within a relationship. There can be no abuser without an abused. The interactional pattern in the relationship creates and maintains the abuse cycle. As long as victims stay in an abusive relationship, they are part of the

cycle, saying by their very presence, "It must be okay for you to treat me like this. I'm still here for more." I would argue that both partners have a degree of culpability. However, one of the unfortunate aspects of this type of relationship is that the woman, who is most often the abused, often assumes an inordinate amount of responsibility for the man's behavior and for the relationship.

It is easy to stereotype men as abusers and women as the abused because that is by far the most common pattern. Clearly, the situation can be reversed. In addition, men and women in intimate relations are often mutually violent (Gelles and Straus 1988). However, for the purposes of this essay, I am discussing abusers who are men and victims who are women. I resort to this classic stereotype for several reasons. First, it reflects my experience. In addition, women are more likely to be harmed and tend to take men's violence more seriously than the reverse. After all, men are, on the average, fifty pounds heavier than their partners. The difference in physical size, strength, and expertise at fighting and weapon use means that, by some estimates, 90 percent of incidents involving police or hospitalization involve serious physical harm to the woman (Dobash and Dobash 1979).

Those who operate battered women's shelters know that women often return to their abusive partners. Many factors explain this recidivism. Though battered women don't exhibit particular personality traits that make them more likely to be abused (Rosenbaum and O'Leary 1981), within the relationship, they often develop patterns of psychological dependence. Over time, an abusive relationship wears down their fragile self-esteem, leaving them unable to believe they can survive without the abuser. In reality, it is usually the abuser who cannot survive without the abused.

In addition, many battered wives, if they left, would face the economic realities of single parenthood, eking out a living often with minimal skills in a marketplace that discriminates doubly against workers that are female and/or part-time (Hewlett 1986).

Richard Gelles and Murray A. Straus, in two national random samples, ascertained that one out of four marriage partners can expect to be involved in marital violence at some time during marriage. One in twenty-two, or 3.8 percent, of wives are the victims of violence likely to produce injury *each* year. Six of every one thousand wives are severely beaten by their husbands each year. However, between 1975 and 1985, overall marital violence (throwing something, slapping, hitting, kicking, using a weapon) decreased among married couples (Gelles and Straus 1988).

Scholars argue that domestic violence is more prevalent in relationships and cultures with the greatest inequalities, with strong patri-

archal ideology, and with rigid sex roles (Finkelhor et al. 1983). These factors and those that follow indicate that domestic violence is likely to be as high within the Mormon culture, if not higher, than in U.S. society in general. Further, unique conditions in Mormon society can lead to disastrous consequences for women who are victims of domestic violence. Utah census data from 1980 indicates that Utah women (about 75 percent of whom are Mormon) marry younger than those in almost any other state. Their youth indicates fewer skills and less education. Utah women are also likely to have, on the average, one more child than women elsewhere (Castleton and Goldscheider 1989). The responsibility for more children, coupled with fewer skills and less education, significantly limits these women's career options. In addition, Latter-day Saint women, taught from an early age the sanctity and eternal nature of marriage, may try to stay in marriages no matter how difficult the emotional and social constraints.

Underlying marital struggles over trivial issues (have you ever tried to explain a fight that started over the TV remote control or the toothpaste?) is a more important contest over who gets to define the meaning of behaviors and who controls the relationship. Definition and control shape the social reality we live in and provide the rules underlying the constraints and freedoms of social life.

I believe that the *recipient* of any behavior gets to define what that behavior means and is. If you feel I'm being abusive to you, *you* get to decide that. I teach this idea to my children. My son is physically stronger than my daughters; in their ordinary scuffles, they complain that he is hurting them. He says he doesn't hurt them. I say *they* get to decide what hurts. We shape our family rules according to this principle.

In my relationship with my husband, I consistently voiced my concerns over what I considered to be a troubled and unhappy marriage, while my husband consistently voiced his belief that we were happily married. As time passed, I became more and more aware of an ongoing power struggle over who got to define "normal" behavior and thus the relationship. About two weeks before I made the final decision to separate, he wrote me a poem for Mother's Day, celebrating our good match and happy marriage.

The preceding information provides some background for understanding the partial marital history that follows. Before I present that history, however, I must offer three caveats: (1) this story is necessarily one-sided, picturing an abusive relationship, and not a complete history of a twelve-year marriage; (2) what I have written here represents the sense I have made of my experiences all retrospectively (which is the only way we do make sense of things); and (3) my experience was trivial compared to what many women have been through. I will

describe how I experienced this abusive relationship, why I stayed in the marriage, how I got out, and what happened afterwards.

When my husband first bounced on the bed and when, one month married, he tossed a glass of water at me in a restaurant, I could not categorize these experiences that were so foreign to me. I knew my siblings hadn't treated each other or me like that, and I wondered if this was how marriage was supposed to be. Maybe, I thought, this was what people meant about the first year being a difficult adjustment. Many such incidents happened during the marriage. Though the experiences rarely involved physical harm to me, they always involved intimidation.

One major incident of violence, after six years of marriage, showed me how unprotected I was and led me eventually to question the "rightness" of patriarchy in all its religious, legal, economic, and social manifestations. This particular incident happened after my husband had worked all night (by his own choice) and was due home to care for our three little ones while I taught piano students. He forgot to come home, a common passive-aggressive pattern of his. That day, he forgot repeatedly, even when I called him. I taught my students and cared for the children, but I resented being forced to be unprofessional. I was also in the first sick stages of pregnancy. When my husband finally came home, I nagged him about his delinquence. He responded by dragging me into the bedroom, where he physically beat me up, banging my head and upper body against the bed, bashing and bruising me, and terrifying the children. I remember visualizing where the car keys and Visa card were, making a dash for them, and escaping. I left the children because I sensed he wouldn't hurt them and I knew I couldn't escape with them.

I drove to the county sheriff's office; they took one look at me, said, "You've been assaulted," and sent me into a room to wait by myself. I spent what seemed like a long time in there, sobbing, before a man came in and explained to me my options. I wanted to avoid humiliating my husband in front of his peers but wanted him to be warned. They explained that there was nothing they could do because they hadn't caught my husband in the act.

After a couple of hours of serious thought, I realized that my home was with my kids and husband and not with my parents, where I had intended to flee. I called my husband, who was contrite, and returned home. I insisted that we get counseling. We did, and our counselor, without ever probing for a history of similar patterns and with the certainty often characteristic of his profession, assured me that the violence would never be repeated. This was what I wanted to hear. Though

our stake and ward leaders knew about the incident (because my husband had told them), no one ever broached the subject with me. At the time, no one—including me—suspected what profound spiritual and intellectual implications this one incident would have for me.

The abuse I endured considerably altered my self-concept. One evening, at a monthly "Stitch 'n Bitch" get-together with friends, this became clear. In a discussion of self-esteem, my friends all noted that marriage had improved their self-image. I realized then that during my youth, I had been an admired and loved person among family and friends. With marriage, however, my self-esteem had dropped.

I experienced this drop partly because my husband tried to redefine my personality. He told me often that I was a complainer, which eventually became true. Though I had always thought of myself as being happy and cheerful, I wasn't in that relationship. So I began thinking of myself as an unhappy person, a chronic complainer. I redefined myself instead of attending to the relationship.

I remember thinking I might be crazy. Everyone else seemed satisfied in their marriages, and it seemed that I should be too. After all, my husband was on his way to a successful career. Maybe I was exaggerating; perhaps my expectations for marriage were too high. I also felt that I might be partially responsible for the problems; it was my responsibility to stay in there and fix the relationship. (Western culture implies that women are responsible for relationships; abusers invariably imply that if their partners weren't so delinquent, they wouldn't have to be so mean.)

In addition, our family was beautiful. People treated us as if we were the ideal: my husband was a doctor, I was energetic and slim, the children were talented and beautiful. This was all a heavy burden for me. I felt I shouldn't disappoint our extended families or the Church by admitting we weren't such a happy family after all. I always felt I was lying when I mailed out the Christmas photographs.

I developed skills common to women in abusive situations. I learned to be watchful, searching for the warning signs of his sudden outbursts. Once, in family therapy, I mentioned that my husband gave us little warning before an outburst. Our five-year-old daughter, when asked by the therapist, said, "Oh, he warns us. He goes like this." She took a big, quick breath and exhaled immediately. It was very clear that the children, too, had learned to recognize the signs of an impending blowup. We had thirty seconds from the breath to the blowup.

I came to feel that my extended family and the Church cared more about the stability of my marriage than about me. My family loved and supported me, but I got the clear message that divorce was not

appropriate; it was a negative, unspeakable possibility. My mother's rule was not to make any important decisions within a year of having a baby—that in itself kept me married for eight years! Even when my family learned about the incident of violence, they did not immediately consider it a good enough reason for a separation. Getting out of the marriage was a very radical idea. However, once I decided to divorce, my family was extremely supportive.

My husband's parents suggested at various times that it was possible to keep me from getting a divorce, that I was a quitter, and more. They ignored the violence. When they finally had to face it, they maintained, as did my husband, that it wasn't qualitatively different from verbal abuse. When I finally recognized how hard my husband and his parents were willing to work at denying that any problems existed, I understood that the problem preceded our relationship; and I gave up hope of saving the marriage.

I now realize that others supported the marriage partly because I spoke very euphemistically about what was going on. I didn't realize I was doing this. I think I was still protecting my reputation and my dream of a happy family. I was embarrassed to say how things really were and did not fully trust my perceptions.

The situation was so murky that I could neither see it clearly nor report it clearly to my friends. I'd ask, "Is it always like this when your husband works all the time?" or "Is it always like this when you're having babies, or when you're poor?" without really specifying what I meant by "this." I didn't know whether what was happening was a normal "this too shall pass" unhappy stage or a bad marriage. I felt powerless and vulnerable. My husband, who, I finally realized, didn't have my interests at heart, had everything to do with the outcome of my life. In many ways, I am certain he too experienced similar feelings of powerlessness.

I have since discovered that I stayed as long as I did for all the classic reasons. First, I didn't trust my own judgment. I tried to compare my marriage with other marriages to figure out whether I could justify a divorce. Second, I stayed because I was taught to believe that divorce would ruin my children's lives. Third, I had economic fears. I had visions of teaching kindergarten for the rest of my life (which is a whole lot better than many women's job alternatives), and I didn't relish the prospect. I was afraid I could not fill the emotional and economic needs of all those babies. Finally, I believed in eternal marriage and eternal families. I wanted my marriage to be like those I had heard about in Laurel class, even though I rarely saw real-life examples. I kept thinking that maybe I *could* fix it. The hardest thing I did was give up that happy, intact-family dream.

It didn't help that I had not been taught to recognize abuse. Nobody at church teaches about domestic violence or tells us how to recognize it, what to do about it, and when to quit a relationship. Instead they talk about eternity. I didn't see myself as a quitter. I was embarrassed at the potential stigma of divorce and was relieved to have an "acceptable" excuse (like violence). Just being miserable for twelve years is not seen as reason enough to divorce.

Graduate school and feminism were the strongest influences helping me leave my marriage. I had first dreamed about attending graduate school during my third pregnancy. The reality I found when I awoke from those dreams made graduate school seem like an impossible fantasy. But by the time my fourth child was a year old, my husband was teaching at an Ivy League university; I sensed that attending that quality of graduate school, however demanding, would be my ticket to the future. I immediately enrolled as a faculty spouse (entrance requirements weren't as rigorous) in a course that introduced me to feminism and ultimately gave me the courage to change my life.

I was more candid with my graduate school friends than with my church friends because they had less invested in the outcome of my decision. In return, they were frank with me. "That's sick," they would say when I told them something that had happened. "That's really sick. I can't believe you tolerate that." They gave me another view of reality, and I vacillated back and forth between the two views, trying to figure out what was right. Gradually, the view of school friends began to hold some weight with me because it offered hope.

Feminism helped me put my unique, personal story into a global context, which I found very useful. I realized that what was happening to me was not half as bad as what was happening to many other women. When I went to court to get a restraining order and saw the other women there, I began to realize how lucky I was. I saw that the oppression of women fills a political and economic function. Our societal values (first articulated and accepted during the Victorian era only one hundred years ago) about women's unique role as mothers and the sanctity of the home—"a man's castle"—keeps women doing unpaid and socially unvalued work, which in turn keeps them economically dependent on men. The cycle continues as we raise our children to think this pattern of family life is not only natural, but the ideal!

I saw that the notion of family privacy perpetuates the possibility of family abuse. Keeping abuse unspeakable is in the best interest of preserving the worst forms of patriarchy. I also realized how our culture perpetuated family violence by not training public safety officials in its prevention, deterrence, and diagnosis; by not reward-

ing good domestic-violence police work; by lenient, if any, punishments; and most of all, by not "seeing" it, except in the most obvious cases.

In this culture, it was too easy for my husband to rationalize his behavior. In fact, though he has also been violent with other adults, to my knowledge, he has never had to publically account for his behavior. I was frightened to realize that the person I had counted on to protect and guide me could, as easily as not, kill me.

As I became more informed, I began to see that I had other alternatives. Without consciously understanding why, I prepared myself economically and personally to live without a partner. I began to see that I could improve my life myself, without waiting for the approval or help of the Church or my family (though our society ensures that it won't be easy).

I read what literature I could find on divorce and children and learned that divorce isn't necessarily bad for children. Stress and tension are bad for children (and everyone else). I realized, and by the end my children articulated this, that the stress of knowing their mother and father might start an intense argument at any minute was worse for children than divorce. Having a mother who was always emotionally empty would, over time, be worse than financial stress. I realized that the Church's support for my marriage was more ideological than material; in the end, I wouldn't get any sympathy, help, or money from the Church to stay in my marriage. I would simply feel the pressure to do so.

The most important reason I ended my marriage was the most personal. By staying, I was colluding in the slow starvation of my soul. Deep down, I knew myself to be generous, optimistic, and trusting. I also knew I was becoming caustic and cynical. To allow my spirit to be twisted was a sin. I needed to get out before I lost the capacity to thrive.

I moved my children to Utah from the East so that I could begin a Ph.D. program at the University of Utah. I negotiated a trial separation. That arrangement was fortuitous; I had the option of staying in the relationship in case I began to feel that I had been imagining everything or if single parenting and the Ph.D. program were too overwhelming. I remember walking across campus that first fall, admiring the flower beds and thinking, "How did I get so lucky? I'm free, I have my children, and I get to learn things." Life had never seemed so rich.

I reentered counseling; finally out of that intense situation, my vision cleared. I saw the incidents of intimidation and abuse as a pattern, rather than as individual episodes. I saw that we had battled all

along over defining the relationship and over control—who got to control me. The separation brought on a delayed reaction (this is common). I began to notice men who were physically large and strong. I would grab my keys (in case I had to defend myself) and make sure I wasn't near any dark or private corners. The fear I had suppressed for so long surfaced when I became safe—safe enough to feel afraid. People used to tell me I was fearless; now I'm not.

Some parts of my new life are a struggle. The economic pressures I feared are a constant worry. I will never feel safe being economically dependent on a man. The stigma of divorce is less than it used to be, but in a world where women rarely make enough to live comfortably on their own, single mothers are often seen as predators. And we still blame victims. I realize this when people ask me questions aimed, however subtly, at how I caused the violence.

The good news is that I began to recover and return to my premarriage "norm" almost immediately. Just before the divorce was final, my family gathered at a lively party for my brother's wedding. One of my brothers commented that he'd forgotten what it was like to see me smile. Because of the investment Mormon families have in marriages and intact families and because a person's decline is often quite gradual, families often don't notice when a member changes significantly.

After a time, I moved from Utah and returned to the ward I had left. Ward members continue to comment—though they seem puzzled as to how this could be—on my improved parenting skills and my overall aura of contentment and self-assurance. If I could change one thing about those dark confusing days, I would wish for one person to look me straight in the eye and say, "Your happiness matters, Anne—in this life!"

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Rescue from Home: Some Ins and Outs

Linda Sillitoe

AS A JOURNALIST, I HAVE LEARNED secondhand about domestic violence, child abuse, mental health, and homicide. I have interviewed experts and victims; I have read and listened. I know that the names printed in the newspaper represent real human beings; the stories are real people's experiences—and tragedies.

That awareness haunted and compelled me when I learned that one of my sisters, Janean, was in a very difficult and potentially dangerous marriage. A long telephone conversation opened a window into her secret nightmare and gave me the opportunity to transform my "basic education" into something as practical and incomplete as the directions on a survival kit. Before we hung up, I promised to be her advocate in what I knew would be a long, perilous journey. It has been, but along the way there have been many moments of illumination and blessing.

The role of "rescuer" can be played by any family member, friend, or neighbor who wants to help a troubled, disordered, or violent marriage. Just as abuse within marriage is common, the role of rescuer or would-be rescuer is also common and must be played with sensitivity. Each abusive relationship has its peculiarities, yet all have similarities as well. In relating a complicated and emotional experience, I have tried to select the observations, incidents, and suggestions that seem most concrete and practical for others.

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First let me say that I use the term rescue partly because my sister's situation required just that—physical flight, medical intervention, and legal enforcement. However, resolution is a fine substitute for the word rescue, if a solution can be found within the marriage. (Statistics show most victims of domestic violence want the marriage to continue and the abuse to stop; in an overwhelming number of cases, the abuse stops only when the marriage ends, if then.) In fact, resolution is what Janean and I discussed in many long conversations between July 1988 and Good Friday 1989. That day, with the help of parents and siblings, Janean moved with her two babies into an apartment, obtained a protective order, and began divorce proceedings. Before that Janean had struggled to keep the peace and tried many types of rescue or resolution, including marriage counseling, a community abuse program, calls to the police, and an in-hospital program for her husband. Had any of those methods provided a resolution, she would have viewed the counselor, police officer, or doctor as a rescuer.

Rescue requires an external support system but must take place internally as well. Many victims in abusive situations never manage to extricate themselves despite the emotional and physical damage they suffer because they don't have the kind of support required for a successful rescue. Janean's support system ultimately included not only the community resources I have mentioned, but also the emotional, strategic, and financial support of our parents, her seven brothers and sisters, their spouses, and several friends. Every bit of that support was needed. More important, perhaps, was the strength Janean found within herself. She had not been abused as a child; she had been raised in a loving home, had a college education, and had high expectations for her life and her children's lives. This healthy core, though eroded, supported her, too.

Internal rescue is invisible but essential, for the bonds that hold us most tightly are within us, not imposed upon us, and they are the hardest to loosen. Marital problems are notoriously frustrating for police officers, counselors, friends, families, and others because of the ambivalent feelings of the person being rescued. Our attitudes and convictions swing like pendulums when our values shift or confidence wavers. Until a victim is free internally, the external rescue can only be temporary; when a wife returns to her abusive husband (who is usually in the repentant phase of the cycle), her support system often collapses in dismay and frustration. Marriage is a complex bond woven of many experiences and emotions. Most marriages in western civilization are a matter of choice and love. It is not easy to recant that choice or let go of that love. In addition, the vulnerability, insecurity, confusion, or recklessness that initiated the match (often unconsciously) are still part of the abused person. The abuse has likely reinforced those traits.

From the beginning of this journey, my cardinal rule was to never tell Janean what to do. Not only did she have to reach her own decision and live with it, but I knew that if I voiced an opinion, I would be discredited when her inner pendulum swung the other way—which happened about every other conversation. My role, I decided, was to raise her self-esteem so she could become empowered instead of helpless. Hearing, "You matter," nourishes anyone. At first that thought seems alien, almost sacrilegious, to the woman who is convinced that the Lord wants her to sacrifice herself for her children, husband, or eternal marriage. Janean's healing was almost visible, even over the telephone.

Before Janean began talking, she felt increasingly alienated from the family, and we from her, because she was living in a split reality we did not comprehend. Within her secret, she felt she was an utter failure in an otherwise golden (and mythical) family. She was the sixth child to marry in the temple and possibly the most devout in commitment to church and family. Her marital problems often seemed insurmountable, but she did not see divorce as a possible solution. Not only did I remind her of her talents, accomplishments, and potential, but I also mentioned the problems the rest of us have, which seldom come up at family birthday parties. Very gradually she began to believe that not only were her children worth saving from misery, but so was she. Then she began to comprehend that the people she loved and respected would understand and support her if they knew her true situation.

Additionally, our family is indebted to Oprah Winfrey's television program, an unexpected source of strength for Janean as she immersed herself vicariously in discussions of abuse, divorce, child support, custody, and other related topics. When I said her sisters in abusive marriages were legion, she didn't believe me because other women were doing as well as she was in protecting their secret. As she listened to others, her shutters opened, and she recognized many of her sisters hiding behind their own drawn shades. Now she reaches out to them.

Though I am no clinician, journalism had taken me to dream-reading, too. Over the years, understanding my own dreams—especially recurring ones—has changed my direction. I introduced this idea to Janean rather tentatively, but she grasped it easily, and we experimented with interpretations of her most vivid dreams until our decoding clicked into place. During those dark months of ambivalence, fear, and torment, it helped me to know that she was dreaming of new areas of her house (or psychological space) that were bright, comfortable, and luxurious. I felt even better when her dreams featured her taking charge of terrifying situations or emerging whole from trauma.

However, as Janean gradually found and reaffirmed herself, the tensions at home rose, too, and her situation became increasingly dangerous. Now she no longer took total responsibility for everyone's behavior and emotional and physical health. She expected her husband to control his own behavior and to allow her some privacy and autonomy. She felt more compelled to stand her ground in an argument than to back down, and he found this response not only irritating but threatening. His jibes at rape crisis centers or domestic violence shelters as agencies to break up families bothered her now in ways they had not before. Television shows and even commercials or public service announcements raised issues between them. Her husband's admitted expectation that marriage is confrontative, and his oft-repeated edict that divorce is anathema "no matter how bad it gets," echoed the clang of a prison door rather than the satisfying click of eternal commitment. As her attitudes changed and his became apparent, every sentence, every incident posed a potential battleground. Avoiding, surviving, and trying to resolve fights demanded continual attention—and perpetuated the status quo on his terms. Yet gradually she began to protect her inner, growing self and focus on survival and solution without true surrender.

In the end, a rescue must always come from within. However, it is inhibited by the continual abuse, which successfully perpetuates the status quo. Within the marriage, the victim's sense of normality is so distorted, her self-esteem so damaged, and her need to appease so enormous that she is often incapable of changing her situation or even thinking of change. Therefore, even her efforts to keep the peace perpetuate the status quo. In fact, as long as she can deny she is being abused, she is, in her own mind, not a victim but a wife, loved and valued, and the world seems safer. She erects defenses by noticing another in a worse situation. "If he ever did that," she'll say, "I'd leave." The line she draws, however, shifts as soon as the violence escalates or, more likely, changes character. Awaiting the crucial incident that draws the line definitively without real tragedy can be frightening.

Naming is a key tool and a powerful one. Janean began talking when her husband was diagnosed as depressed—a legitimate illness that can be treated. The second diagnosis of a personality disorder came later; yet devastating as that was, it brought some context to chaos.

Defining abuse is essential. Name-calling, ridiculing, derision, cursing-out is not okay or typical; preventing sleep or medical treatment, reckless driving, denying physical freedom to leave the house or use the telephone is not okay; physical force, whether it leaves visible marks or not, is not okay; threatening violence or kidnapping is not

okay. Because abuse is not specifically defined in Relief Society and priesthood lessons or bishop's interviews, my brother-in-law, like many returned missionaries and priesthood holders, gave the right answers at church, never associating his behavior with abuse.

By November 1988 the need for intervention was obvious. Janean knew then that her husband had a personality disorder that was not curable or susceptible to therapy. They had two boys, ages two years and ten months, who were precocious and lively, but very prone to colds and ear infections. The children's ages and illnesses made everyday life challenging. Almost daily Janean endured verbal and psychological abuse and irrational conversations; explosive arguments occurred every few days. Despite that, both she and her husband were active in their ward and had the appearance of a typical family.

One November Sunday, she told her bishop privately that her marriage could not continue unless it improved. He did not truly understand her situation, she felt, but, as other patriarchs would later, he left the door open for her to leave—and that panicked her. Janean called me as soon as she got home. My husband and I were visiting with a friend who was a police officer, and I knew he couldn't have missed overhearing my side of the conversation, though he continued chatting with my husband. I briefly filled him in, and he responded as more than a police officer. "An abusive marriage is almost a captive situation," he said. "Abused spouses literally can't think straight until they get out of it and notice how nice it is to be treated well. They're too busy pleasing the captor." He suggested bringing Janean and the children to our home, telling her she could return in a week if she wanted to, as he had done with his sister. At the time, I silently noted that his method was probably easier for a six-foot-tall cop than it would be for me, but his logic resonated. For some time, my mother and I had discussed various ways to give Janean's marriage a rest, but I had never convinced Janean to leave for more than an hour or two, even when she felt endangered.

The next morning Janean called very early; her voice was barely audible. On Sunday, she had feared she was coming down with the children's virus. That night her husband had kept her awake, as usual, arguing, entreating, anything to keep her engaged; once he went to sleep well after midnight, the baby woke up sick. Now she was exhausted, demoralized, and ill herself.

My mother, who lived only a few doors from Janean, met me and we cheerfully packed Janean and the two children into my car, agreeing that they could rest at our house until Janean needed to go home and cook dinner. Just in case, we brought enough to see them all through a day or two. As it turned out, they stayed until Friday, went

home, relapsed, and returned for another four days. Even though Janean was very ill most of the time, her stay changed her thinking. We were too busy chasing her babies to wait on her, but she did like being treated well. She didn't miss her husband, which surprised her. The little boys acted out their accumulated stress, but they didn't cry for their father or home. In fact, when we took the two-year-old for a ride in the car, he checked to be sure we would return to our house, not his. During November and December, we continued these time-out periods, and because they were ostensibly due to illness, they incited no hard feelings or punishment at home. My parents invited Janean's husband to dinner, providing a practical and emotional support to her absences from home.

By Christmas my own family was feeling stress. Janean's family was not getting enough help from biweekly counseling sessions, and nothing else was immediately available. Although Janean and her husband called a Christmas truce, the volatile situation exploded again in January, the very night a community support group was supposed to begin, but didn't. Their tension was high in anticipation and a fight almost inevitable. This time Janean and her babies came to our home for time-out without being sick.

As tensions rose in December, I had, with Janean's blessing, begun sharing information about her situation with other siblings and their spouses. This opened the door for Janean to talk directly with them. I knew how vitally she needed support from both sisters and brothers. The men had difficulty understanding why her husband didn't shape up (he couldn't) or ship out (he wouldn't), and why Janean hadn't left long ago. They had to visualize living with a very strong roommate half again their size, whom they loved but who constantly tore them down and yet depended on them. Could they imagine being pregnant, nursing, and fleeing with two heavy babies? We all had to imagine how paralyzing physical fear is, even if suppressed; how immobilizing the great unknown is, especially when one feels inadequate and afraid.

No other family could take in Janean and her babies at a moment's notice, but they cared and would ultimately provide babysitting, legal assistance, moving services, and cash. Removing the secrecy surrounding Janean's trouble also helped ease the stress. Throughout, my husband John and I gave our children the information they needed to cope with the priority I placed on Janean's needs and with the appearances of two small and dynamic houseguests (who were happier and more relaxed with each visit). We also began to rely on trusted friends to give us emotional support. In addition, my occasional contact with police officers through my work provided an important touchstone with reality. We all learned that denial is a strong and dangerous survival

technique. The person in a demeaning or dangerous situation survives by denying the extent of the danger and suppressing many of the accompanying emotions. Because my mother lived so close to Janean, she really rode Janean's family's ups and down. My contact was less extensive, but there were times when each of us involved simply had to screen out and mentally deny awareness of that precarious situation. Every time the telephone rang, we all jumped. We began to expect crises every other day as the situation became more volatile.

As Janean continued to seek help in January, she found an inpatient program promising intensive drug and behavioral therapy, which her husband agreed to enter. He ended up staying for five weeks, and during that time Janean worked through many internal issues regarding eternal marriage, divorce, independence, and the children's well-being. She prepared to give the marriage every possible chance when he returned but also learned that she could live on her own. Two weeks after they were reunited, Janean's husband was involved in a tussle with police officers, and that incident finally drew the line definitively for Janean. On that Monday at midnight, she and her boys returned to our home for a final time-out. Feeling she could not leave the marriage with her husband's knowledge, she found an attorney and an apartment. After their last community workshop on abuse, she returned to our home for a family meeting. The next morning, she arranged for her husband's doctor to break the news and encourage her husband to check himself into the hospital, which he did briefly. Meanwhile, she went into hiding for two weeks until she felt she could move back home. From Good Friday through the first weeks of spring, the strategic support group we had built proved invaluable, providing financial, legal, practical, and moral support.

We were lucky. In a little less than a year, the crisis was resolved to the point of safety, though legal hassles extended for another year. Janean found a job and is working full-time happily and successfully, and her children are enrolled in a child care program they enjoy. She laughs now, in a carefree way we had almost forgotten, and she pursues self-knowledge with the same courage and determination that finally freed her. The rest of us sleep better. Every few months, we read in the newspapers the kind of article that haunted me, reporting a tragic incident of family violence. The quotes differ, but not much. I dreaded the neighbors describing the typical young family—a sweet, quiet wife, two cute little boys, and a husband, who, though a loner, was such a kind, helpful guy.

The Mormon Woman as Writer

Phyllis Barber

Once while I was wandering through my life, I had a need to say something. I'm not sure where this something came from, but opinions and observations grew on the interior walls of my mind like lichen, growing into some kind of personal vision that wanted out.
— Phyllis Barber

As a Mormon child, I listened when my parents and teachers said, "Thou shalt not bear false witness." I wanted to obey, keep the commandments, and speak the truth in every situation.

But there were times. Once I told Aunt Martha she had a moustache. My mother whispered crossly, "You don't say things like that."

"It's the truth," I insisted.

"Sometimes you can't tell the truth," she said. "People's feelings . . ."

This currying of the truth seemed strange. In my mind, the truth was a clearly seen star. But wispy clouds had drifted across its face. A complicated duality was seeded in my heart and mind.

As I grew older, I started hedging in other situations. I didn't ask the Mutual Improvement Association dance director to stop shouting like a Nazi general even though he was turning us teenagers sour on the All-Church Dance Festival. I said I had a testimony of the gospel when I wanted, more than had, one. I said things were all right when they weren't. After all, I was a brave child of God. And after I married, I overlooked irresponsible behavior in my family to present a pretty picture for everyone to see. Little things. Simple things. Small bricks in a building of self-deception. Small masks and small lies smothering the child who once believed in pure truth.

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Then, one day, I realized I'd created a sculpture of myself outside myself, a clone who was my personal representative to the world. She had groomed hair, was nice, kind, responsible, well-loved, obedient, and she tended home fires. The other me, inside, seemed quite different—sometimes loving, yet sometimes spiteful, sometimes slapping a child, hating the drudgery of the iron/skillet/broom, and dreaming of a more exotic life in a Medusa hairstyle. When this split came to my consciousness, it suddenly seemed bizarre. Why must I walk down the street in tandem when it would be easier just to be myself?

Subterraneously, like a blind reptile in a tunnel, I decided to dismantle the idealized sculpture, gather the disparate parts of myself together again, and find my voice—not an imitation or an echo. Against my better judgment, I began to write, a dangerous thing to do. Words are unreliable. People can pick words apart and throw them back with fingerprints on them. I felt nervous. Maybe I should dance, sing, play the piano, or write innocent children's stories. Maybe I could speak most eloquently by not speaking at all. But the pen was in my hand.

In the act of holding it, I decided I wanted to look at questions from every angle, not from a single point of view. I wanted to consider the value of opposites: bitter/sweet, shadow/light, good/evil. I wanted to reevaluate the belief that "this-could-never-happen-to-me-because-I'm-a-good-Mormon," an idea that had come to feel arrogant and uncomfortable. I wanted to face, rather than avoid, the difficult emotions of hatred, pride, insecurity, fear, loss, desire, self-righteousness—all of which I've known, all of which I've seen outside of me. And finally, I wanted to confess that my experience of connecting with the divine was closer to poet Anne Sexton's book title, *The Awful Rowing Toward God*, than the one I'd heard proposed in church meetings—The Glory of the Gospel, the United Family who sinks to bended knee in common prayer.

As much as I wanted to, I couldn't support what I perceived to be an emotionally idealistic, therefore partially dishonest, view of the world. But on the other side of the coin, I didn't want to don the mantle of *artiste* either—someone who considers herself above reproach in the rarified stratosphere of art. I'm a scribbler, scratching down the events in my line of vision. I see partials. I excel in glances. I paint glimpses of nature in finite detail, not the cosmos. I don't claim to expound the capital T Truth, but rather my capital P Point of View about the range of truth I think I see. Writing is only a way I've chosen, my pick and shovel as I dig out my life and make shapes of it.

In this process, I want to speak what I speak, not what someone else tells me I should speak. Otherwise, I'm no more than parrot and plagiarist. I want to stand where I stand despite all the voices around

me, despite my parents, teachers, Church authorities, or literary critics poised with the canons of tradition and righteousness on their side. I want to be brave enough to stand naked in the snow, to live on if someone laughs, ridicules, or says I know nothing. Only I can bear witness to what I feel and think. I'm the author of my insides as well as the interpreter of external reality.

When, as an artist, I am advised by Church leaders to give my talent to build God's kingdom and spread the truth of the gospel, what am I being asked? Am I a salesperson, a public relations tool to be edited for the masses? Do I have to paint a rosy picture of all things Mormon? Of all things Christian? Am I expected to believe the rosy picture to be the real picture? What about the blues, grays, and blacks in the palette?

Must I maintain a blissful optimism and trust that the hand of God is everywhere gentle to the righteous? If so, then what of the inevitable questions: What is Hitler, what is Stalin, Jim Jones, or Jimmy Swaggart? Is God always good? What is good? What is evil? What is day/light? What is night/dark? Yin? Yang? Two sides of the same coin? And what about "opposition in all things"? This truth-finding is like walking through scraps of pig iron and balancing on uneven surfaces.

In his excellent work, *The Perpetual Orgy: Flaubert and Madame Bovary*, Mario Vargas Llosa compares Bertolt Brecht with Gustave Flaubert. Brecht's plays were written to teach life lessons to his audience. Vargas Llosa describes him as

> the author [who] goes over a lesson with his pupils, one that includes a certain number of stories and their morals, a few fables and the exclusive truths that they illustrate. The reader . . . has the message forced upon him (with genius sometimes), along with a story and some characters, and is allowed no escape and no choice: literature becomes something that . . . demands of the reader the acceptance of a single truth that exists prior to the work of art.

In Flaubert's work, Vargos Llosa finds that

> . . . the truth (one or several) is hidden, woven into the very pattern of the elements constituting the fiction, and it is up to the reader to discover it, to draw, by and for himself and at his own risk, the ethical, social and philosophical conclusions of the story. Flaubert's art respects . . . the reader's initiative. His technique of objectivity is aimed at reducing to an absolute minimum the "imposition" of a particular view that every work of art inevitably entails. (1986, 231)

Obviously, both approaches have validity in the world of literature, but I tend to favor Flaubert's approach of truth weaving itself into the pattern—the truth that is discovered in the creative process, not mandated beforehand. As I create, I am searching, exploring, letting my creation guide me. If I already know everything, I close my

ears to new voices or ideas that may want to exercise themselves; there is no place for creativity to breathe. I cannot examine or expand if there is no fluidity, if all is concretized.

So I pose this question: Is everything finished for us to observe and comment upon, or does God want us to make additions and corrections to the text? "Is reality made or in the process of making?" as Descartes asks.

Our main connection to God may be our imagination. Isn't a leap of faith—a blessed imagination—required to believe in golden plates, the celestial kingdom, and, ultimately, the notion of God? If Mormons are, as Lorenzo Snow said, "as God once was" beings and hope to be gods and goddesses, priests and priestesses, we have the imperative to use our intelligence and creativity to make this world and future worlds the best of places to live. How many times have you said to yourself, "If I owned the world, I'd do things differently"?

When Czeslaw Milosz, the Nobel prize-winning poet, gave his acceptance speech, he said many of his friends had seen their friends die unjustly in World War II and had given in to despair. He concluded by saying artists must keep their vision and not yield to catastrophe or prevailing opinion contrary to their own. "Like all my contemporaries, I have felt the pull of despair, of impending doom, and reproached myself for succumbing to a nihilistic temptation. Yet on a deeper level, I believe, my poetry remained sane and in a dark age expressed a longing for the Kingdom of Peace and Justice" (1981, 409).

If any of us think we know all the answers in our despair or in our certainty, there is nothing left to explore. If the process is limited to A, B, C, D, there is no reason to create anything. Creativity implies freshness, new life, new possibilities. Artists need their wildest imagination to explore this world and worlds beyond.

In the attempt to speak with imagination, a challenge for Mormon writers is the Latter-day Saint lexicon. What repertoire of language is available to me if I operate from the stance of active Mormonism? Should a down-and-out character sulking in a western bar be expected to speak Mormon slang because I am a Mormon writer? If my word processing screen displays words that a good Mormon woman shouldn't use, do I delete them, blast them off the screen, and flagellate myself—"I said that?" Maybe I can blame my word processor—that evil thing. Demonic. Saying things I'd never say.

In a recent discussion, I mentioned to a friend that a character in my first novel took the Lord's name in vain. She answered that she would draw the line when it came to that. "What if," I asked, "there are people in the world who speak that way and who would sound foolish if I used 'Gol darn'?" "I'd draw the line," she maintained.

Whatever the solution to that dispute, the conversation started me thinking about words that might offend some people in the LDS culture. I took adjectives first. Which adjectives are comfortable?

> nice sweet gentle tender kind reliable responsible marvelous spiritual generous loving soothing intelligent cheerful appropriate warm

And which adjectives might cause discomfort when applied to a Mormon woman?

> angry mouthy despairing grasping materialistic controversial sexy seductive feminist bitchy intellectual probing Socratic heroic sleazy

Discomfort for a Mormon man?

> power-hungry adulterous greedy lying seedy fascist communist socialist hippy flippant irrelevant pig money-grubbing abusive

If I create a character who is a bishop or a Relief Society sister and use the uncomfortable adjectives, am I betraying my religion and my community? Need I censor myself continually to avoid offending someone? If so, do I have only a parcel of the language available to me as I write?

Many Mormon writers feel pressured to maintain a worshipful attitude toward culturally respected objects and maxims because they don't want their worthiness canceled. If they walk the tightrope of staying in good graces with the Church community versus dealing with very human quirks of character in an objective, even irreverent manner, then they run the risk of being labeled unfair, slanderous, heretic, firebrand, smug intellectual. This problem is universal in religious organizations: the Ayotollah ordered Salman Rushdie's death for a similar offense.

There is often a literalness in fundamental religion that grounds a wild imagination and flights of language. It is connected to truth-telling, integrity, and telling it straight from the hip: honorable qualities. But the life of the imagination needs to be one of soaring, high altitude, daring; it can't be choked and silenced and grounded every step of the way.

Therefore, Mormon writers often worry about readers who don't go on the same metaphorical flights and who choose to travel on B52s. Many worry about readers who don't differentiate between author and narrative persona. Admittedly, the author is responsible for every word and action that issues forth from his or her characters. The author wrote those words, after all. But for a reader to take a personal moral inventory of an author is another matter. The reader has some responsibility as the interpreter of the text. Much of the burden of interpretation lies with the reader who will make out of words what he or she

wishes. Words are living things, ubiquitous, shifting. Words can be shaped like liquid plastic by both author and reader.

Ronald Sukenick, an experimental American writer, describes the creation of character: "You open an awareness into multiple possibilities and multiple levels of personality, and you can be an infinite number of beings: at one point a mature businessman and at another point a vulnerable infant" (in Bellamy 1974, 65).

Maybe this all happens in the DNA molecule where humans are connected to every one of their ancestors in the long chain back to the beginning—the honorable, the dishonorable, the indifferent. In my opinion, a good writer must assume that people, fictional and real, are subject to the entire spectrum of possibility. Human beings are fluid. They are amorphous. They are mortal. They have idiosyncracies. Should a writer be expected to pretend otherwise?

How can I write about the whole range of emotion if I am inhibited by decorum? Can my characters scream and rage and commit sin? Must they sit on a cushion and sew a fine seam or have only faith-promoting experiences? Am I obligated to make things work out happily ever after, everyone saved and glowing with gospel light? Or is my imagination free to range through the jungles, forests, mountaintops, and deserts of the human experience?

A Mormon writer can break through these barriers, as Levi Peterson has done in *The Backslider* and some of his short stories, but can't expect to stand in a hallowed circle of light surrounded by benevolent faces. These writers need to remember that making any choice includes the price of admission: there's a price/prize for belonging and remaining safe; there's a price/prize for living at the edge.

Thus, the challenge of the language. How plastic is it? How available are some words? How much danger is there of a writer losing credibility in the community by venturing too far out of bounds? Is the kingdom of God more important than one individual's imagination? Am I freer, therefore, to speak how I speak if I don't call myself a Mormon writer but rather a woman who writes?

But what happens to the Mormon writer who decides to stride out in the world at large, bypassing his or her heritage and saying, "Forget that can of worms. I'll just write for people outside of the culture"?

Writing for the world at large presents an unusual challenge to someone who has been raised on Mormon language/sensibility and who believes subconsciously that the most important value on earth is the upbuilding of the kingdom of God. If storytelling is rendered through this particular lens, many readers outside of the language and sensibility have no contextual awareness to inform them of the subtlety and nuance, even the high stakes being played out in the story.

"Stake center, bishop, Relief Society, testimony, temple garments, missionary, sacrament meeting"—foreign words. A character's struggle between obedience to LDS principles and obedience to self, or the struggle with emotions of fear/anger because of a bishop's interview—these are tempests in a teapot to the outside observer.

An observer can say, "What about Chaim Potok, Philip Roth, Mary Gordon, Graham Greene—Jewish and Catholic writers? People are interested in them." As I understand it, Judaism and Catholicism are much more universal, much more ancient and puzzling to the public mind than is Mormonism, which many consider a quaint, odd, right-wing cult, mainly known by its oddities, its yellow headlines—the stories of modern-day polygamy (which is all many people "know" of the religion), Mark Hofmann, and the Singer/Swapp clan.

Then some questions need to be asked: Is a writer who happens to be Mormon better off addressing a Mormon audience who understands the language and the gallant efforts of members trying to lead a principled life? Are Mormon writers trying to write for a larger audience only fooling themselves? Will they just be caught in a crack somewhere, neither in one world or the other? Oddities to both?

> *Reticence and good taste are excellent things, but unscrewing the doors from their jambs is a good thing too. Our original sin . . . is a tendency to forget that nothing human is alien to any of us. This means that the crazy suicidal lady is not to be condescended to by me. It also means that she is one of the inhabitants of my own proper attic, whom I deny at my peril.*
> — Alicia Ostriker

As for the challenges of writing for the Mormon woman specifically, I begin with a remembrance of my father who always told me to be kind. He wouldn't allow me to say anything bad about anyone in authority or anyone else for that matter unless I could say three nice things. He told me, "Love one another," and he cried easily when babies were blessed and children confirmed. He was a bishop. But I also remember my father's hair-trigger temper, remember him slapping me in the face and saying, "Don't you dare cross me, you smart ass."

I don't remember what I said. I may have plied the knife and salted the wound, but maybe I didn't. Maybe I was caught in the invisible web of his frustration about earning a living, feeding four children, and being a saint. Nevertheless, somewhere I learned that saying what I thought was a dangerous occupation.

I remember the early attempts at writing, being afraid of my own feelings leaking out on the paper. They might be embarrassing. They might prove my unworthiness. They might disgrace me before God. I

had to keep reminding myself that I could always throw the paper away. No one had to see what I wrote. But still, I could feel the points of tension in my neck, like talons of an eagle. "Don't you dare say anything wrong. Be kind. Be compassionate. An example. Give everyone the benefit of the doubt. Do unto others . . . "

And then I remembered the MIA slogan of the late fifties, "Dare to be different." But that meant different from everyone else who wasn't Mormon, not different from my Mormon counterparts. I felt the tight girdle of goodness around me. Was there any room to move around on the inside of Mormonism? I reminded myself to say my say, even if it wasn't picture perfect. If I didn't, all the words in my head would suffocate me. Some of them had to get out. They were crowding me. I could still tear or burn or crumple the paper on which I wrote.

Looking at this dilemma directly is painful. I want to be loved by everyone. And if I say something offensive to someone, then I might lose some of the love I need. But I need love from myself too. I want to be unafraid of my reflection in the mirror.

So what specific challenges do I face as a Mormon woman writer, even if I now stand at some distance from activity?

Both the Mormon male and female are raised on the ethic of service, but I believe the woman is the more publicly obligated social servant when the LDS cultural ideal is operative (the female being married and staying at home to raise children). This is not to say men don't serve. They do, but ordinarily by furthering their careers and operating in an administrative capacity. In everyday practice, the women are the main caretakers.

Because I am not the major wage-earner, whenever I sit down to write, I feel spider webs of guilt being woven in the corners of my study. I should be upstairs in my kitchen baking bread, preparing a meal for a sick neighbor, planning an outing for my children, finding dead relatives on microfilm. I shouldn't sit in my study observing people from a distance and writing insignificant stories. I should be making beauty with someone who needs me—art in the real, not the abstract.

Then the spider spins its web furiously around my head. Am I involved in a sufficiently elevated task? Am I furthering the kingdom of God, my main function as a Mormon and a good person?

Sitting in my study, typing, thinking for five hours a day seems an unnatural act. I should close down my computer and answer the needs outside my sealed-off, quiet study. The notion of service, that "other," is my responsibility as well as my salvation, makes it hard to believe in my work. Everything else is more important.

Even if I am providing a service with my writing, it's an indirect and solitary one. And if it's service I'm considering most important, am I not obligated to write something uplifting rather than depressing (which is often the direction of my stories)?

Another challenge to a female writer is the cultural impulse to be a jack-of-all-trades. In my experience, the LDS woman is not encouraged to excel in one area alone. Balance is the more important quality. Excelling in one area is somehow anti-balance.

Knowing how to do many things adequately seems to be the sanctioned criteria because, after all, a mother (the most praised role of the LDS woman) needs to be able to perform in all situations—nurse, comforter, baker, canner, secretary, cook, scriptorian, manager. So, to me, devoting a good percentage of my day to writing, while I could be learning wok cookery, taking an Institute class, learning how to teach my children to manage money or how to make a quiet book for my baby for sacrament meeting is a selfish act. Continually, I have to brush little winged creatures off my shoulders who hoot at me while I write and tell me I am wrong and I'll never amount to anything and I'm silly to think I have something to say when it's all outlined for me if I'd only listen to people who are wiser than myself.

And if, by some monumental good fortune, I succeed at writing, I mustn't be too visible. I mustn't step out where everyone can see me. It's dangerous there. This is a common dilemma for females, not just those who are LDS. Traditionally, the majority of all women are perceived as being better at networking and holding things together than at outdistancing others and standing in a singular ray of spotlight.

That brings up the subject of husbands. If my husband is not successful at his business, I can't be successful at mine. I must not overshadow him. Pull back. Stay in the background, being the woman behind the man. Hold him up when he's in the breach, be mindful of his interests, never surge ahead of him, as that might make him look inadequate. I suspect that if I have a best-selling novel, people around me may scrutinize my family size before they congratulate me on my work. They'll look to see if my children are well fed and my husband satisfied with our marriage. And if they or he are not, I may be criticized as an ambitious woman who pursues what she wants regardless. And, of course, it's wrong to be an ambitious woman in the kingdom of God.

Can't there be another mentality open to me? That my success is my husband's success? My failure his failure? After all, his success has been my success and vice versa for years. Are my talents to be subdued and kept at bay so I will offend no one? Must women keep their

power subterranean so as not to frighten? Hide their brains so they won't scare off the men? Operate at the lowest common denominator of their ability so as to maintain an equilibrium with everything around them?

Or can I, as a woman, give the most back to my culture and society when I accept my ability and stop looking around to see if I've stepped over a wrong line somewhere? Isn't there room for everyone to support everyone else in being the best they can be? By being myself and stepping forward, even if it frightens me, don't I create more room for others?

And then I ask myself what this means. Who am I asking to give me more room? Is it the Church? Or is it me? Could it be a little of both?

> *There are two ways to victory—to strive bravely, or to yield. How much pain the last will save we have not yet learned.*
>
> — Henry David Thoreau

Now, as a grown woman, I have a complicated history that makes me what I am: membership in the LDS church; knowledge of other cultures and religions who do things differently; more than a smattering of humanistic psychology, political science, archaeology, and sociology. I've read about religious wars (i.e., people who kill each other for the truth); I've studied literature, writing, music, teenagers, heartbreak, and disillusionment; I grew up in Las Vegas where the ideal woman (the one most appreciated by the culture at large) seemed to be the one with the most beautiful statuesque body decorated with sequins, feathers, and chiffon. This is my life, and I can't sort out how much of me is culturally programmed, educated, or spontaneously mine.

As a woman, I have my feminine perception of the world because I've surrendered to procreation. I've menstruated, I've watched my stomach stretch to monstrous proportions, I've given birth to four sons, I've nursed, I've worn skirts, I've flirted, I've kissed and been kissed. And in truth, I can't claim to be more wounded, more special, or more suppressed than any other person—man, woman, authority, despot, bag lady, immigrant. The human condition is a large enough challenge for each of us without individuals claiming themselves victim.

Therefore, I don't wish to blame the men, even though they've laughed me off the baseball field, listened to me politely and then gone about their more important male business; even though some have told me I can't have the final say about things because there are those with greater access to the truth. Blame feels unfair, even though I've deferred to the males around me, convinced they did know more because they

had authority from God and what I've unconsciously decided are more obvious privileges. But doesn't God speak to me too? Don't I have a mind and a bodily manifestation like males, even if I have slightly different equipment? Just because I have breasts and a vagina am I less spiritual or intelligent than my male counterparts? Does mammary fat drain the brain cells?

Is God as he a convenient pronoun usage created by linguistics or is God a he with a wife we rarely hear about? If so, why don't we hear more about her? What if men and women are really two sides of the same coin? Daughters and sons—mirror image manifestations of God. Is God the embodiment of all things—male and female, not just male? Is God a god of duality or of oneness?

Theological questions aside, what can I do as a Mormon woman who writes? How can I use my creativity to find balance for myself and others? Am I caught up in trying to please too much? Trying to adapt, smooth ruffles, keep the peace at all costs? Is my notion of connecting people and keeping them together blind to the independence that I and others need at times? Do I always back off my position when challenged by an "authority" (whether ecclesiastical or literary)? Am I brave enough to stand my ground when hail as big as golf balls pelts my hide? I might be brave enough to stand up for my husband and children in troubled waters, but am I brave enough to serve my personal integrity? And that means I must stand behind my conviction that all of us are co-partners with God as creator. Therefore, we must expand our awareness, practice our individuation, and steer clear of mass consciousness.

And females just might have a different purpose and a different method of telling. Their stories and observations have often remained in obscurity because they've been making great art in the kitchen, on the table, in hospitals, wherever they might be—art that is useful, caring, giving to the living rather than to society's notion of greatness. They've learned to make art on small stages, part of the beauty of their art.

My particular approach to writing does not always suit my critics, teachers, friends, or husband who wishes I were more practical/commercial. I like to explore time warps, the edges of sanity, impressionism, experimental language, oblique approaches to the subject of humanity. I like subtlety more than dramatic intensity. I believe that truth is found in small places, not always in heroic epics. I'm attracted to stories with barely discernible plot lines. Maybe this is because I, as a woman, have learned to survive by not being obvious. It threatens me to be seen too clearly. Sometimes I adopt bizarre imagery and situations in my fiction, maybe hiding behind a veil of obfuscation.

Maybe this could be considered a female ploy—an invitation to "Come in and find me. If you love me, you'll do anything for me!" It may also be that fear of censorship is intense and that conventional use of the language seems too trite, boring, or shallow to carry the expression of my feelings.

If I had my way, I'd rather speak with my hands, dance wildly, sing the things for which there are no words—probably more honest ways of telling. But, for some unknown reason, I've accepted the role of writer.

Therefore, I need to accept some of the profession's demands. I need to accept the task before me—to read, study, think, learn traditional logic even though it opposes the way I know and understand things, learn the rules of the craft just as I would with a musical instrument. I need to have these tools, much as I'd like to do without them and do everything my way (which is much more fun). So I refine, refine, and then refine again, observe the rules of character, plot, and setting until I can't stand them anymore; and then, a little flash of inspiration comes and I remember why I'm writing. It's all about that personal vision, all about speaking how I speak. I'm the only one who can do that. Then I cross my fingers and hope I can speak clearly enough for someone to hear, for someone to be moved by my words as I have been moved by others who've chosen to write.

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"May Swenson and Delilah," oil by Bernard Rosenquit

A Tribute to May Swenson

Veneta Nielsen

AS ONE OF MANY WHO HAVE BORROWED deeply from May Swenson's art, in classrooms over the nation and abroad, I offer tribute to her respect for the wonder, the splendor, of every living thing she encountered, human or other-human. I pay tribute to her uniquely brilliant perceptions and her need to record and authorize those perceptions, that respect. Hers were always true and exact words, used with fine artistry. I thank her for what she gives and is—artist, teacher, wise friend.

Many years ago, when she came to visit her family, then still living at the base of University Hill in Logan, she and I went together to Logan Canyon to picnic on the bank of the river. We found a place above where the water divides to offer its nourishment to the town's gardens, lawns, trees, and fields and to give Logan's houses light, warmth, and function. May touched the water barefoot; it was chilly, electrifying, swift. She talked about the river's giving, and about the obligation of the poet as artist. She talked seriously and thoughtfully about her work.

"I think I have mastered my craft; now I want to use it to say some things," she said. Since then she has said many things. Besides her delightful, wonderfully graphic poems, many reveal her dedication to some vision still to be realized, still to be embodied in words. A few

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VENETA LEATHAM NIELSEN, retired English professor emeritus, Utah State University, is author of two volumes of poetry: Familiar as a Sparrow *(Brigham Young University Press, 1978) and* Looking for the Blue Rose, *(limited edition available at Utah State University Bookstore); a classroom handbook,* To Find the Poem *(Utah State University Press, 1968); and the 1974 Utah State University Honor lecture, "So Deep a Logos."*

lines from "In the Bodies of Words," her poem on the death of Elizabeth Bishop exemplify:

> Your vision multiplies,
> is magnified in the bodies of words,
> not vanished, your vision lives from eye to eye,
> your words from lip to lip perpetuated.

At the time of our conversation, her poem "The Centaur" had just been published. She had, by a magical, mythical image, described herself riding a stick horse by the old canal bank near the family home, the early stirrings of her art's life. As the child rider of two worlds, the spirit and matter worlds symbolized by the centaur, she drew Mind as controller of the horse compounded of body power, sense experience, and spirit. The image depicts both human and beyond-human things, in a matter world. At the poem's ending her mother asks, "Where have you been?" Her answer was not merely, "Along the canal bank."

> *What's that in your pocket?* she said
> *Just my knife.* It weighted my pocket
> and stretched my dress awry.
>
> *Go tie back your hair*, said my mother
> and *Why is your mouth all green?*
> *Rob Roy he pulled some clover*
> *as we crossed the field*, I told her.

May seemed to know her destiny as artist-poet from the beginning of her work, and from the green and growing wonder of her spirit she has given as the river gives its gifts, fully, naturally. Her poems have taught thousands of students in our schools new ways of seeing, thinking, feeling, understanding. Tirelessly inquisitive herself, she invites students to look more closely into the meanings of both physical and spiritual realities. Possibly more than any other contemporary poet, she has shown the unity and identity of nature's creations.

She has shown the sacredness of a life based on reverence and dedication, has helped us to better live our humanity, to sharpen our senses and deepen ways of being. An honorary doctorate conferred by Utah State University last year is only one of many signals that she belongs also to the order of benefactors to liberal education. Many other prestigious honors have showered her with grateful recognition, with scholarships, travel opportunities, unusual financial awards.

One of the truly great, Goethe, is said to have been asked a question about religion and answered that true religion is respect for what is above us, what is below us, and what is equal to us. May Swenson, Logan's poet as well as the world's, has respected her life and brought

respect and honor to us all, adding her mind's wisdom and vision to the soul of the world. Other teachers, writers, readers may tell of her phenomenal gifts. To know her, however, one must read her poems, so many, serious, witty, light and dark, but all distinguished by the rare flashing intelligence and love. At the end of her most recent book, titled *In Other Words*, she pronounces simply, like the cockatoo Blondi in the epic poem "Banyan":

> The purpose of life is
> To find the purpose of life
> To find the purpose
> Of life is
> The Purpose
> Life is
> To find.

If I Had Children

May Swenson

If I had children, I might name
them astrometeorological names:
Meridian, a girl. Zenith, a boy.
Eclipse, a pretty name for either one.
Anaximander, ancient Greek scientist
(who built a gnomon on Lacedaemon,
and with it predicted the exact date

that city would be destroyed by
earthquake). . . . Anaximander, wonderful
name for a girl. Anny could be her
nickname. Ion, short for ionosphere,
would make a graceful name for
a boy. Twins could be named after
planets: Venus and Mercury, or

Neptune and Mars. They'd adore each
other's heavenly bodies shining
upon their doubles on Earth.
And have you ever thought that, of
the Nine, only one planet is female?
Venus. Unless Earth is. So, seven
of Sun's children, it seems, are male.

The recipient of Rockefeller, Guggenheim and Ford Foundation grants, MAY SWENSON received the Shelley Memorial Award of the Poetry Society of America, the International Poetry Forum Translation Medal, an Academy of American Poets Fellowship, a National Institute of Arts and Letters Award, the Bollingen Prize in Poetry from Yale University, a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and, a year and a half before her death, a MacArthur Fellowship.

She published nine books of poetry. Mona Van Duyn said of her work, "May Swenson's is an art that comes as close as any I know to what I like to think must have been the serious fun, the gorgeous mix of play and purpose of Creation itself . . . "

This poem is reprinted with permission from In Other Words *(New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987).*

But, if I had children, and grandchild-
ren, then greatgrandchildren, myriads
of newborn moons and moonlets crowding
into the viewfinder would furnish me
names both handsome and sweet:
Phoebe, Rhea, Dione among daughters
of Saturn, with Titan and Janus the

brothers. Io, Ganymede and Callisto,
Jupiter's boys: Europa and little
Amalthea, their sisters.
On Io, most exotic of the Galilean
moons, are mapped six great-and-grand
volcanoes: Loki, Hemo, Horus, Daedalus,
Tarsis, Ra. Beauties all! But all

boys. Well, if I had children
I wouldn't fix genders or orbits, only
names for them. Wobbling Phobus,
distant child of Mars, misshapen as
a frozen potato. . . . If I had such a
lopsided moon, the name Phobus would
fit. And I'd love it just the same.

The Blood in My Veins

Dorothy K. Wheeler

Tonight while combing my long dark hair,
Sprinkled with strands of white,
I am grateful for my legacy
And wish others would not look down
On my people.

For the white man took our land.
Questing for gold and ground,
They placed us on dismal reservations
In houses cramped and dark,
Giving our children inadequate education.

We grieve and await the time
The pipe of peace will be smoked by all.
Our young ones go astray, like yours;
We are a misjudged people.
But I am proud of the blood in my veins.

DOROTHY K. WHEELER was raised on an isolated Idaho cattle ranch where her father was a cowboy and her mother, poet laureate of Idaho, wrote poems and taught her four out of six years in grade school. Dorothy is married, has two sons and five grandchildren, and is a nationally published poet.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

ELLA PEACOCK was born in Germantown, Philadelphia, in 1905 and studied art in her youth at the Maryland Institute in Baltimore. She moved to Spring City, Utah, in 1970 and since then has exhibited locally with Phillips Gallery, Salt Lake City; Old Town Gallery, Park City; and Brigham Young University.

BETHANNE ANDERSEN, a resident of Boise, Idaho, received a B.F.A. and M.F.A. from Brigham Young University and has taught art classes at the Springville Museum of Art, at BYU, and at the Boise Art Museum. Her work has been widely exhibited in the western states and at the Smithsonian National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.

LEE UDALL BENNION was born in Merced, California, and lives currently in Spring City, Utah. She received a B.F.A. in painting from Brigham Young University in 1986 and, among other awards, received the 1988-90 Utah Arts Council Visual Arts Fellowship. She has exhibited her work extensively in Utah and is represented by Gallery 56 in Salt Lake City.

VON ALLEN, a resident of Provo, Utah, holds a B.A. and an M.A. from Edinboro State College in Pennsylvania, and an M.F.A. from Syracuse University in New York. She is currently an assistant professor and head of the ceramics program at BYU, where she was recently named "Teacher of the Year" in the art department. Her work has been featured in *Studio Potter Magazine* (Dec. 1988) and has been exhibited widely in such places as Texas, Utah, California, Georgia, Montana, Arizona, New York, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia. She is represented by Pierpont Gallery in Salt Lake City.

LAURA LEE STAY, born in 1958, lives in Provo, Utah, where she is currently working on an M.F.A. at Brigham Young University. She has exhibited in Utah and California and has major collections in the Utah Arts Council, Springville Art Museum, and the LDS Church Museum of History and Art. Old Town Gallery, Park City, Utah, and Garden Gallery, Los Olivos, California, represent her work.

VIVIANN ROSE was born in Moab, where she still lives when not traveling extensively. She studied at the University of Utah, Brigham Young University, and Utah State University. Her photographs have been exhibited widely in the western states and in Florida, she has won numerous awards, and her work has been featured in several publications. She is represented by the Gregory Gallery, Newport Beach, California; and Coda Gallery, Palm Desert, California.

ELAINE S. HARDING was born in Chicago and now lives in Salt Lake City, where she received her B.F.A. from the University of Utah. She has exhibited her work in Utah, Nevada, Montana, and California. She is an associate instructor at the University of Utah and is currently the art editor for DIALOGUE. Her work is in the Utah State Fine Arts Collection and numerous corporate and private corporations. Phillips Gallery and Pierpont Gallery, both in Salt Lake City, and the Dooly Gallery in Park City represent her work.

ROMA POOLE ALLEN was born in Whitney, Idaho, in 1923 and lives now in Logan, Utah, where she received both a B.S. and an M.F.A. from Utah State University. She has taught throughout Utah, has won numerous awards, and has exhibited at many local galleries and museums.

LOUISE GARFF HUBBARD lives in Logan, Utah, where she earned both a B.S. and an M.F.A. from Utah State University. She has taught art classses at Utah State University and for the Utah Arts Council. Her work has been included in numerous state and regional art exhibits.

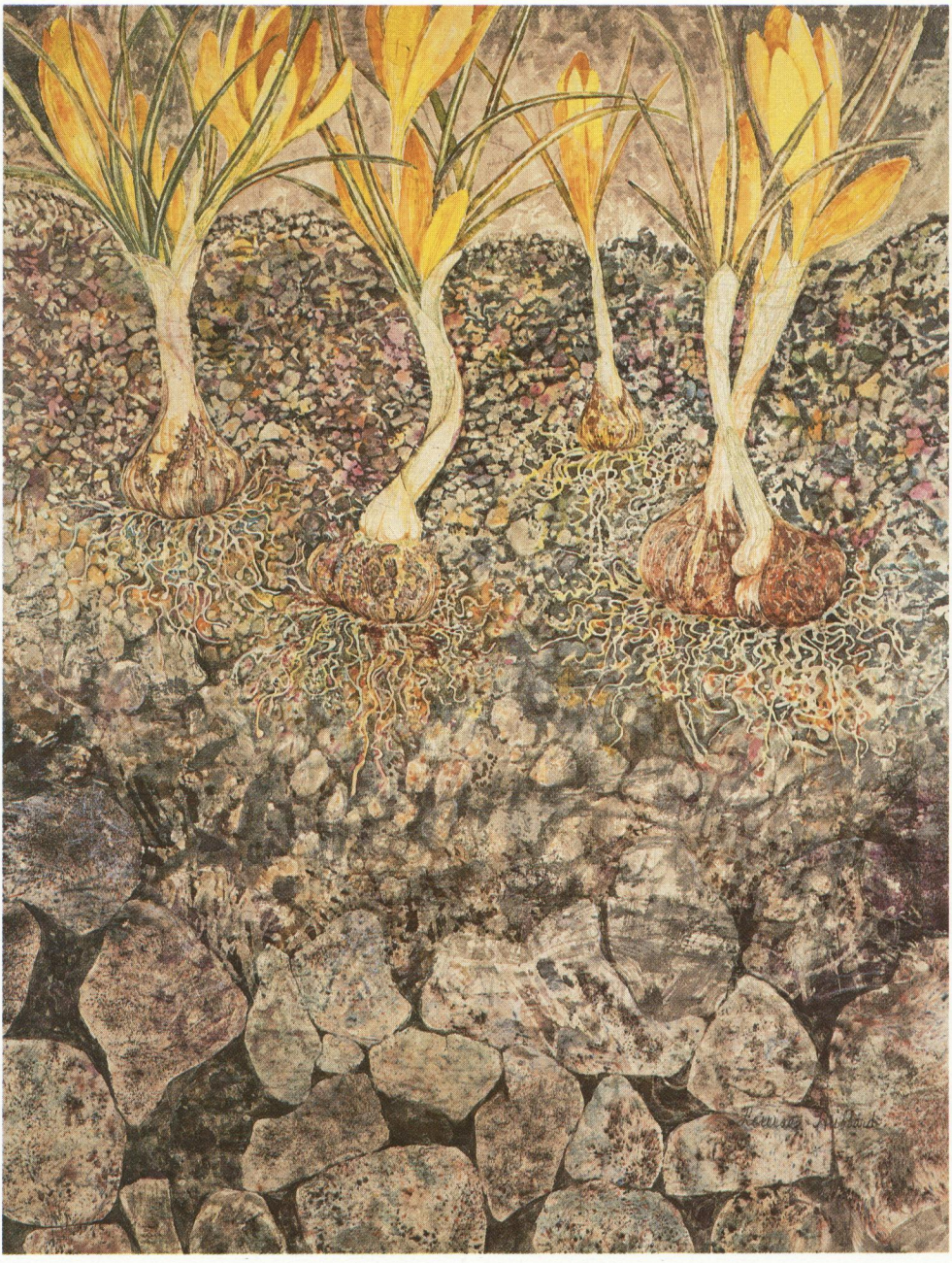
Photography in this issue courtesy of Jess Allen.
Photographs of "Spiral Lapse" by Von Allen courtesy of Steve Tregeagle.

Cover: "Peonie," Roma Poole Allen, 18" X 26", watercolor, 1988, collection of the artist

"Storm near Pidgeon Hollow," Ella Peacock, 14″ X 21″, oil on canvas, 1978, collection of Ann and Paul Larsen

"Flight," Bethanne Andersen, 22″ X 21″, pastel, 1984, Church Museum of History and Art

"New Moon," Lee Bennion, 36" X 48", oil on linen, 1989, collection of the artist

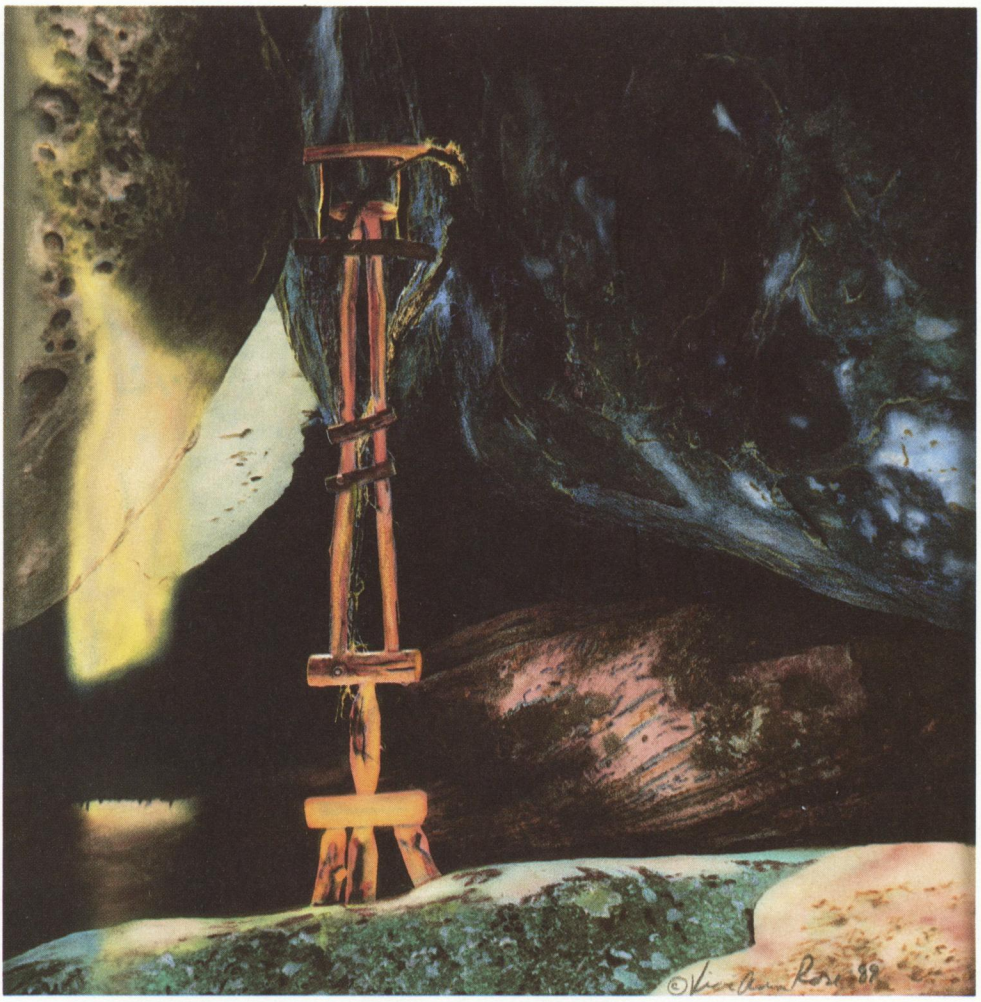


"Crocus," Louise Hubbard, 34″ X 26″, watercolor, 1986, collection of the artist

"Grand Canyon Aerial," Elaine S. Harding, 49″ X 36″, pastel on canvas, 1984, collection of the artist

"Mystic Moves," Laura Lee Stay, 26″ high (first of eight edition), bronze, 1989, collection of the artist

"Spiral Lapse," Von Allen, 55″ X 19″ X 11″, ceramic, 1989, collection of the artist



"Music of the Universe," Viviann Rose, 6″ X 6″, oiled photograph, 1989, collection of the artist

The Playhouse

Sonya Woods

I SIT SCRUNCHED in a fetal position, my eyes tightly closed, savoring the womblike comfort of the playhouse. A spider is weaving its filmy home in one corner of the ceiling, and a fly has buzzed to its demise against a warm plastic window. I don't mind sharing this place with the insects. I come here often when the kids are in school, just to sit and think and pretend I am a little girl again. Grampa built my older sister Gladys and me a house like this when we were young and eager visitors to his farm, a cozy country place complete with horses, cows, pigs, and chickens. We were the first grandchildren; and since Mama traveled a lot following Daddy during the war, we were consequently taken over by my doting grandmother, who spoiled us and dominated most of our upbringing.

Grampa made our playhouse fancier than this, though, with gingerbread trim around the eaves, real glass windows that slid open, a pretend sink, and little knick-knack shelves with rounded ends and covered with countertop just like Grandma's.

I needed that playhouse. It was my refuge, my harbor from fear, my last resort. It was my security, because Uncle Ed could never get me there. No matter where else he came for me, he could never come in my little house. I felt protected, like a mouse in her mousehole.

I don't know why he never came there. Maybe he felt foolish walking the distance to the end of the orchard where the playhouse was, stooping to enter its child-size door and maneuver around child-size furniture. Or perhaps its windows on all sides repelled him with his

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SONYA WOODS, not her real name, describes herself as "a fairly ordinary housewife" living in California. She is active in her stake Primary position and enjoys writing, painting, raising her many children and dogs, and tending a pseudo-English garden.

need for privacy. Or maybe, strangely enough, he thought it sacred, like the temple, not to be entered by people like him.

He didn't think me sacred, though. And there were other places where he had no second thoughts about intruding to satisfy his special needs. Like the enclosed staircase behind Grandma's kitchen where I played with my paperdolls, or the sewing room where I slept when I got to stay weekends, or in the darkened living room under a pillow as he sat me on his lap. Or the oat field.

I remember vividly the oat field encounter. I had just turned seven that week, and Grandma had invited Gladys and me to the farm for a few days as a birthday present. It was a lazy midsummer afternoon, and we had gone out to pull mustard weeds for Grampa. I loved being in the fields then, when the sky was terribly blue and there were no clouds, and this day was particularly delightful. We skipped merrily across the pasture in cool blouses and jeans, feeling as fresh and new as the tender green oat plants. Our assignment was to pull the yellow-flowered plants from the damp earth before they went to seed and ruined the fall harvest. We got hot and sweaty as we competed for the biggest bundle of the sour-smelling weed, and we laughed and raced around, crushing some of the oats in our exuberance.

But just as we finished, I looked up and saw a thin, dark figure coming toward us from the house. Though the sun was behind him and I couldn't see him clearly, I instinctively knew it was Uncle Ed. And I knew why he was coming. My hands went clammy and my skin turned cold.

When he came up to us, Gladys joked and played with him for a while, but then she got tired and went in. I tried to go, too, sticking very close behind her, as if by some chance he'd forget about me. But he didn't. He held me back, squeezing my shoulders. I struggled and thrashed anxiously, but he only gripped harder, hurting me, as Gladys skipped ahead. I wanted to scream, "Come back, Gladys, come back! He's going to touch me!" But I couldn't. I was afraid he would hurt me; and besides, Gladys wouldn't understand.

He waited a few minutes to make sure she had actually gone inside, looking nervously around the field and holding my arm so tightly it cut off my circulation. Then when he knew it was safe, he carefully crushed the grass all around into a soft nest, like a large animal going to sleep, and gently pushed me to the ground. His clumsy hands hurriedly undid my buttons, shoelaces, and zipper, his breathing growing heavier as he completed his task. And then his huge frame crushed down on me. I shut my eyes and tried to pretend it wasn't happening, but then I opened them and saw his face contorted and straining. And I knew it really was.

When he finished, he dressed carefully, dusting off bits of grass and dirt from his pants, adjusting his belt, and tucking in his shirt immaculately. Then he took out his comb and made sure every hair was in place. As he did so, he sat a little apart from me and looked away, almost embarrassed, like he had just found me there and had had nothing to do with my awkward condition. My hair was filthy with dirt, my jeans stained with grass, my body sticky. My glasses were somewhere on the ground. Then, as if by some secret sense, an unspoken, ominous pact went between us: "Uncle Ed didn't do anything." I got dressed without looking at him and scampered away like a scared rabbit.

I didn't go the farmhouse where Grandma was baking cookies, but to the playhouse, where I could turn for a few minutes into a grown-up. I smashed handfuls of raspberries into jam on a plate, splattering juice all over the counter, not caring about the stain. Then, leaving it to ferment under the shelf, I huddled on the wooden bench by the window, wanting the late afternoon sun to warm me. It didn't. I was chilled, from the inner marrow of my bones, to the top of my head, to my feet. I turned numb, blank.

I don't know how long I stayed there; but near dark, I went back to the farmhouse. Grandma was cooking Swiss steak from the steer Grampa had butchered last week, and the kitchen smelled of beef gravy and seasoned salt. When Grandma saw me, she turned from the stove to hug me. "There you are, little honey! Where have you been? Are you feeling okay? Here, go and put these on the table."

I dutifully set knives, forks, and spoons on the Quaker lace cloth, all the while feeling his hands on my body and wondering if I should tell Grandma. But she loved Uncle Ed so much, I didn't think she'd want to know. I guessed that she didn't want to know the answers to those "how are you feeling" questions either, because she never looked into my face like she cared. They were just questions without question marks.

The oat field wasn't the only place I couldn't hide. In fact, when I stayed during the week, I never felt safe until he was on the bus going to high school. I'd sit on the big window seat behind the dining room table and watch the bus roll up to the house, and Ed would get on with his sack lunch. Then I'd run upstairs to the attic where he hid orange crates filled with Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck comics that we weren't supposed to get into, and lie on Mama's old bed and eat cookies and read all morning and Grandma didn't mind.

But I never could look into his room across the hall or go inside without getting sick to my stomach, because that was where it started. We were sitting on the edge of the bed in front of the mirror, and I

was on his lap. "Where do you want me to tickle you?" he kept asking gently, over and over. I saw myself smiling back at him shyly, trusting him, loving him, with shiny baby hair curling at my ears. I looked so young in that reflection.

If Uncle Ed was the devil of the upstairs, Grandma was the angel of the downstairs. She was well known for her cooking and organizational abilities and used her talents to spread love and good will among the community. Ever the typical sweet Mormon matron, she taught me to love the gospel as she held my little hand in hers every Sunday and boomed out, "There Is an Hour of Peace and Rest," making her scratchy voice go high and wide on the "boon." I loved the "boon," and I loved her. I treasured our summer days together as we kneaded huge mounds of brown bread, searched for new eggs in the henhouse, and hung up damp, sweet-smelling flags of sheets and workclothes on the lines out in the orchard.

She was one of the pillars of the ward back then. Relief Society president and homemaking leader since time began for me, she organized and produced the yearly Swedish smorgasbords that netted the ward a brand-new building. Posters all over town advertised "over fifty authentic Swedish dishes." The event was held in the local high school cafeteria, where Mutual girls served as waitresses in starched organdy aprons and passed out crumb pie and fruit soup. I loved the hustle and bustle of these galas, with hundreds of noisy, hungry people leaning over long tables piled high with Scandinavian bounty, and the annual argument between Grandma and Brother Beukers over how thin the turkey should be carved. I could eat free and stuffed down pickled herring, meatballs, and rosettes to my heart's content.

At Grandma's funeral, the stake president spoke fondly of those times with Grandma and said that they had been one of her greatest missions in this life—that she had been sent to earth to use those talents for the furthering of the kingdom.

The irony of it all was that she raised a man like my uncle. Uncle Ed was not only a highly gifted artist, but also the ward "funny man." He was always drawing posters for roadshows, musicals, and talent shows and then acting as emcee as well. He could stand in front of his audience without a hint of a smile, tell jokes that made people fall over in their chairs, and still keep a straight face. He could find a laugh in anything. He would take a remark or a topic somebody had brought up, twist it around, and make it into a piece of comedy. We grandchildren and cousins dubbed him our "funny uncle."

When he wasn't doing his comedy routines, he was sculpting, twisting clay noses into shape, poking eyes deep into soft heads, squeezing necks into proportion. And when he wasn't doing that, he was tickling

everybody. Tickling all of us grandkids with those delicate artist's hands, touching us hard, probing and squeezing and hurting when the grown-ups weren't watching. Uncle Ed tickled us until we cried, but he tickled me most. I would laugh because that was the way my child's body reacted, and I was in too much pain to be articulate, although I wanted to cry out, "You're torturing me!" Instead I could only giggle, "Stop it! Stop it!" over and over, but he never took me seriously and went on and on until only my mouth laughed. He tickled Gladys once so much she threw up, and I wished I had too, all over him.

When he finished tickling everybody, he would single me out, pick me up and take me upstairs to his bedroom where he pushed a big trunk in front of the door. Then he got undressed while I sat on the bed and waited in paralyzed silence, like a trapped animal, knowing what was going to happen but not knowing what to do about it.

Oh, I fought sometimes. I tried to push him away when he came for me downstairs, shoving at his arms, clinging to Grampa in plain sight, hoping he would get my hints for help. But Grampa would just go on staring at his newspaper through his giant magnifying glass, absently chastise, "Eddie, stop roughhousing," and gently nudge me away.

So then I'd run and stand between Grandma and Mama in the kitchen and cling to their chairs by the wood stove, but he'd pretend to play with me and lift me up between them, gripping my arm painfully where Mama couldn't see, and gritting his teeth. I was terrified and let go, and Grandma would say, "Eddie, stop teasing the girls," and turn back to her gossip.

Grandma wouldn't have believed me if I had told her anyway. Eddie was her youngest, and he wouldn't do such things. He was too good. Everyone knew she wanted him at home with her forever; and when he became an elder, he would be the head of the household, because Grampa was not a member of the Church and therefore not qualified in any respect, according to her. Any thoughts like that would be my perverted imagination. Grandma might stop loving me or not let me come to her house.

If Mama believed me, she wouldn't like Uncle Ed anymore. In fact, she might hate him, and we wouldn't come out here ever again, and our summers and Christmases and chicken every Sunday after Church would be over. Riding with Grampa on his tractor and feeding the cows in their stalls would end. There would be no more lining up for cookies from Grandma's big old glass jars left over from Church suppers, and no more lying under crispy fresh-as-outdoors sheets with Gladys telling me stories, and no more helping Grandma wash clothes in her wringer washer, pulling them out like the flattened cats in Walter

Lantz cartoons, and spending hours upstairs listening to "Old Prospector" records. Grandma's house was our oasis from school and the everyday doldrums of existence in town, and did I want to ruin it all with one silly statement like, "Mama, Uncle Ed is putting his hands underneath my clothes and touching me and it scares me, and I don't like it, and I'm afraid of him. And then he makes me hold him and he gets on top of me and after a while there is this sticky stuff all over me, and do I have to do this with him? Grandma, Grampa, Mama?"

My words could change the high-standing family of which Grandma was so proud, especially with Great-Uncle Howard being bishop and Great-Uncle Ray being stake president and Uncle Ed being Young Men's first counselor.

At Primary we sang, "Little lambs so white and fair, are the shepherd's constant care." I never let myself sing it, because I knew I wasn't one of God's little lambs. Nobody constantly cares for me, I thought. Mama would have him drive me to ballet lessons, and he'd cover my lap with a newspaper to fondle me at stoplights. And I'd stand naked in front of the bedroom mirror with his hands on my genitals. Uncle Ed seemed obsessed by them as he manipulated my body. He was always silent and grim, with an impersonal look on his face like a mortician working on a cadaver. I tried to guess what he was thinking. Maybe he was pretending I was a beautiful girlfriend that he never had in high school; or a sex goddess from one of his *Playboy* magazines I'd see lying around when he did it to me. I'd hunt for them sometimes, when I was given the task of helping Gladys clean up his room for Grandma, when he was away. I'd look through the pages and get this dark, cloying feeling that made me want to throw up and have sex at the same time. It would captivate me and make me stop thinking of anything else except wanting to float away into outer space or be sucked into a deep hole. Finally I'd feel one of my headaches coming on, so I'd take a deep breath and run downstairs where everything was civilized and Grampa was hunched over the news on the radio, turning the sound up so loud you couldn't hear anything else. I was relieved that life was being lived somewhat normally, if only by an old man who never spoke to me.

People wondered why Uncle Ed didn't have a girlfriend, but Grandma said it was because he was so pure. Only evil-minded boys needed girlfriends, she said. Carol Johnson and Denise Richards chased him for years, but he always hid in the back room when they came over, telling us to say he wasn't home. Carol said it was because he was shy, and Denise thought he couldn't face up to reality, so she humored him and persisted in her one-sided courtship. On Friday nights Grandma would beg him to stay home with her because she

was so lonely. He'd dutifully agree and drive down to the A & W and pick up a gallon of ice-cold root beer. Then she'd dress up in her red dress with the gold earrings and sit with him in the living room and drink root beer and watch TV while Grampa sat at the dining room table with his magnifying glass. I got to sit with them, and for once Uncle Ed didn't touch me.

When it was time to go on his mission, Grandma told everyone he couldn't go because he had a bad back. "Poor Eddie," she'd say, "he just can't do the things other people do." I hated the way she protected him, smothering him with her huge breasts, making him helpless and dependent on her. "He is my last baby," Grandma would say to Mama, tears gleaming in her eyes. "He is the only one I have left to love. When he leaves, my life will be over." She had forgotten about Grampa.

I used to get angry seeing her so painstakingly, unnaturally save Ed's dinner for him in the oven when he was all grown up and too old for it, not even knowing when he'd be home from who knows where doing who knows what. He'd just look at it stupidly and go and make peanut butter and jelly on white soda crackers that dripped all over the plate. The crumbs fell like dandruff into flaky white bits on the counter when he bit into them, and he'd leave everything for Grandma to clean up in the morning. I'd stay out of sight then, hoping he wouldn't know I was there, but he'd come looking for me in the sewing room bed, and I felt his powerlessness turn into power at the sight of me. And there was no getting away in the dark house with everyone asleep.

The next week at home I'd spend hours daydreaming about having my own little girl to hurt and squeeze like he'd squeezed me, a real little skinny one, and I'd shake our cat hard until it was afraid of me, and only years later did I know that it was him I wanted to hurt.

Then one day, when Eddie had left home and was a sophomore living with a bunch of guys in a house off campus at BYU, there came a letter addressed to Uncle Howard, the bishop. They were expelling him for "perverse activities not in keeping with the standards of the Y and morals of the Church." Even though Uncle Howard placed the letter in Grandma's hands, she wouldn't read it; and when it was read to her, she wouldn't believe it. She just cried and said it wasn't so. And so it wasn't, because when Grandma didn't acknowledge a thing, it didn't happen. And that was that. Life just went on.

Maybe I didn't happen either, I think grimly, bunching my legs more tightly under me, ignoring the increasing ache, wishing my arms could reach around myself again, although the playhouse has become hot and stuffy. It is as if I am reaching for some comforting thing just out of my grasp. Sweat drips from under my knees, and I am itching with its stickiness at the back of my neck. I remember the day I real-

ized that the playhouse was the only tangible evidence that Grampa loved me, because he had never really talked to me. Startled, I called Mother with the exciting revelation. But if he loved me, why didn't he rescue me, I ask myself over and over. Why didn't he see? Why didn't they all see?

One night when I was twelve, Mama and Daddy sat Gladys and me down for a talk about sex and told us that our vaginas are pear-shaped and that we shouldn't let anyone undress or sleep with us because the little seed might leap over to us and we would get pregnant. I tried to imagine a boy sleeping next to me in bed and a corn seed leaping over to me, and then I put things together with Uncle Ed and me. And I went into a cold sweat and thought I was pregnant; and every day in front of the bathroom mirror, I anxiously checked my tummy for swelling. I imagined myself sitting for months in an unwed mothers' home, disgracing the family with my sin. I lived in fear for a long time, not knowing any details about the logistics of periods and that I wasn't old enough to have one. Several times I came close to telling Mother, confessing before she found out, and hoping for clemency. But I never did.

Instead, I lived with my secret, unaware that Uncle Ed could not have made me pregnant with what he carefully did but not getting all the information I needed to come to the correct conclusion. And as time wore on and I did not get any fatter but saw myself growing tall and strong, my timid submission to Uncle Ed grew into hostility. I was about thirteen when he felt my new knowledge coupled with anger. It was a Sunday night after one of Grandma's typically overladen dinners when the whole family was gathered companionably around the lace-covered dining table picking their teeth and eating too many cookies. They were trying to look polite as Grampa launched into one of his rare talkative moods telling disjointed stories about his Swedish childhood in the deep snow and how he stole a thick pancake in the army. Mostly everyone was yawning and looking at the table, and Grandma was trying to discourage him by chattering loudly to Great-aunt Ethel about Relief Society problems. Ed padded around to me quietly and tried to take my hand to lead me out, but this time I was ready to defend myself, maybe even get revenge. I clenched my fists, glared at him, and sat rigidly, ready to fight. That was all I had to do, because he immediately backed off and never bothered me again. I heard many years later that he went for one of my young cousins, and then my baby sister Cynthia, who was three by the time he turned to her. How many others between times, I have no way of knowing. Finally in his thirties, he married my Aunt Reba in the temple and had eight children in ten years. I went to his reception.

At sixteen I made a conscientious effort to forgive him, to prevent myself from becoming so bitter and angry I couldn't function. I had to pretend nothing had ever gone on, and he was visibly relieved at my charade. Then I began to hope, to believe, like I had learned in Mutual, that if I was pure and married in the temple, nothing bad would ever happen to me again. But that was for girls who hadn't been molested.

I didn't get married until I was twenty-six. I had rejected the two or three men who had asked me up until that time because I thought they were weak. Instead I chose a grim, stern, "strong" man who had been molested himself, who didn't talk very much, and who told me what to do, like what to wear and when to stop eating. We traded stories on our mutual abuse, finding it odd that we should find each other. At first I thought our relationship was too good to be true.

But after we had been married two years, he became withdrawn and cold and resorted to satisfying himself with me in the bathroom in front of the mirror, businesslike, quietly, before he left for his Church meetings. Conversations consisted of his orders to me, which I always immediately obeyed. I began to sense that I had married another Uncle Ed. I became subservient, fearful, and anxious to please him so he wouldn't get angry or hurt me. When he came home at night, the children and I hid in the back room to avoid his anger.

Late at night he would tease me by turning off all the lights in the house and telling me he was coming to "get me." And he'd tickle me, too. I came close to a nervous breakdown; and after seven years of marriage, divorce was a relief.

In the middle of the divorce and the humiliation of having a big D emblazoned on my chest for all the Church to see, Gladys called. She said that Ed's family of seven girls and one boy looked withdrawn and depressed, and she thought something was going on. Did I know anything that I should be telling her? I did, feeling it was right for the first time in thirty years. She told me she had suspected it for a long time but had never had the nerve to ask me. I was relieved, she was shaken, and we both became closer, talking for two hours long distance, comparing mutual suspicions and feelings.

In the ensuing months of investigation by the Church court, I was asked to make a statement to the high council; and as I did, I wrote Ed, too. I told him I forgave him, and said I still loved him and wanted him to be a part of our family.

I wanted him to say he was sorry and that he would never have knowingly hurt me. But he didn't. He merely wrote back that I was incorrect, he hadn't started molesting me when I was four years old, but two, and only because I was a "whining, clinging child." Further-

more, he said he would have been a lot better off if he had just thrown me down the stairs. But hadn't he loved me?

The court gave him a year's probation in which to start paying his tithing so he could go back to the temple, because, they explained, it was so long ago that this had happened, and he had had it on his conscience all these years.

I wanted to grab his genitals, string them out, and chop them off, inch by inch. I wanted to rip his clothes off and expose him to the open sky like he had me and ask him how he felt. But now the whole world knows, including Mother; and everything I feared as a child has come true. Mother hates Uncle Ed, and Uncle Ed doesn't visit anymore, and we hardly know his family. His children don't know why we no longer get together at Christmas, although we live only ten miles apart. Mercifully Grandma died not knowing. She loved him so much. Probably more than she loved me.

Uncle Ed looked so good at Grandma's funeral. So young. He's fifty, and he hasn't aged a day past thirty-five. Aunt Reba brought their eight children and was even warm with me. But he wouldn't come near me or Mother. I could hear him telling his jokes and the little groups around him guffawing, so I knew he still had his wit. And his job with the Church school system.

I had my breakdown a few weeks later, and in the hospital they told me to forget the past, get on top of my problems, and keep spiritually alive. Pat advice. But I don't think I want to. I am comfortable being withdrawn, hating the world, because I'm most familiar with that emotion. And it's a guarantee I won't get hurt again.

Can I ever feel more than a child who has been violated? Can I ever feel more than a rutted calf who has become a rutted cow? Aunt Reba told Gladys this never would have happened if I had kept my mouth shut, "or better yet, kept her dress down and her pants up."

Mother will not let this rest, and it is the only thing that comforts me. I think it is her way of rescuing me now, although it is too late. She keeps after Uncle Ed, trying to get him to come to Cynthia and me, apologize, and give us money for the therapy that is costing us so much. I tell her it's pie in the sky, and we are dreaming, and Gladys says to consider him dead. It's true, he won't have anything to do with us. He just walks away.

Aunt Reba says to leave well enough alone. He already agreed with the stake president to make it up by working for the Church for a while, she says, and so he works on the stake newspaper, and that's taking care of his repentance. And she jokes with some exasperation in her voice that maybe it would have been better if he'd thrown me downstairs after all, and giggles nervously.

I am Junior Primary chorister, and every other Sunday we sing, "I Am a Child of God." I wave my arm and walk down the aisles and look at the children deeply, convincing each one that he or she is a child of a loving Father. At the same time, I am nurturing myself, trying to become convinced.

I love to read 3 Nephi, where the Savior asks, "Have you any afflicted among you? Bring them hither, and I will heal them."

And I prayerfully cry, "Here I am! Heal me! Please!" I am crawling, albeit slowly, toward Jesus' hem, getting ready to touch it, and hoping to feel the newness rush into me.

This morning I went for a drive before dawn; and not too far above me I saw the moon, its old-man face turned into soft focus by the fog. As I watched its ethereal beauty, a soprano on a Christian radio broadcast began to sing, lovingly, "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so . . . " All at once I felt the little girl in me reach up and begin to cry, and the song seemed to wrap itself around me.

The playhouse has made me hot and sleepy. Sweat is tickling my back and neck, and my body feels heavy. The spider has settled into her home for a nap, and she looks content. I rub my hands over the rough surface of the walls. Someday we'll have to smooth these out. And maybe install some real glass windows that slide open. But for now, it is time for me to go inside.

Daddy Hung Me Out

A. R. Mitchell

He hung me next to the load of dripping clothes.
I was just a child! Couldn't walk! Couldn't talk!
Too frozen stiff to cry! But strong enough
to clench my monkey fists around the line.
I still can see the pomegranate bush.

Yes I dropped. Of course I dropped, I was
just a babe, not yet walking, not potty-trained.
Of course my daddy caught me, cuddled me, laughed
his husky damned-if-she-didn't-do-it laugh
and handed the ice to Mama. I thawed in tears.

I tell Mama, I knew the pomegranates,
the deep blue sky, the cruelty. "No—
You were too young to remember." But I do.
"Angel," she says, "You were such a strong-willed child
and Daddy was never so proud as when you hung."

A. R. MITCHELL recently finished a Ph.D. at the University of California Riverside, now resides at Madras, Oregon, and researches stress management for Oregon State University.

In fifty-five my man and I struck out
in a car loaded deep with budding dreams.
We gardened hope: a wage, a house, a farm—
In time four children came to squeeze my neck.
In time, the grandkids will say I'm growing old.

In hospital passageways I clenched my life
against the calluses of my father's hand.
I watched my first love struggle for a time.
I heard my second fall. I dropped a stillborn son
and heard a brother's comfort from beyond.

I suppose I've forgiven Daddy for the pain.
I watched his eyes turn inward toward the wall
and clenched his hand when he no longer mine.
I've seen the need for cleansing times.
I only hope he'll catch me home.

Mothers, Daughters, and Dolls

Valerie Holladay

> *Came home from school Thursday about 7:30 absolutely exhausted but committed to writing a paper. Although I had planned to go to Mozart's* Marriage of Figaro *that night, I forgot to get tickets before it sold out. To my surprise, Mom left a message on my answering machine saying that she had managed to get tickets, since she knew I wanted to go. Immediately energized, I quickly called to say I was on my way (the paper could wait!).*
>
> *I raced downtown (missing the freeway exit and ending up in totally new, strange, and dark territory), found parking in a town overrun with Jazz fans and opera buffs (realizing too late that I had no change to pay for it—but the very kind attendant let me park for free), and ran the three blocks to the Capitol Theatre (over patches of black ice and in sub-zero weather) with heart pounding, eyes watering, and throat burning. I made it at exactly 8 o'clock!*
>
> *Despite my misadventures, the opera was marvelous (once I caught my breath). Mom is such a doll. She doesn't even like the opera—she slept through the second half! To thank her I told her I'd treat her to the symphony next weekend, since she's really a symphony fan.*

WHEN I WAS YOUNG, I knew my mother was eccentric, but her adventures seemed exciting to a nine-year-old child. We were always going somewhere, rattling around in her old car. She earned money cleaning and ironing for other people and usually took us children with her to help scrub and wax tired linoleum floors or to deliver crisply pressed shirts. Sometimes we parked the car beside the gleaming white Singer building that was for lease on Foothill Boulevard; there I listened to her dream aloud about the beauty spa she would start there. Many nights we didn't get home until after midnight—after a quick stop at 7-Eleven for Dr. Pepper and anything with the Hostess label. Mom's gallivanting frustrated my dad; he never knew where his wife and children were. Even worse, sometimes he came home late at night to a

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house full of young children who had no idea where their mother was. He didn't come home until nearly ten o'clock himself most nights; he supplemented his teacher's salary by working evenings for the county library system. Seldom home, he was a stranger to his family. We spent more time with Mom.

I especially remember going shopping for dolls with Mom. The dolls weren't for my sister or me, but for herself. My mother collected dolls, which is not an unusual hobby for most people, but she went about it in an unusual way. Her dolls were not like the carefully guarded beauties of other collections, many of whom proudly displayed eyelashes and real human hair. Hers lacked their pink porcelain cheeks and fine hand-crafted gowns of silk and lace. Nor were they artfully arranged on shelves or in glass china cabinets. But even so, the cashiers where we shopped used to call her "the doll lady" when they saw her coming through the doors.

Although there are now half a dozen in the valley, there were only three Deseret Industries in Salt Lake when I was a child. My mother shopped them all. Owned and run by the LDS Church Welfare Services, Deseret Industries is both affectionately and disdainfully referred to as "the D.I." In this secondhand store, a careful shopper might find a rare book, a still reliable food processor, an impeccable tuxedo for $10, or an oak desk for $30. Once I saw a 1959 Harley Davidson motorcycle on display at the D.I. on 45th South. Rather than being assigned a set price, it was open for bids starting at $1500. The only bid received at that point was for $50.

> *Mom runs through her monthly welfare check in about three days. Last time she was clearly on a roll, so I did the only thing I could do—I went along. We spent an hour or two in the D.I. (still her favorite place to shop) and found about ten books we wanted. She also bought two beat-up tennis rackets, a bunch of yarn, a large carry-all shoulder bag, and some other odds and ends.*
>
> *Teresa's apartment is too small to hold all Mom's stuff, so Mom rents a small storage shed. In the last several years I can't count how many times she's gotten behind in her payments for the storage space and lost it. The managers just haul all of Mom's stuff to the junkyard. And Mom just goes out and buys more.*

We did most of our shopping for dolls at the D.I. on 2nd West. The most run-down of all the Salt Lake stores, it took all donations and refurbished nothing. Dolls and toys were tossed in heaps or in bins in the back of the store. Clothes hung on circular racks to the right, appliances and furniture crowded our left. The wall space above the shelves and clothes racks showed lusterless painted brick. The air itself always felt musty and chill inside, like the walk-in freezer in a convenience store, almost as if the cool air could preserve what little life remained in each rejected, cast-off item. As I browsed, I might

rummage through a bin that contained several broken records, an $80 lady's silk blouse with a scorched and tattered sleeve now going for fifty cents, a broken electric can opener, a child's scratched and dented Snoopy lunchbox, a grimy pillow, and a stack of old *Good Housekeeping* magazines. A bundle of crooked hangers and a ragged Raggedy Ann might be thrown in for a good measure.

The other two stores were more organized. Different clothing racks held slightly to moderately worn women's blouses, children's pants, men's jackets, and boys' shirts. Here donations that were unsalvageable never made it to the racks and shelves, unlike those at the 2nd West store. Instead of being tossed indiscriminately together in a bin, toys were separated into stuffed animals, dolls, games, and books; a few bikes with flat tires or missing spokes were propped against the wall. Furniture was also grouped together: scuffed desks, lopsided bookshelves, scratched tables and chairs, and faded, sagging couches. Often new furniture still in plastic was available that the D.I. had somehow bought in quantity; their prices, however, were no cheaper than those in the regular retail furniture stores.

My second-most favorite part of the store was the book section. Books were divided into paperbacks and hardbacks, fiction and old textbooks, with stacks of old, tattered magazines off to one side. Sometimes pages had been colored on or torn out. Often the cover looked as if it had been chewed apart by a family pet; sometimes it was missing altogether. I didn't mind. I loved to read and always found room to tuck a few books in with the dolls.

Just inside the door of the Deseret Industries store, Mom and I might have passed a large rectangular table, the kind used for ward banquets and Daddy-Daughter Dinners (minus the crepe paper and ribbon flower centerpieces). Instead, the tables held heaps of scattered, naked junk, with no attempt to claim refurbishment. Broken toasters and tangled jewelry, incomplete puzzle sets, out-of-date eight-track cassettes—all lay humbly open for inspection. These received only a cursory glance from my mother, who stopped only for a battered but irresistible book on hypnotism or never-fail dieting tips. Then she beelined for the dim back corner of the store where the dolls awaited her.

She did not shop like most experienced "thrift-seekers," who, like surgeons, probe the tables and bins for the elusive article of concern. Neither did she peck at the clothes rack like a sparrow searching for a breakfast beetle. She pillaged. Like a human bulldozer, she rumbled gustily into the canvas bins of rejected playmates, who had been replaced by that year's model, a slicker, cleaner, and more sophisti-

cated Baby-Wet or Cutie Pie Cuddles. When she and I left with our purchases, the tables that had been cluttered with plastic humanity lay as barren and empty as a school hallway on a Saturday.

Mom found some Mon Cheri chocolates on sale at Smith's—they were a dollar a box, and each box contained a coupon for the next box free. She bought about fifty boxes (with her food stamps, of course) in order to get another fifty free boxes. She gave everyone—including me—a few boxes, which I was glad to have, but I couldn't help thinking that's not what food stamps are for.

Driving home from Grandma's last week we stopped at a store for a gallon of milk. Mom gave me some food stamps and asked me to get it for her since she was tired from cleaning Grandma's apartment. At the check-out stand my fingers and face felt stiff as I tore two one-dollar coupons from the booklet and gave them to the cashier. Mom says that all the street people she knows call them "tramp stamps." She laughs about it, but I wonder if she's embarrassed.

Like a Schweitzer, Mom dedicated herself to rescuing the dolls from the jungle darkness of the D.I. The castoffs, the rejected, the unloved—these were the ones upon whom she showered her abundant love. Buying them by the bin full, we transferred the naked dolls from their mass grave into cardboard boxes which we then piled, stacked, and crunched into her small Volkswagen bug. My mother knew that each doll needed only to be bathed and dressed; each shorn and ratty mass of hair—usually the training ground for youthful, would-be beauticians—could be made to curl once again around the smudged and sometimes dented cheeks. She could easily sew a simple full-skirted dress with a gathered waist and sleeves and lacy pantelettes, or even a daintily dotted flannel nightgown to cover their nakedness. Thus resurrected, her dolls could find new homes.

My mother was a skillful seamstress. She had made her own clothes all through high school during her summer vacations at her grandparents' home in Hiram, while the rest of her family went on weekend fishing trips. In college, my mother preferred "store-bought" clothes; homemade clothes lacked the flair needed to attract the young men she wanted to date. Later, during the years she worked as a county social worker, she bought clothes not for that extra style, but simply because she was a mother with three small children who worked full-time; where would she find time to sew?

She did, however, find time to teach me to sew. For my first project, I proudly chose a black and white zebra-striped cotton for a new pair of pants. Together we cut out the bell-bottomed pattern. As a team we pinned and basted the pieces together, and I made careful, jerky seams which I then unpicked and sewed again under her patient supervision.

But it was alone that I faced my amused and mocking classmates. I only wore my zebra-striped pants once, then hid them in my closet.

It would not have been difficult to fashion a few small dresses, with a whisper of lace at the sleeves or along the hem. For several dolls, perhaps. But for hundreds? My mother, tender heart that she was, could not say no to any doll, no matter how plain, no matter how unlovable. Each had-been doll was a vulnerable child hoping to be asked to come along, to be invited to play on the kick-ball team. She heard a myriad plaintive voices calling, "Take me home with you." She answered each cry.

She has another job for the moment. Ironically, it's in the Assistance Payments Office; she's shredding up papers by hand. The state's Work Experience and Training program—WEAT assignments, as they're called—are supposed to provide experience and also act as an "in" to other jobs. Her job only pays about fifty cents an hour, but it's necessary in order to keep her welfare money. I'm hopeful for her, but it's hard to get excited about it after all the jobs she's walked away from.

I know she's a hard worker. We used to stay up all night cleaning A & W Drive-ins and business offices. And she used to iron for hours at a time. While I was a missionary in France, she worked as a cook at the Lion House for nearly two years. Some say that people who are unemployed or on the street are just too lazy to get a job, but I know that's not the real reason.

Originally a music student at the University of Utah, Mom changed her major from music to social work after getting a D in music theory. She didn't start piano lessons until she was eighteen years old but became quite skilled through her own determination and musical ability. Before learning the piano, she played the guitar and sang Gene Autry and Roy Rogers cowboy songs (and yodeled!) at school and church talent shows, USOs, and employee socials at the electric company where her father worked.

She had also considered art as a major, since she wanted to illustrate children's books, but her advisors said she was too close to graduating in her major. So her creative instincts expressed themselves on the walls of our house. A beautiful winter scene covered the cement playroom walls of our basement. Our front room wall showed a life-sized Christus, his arms outstretched. When the curtains to our large front window were opened, it looked as if Christ was standing in our front room! Once Mom painted Venus de Milo on a large doorboard and set it outside to dry. The nude beauty created quite a stir in our conservative Mormon neighborhood.

Even before the divorce from Dad, I didn't understand why Mom did some of the things she did. But since she met Mike in the Plasma Donor Center where she sells her blood every week for a few dollars, she's changed even more.

While Mom may be unreliable and eccentric, she's never been deceitful. But Mike—he's lived on the street for years and has taught Mom how to survive his way—by sleeping in

abandoned cars and houses, and even in hospital waiting rooms, getting free meals in the soup kitchen downtown, and panhandling off the sidewalk. When he wants some easy money, he lies to pastors of different churches by telling them he and Mom are out-of-town visitors who need some money to fix their car. Now Mom's starting to lie to us and she avoids us. I think that hurts most of all.

After Mom graduated from the University of Utah, she married my dad and began working with the county social services. She worked for three years until my oldest brother was born, when she quit to stay home with him and my sister, Teresa, born eighteen months later. By the time I came along two years later, my parents needed more income than my father's teaching salary to make house payments, so she went back to her county job.

As a social worker, she taught a group of expectant, first-time mothers an early form of natural childbirth. She wrote and published her teaching experiences in a slim volume called *Having a Baby*, using a loan to pay a private publisher to produce several hundred copies of her book. While she enjoyed her early assignments, though, her casework later started to take her to broken families, to diseased and crippled people, to people who had lost hope. She dreaded her visits to nursing homes, which at that time had no state regulatory standards. Large bed sores covered the elderly, frail bodies that housed the even more fragile spirits of cast-off grandparents and used-up people. She had no answers for them, no strength to give them. She quit working for the county and taught antiquing classes at home. She also took in ironing and hired herself out cleaning other women's houses.

Mom drove all over the valley to clean or deliver ironing in a series of puffing secondhand Volkswagen bugs. She wore out several, including a black one, a blue one, and a fire-engine red one. She never remembered to have the oil and filter changed, and her cars disintegrated quickly from her abuse. Once, because we children quarrelled for the privilege of riding in the front passenger seat, she took the seat out of the car completely. No longer did we whine to sit in that once-desired spot; we avoided it if possible. How much fun was it to crouch there uncomfortably, clutching the window and bouncing around as Mom sped along the streets, occasionally plunging the car into a pothole?

Mom has filed for divorce from Mike and has been living with Teresa for the past few months. In March we convinced Mom to leave Mike; he nearly killed her in one of his violent, schizophrenic rages, so we took her to the Battered Women's Shelter at the YWCA. A few weeks later he broke into my apartment to find out where she was. I called the police, and he spent a night in jail. But only a few weeks later, Mom went back to him. After she finally divorced him, she married him again, then left him a few more times. Now it sounds like this may be the last time.

But today she disappeared again. Teresa and I drove all over town, passing her usual spot in front of Crossroads Mall. She was upset with Teresa, who tried to tell her tactfully that she can't start interviewing for a real social work position while she pulls in a few extra dollars playing the harmonica on the street.

After dragging the dolls across the parking lot, we loaded the car with our purchases from the D.I. Most of the time the car was so full that Mom's chosen accomplice—usually me—had to sit on a box of dolls, the hard plastic arms and legs poking my backside without mercy. I was my mother's companion because my older sister and brother didn't understand Mom's need to buy *all* the dolls in the Deseret Industries; once she paid one hundred dollars to clear away all the dolls—including those without arms and legs (and even an occasional severed and abandoned doll head). Together we rode home as I perched uncomfortably on the stubborn plastic flesh and scratchy, wiry hair. Despite my seeming heartlessness for suffocating our foundling children, my nine-year-old heart shared my mother's encompassing compassion for the unloved.

When I went to school, the other kids ran away from me, except when they came just close enough to pinch me or spit on me. Sometimes they stood on the benches that lined the halls, so they wouldn't have to stand on the same floor that I did and be susceptible to my "fleas," despite the talismanic "F.F.F." that most children at my school carefully wrote on the backs of their hands to be "Free From Fleas." I ran home from school at night, with my tormenters chasing after me with rocks or snowballs. My sister, two years older, was not totally immune to the teasing of other students, but she received less of it than I did. My older brother, Stuart, had also been cruelly tormented by his classmates, but he had gone on to the greater anonymity of junior high school. So I was left alone.

I wasn't sure why I stood apart from the others. No doubt my braces and my dark-rimmed cat-eye glasses with taped earpieces were a natural invitation to catcalls and shrieks of "Brace-Face" and "Four-Eyes." The worst of the names, "Stink-a-day," was perhaps not totally unearned. Our house was not cared for by my overworked father and busy, wandering mother; and to make matters worse, we had seven cats, a dog, a few ducks, and various hamsters, birds, and once a tiny alligator—all in the house or trying to get in the house most of the time. The exterior of our house was just as bad; the lawn was peppered with dandelions and weeds grew nearly waist high.

Not only was our house and yard unkempt, but we children had the same neglected appearance. My fourth-grade class photograph shows a serious-faced child dressed in one of the unstylish jumpers that my grandmother sewed for me. With it, I'm wearing an unironed blue

shirt; the jumper is an orange-flowered print. My dishwater blond hair is uneven and scraggly from my endeavors with the scissors. I was five the first time I cut my own hair. Actually I let my friend Barbara cut my hair, then I cut hers. When her mother came to pick her up, she gasped in horror and turned her over her knee and spanked her right there in front of me. My own parents reacted more mildly; they simply took me to the woman in the corner house who had a salon in her basement. There my hair was evened and trimmed until it was shorter than a boy cut, a new style called a "pixie cut." In time my hair grew to my shoulders, despite my repeated attempts at playing beautician.

In addition to my odd clothes and hair, perhaps, too, I was the stereotyped "brain," the smart student who was heckled by other students who struggled to finish their homework and to bring home satisfactory grades. Besides getting good grades, I kept my face sunk in a book every spare minute I had. I even read during recess, something *nobody* did. In fifth grade my favorite book was *Mara, Daughter of the Nile*. I was fascinated by Mara, a blue-eyed Egyptian slave who ran away from her cruel master, stowed away on a boat on the Nile, and became involved in royal espionage. She fell in love with Sheftu, an Egyptian lord and one of the king's spies; together they helped to dethrone the usurping queen and place the rightful pharaoh on the throne. Another favorite book of mine was a thick volume of fairy tales with heavy, crinkled pages and lustrous illustrations of fire-breathing dragons and milky-complexioned princesses. When one of my tormentors saw me hug the book to my flat chest, he pushed my shoulder roughly and snorted, "You can't read that. You don't know how."

Stung, I quickly (and truthfully) replied, "I already have. Twice."

When I was younger, I thought it was Mom who caused my unpopularity. In her impetuous and generous way, she had let the Cub Scouts in her den use her oil paints. Ignoring her cautions, one boy nastily daubed paint on the other boys' clothes. When the Scouts returned home after their activity, their irate mothers punished them for ruining their clothes. Together, the worst of the bullies took revenge on my family. They left burning sacks of manure on our front step. They toilet-papered our house. And when I left the safety of our chain-link fenced yard, they took out their anger on me. The children at school, sensing a scapegoat, quickly followed suit.

As I look back now, however, I wonder if perhaps the other children knew about the dolls. I can imagine them watching through the windows of their well-ordered homes as Mom and I hauled box after box into our house. Like a large, unblinking eyeball, their gaze pierced through the walls of our brick home and focused upon the piles of

dolls that spread across the floor in jumbled heaps. The stacks of bulging cardboard boxes sagged against the walls and against each other, seeming to spread and grow and push against the walls and the ceiling. Higher and higher, faces and legs and ears smashed against the windows and doors and walls and roof, until at last they exploded through the windows and out the chimney like a volcanic eruption of human plasticity. Naked dolls with shapeless, frizzy curls and grasping hands clutched at the air as they jettisoned upward and tumbled and bounced down the roof, their cries muffled as a shower of bodies thudded on top of them. The sound of skidding, smacking plastic on plastic and the hot, airless smell of doll flesh filled the air. Their innocent bodies lay scattered everywhere, like mangled remnants of motorcycle collisions, heads smashed, legs and arms missing.

Maybe the other children saw these dolls, covering our house like the remnants of some bizarre and violent storm. Like human drifts, dolls surrounded the house, blocked the car, and barricaded the driveway. Naked and vulnerable, but endowed with the power of deathlessness, the dolls held us in their tiny, curved fingers that reached upward from the clumps of weeds and dirt like corpses straining for life in a plowed-over cemetery. The thick stench of unwashed and compressed bodies darkly covered our house.

Did the other children see the dolls crawl after me each day as I went to school? Dragging themselves on tiny, bloated stomachs, the survivors of the holocaust hitched themselves slowly across the crystal-sharp concrete, their naked flesh scraping and bleeding, following me relentlessly as I ran to school. When I arrived at last panting at the steps of the main door, I slammed it behind me and paused, breathless, only to face my schoolmates who froze at my entrance. With a new distraction until the bell for class rang, my persecutors came toward me with smirks and giggles. Behind me tiny, inhuman fists pounded the metal doors.

In the fourth grade I refused to go to school any more. Mom told me she understood and would explain to the principal why I didn't want to go. But I didn't want to force my beloved mother to talk to the principal, who I had heard was a terrible, hateful man. So I went.

> *I finally met Andrew, Mom's new boyfriend. Teresa went to talk to Mom a few days ago, and he nearly threw her down the stairs of the hotel where he and Mom are staying. Then he spitefully threw his empty glass after her. Mom had Teresa's car keys, so Teresa asked me to come with her in case he was drinking again.*
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> *The hotel was filthy; the ceiling was falling down, and some of the rooms didn't have doors. As I walked down the dark, narrow hallway, I could see the people lying on their beds in their rooms. They pay twelve dollars a night for a tiny ten-foot-square room with a scummy sink in the corner and a community bathroom down the hall. Mom sleeps on the floor while Andrew spends most of the day in a drunken stupor on the bed.*

When I was little, I used to think monsters lived in my house. But as I grew older, I realized that my monsters didn't exist, and I ventured into our unfinished and drafty basement where dolls tumbled from wilted cardboard boxes and spread knee-deep across the floor. More dolls were jammed under our basement stairs, an area I cleared away when I was ten. I sheltered it with hanging blankets for privacy. Not only did the dolls cram our basement, but they filled our attic as well, a shallow affair that ran the length of the house; since we couldn't stack the boxes of dolls there, we laid them out end to end, filling every spare foot of space. But the space under the stairs became mine.

With an old chipped and shadeless lamp on the cement floor and my posters of Bobby Sherman and David Cassidy on the walls, I created my own world. With a librarian as a father, I had access to shelves of books with no danger of overdue fines. Here, away from the other world, I became Mara, Nancy Drew, Trixie Belden, Harriet Tubman, and Sarah Crewe. I was Jane Addams, Clara Barton, and Florence Nightingale. I was a beautiful and timid governess at Dragonwyck. I was Annie Oakley. I survived, forgotten and alone, on the Island of the Blue Dolphins. I was called the Witch of Blackbird Pond. I played in the Secret Garden.

When I grew older I read *Teen Beauty Secrets* and *The Fascinating Girl*. Trembling and breathless, I devoured *How to Get a Teenage Boy and What to Do with Him When You Get Him*. I read and reread my copies of *Tiger Beat* and *Teen*. I dreamed that I was kidnapped with Bobby Sherman and locked away in a damp cellar where we huddled against each other for warmth. I had no rational explanation why a kidnapper would snatch an unknown girl with a famous movie star, but that was immaterial. Sometimes I dreamed I was Mara, floating down the Nile, aware but careless of the handsome, arrogant Sheftu who watched me admiringly. And I dreamed, more awake than asleep, that my house would burn down to ashes.

> *The only reason Mom has come back to Teresa's apartment is that Andrew took the money for the room where they're staying. She paid in advance for the room for the rest of the week, but Andrew took the money back from the hotel attendant, saying they wouldn't need the room anymore. Then he took the money to go get something to drink. Judging by all the empty Listerine bottles in the room, I'd say he was pretty desperate.*
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> *Mom stays close by the phone and crochets or plays the piano, guarding the hope that he'll call when he needs money to rent a room or buy a drink. Sometimes we might spend a few hours browsing around the D.I. together. Some days she'll go downtown and play her harmonica to earn a few dollars. And once in a while, Mom and I go to the symphony.*

While I dreamed in my tiny cubbyhole and Mom went from house to house to do cleaning, the dolls hibernated in the attic and in our basement, forgotten once again, as they awaited resurrection from

another more dependable source than my mother. It was not an innate cruelty that caused her to neglect the promises of hope she had given to her dolls. Within her waged an immense battle of talents and dreams—her music, her art, her family, her need to be loved, her need to be needed. Each desire struggled to voice itself as Mom juggled first one project, then another. And every few weeks, when her work was done or could wait a little longer, we jumped into the car and headed to the D.I. for another load of dolls.

When I was fourteen years old, my father divorced my mother and moved to a narrow ten-by-fifty-foot mobile home in a well-manicured mobile home park. After a time, my mother sold our tired house to two enterprising young men who hoped to spruce it up and sell it for a profit. Our buyers spent days hauling boxes of unfulfilled dolls to Deseret Industries.

Carrying On

Ruth Knight

Firm as the mountains around us,
Stalwart and brave we stand
On the rock our fathers planted
For us in this goodly land.
—Ruth May Fox
(no. 255, *Hymns*, 1985)

ONE OF MY EARLIEST MEMORIES is of my mother pressing her freshly laundered temple clothing, folding it carefully into a special suitcase, and letting me carry it to its place on the floor of her closet. It waited there, ready to accompany her should she either seek to renew her covenants at the temple in Idaho Falls or be finally and joyously called home to her parents in heaven. Although the ceremony was too sacred to discuss outside the thick white walls of the temple, I knew that each piece of the pure white ceremonial clothing had an eternal significance, and I felt closer to salvation just for having carried it to her closet. Most people in Teton Valley did not make a temple journey often. They were snowed in during the winter, and in the summer, valley farmers had to use every good-weather minute for cultivating. At any rate, income to pay for the trip to Salt Lake or Idaho Falls came from the autumn harvest of seed potatoes. Yet somehow the massive mountains encircling us, topped by the granite spires of the Tetons, protected us, enriched us, and lent us strength as we struggled to give our lives for the building of the kingdom.

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From our ancestors' journals, we had learned that dying for one's beliefs is often a blessed alternative to living for them. During their nineteenth-century migration, my ancestors buried their dead all the way from the Mississippi River to the frozen plains of Wyoming. One of my great-great-grandmothers, who left wealth in New York, a two-story brick home in Illinois, and a daughter in a shallow trailside grave in Nebraska, went into labor only a few hours before her husband finally stopped their oxen in front of a dugout near a lake of salt. There she gave birth to my great-grandfather, whom she named Freeborn after their long-awaited sanctuary. Freeborn later married Mary, who, as a two-year-old, walked over a thousand miles with her mother's handcart company.

In the 1890s, the same women who walked halfway across a continent also nurtured large families, farmed the desert, gained major political and professional positions, and lobbied with Susan B. Anthony until they were among the first in the nation to earn the right to vote. Suddenly, because of polygamy, the government disenfranchised them, confiscated their property, and proscribed their marriages as criminal offenses. Families chose either imprisonment of men or abandonment of women and children. Lonely women were left to put potatoes in the ground and on the table.

By the middle of this century, stories of these persecutions and of the Saints' participation in the feminist movement of the last century were about as current as the Shoshone arrowhead fragments that surfaced in our Teton Valley yard every spring when the gophers got busy. Monogamous wives, who viewed themselves as "homemakers," even though most farmed side by side with their husbands, gathered on winter afternoons to quilt. Over the click of needles and the babble of babies, they reminded each other how blessed they were not to have to live like pioneer women. Somehow growing up to be anything but a full-time wife and mother seemed to be either a terrible ordeal or downright sinful.

The Church preached strict obedience to the laws of the land. Everyone in our valley joined to pray and flag wave for our National Guard when the entire unit was sent to Vietnam. We convinced ourselves that the sacrifice was necessary for the freedom of all. Though the mountains blocked most radio and TV signals and the newspapers were late, we saw and heard enough about the "way it was" out in the world to huddle together—secure, protected, encircled by the eternal mountains. We thanked God for our membership in the Church and asked him to bless our far-off servicemen and missionaries with power to soften the hearts of the wicked and to bring an end to lawlessness and sin.

In a Mormon junior college in Rexburg, Idaho, romance and anticipation were in the air. I had more dates during first semester than I had ever dreamed of. Hard-studying missionaries, just back from the field, talked seriously to me about their desire for a large family, a wife who could make home a bit of heaven on earth, and a helpmate who could inspire and support them in their careers.

But then I noticed Tommy Knight. Tommy was tall, handsome, and happy-go-lucky—a young man with a huge smile and a southern drawl. He drove a Mustang convertible with the top down, rode a mean mountain motorcycle, and was always asking for my geology notes. His wide-eyed flexibility attracted me. He had not already decided how he wanted his family set up or how his wife was to act, and he happily ate pizza while I filled him in on all the eternally important stuff, including a temple wedding, which we planned for spring.

The first part of my temple wedding was a ceremonial washing and anointing. Covered modestly with a pure white sheet, I stepped from my dressing room into a tiny, white-tiled room where a white-haired woman with a blue, blue gaze looked deep into my eyes while she anointed me with consecrated oil and blessed me. Awash in the sensible purposes of mortality which suddenly seemed both awesome and transcendent, I knew then that the physical and the spiritual were sides of the same precious coin.

Then I was clothed in holiness, and my mother helped me into the wedding dress she had made. She and I joined others in a towering room, filled with floor-to-ceiling murals depicting the earth and everything on it. The world outside seemed miles and ages away.

Women made covenants on one side of the room, men on the other. Then all moved from room to room, in in and up up, each room taller than the last, each covenant more intense. The ritual seemed totally alien, and yet not unlike the scriptures we studied each Sunday in our community meetinghouses. I kept forgetting the words and actions I was supposed to imitate or repeat, but it didn't matter; loving, white-clothed women hovered around me, prompting, patting, reassuring. I looked across the room to see my tiny father trying to untangle my tall Tommy from his temple clothing, and I was overcome with love and thankfulness.

Later, kneeling at a velvet altar reflected endlessly in the mirrors on the walls, I sealed my forever life and energy to the forever life and energy of my husband, thinking with my head that I was taking Tommy's name and becoming part of his family, but feeling with my heart that he was taking my lifestyle and would carry on the traditions that were mine.

That summer we lived in Teton Valley feeling like little kids playing house and trying to earn money for school. We moved to Brigham Young University in the fall with insufficient money to last the year. If we didn't pay my tuition and I earned money waiting tables, we would have had enough money to see us through. But Tommy pushed me to register, arguing that it would be better to go into debt to prepare me to earn a living then to risk unpreparedness should he die in a motorcycle accident.

I wanted to major in history or English but registered for elementary education because elementary teaching jobs were more plentiful than high school teaching jobs, and nursing did not appeal to me. I did not think a woman could do anything with history or English except teach high school.

Professors rewarded me with excellent grades and I, in turn, longed to have Tommy become a professor. I imagined him writing wonderful history books with my silent, invisible help, and I saw myself entertaining his fascinating colleagues. It seemed irrelevant that Tommy wanted to be a used-car dealer and that I hated to invite people over to dinner because it meant cooking instead of reading, not to mention shoveling my "organized" disarray of papers and books into a box in the bedroom in order to make the apartment presentable.

Tommy kept withdrawing from classes and wheeling and dealing with old cars when he was supposed to be studying for blue book exams in history, so I read the university catalogue and talked him into transferring into industrial arts education. He loved the auto shop, though he drove the instructors crazy by ignoring his homework while securing the auto repair business of their colleagues in other departments.

One night during their monthly visit, our home teachers told us that after four long years another couple in our student ward had successfully conceived a child with help from a fertility specialist. I felt flushed. Did they want to know why we had been married a year and a half and had no baby? I was still uncomfortable admitting that I slept with Tommy, let alone discussing its consequences with other men. The silence in the room was unbearable, broken only when one of our visitors reminded us that the prophet had admonished that education was no reason to postpone having a family.

I graduated that spring, but Tommy had two and a half years left before he could get a teaching certificate. I was feeling guilty about not being pregnant and frustrated that Tommy took school so lightly. When I was offered a teaching position in Provo, I told Tommy with a long face that a woman's place was in the home and that I was giving up on his becoming a teacher. I thought he would quit school and go to

work, so we could start a family. Instead, he promised that if I would take the teaching job, he would make sure he was teaching in two years.

I dearly loved teaching second grade and never felt so torn as when we delightedly announced the due date of our first child. My principal informed me that because of my pregnancy, my contract would not be renewed and asked me to write a letter of resignation. I said nothing about the baby and listed moving out-of-state as my reason for departure.

For the next few years we moved from state to state, following automechanics teaching jobs. I met people whose religious ceremonies involved using peyote or dancing with rattlesnakes writhing live between their teeth. I met atheists and agnostics. I met liberals and fundamentalists who said they disliked Mormons even more than they disliked each other. I met people who boiled mutton stew over open fires to eat on fry bread plates, people who picked poke salad by the roadside and cooked it with fat back, people who complained about flying all over the world on business, and people who had twenty-four-hour uniformed security guards to protect the art pieces hung in the halls of their columned mansions.

But because my strongest ties were always to the Church, and the Church seemed much the same wherever we went, I never realized I was really "out in the world" until Tom lost his job teaching auto mechanics and told me that if I didn't get a job to help out, he was going to sell our little Appalachian country house and use the equity to buy a nearly bankrupt body shop. He had no business experience, and neither did I. My Utah elementary school teaching certification had run out, and I was fifteen hundred miles from Brigham Young University. I had been a housewife for seven years, and the eldest of our three children was in first grade.

Tom said if I would go to law school, he would donate his retirement money and take a salaried job until I graduated. But it seemed as though no one at church believed law school was Tom's idea. Friends reminded me that no success could compensate for failure in the home, that my babies needed a full-time mother, that worldliness was unbecoming to a woman. They said that if baby-sitting, sewing, and envelope stuffing did not provide enough money, I should live on faith. They assured me that the Lord would reward my obedience. A respected Church leader warned me that if I went to law school, I would be divorced in five years. He was convinced that rubbing shoulders with all those educated men would make me think that a man who worked on cars was not good enough for me. A woman who gets more education than her husband, he added, strips the man of his

manhood. Other friends distanced themselves from me as though I had something contagious. A few people said, "Go for it" but usually offered future assistance if the plan didn't work.

One Sunday a woman I respected stopped me in the meetinghouse hallway and said, "I have been asked by the stake to organize a letter-writing campaign so that interested people will let their congressmen know that they oppose the ERA. I hope that you will be willing to help."

I had never turned down a Church calling, so I said, "Sure."

"Good. We need to have you call everyone on the ward list from K to N and ask them to meet in your home. You could have refreshments and maybe type up some letters for people to sign."

"I'd get more people if I had this at the church," I said, thinking of the long country road to our home.

"Oh, no, this is not a Church calling. We must keep church and state separate," she replied kindly.

I had never given the Equal Rights Amendment much thought. If the Church told me to oppose it, I would, but somehow being asked by someone called by the Church to do something that I was forbidden to do in the name of the Church or in the Church building unnerved me.

But a devil deep inside me hinted that if I were really good at acceptable politics, my friends would trust me again, so I nodded as if in total agreement. I held my letter-writing party at the home of a staunchly conservative woman with a large town home. As I tried to put together some intelligent anti-ERA letters, I began to think, really for the first time, about women's rights. I gave my party, but I sensed that it was time for me to move on.

Since I could no longer stay in my nest, I prepared to fly.

Law school for me was like coming in halfway through an Air Force training movie, yet being expected to take wing using the strategies discussed at the beginning of the movie. I wore the proper uniforms and tried to march to one drummer at school and another at church, but in the seclusion of the back bedroom, my journal received details of both worlds to which I did not quite belong.

The height of my isolation came when I found myself graduated, working pressured overtime for a publisher of state statutes, and frantically preparing for one of the worst bar exams in the country. From my journal during that time:

I pride myself on being a healthy person. So it is understandable that I worry a little about my eyesight going bad; I read law for a living. Finally I give up and go to an optometrist, and go and go. New

contacts; thinner contacts; artificial tears; reading glasses as in "You are getting older and will soon need bifocals." Can't see across my office; can't see across my desk; can't see across my nose. Thirsty. Dizzy. Nauseated. Skin scales. Hair like straw. Stumbling. Speech garbled. Concentrate on putting one word after another—putting pencil on right place on paper. Faint. Handwriting shaky. Backache. Thirsty. Get sick if I drink but can see better when I drink. Oh, no. Deadline. Here are four more session laws to go in your title. *Deadline.*

Go to the doctor during lunch. Working in the waiting room. Working in the examination room. Worry worry. *Diabetes*? "Blood, we want your blood." Puncture. Blood sucking up a little tube. New little machine. Beep. "Not diabetes."

Urine. "Here in the little cup."

"Can't."

"Have to." Concentrate. Need to be working, studying, mothering, wifing, doing laundry.

"Not lupus either."

"Stress? Is that all? The dehydration made my contacts stick to my eyeballs? Eeeeiii!"

"Take these little pink pills for anxiety attacks."

"Pills? Drugs? I don't take drugs. I don't even drink coffee!"

"Well, I could prescribe a lot of *beer*. . . . "

"Gimme the pills."

Back to work until 11:00 p.m. Stacks of pages pages. Alone in the big black building late at night. Night. Morning. Work work.

Knock knock. The boss looks nervous, angry.

"We need to talk. When exactly do you plan to leave to study for the bar?"

I already told the man. I show him again on the calendar: five days to study and three days to travel and take the exam (the two-day exam with twenty-four subjects plus multistate when other states only have six subjects or eight or none. Obscure subjects like equity and worse).

"No, you cannot have the time off."

"But you said . . . "

"I realize you are new here, but these things must be in writing."

(Silence.)

He shrugs. "Well, finish up to the point that you can send the copy to the copy editors. And go. But understand that you are hurting the company."

(Pause.) "I didn't realize I would hurt the company. I don't like to think of myself as the sort of person who would do that. . . . I won't take the exam."

"Oh, no, you go ahead and take it."

"I really don't WANT to."

"I INSIST that you go and take the test. . . . "

Work work workwork—sixteen-hour days through the weekend so as to be taking fewer days off. Then study study. I never had conflicts, creditor's rights, crim pro II, equity, local government, negotiable instruments, sales, secured transactions, unsecured transactions, suretyship, mortgages, bankruptcy, tax II. And I never understood civil procedure. Try try. Water water. Pills pills. Study study.

I tell people I'm not studying. I am going to flunk, and I want to be able to say I didn't study. I didn't learn anything in law school. Yes I did. I just didn't learn this stuff.

On the other hand, this is beginning to make sense. Wonderful. Amazing how much I know. I know enough to write a soap opera—but not enough to pass the bar.

Maybe I do. Yes, I do.

No, I don't.

No time to study for the Multistate part of the exam but I was passing the multistate practice tests I took last summer. I'm pretty good at multiple guess.

Take a pill. I am going to pass. Pill wears off. I am going to flunk. Take a pill.

On the morning of the exam, friend Sheila pops pills as she drives on the interstate highway. She has many bottles with different colors and shapes in each. In a little over an hour, we exit into the bowels of the state capital. We pass tall buildings on one-way streets during rush hour. Rush rush.

I ask questions about "payable to order or bearer a sum certain in money." Was it a terminable interest or a qualified terminable interest?

Sheila wants to talk about her new marriage. Her husband is rich, but he doesn't give her any money. Doesn't buy her daughter anything. She says sex is good.

I remind myself that a lawyer has twenty-one days absolute right to file, but after that he or she may only file with leave of court.

He bought her a ring that cost five figures and is taking her to Hawaii as soon as the bar is over but won't help with groceries. She lives just as always—scrimping.

What was the difference between summary judgment and directed verdict?

Should she sell the ring to pay off her college loan? Would that get his attention?

Sheila has been studying two hours every day since she got too sick to take the exam six months ago. The last three weeks she has taken time off to study full time. She knows everything. Ten days for this. Twenty-one for that. Ninety for something else. She knows about the new appellate court and who goes there. I didn't even know about it, since it was new in January. She is an encyclopedia and afraid *she* will flunk. She has memorized twenty-four subjects and taken thirty timed mock multistate exams.

Traffic stops completely for a caravan of big red Barnum and Bailey trucks. One truck pulls a train of tiger cages into the coliseum. One powerful cat stares me balefully in the eye and then continues pacing in circles the size of her trap.

Our hotel is right next to the circus. I take a pill.

Bellboys in red with plumes on their hats approach us. We doggedly carry in our own bags—paper bags and picnic coolers, cardboard boxes of books—through the lobby with live piano music and people holding crystal goblets.

I am trying to remember the elements of negotiability while riding to the twelfth floor. A distinguished-looking woman tells me not to worry. The best thing is not to worry. I ask if she is taking "it." She says no, she is *giving* "it."

Sheila takes the shades off all the lamps in our room. Study study. Then Sheila strips and does frantic calisthenics. Kickkickbendbend.

I review the implied warranties and try not to look at Sheila.

She showers, goes to bed, and wraps a pillow around her head. It is 9:30. When she gets up to go to the bathroom, I ask why she is wearing pink plastic gloves.

She can't talk until she takes the football player's mouth guard out of her mouth. Her voice is thick from medication. "I wear th' mouth guard so I won' grind m' teeth, an' th' gloves so I won' claw m'self in m' zleep."

Good thing her husband only sees her on weekends.

Study study. I will be okay, I say, as I chew my pill. Don't be foolish and not sleep. In bed. Lights out. Toss and turn. Every muscle jumps and twitches. I close my eyes and practice relaxation techniques.

Sheila asks, "You wwwant wwwwone ovvv mmyyy pillsss?"

I say, "No!" and nearly jump out of the twelfth story plate glass window. Dear dear. Heavenly Father, help me. Can you hear me? . . . You can, but I came where I didn't belong, so I am on my own. I should've taught school. No matter how hard I try, I can't do this, and I don't even like it. Dear dear.

Finally I get up and take creditors' rights to the bathroom. It feels better to study.

Crash. I jump and drop my papers all over the bathroom floor. Suddenly framed by the doorway stands Sheila in curlers, mouth guard, and gloves. "Ahmmm soorrri. Ah vv nightmares. Please leave the bathroom light on when you go to bed. . . . "

In the morning I drink a lot of juice and hope I can make it three hours without the bathroom. I go over state procedure because procedure is supposed to be most important. When we emerge business suited, other similarly suited persons come out of other doors. We all look alike.

The crowded elevator ejects us into a huge hall where slender men in suits mill around. Blue and gray. A third of these people will fail. Gray and blue. I walk miles in a ballroom with crystal chandeliers before I find my card on a table next to a man who tells me he didn't take the bar last summer; he got sick the night before. He thinks I think he failed last summer. Who cares? All I'm thinking about are the elements of negotiability.

"Your number will be on your blue composition book. Place your number on your place card. A monitor will pick it up." The nice woman in the elevator is in front in a suit. Is she a bar examiner? No. She is the monitor. "You have ten pages. Count them. Ten. That is all you get. One page, front and back, for one problem. Ten problems. Eighteen minutes per problem. Please do not leave the room; leaving the room disturbs people. Does everyone have a test? You may begin."

Dates, service, cross claim, and the statute of limitations. Rape, peremptory challenges, motion to strike. Directed verdict, judgment N.O.V., twenty-one days to modify, and the jurisdictional amount of punitive damages.

I need to go to the bathroom. Mecklenburg Prison. I really have to go to the bathroom. Police reports. I am going to be sick. Confessions and fingerprints. No one is leaving. Conversion-hearsay-bailment-gratuitous-for hire-actual or apparent authority.

I cannot concentrate until I go to the bathroom. The pain in my abdomen feels like cramps, but it couldn't be. Return of attorney's fees. Oh, no, it IS cramps. I can feel the stickiness, draining. It will go through my suit. Easement. Guardian ad litum. I have to go out. I run quietly, hoping nothing shows or runs down my leg. Where is the bathroom????? When I try a door, it is the other door to the exam! I ask a man who doesn't know. A woman does.

Gross. Need a . . .

"You may take nothing in the examination room except two pens."

I don't have my purse! I don't have a quarter. We only have one room key, and Sheila has it. Could I bum a quarter? No one stands

outside the door. One person inside is throwing up; I can see her gray suit under the stall. Wad up a giant blob of toilet paper.

The bar review professors said to *engrave* your test, because all failing papers had messiness in common. I have already scribbled out, written in the margin, and tacked on another point as I was already into the essay. I may as well not go back in. I am no attorney. I am messsy. I carve things out of blobs of matter; I can't make a skeleton and flesh it out. Is there any reason to go back in?

I have to go back in simply because I am not a quitter.

Bar examiners glare at me as I enter.

Necessary parties, inheritance, proceeds, and shipments of lumber. Divorce a mensa et thoro; I know what that is. So what?

Time. It is one-fourth over.

At noon I meet a bright, spunky, tiny woman who chatters. She is Vietnamese. She went to law school in France. But the United States wouldn't recognize her French degree, so she went three more years here. She failed both the state and multistate a year ago and again last July. The French write long flowery prose, so on the exam she wrote everything she knew. On one state question the examiner replied, "You have the right answers—enough for a perfect score of ten—but when you write so much, it makes me think you are unsure. A lawyer must be sure." He gave her a six, and that failed her. She has two children in college. She speaks many languages. She doesn't need money. "I just want to help my people. . . . You know . . . they stay together . . . like that (hand gestures) . . . I hate that . . . they don't know how to belong here. . . . After all these years they feel strange . . . if I can just pass . . . "

I wrote long flowery prose. I wrote every question as if I were unsure. Who *wouldn't* be unsure???? A bluffer I am not. Oh. . . . At least tomorrow's multistate is standardized and multiple choice. Thank the Lord for small favors. Sheila says she finally understands con law.

Glad for midnight, I lie darkly in bed, leaving the light on for Sheila. Why try? I didn't have time to prepare for the multistate.

I tell myself to stop carrying on like this. If pioneer women could walk across the plains, I can try for one more day. I peer nearsightedly at the clock every hour. Sheila's gloves clutch her pillow. The clock says four-thirty. I *must* sleep. Tick tock. Time time. Black.

Is Sheila up? Is she stealing study time? Does she have legal pads in the bed under the covers? Is she studying so she will pass and I won't? I turn to confront her, but she is there soft and soothing. She

smoothes my hair. She says she will help me, and I will pass. She tries, but my pencil is stuck in my legal pad that is a honeycomb. I cannot mooove. My hand is sticky. She says, "I tried, honey, but I cannot help you if you cannot write fast. I am sorry, but I must go." She jogs away across the desert, and I am alone, stuck, sucked into the honeycomb.

The alarm rings.

I shake for a moment and then put on my glasses. Sheila takes the guard out of her mouth and brushes her teeth. She reviews some notes, then we go downstairs. Sheila says, "Do you ever have nightmares?"

I shake my head, "No," lying.

This time we sit at the same table with our pencils, closed test booklets, and answer grids full of orderly rows of little ovals.

"You may begin."

At the end of the first hour I feel great. Right on time. I knew the answers. Okay . . . Then I begin to need the bathroom again; to look at the doors. When I hit a long, long contracts problem, I get sleepy—and behind. How far behind? Fifteen or twenty minutes. Push. I must do every problem in one minute, so I skim through, guess, and go on. Now I must do each one in thirty seconds. No time to read carefully, remember the analysis, and choose the best response.

"Five minutes." I mark BCBC down a column. Part III is over.

We have to be out of our rooms before one o'clock. So we trudge out past the bellboys with our loads of stuff. I see a little man about two feet tall, wearing a sequined costume, and running across the street with the light. His legs are so short he must run to keep up with other people who walk when the light says "WALK."

I go back in for part four. I try to pace myself eight and one-half questions every fifteen minutes. I can't tell where my pencil goes on the answer sheet. I blink and blink to clear my eyes. My contacts must be sticking to my eyeballs. I am marking in the wrong grid. Erase. Blink. Sheila's pencil is moving rhythmically down her answer sheet. Why am I watching her? She is not watching me. Now I am not watching anything because my eyes are blurry. People begin leaving and bumping my chair. Leaving and disturbing is okay in the last hour of the exam, just not in the first two hours. I would stand up, but my body is too heavy. Am I smiling at the leavers and bumpers? Is it foggy in here? My pencil is stuck somewhere in the answer grid.

Back home, when I take my shoes off, I have so many charley horses that my toes curl up to my knees. Tom is watching football. Then he is watching me. He holds me gently and tells me to stop tearing at my hair.

And we hear the desert singing:
Carry on, carry on, carry on!
Hills and vales and mountains ringing:
Carry on, carry on, carry on!
— Ruth May Fox
(no. 255, *Hymns*, 1985)

The scores told me I did a good job on the impossible state exam. If I had just finished the multistate, the possible national exam, I would have passed. Still I was utterly terrified to face the ordeal again. I knew if I could take my time and be tested in Teton Valley under a tree, I would do fine. Perhaps the ability to survive under pressure was what bar examiners really tested. The issue for me was not whether I knew the legal concepts. The issue was endurance.

I asked myself whether I would feel less pressure if I belonged to the group that thrives on the stress of the legal profession. Did I have any more energy for strategies in logic that made little sense to me? I wrote questions in my journal until I could finally ask myself what I had inside that I could use to finish this journey I had started.

I knelt beside the bed and tried to ask Father in Heaven how to go about making a place for myself in a world where I felt so awkward, or if that didn't work out, how to find the promised land again. I knelt there listening but heard nothing. My knees hurt and I felt silly. Finally I went to bed and tried again the next night and the next. I began to carry the prayer around with me. Finally when I addressed Father in Heaven, I began to feel as if he wished he could tell me the answer, but he couldn't.

Then I began to think about my Heavenly Mother. After a while a slow smile spread out in my heart.

What I needed was *female power*. Holy Ghost/Mother in Heaven/whatever it really was/*inside power*—inside me all along if I could figure out how to use it.

Home became a quiet refuge where I relaxed in warm baths, talked to my mother on the phone, and read poetry aloud to myself. I took time to look at the trees, at my children sleeping, and at Tom's feet sticking out from under a 1963 MG.

I ritualized my preparation for the next bar as if it were an important ceremony.

Tom went to the exam with me. When we found the hotel, I saw the Vietnamese woman running in the parking lot. She was reading from a Bar/Bri book as she ran. This was her fourth and last try to pass the exam.

I tried to review in the hotel room. Tom watched TV and ate potato chips. I told him I couldn't study with rock video accompaniment. He tried to sleep and then snored. I gave up and went to bed before ten o'clock.

Suddenly, I woke, as if by music. The sun was shining through the latticed windows like diamonds. I put on my glasses and studied the beautiful old woodwork, the polished antique furniture, and the brass lamps.

Then I heard something inside me (or maybe I just remembered it from long ago Seminary):

"Awake, awake; put on thy strength . . . put on thy beautiful garments. . . . "

I got up and walked into the bathroom. The light was very bright, shining on the antique white porcelain and ceramic tile. It was the whitest room I had ever seen. As I ran the bath water, I leaned back against the old-fashioned tub back and gave myself to the warmth. Again I began to hear language inside me—clean and clear. Words I seldom remembered through the entire temple ceremony filled me, more sacred than secret. Words about health and strength, loyalty and cleanliness, sacrifice and consecration, and the power promised to me and to my posterity if I can but realize my own potential, courageously using free agency to seek wisdom. Suddenly the words meant much more than remembering them to repeat at the appropriate time. I saw that belonging to a state bar association based simply on "repeat-it-back" learning was worthless unless I made it a meaningful rite of passage, leading me to contribute toward the building of a kingdom I cared about.

When Tom woke up, I asked him to give me a blessing the way I used to ask my father. He did. He was not eloquent. He was Tommy Knight. Wearing sweats and tennis shoes, he escorted me to the coliseum. Hundreds of would-be warriors in the chain-male suits waited for the opening of the doors, grinding the remains of their tobacco into the plaza near a fountain. Nobody but me appeared to be enjoying the fountain.

I sat next to a man from Alabama who failed last time because he couldn't last three hours without a cigarette when he was nervous. We began. No recognizable questions. Hairline distinctions. Out and out tricks. Red herrings. I breathed deeply and kept at it. Sure enough, the impossible question appeared. Using the process of elimination, I skipped and dodged and doubled back until I felt almost exhilarated.

Tom was waiting with hamburgers and milkshakes. I didn't mind returning to the exam.

As I turned in my last test when time was called, I saw the Vietnamese woman. She was frantically trying to finish, alone in a wide, wide sea. The monitors took her answer sheet. She lay her head on the table. I heard her voice six months ago—"I just want to help my people. . . . " And I knew that the pure in heart do not always pass bar exams or find the sanctuary they seek.

The knowledge hurt me, but the hurting healed me, too.

Sometimes a body just doesn't survive the war, or the winter walk through Wyoming. But the collective spirit of strength lives, carried along inside when we find ourselves traveling outside our circle of familiar spires.

Deity

Anita Tanner

Who is he from the Sunday pulpit
acquiring the air of sins
with his lecture,
hell's woes never hidden
in the muscles of his jaws,
fraternal words (all-knowing,
all-powerful) accentuated
with his fist.
(I cannot see the face.)

Even though I kneel to him,
she is God.
She is nurse of my mortal wounds,
cradler of my conscience.
I bathed in her womb-baptism,
uncurled, breathing perspiration
through the pores of her temples.
We are one.

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I acknowledge him,
his voice deigning
from where he leans
into a makeshift throne
every week,
the dominion of his words
falling on the sorrow of ears.

When I am racked
in confinement, she washes
and annoints me. Her voice,
atrophied in the gloom,
whispers kindred peace
to all my nerves, to the white moons
of my nails, graying roots
of her hair mingling with my own.

Empathy

Helen B. Cannon

SEVERAL TIMES A YEAR, I give one of the Relief Society's supplemental lessons. Jokingly, I call this my token Church job; in truth it means a great deal to me. I deeply value the opportunity and the trust given me. The measure of trust, in fact, is all the more significant and touching, since my Relief Society presidency give me free reign to choose the subject. I don't take the responsibility lightly. Thoughts well up in me; and in these lessons, I can let them spill over.

Usually I center lessons around subjects that I, myself, need to probe—areas where I know I should improve. Not long ago, aware of my own insularity, I challenged myself and my ward sisters toward greater empathy for others. We talked of our difficulty or inability to perceive the experience of others—those who differ from us in age, economic circumstance, education, health, race, creed. Borrowing from Indian wisdom, I counseled, "Walk a mile in another's moccasins before you judge." I came home feeling quite good about the lesson, thinking I'd somewhat shaken myself, as well as others, from narrow, closed views.

In this self-congratulatory mood, I picked up the local newspaper, turning first, as I often do, to the Letters to the Editor. There, predictably, I found yet another anti-abortion tirade written by a Mormon sister. The tone of the letter was so angry that I could easily visualize its author being first in line to cast stones at any woman who might contemplate an abortion—the "enemy" here faceless, but the hatred palpable and terrifyingly real. For the moment, though, this strident woman had pocketed her verbal stones and contented herself

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with wishing that those who choose abortion had "themselves been aborted." A woman hating her sister that much. . . . My own words about empathy rose up then—" . . . walk in another's moccasins . . . " Suppose I wore the shoes of a woman who had chosen abortion; suppose I were the enemy. I would not quite fit the stereotype envisioned by most pro-lifers, if they visualize anyone at all. I would not be the selfish yuppie or the feminist career woman who chose abortion so I could get on with my life; I would not have been the callow teenager. No.

I thought back to the darkest period of my life, when, in my mid-forties, I found myself in a terrible period of sickness and depression. I remember those days when I cried from morning to night and often far into the nights, when I wished for death, when my only fantasies were black ones, imagining ways I could stop my life. Only the fear that death would not assure oblivion kept me from trying to find a way out. But once, empty of faith and in utter despair, I took my chance at oblivion. A handful of swallowed aspirins brought no eternal sleep, nothing but retching, wrenching sickness and ears ringing with despised life. I fully understood then poet Anne Sexton's lines in "Wanting to Die,"

> To thrust all that life under your tongue!
> that, all by itself, becomes a passion. (1966, 58)

Suppose, in those dark days of my forty-fifth year, I had discovered I was pregnant. Empathize with that, I told myself. Certainly I know I would not have feared for my life, though my husband might. What I would have feared, I'm sure, were the consequences for my living children and for the emotional and physical well-being of the new life to be given to my care.

What did that woman who might have been me know of the issue, having come up through Church education in the days when abortion was a taboo subject? I can't remember, in all my days of MIA and Sunday School, Seminary and Institute, study groups and sacrament meetings, when our Church's doctrinal position on abortion (if there were one clearly defined) was ever discussed. Sometimes in study groups we did talk about birth control, in terms that were vague, if not euphemistic. I can't remember that abortion was ever mentioned, but I do remember that what we observed about birth control was that the Church position didn't appear to be carved in stone. It had moved from the early unqualified injunctions to multiply and replenish the earth (even if that meant a woman bore a child a year for all of her childbearing years), to President McKay's softening (1969) statement:

> It is the policy of the Church to discourage the prevention of conception by any means unless the health of the mother demands it. It is also the policy of the Church to regard *marital relations of husband and wife as their personal problem and responsibility, to be solved and established between themselves as a sacred relationship.* (in Bush 1976, 28; italics added to the part by which I was then most impressed)

How many women of my generation walked with me in ignorance, unaware of the issue's potential volatility? The fact is, five and ten years ago the subject was relatively invisible. Faye D. Ginsburg's excellent *Contested Lives* (1989), an anthropological case study set in Fargo, North Dakota, typifies the development of the abortion debate in the 1980s—and is not unlike a parallel development in Mormon culture. Until the opening of an abortion clinic in Fargo, women there were not at war among themselves. While the opening of the clinic did not, of course, mark the beginning of abortions in Fargo, it did mark the time of polarization when people, forced by deeply entrenched moral constraints, began to take sides. Early anti-abortion campaigns in Fargo, Ginsburg shows, did not try to establish "personhood" for the fetus.

Looking back, I'm sure that the question of when the spirit enters the body is something I didn't spend much time thinking about either. If I had, I would probably have let a beloved Book of Mormon scripture float to the surface to supply my answer. I would have remembered thinking about the revelation to Nephi on the night before Christ's mortal birth. "Lift up your head, and be of good cheer," came the voice of the Lord himself, not from Mary's womb, I assume, "for behold, the time is at hand, and on this night shall the sign be given, and on the morrow come I into the world" (3 Ne. 1:13).

In a subconscious way I had taken this touching passage as scriptural support for the idea that the spirit does not enter the physical body until the magical moment of birth, inhaled perhaps like the first gasp of air filling each new child with light and life. But in truth I didn't consciously think of it. Maybe many of my sisters didn't either. It's true, a woman of my generation could have ferreted out strong but puzzling and contradictory statements of Church positions on abortion and birth control, but the fact is, most of us didn't. Most of us were quite blithe, tending conscientiously, if sometimes unhappily, to homemaking and Church responsibilities. Comparatively few Church women would have read Lester Bush's provocative 1976 essay in DIALOGUE. It is one of the few Church documents I can think of which dared to examine abortion and birth control within the Church.

In 1976 when I read it, the problems seemed remote—a matter of curious interest only. Some few details did stick with me though, one relating to Brigham Young's half-contradictory stance on the issue of

when life begins. His stated belief had been that the spirit enters the fetus at the time of quickening or later. But in a funeral sermon for a dead child, President Young cast some doubt on his earlier view: "When some people have little children at 6 & 7 months pregnancy & they live but a few hours then die they bless them &c. but I dont do it for I think that such a spirit has not a fair chance for I think that such a spirit will have a chance of occupying another Tabernacle and developing itself" (in Bush 1976, 15).

Three years later, a DIALOGUE Notes and Comments article dropped no bombshell either, though if printed today it might. Three BYU biologists posed questions that most of us were unprepared to consider. They asked, for instance, questions about the phenomenon of identical twinning. "Identical twins begin as a single embryo which at some point in development splits in two. At what point are two spirits present?" The question of how many angels can dance on the head of a pin seemed almost as relevant to me then. And what of spontaneous abortion, which is far more common in humans than most people realize? Most of these natural abortions occur in the first few days or weeks of pregnancy and are therefore not noticed by physicians, or even the pregnant woman herself. The authors indicate that "somewhere between twenty percent and well over half of all conceptions end in spontaneous abortion. . . . If one were to assume that every embryo is a human soul, the simplest conclusion would be that many (perhaps most) of our brothers and sisters never experience mortality in a meaningful way" (Farmer, Bradshaw, and Johnson 1979, 72–73).

As Mary Gordon points out in a recent *Atlantic Monthly* article, our language itself reflects conventional wisdom that I would have known even then. I likely would have been informed by our language differentiation between *miscarriage*, occurring early in pregnancies, and *stillbirth*, occurring very late. A spontaneous abortion at six weeks would never be called a stillbirth, and the issue of an early miscarriage would not be given a name, buried, or blessed. In a vague, intuitive way, I would have known this.

But my sick self surely would not have remembered or pondered any of this. Instead, pregnant and ill, I would have turned to my husband—a former bishop, a faithful man, a loving father. Suppose, knowing so well the circumstances, loving me and fearing for my life, he had counseled me to have an abortion. Suppose he had, through my LDS doctor, made the arrangements and helped me through it, and driven me sadly home, the windshield wipers beating out the words of Anne Sexton's poignant refrain, "*Somebody who should have been born is*

gone. Someone who should have been born is gone" ("The Abortion" 1961, 20). But before that, in a clinic where no happy people entered, he would, I know, have held my hand—would have cried with me.

Empathize with that woman who might have been me, I tell myself. How was it for her, then; but more important, how would it be for her now? How would she feel as she read this letter to the editor, branding her as a "murderer," "Nazi-like," participating in a "final solution." Think of this woman, recovered, loving life and family once again, trying to live a kind and giving life. Crises often effect great shifts in the way people perceive and understand their world. Healed, perhaps, she would now welcome a child—sacrifice her life for its birth, even. Could she, in the current rain of accusation, function again in church or community or family? Once uncertain and unthinking about the ethics of abortion, she now no longer moves in blessed uncertainty. Thought has become her burden. Her hidden scarlet letter "A" stands for abortion rather than adultery. It brands her soul with sin. "Post-abortion syndrome," they say. Would it have come to wreak its natural course, or would it be thrust upon her by sure and accusing voices from every sector?

Suppose this woman sat in my class today. Had she a right to ask for understanding, even for love and acceptance, and, if need be, forgiveness? Perhaps it's easier to sympathize with cases removed in time and space than to withhold judgment upon those in our midst. Who but the stony-hearted would not respond in sympathy to a poignant recollection by an old Jewish woman, as recorded by anthropologist Barbara Myerhoff in her deeply moving study, *Number Our Days*? Listen to Sonya recalling the plight of her mother in the old country:

> I remember my mama also with pain. I must have been about five years old. My sister just died, a very slow death, and we didn't have enough food for her. The whole city cried. She was a beautiful girl, about twelve years old. Already there were six of us and my mother didn't want no more children. I heard a funny sound and crept out in the middle of the night. My mother was lifting up a heavy barrel full of pickles and dropping it again and again. Somehow I found out it was to get rid of her baby, so she would have a miscarriage. You know how many marriages this ruined, because even if she loved her husband, she wouldn't let him go near her. In those days they had abortions, like I wouldn't describe them here. My mother's sister died of that, she had fourteen abortions and eight children at forty. They knew none of the children would have a chance in life if they kept on that way, so she wouldn't go to her husband any more. From this he lost his manhood. I heard her tell my mother that if she wasn't a Jew and it wasn't against the law, she would hang herself. (1978, 232–33)

It would seem easier to muster compassion for those long ago and far away women; but in fact, those who hate seem unable to imagine beyond their perception of a faceless contemporary American stereo-

type—that selfish career woman or the teenager who "asked for it." This free-floating hatred seldom confronts a real-life woman who could, in fact, be the pro-lifer's own mother, sister, daughter, or friend. Certainly the strident crusaders seldom visualize beyond an insular American image. Do they imagine the average Russian woman who has in the course of a marriage fourteen abortions? (du Plessix Gray 1990, 67). Do they visualize Rumanian women, who under Ceausescu's disastrous natality program were policed, "receiving gynecological checkups in their workplaces. Once a woman was found to be pregnant, 'demographic command bodies' were called in to monitor her. Any miscarriages were investigated and illegal abortions were punished by prison terms for both the woman and the physician" (Echikson 1990, 4).

But we needn't turn to other times and other places to exercise empathy. Sisters in our midst have need of our sensitivity and understanding and acceptance. In Utah, 4,149 resident women sought and received abortions in 1988 (*Induced Abortions* 1990, 1), among them the teen who was incestuously raped, the woman whose childbearing years had seemed over, the sister who was ill in mind or body, another who found no counseling voice to suggest adoption or to raise philosophical doubt as to when an immortal spirit assumes mortality. Surely that woman moves among us, sits in church beside us, walks with us as our friend. "[She] that is without sin among you, let [her] first cast a stone" (John 8:7).

I put the newspaper down and in my mind embrace my sister through waves of empathy. I will not judge her. I will only love and try to understand.

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The Slow Way Home

Loretta Randall Sharp

She leaves the women in her husband's house
and makes a slow way home
to her own mother, to friends singing
as they bring sweet butter
for the first month, molasses
for the second, radish, the third.
Nine kinds of giftgiving
fill full the life cycle,
and then singing sisters
bracelet her bare arms,
    first a circle of healing *nīm*,
    then elephant hair to match her task
    and bangles of green glass
    because she is fragile and glad.

Taking to themselves a paste
of rice and clarified butter,
the hands of women rub
in slow circles the tight flesh
rising with what will yet be.

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At the midwife's nod, water
is heated, oil warmed,
and she is settled into a bed
rounded out from white sand.

But like Parvati, Devi, like all women
come home
she spreads her legs when the waters
will not be stayed, shapes sand new
each time the pains take hold.
Sinking to places she must go alone,
she rises, revived finally
by the high brine smell of blood,
by the infant held high, its cry
the cry of the mother birthing herself
again
and again.

FICTION

Songs

Lisa Madsen de Rubilar

MARTA PILLAHUEL WAS VERY OLD. She lived in the country with her pigs on one side and her chickens on the other. Her wooden house leaned to the east and let in the weather—a warm breeze in the summer, a bit of storm fine as sea spray in the winter.

The outside boards were green and slick from Valdivia rain, and the inside boards were gray from cookstove smoke. There were two rooms—one for cooking, for eating, and for talking hours and hours on cold afternoons with the teapot boiling and with a *maté* cup to pass from hand to hand; the other room was for sleeping and for praying.

Now that she was old, Marta Pillahuel lived nearer town. Not that she had moved: the neighborhoods just kept sneaking closer, like a dog sliding his rear end out of the cold in to where he knows he doesn't belong.

By the road, it was now only a half-hour walk from Marta Pillahuel's house to the first neighborhood block. But through the fields, as Marta Pillahuel went, even in the wet, in her cracked rubber boots, it was only fifteen minutes to the nearest church. Even God was closer now than he used to be. Some of the eviler mouths, on cold afternoons, said Marta Pillahuel blasphemed against the baptism of her birth so she wouldn't have to walk so far. After more than half a century of mass every Sunday in the cathedral downtown, Marta Pillahuel now took her wrinkled face and listening eyes to a little box of a church, all cinderblock and windows, where her boots paced strangely on white linoleum floors and her fuzzed coat moved like a shadow there where

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everything still smelled chalky and new. Inside the church there were even toilets with doors on the stalls, and shiny sinks with metal faucets, and a giant mirror all uncracked.

This was where, on the morning of her first sacrament meeting, Elena García met Marta Pillahuel for the first time. Their glances connected in the uncracked mirror as Marta Pillahuel rinsed the soles of her boots under the tap and Elena García brushed her long black hair.

"Congratulations," Marta Pillahuel said, "and welcome." She knew that Elena was Andrés Espinoza's bride and was not surprised that Elena was exactly as she had imagined her. Elena nodded and smiled but quickly shifted her gaze elsewhere. It rested on the door that opened into the font where she had been baptized the day before her marriage. Her mother had come to the wedding anyway, a black scarf tied over her head; but her aunts, her cousins, her grandmother, and her godmother had not. Elena was two weeks married, and everything was new—her family, her home, her bed, her body, even her church.

Marta Pillahuel's eyes snatched at hers once again in the mirror. "I would like you to come to my house for scones and honey," she said. "Can you come tonight?"

That evening Elena and Andrés walked out through the fields to Marta Pillahuel's house and returned late, stumbling against each other in that moonless night, laughing with the darkness. That was the first time Elena García went to Marta Pillahuel's.

The second time, she went by way of the road and she went alone, except for the baby growing large inside her. It had rained, and the hedges were still raining. She tapped the curved limbs of the wild blackberry with the tip of her umbrella as she passed. The blackberry branches were intertwined as a child's curls, each one making a perfect arc that straightened just a bit as Elena's tap let drops fall heavy and straight to the ground. Elena could not see over the hedge. She could see only the sky, blue and cloudy, the tips of the giant firs up ahead, and the swan necks of the wild blackberries.

Where the road curved suddenly to the left, the sandy soil that turned silver with each step gave way to a mire. Elena stopped. She could take off her shoes and wipe her feet later on the wet grass, but Andrés would be angry. He would say, "Think of the baby." He would want her to turn back.

The grass along the edge of the road was just as well churned by hooves, feet, and wheels as the road itself, so Elena decided to walk straight down the middle of the road between the deepest ruts. She walked carefully, up on her toes, watching for the firmest spots; but despite her caution, her shoe came off in the mud. She lost her bal-

ance and muddied her hand before she could get her foot back in. "I couldn't help it," she said aloud.

When Elena looked up again, there was a shining hill—green and perfectly curved—lying ahead, and wide green fields on either side. The road appeared to end right there at the foot of the hill. But Elena knew the illusion—how in reality it veered off to the left at the last moment and looped right past Marta Pillahuel's door.

The hill was greener now, just past the winter rains, than it had been when she and Andrés had come nine months before. And the road was longer. It was too long. She shouldn't have come. Elena crouched at the side of the road to relieve the weighted pain in her abdomen. Leaning forward on one hand, she supported the baby's weight on her thighs.

She looked up the road once more at the shining hill—green against blue against the clouds' gray-white. Then she looked down where her hand tingled against the soil. Tiny purple flowers grew between her fingers. The baby made three quick thuds there where her womb pressed against her thigh, and Elena García laughed right out loud. "Come out, baby," she said. "Come out and see the sunshine!"

She stood and walked again, singing a song about the Christ child. Marta Pillahuel was going to help her with the Christmas songs the Primary children would sing at the front of the chapel in two weeks. The children sang everything very loudly with their arms stiff at their sides. They had been taught to sing this way in school. "Pretend you are angels," Elena told them. "When you sing about the Holy Child, do not shout." But the children continued to sing in the way they had been taught.

"They are angels anyway," Elena told Andrés, who responded, "I'm sure the angels had to shout at the sleeping shepherds."

The children's favorite song, the one they yelled loudest toward the ceiling, was about the donkey María rode to Bethlehem. The donkey was tired, but he let María sleep in the only empty stall in the stable; he was hungry, but he let Jesus sleep in his manger filled with soft hay.

Elena liked the song, too. Sometimes she hummed it while scrubbing Señora Ovalde's jeans with a plastic brush. But one day she said to Andrés, "I think that María walked to Bethlehem. She and José were poor and could not buy a donkey."

"Maybe she walked part of the way," Andrés said. "But they had friends and cousins and uncles and aunts. Maybe her cousin or her uncle let her ride his donkey."

"But nobody saw how tired she was because María and José were far behind," Elena insisted. "That is why there was no room when they finally got to the inn."

Now, as she passed below the heavy green of the giant firs, Elena conceded to herself that María would never have reached Bethlehem if she had walked. She crouched once more at the side of the road and thought how some kind old man, on seeing María resting in the dust, had offered her a ride on his donkey. Or perhaps José saw kindness in the man's wrinkles and had stopped him on the crowded road to ask for help. Elena picked up a small green cone and twirled it in her fingers; the fir trees hissed above her head. The hill, still shining, was closer now. She could see where the road twisted off to the left. José must have loved María very much, she thought, as her eyes followed the road's curve out of sight.

Marta Pillahuel did not expect Elena until the afternoon, or maybe not at all, since the road was wet. But she was standing in the doorway as she often did after rain when Elena García climbed up over the road embankment. "Here is the lady to sing," Marta Pillahuel said to her grandson Carlito, who was sitting under the table with a kitten in each hand.

"Sing! Sing!" Carlito cried and ran barefoot into the mud outside the front door. He stopped there in wonderment, then sat down.

"You are a monster," Marta Pillahuel told him as she swung him up on one hip without stopping on her way across the yard. And to Elena she said in greeting, "We'll put your shoes under the stove to dry." She rested her cheek against Elena's and kissed the air.

On the way back to the house, Carlito stretched his hand out across Marta Pillahuel's shoulder. Elena touched his fingers, and he squeezed her thumb tight, not letting go until the three of them reached the door. "Sing! Sing!" Carlito said.

"We'll sing, love," Marta Pillahuel told him. She put Carlito on the floor and reached for a bucket by the door. "But first we'll warm up Sister Elena." She took the top off the charcoaled teapot and shut one eye to measure the water as she filled it clear to the top. After she put more wood in the stove and placed the teapot on top, she pulled Carlito onto her lap and started scrubbing at his feet with the gray rag she kept to wipe the stove top. "What are you going to name that child?" Marta Pillahuel asked Elena.

"We do not know yet. We cannot agree. Andrés wants Mercedes for a girl, after his mother. But I say that Mercedes is a Catholic name, and now our faith has changed."

"María if it is a girl; José if it is a boy," Marta Pillahuel said. "It is almost Christmas."

Those were Catholic names, too, the ones the priests always gave if the parents let them choose. Elena did not say this out loud, but Marta Pillahuel knew what she was thinking. "When we change, all

things do not need to change," she said to Elena, and to Carlito she said, "Sit quiet so I can get between your toes."

After fumbling a little longer with his pumping feet, she carried him into the bedroom and came back shaking out a pair of men's wool socks. These she worked over Carlito's toes and pulled up to his thighs. Wiping his nose with her sleeve, she set him on the floor. "Poor little man has a cold," she said. She placed her hands on her thighs for a moment and smiled at Elena. For an old woman, Elena thought, she had a lot of teeth.

"Your shoes, please," Marta Pillahuel said. Elena took them off, and Marta Pillahuel rubbed them with the rag she'd used on Carlito's feet. Then she put them under the stove. Disappearing again into the bedroom, she returned with another pair of socks. She made Elena put them on.

Then Marta Pillahuel became very busy. She set the table with two thick saucers from the board above the water basin, a jar of red jam, a bowl of sugar. For herself she put on a wooden box filled with the *yerba maté*, her tin *maté* cup, and a plastic glass; for Elena she set out a can of grain coffee and a heavy mug. She remembered from last time that Elena did not drink *maté*. Elena had said that sugar could not conceal the *yerba*'s bitter taste.

Marta Pillahuel wiped two spoons and two knives on her shirt front before setting them on the table. Unwrapping the dusty cloth from a round slab of bread, she cut the bread into thick slices. Once everything was in place, she held out her hand to Elena. "You can sit here, and you can bless the food." Then Marta Pillahuel bowed her head over her hands.

After Elena said the prayer, Marta Pillahuel opened her eyes before raising her head. They rested on the kittens whose round bellies Carlito was kneading under the table. The kittens reminded her again that Christmas was near. She had found them two weeks before as she knelt in the corner of the chicken shed to place her tiny crèche figurines in the straw. She had watched the warm scraps of life worm over each other searching with sealed eyes for a teat, had remained motionless until her knees ached and the she-cat no longer minded her presence. Then she had wreathed the wriggling circle of fur and flesh with wooden figures. Marta Pillahuel's mother had bought the carved dolls from Blind Enrique seventy years before and taught her to hide them every year somewhere close to the animals, where no one would find them. "Jesus was not born in a chapel," Marta Pillahuel's mother had said. "This is to remind you."

So the cat had watched as Marta Pillahuel ringed her with shepherds, kneeling kings, sheep, camels, oxen. It seemed right to place

María, her hands clasped before her breast, and the tiny Christ child in his manger, so close to the bitter scent of new motherhood. This was what Marta Pillahuel thought of as she watched Carlito knead the kittens' bellies.

When she looked up, she saw that Elena was waiting, her hands resting on her round abdomen. Elena smiled, and Marta Pillahuel said out loud the words that had formed in her mind: "Every mother is María."

Elena did not know what Marta Pillahuel meant, but the words felt comfortable. Elena pried the lid off the grain coffee and emptied two spoonfuls into her mug. Marta Pillahuel hefted the blackened kettle and filled it for her. While Elena added sugar and stirred, Marta Pillahuel spooned the fine *yerba* flakes into her own tin cup until it was almost full. She added water until the *yerba* was covered. Then she placed the back of the spoon against the *yerba* and pressed hard as she poured off a green-brown juice into the plastic glass. She did this so that the dust in the *yerba* would not clog up her liver. Marta Pillahuel worked her metal *maté* straw down to the bottom of the cup, sprinkled the dark green surface of the *yerba* with sugar, and added hot water. Sucking the bitter and sweet liquid into her mouth, she motioned toward the plate of bread. "Serve yourself!" she said.

Elena was blowing on her spoon like a child. As Marta Pillahuel studied her cheeks and pursed baby mouth, something occurred to her. "You will have your baby at the same time María's baby was born," she predicted.

"Tell me what it is like to have a baby," Elena said. She asked this of every woman she talked to, and each woman told her a story. Marta Pillahuel said, "No person can tell another. It is like knowing God by the Holy Ghost."

Still, Elena waited; but Marta Pillahuel became busy sucking the last drops from her *maté* cup and said no more. So Elena said, "I have learned that María could not have walked to Bethlehem."

Marta Pillahuel looked up. "You were tired when you arrived here," she said.

"The baby is very heavy now."

"As María's was."

Marta Pillahuel added more sugar to her *maté* cup. It shone like sun sparks on a dark green sea. She added more water. Carlito whined, pulling at the bottom of her shirt. Catching him under the arms with her forearm, she pulled him up onto her lap, then leaned over him to suck at the straw. She broke off a piece of bread and gave it to him.

"How many babies did you have?" Elena asked, spreading thick red jam on the thick bread.

"I had seven babies," Marta Pillahuel answered. She pushed the *maté* cup beyond the range of Carlito's fingers and sat up straight. "That's why my stomach's all out here and not packed behind my bones." Marta Pillahuel patted the round mound of flesh resting on her skinny thighs. Carlito squirmed around to finger the loose skin at the base of her neck.

Elena nodded complacently. She had talked to mothers of eleven, or even fifteen. Seven was not so very many.

"I will tell you how the Blessed Virgin appeared to me after my first baby was born," Marta Pillahuel said abruptly. "My baby, named Elías after my grandfather, a big strong baby that almost killed me to be born, died unbaptized at three days old. My husband was in the beet harvest, and I was in my bed bleeding and crying when María came and stood by my shoulder with her long black hair and her black eyes. 'Your perfect son has died,' she said, 'and I cry with you.' Drops ran from her black eyes into her black hair. Then she said to me, 'Do not cry, Marta. Your son is with my son.' "

Elena curved her fingers tightly around her cup, bending close enough to breathe the steam. She was not sure that she should believe, now that she was Mormon, that the Blessed Virgin had appeared to Marta Pillahuel.

Carlito twisted onto his stomach and thrust his feet toward the floor, so Marta Pillahuel set him down and pulled his shirt down over his belly. "You see me Mormon now because my son died unbaptized at three days old. And the Blessed Virgin said to me, 'Do not cry, Marta. Your son is with my son.' " She slid the *maté* cup over the rough board and added more hot water, more sugar. She placed the silver straw between her teeth and said, "All of my children are good children. Not one is in jail or in the gutter. I raised them decent. But I have just one perfect son."

Elena's attention shifted inward to the methodical thumping against her hipbone. "The baby has hiccups," she said.

Marta Pillahuel laughed. Her teeth were strong and gray. "I know all about that! You see me here with crooked bones and breasts like old figs, but I know all about those things. I remember."

Elena placed her hand low on her abdomen and smiled. "I think she wants to come out and eat with us."

"Ah! You think it is a woman!"

"When I dream, it is always a girl. But Andrés thinks a man will be born."

"Carlito! Soon you will have a new little friend. Soon a new little friend will come and play with you!"

"She wants to play now!" said Elena. "See how she jumps. Come here, Carlito. Let me show you how she wants to play with you."

Carlito stopped in the middle of the floor and looked at Elena with round eyes.

"Go on," said Marta Pillahuel. Elena held out her hand to him, but Carlito ran to Marta Pillahuel and flung his face against her thigh. She laughed again and rubbed his back.

"Are you going to keep Carlito always?" Elena asked.

"I won't get him grown before I die; but I'll get him along far as I can." The rough spots on Marta Pillahuel's palm caught on Carlito's shirt as she rubbed up and down. "My daughter says she'll come get him when she saves enough. She's working in Copiapó. But she won't come until I die. She has a man there." Marta Pillahuel shut her eyes to take a long suck on the silver straw. When she opened them she said to Carlito, "Ya! Go play with your kittens."

"I hope my baby has fat cheeks like his," Elena said.

Marta Pillahuel surveyed Elena's round breasts. "Your baby will have nice and fat cheeks. You'll have lots of milk for your little one," she said. But she was still thinking about her daughter, who would not come until she died. "You know," she said after a time, "I taught my boys to respect the women. I taught my boys respect, that's all." Marta Pillahuel chose a fat piece of bread and coated it thickly with jam. When she looked up she said, "Have some more bread, Elena. Serve yourself! Serve yourself!" Elena nodded, and Marta Pillahuel went on without taking a breath. "Of course my oldest son has a second family now. But at least he sends his first woman something every month. I know he at least does that." She nodded and rubbed her hands on her thighs. When her eyes met Elena's she said loudly, "Serve yourself!"

"My baby and I don't want to eat all your bread," Elena answered.

"Eat it all! Eat it all! My father always said that people who save food show God they do not trust him."

Elena laughed. "Then I will help you trust in God." She took the last piece.

"My father gave food to every beggar that passed his door," Marta Pillahuel said. She was happy again. "But he never gave a thing to the priests that came collecting with their big leather bags. 'Those priests have two legs and two arms,' he used to say.

"I was seven when my father died, but I remember all the things he said, and I remember the big mustache that he scratched against my neck, and I remember his big old Sunday boots that he polished up nice for Easter mass and for cattle auctions. He had an eye for livestock; he picked out every horse, cow, and pig the master owned.

Worked forty years for the same man and never owned a pinch of ground. But we planted a patch at the edge of the master's land.

"My father would come and get me before sunup and carry me on his back out to the field. I remember his warm back, and sometimes I fell asleep. Then he'd set me down on the cold ground, and I was barefoot. He'd dig up the cold ground, and I'd follow with the seeds. I put them in one by one and pushed the cold ground over the top. Then the sun would come up, and my father put me on his back again to go home. He told me I was the best person he knew to put seeds in the ground.

" 'Now, my tiny woman, you are playing the part of a man. You are planting seeds where they can grow. When you are big, you will play the part of a woman; you will be the soil and the sun. It is nice to be a woman, to make life grow. I think sometimes I would like to be a woman.'

"After he died, I said his words to myself at night because they were soft and quiet. That is why I remember what he said, even though I did not understand. And in seventy-nine years I've never heard another man say words like those. No man ever wishes he were a woman."

"I think it is nice to have a baby inside," Elena said. "It is nice to feel it kick inside."

"It is good to be soil and sun," Marta Pillahuel said. She looked hard into her *maté* cup. She worked the bitter leaves with her silver straw. "You will know María better after your baby is born," she said at last. "You will be astonished by her pain, and you will be amazed at her blood. You will know she looked on her newborn's face and said, 'This is God, the perfect one.' And you will say to the baby in your arms, 'This also is the perfect one.' Every mother is María."

Elena nodded. She understood. She had learned that María could not have walked all the way to Bethlehem. And she was learning now that María had been afraid. "Tell me how bad it hurts," Elena said.

"Do not worry how bad it hurts," Marta Pillahuel said loudly. Then she added, softer, "All mothers know harder pains than those. María's son died to save us from the harder pains. I cried when my perfect son died, as María cried for hers. But I have also cried for the living ones. For them I have also cried."

Two small tears beaded in Marta Pillahuel's eyes, fell away, traveled her cheeks' furrows, met on her lips. Marta Pillahuel tasted the wet and salt of them and nodded as if in agreement. It was right that Jesus had left her those two tears—two small tears for her daughter who would not come home, for her son who'd left his first woman and found another, for all her sons and daughters with all their griefs and

badnesses—two tears to remind her what Jesus had done to save her from the harder pains, the bloodless, harder pains.

Marta Pillahuel thought about this as she wiped her lips dry and rose to put the teapot back on the stove, to fling crumbs from the bread plate out into the mud for the chickens.

Elena had seen the tears flower in Marta Pillahuel's eyes, and the fear that had wedged in tight between the baby and her heart gave way to something beautiful and sad. She stood up, stacked the plates, and carried them to the wooden counter.

"Leave those things," Marta Pillahuel said. "It is almost Christmas. Let us sing our songs."

Marta Pillahuel took Elena's hand between her palms and pulled her near her, in front of the stove. Her hands were warm and rough on Elena's hands. Carlito, seeing them that way, crawled out from under the table and wiggled between them, pressing his nose against his grandmother's leg.

Elena said, "I have taught the children the words to the song called 'María's Cradle Song,' but I do not know the melody."

"I will teach you how beautiful it is. This is how it goes." Marta Pillahuel hummed gently, tapping out the beats on Carlito's head with one hand and squeezing Elena's hand every fourth beat with the other.

"Now sing it with me," she told Elena when she finished. Then Elena sang along, squeezing Marta Pillahuel's hand every fourth beat; and Carlito hummed, rocking his head back and forth against Marta Pillahuel's leg in time with the words.

One of the Women

Dixie Partridge

One of the women inside me
cannot rejoice with anyone.
She stays in the shadows
bowing her head.
Her long hair has never been cut.

One of the women inside me
thinks of suffering
at moments of great joy, and won't eat
with the family on days of thanksgiving.
Her hands cover her eyes.

The woman waits
for companionship, but has no answers
I will believe.
I refuse to join her. Her eyes
have seen something savage,
but she is beautiful.

DIXIE PARTRIDGE, of Richland, Washington, is working on her third book of poetry. Her work has appeared in over fifty journals and reviews and in several anthologies. Her first book, Deer in the Haystacks, *came out from Ahsahta Press in 1984;* Watermark, *her second, is in search of a publisher.*

When she puts on a white garment,
consanguine tinges appear, stains
over which she toils. When I sleep,
she roams the halls as though they were mazes
connecting only with each other.
If she sleeps, she sleeps curved
around her womb.

It is she who will ruin my life,
or else save it. It is she
who makes me long at certain moments—
while cities in the distance burn—
to be turned to salt.

The Chastity Gum

Lael Littke

IT WASN'T LIKE SISTER FARLEY to chew gum. She took her stewardship over her little swarm of Beehive girls seriously, and normally she was the very soul of decorum, showing us by her dress and manner what true daughters of Zion should aspire to become.

When she came to class one Tuesday night with jaws moving around a cud of gum in exaggerated chomps, we suspected she was about to make a point, especially since she seemed nervous and apprehensive as well.

After the class preliminaries, Sister Farley cleared her throat and cast a desperate glance at the classroom door as if she was about to bolt. Instead she suddenly whipped the gum out of her mouth and held it toward us, a wad of wet, gray matter with teeth marks plainly showing. The scent of spearmint filled the small room.

"All right, girls," she said. "Which one of you would like to chew this for a while?"

It wasn't that we weren't tempted. We were in the midst of World War II, and gum was hard to come by. You cherished each piece, chewing it for days, saving it on the windowsill at night, hoarding it until it disintegrated.

But gum somebody else had chewed?

One by one we shook our heads.

Sister Farley cleared her throat again and her face reddened, but she went gamely on, saying the words as if she'd rehearsed them a lot.

LAEL JENSEN LITTKE, a graduate of Utah State University, has sixteen published books for teenagers and children to her credit as well as nearly a hundred short stories in major magazines. She has taught writing at Pasadena City College and UCLA. She and her husband, George, a professor at Cal State Los Angeles, live in Pasadena. They have one daughter.

"A girl who lets a boy get too familiar is like this gum. No good man wants to marry a girl who's been passed around."

Heat rose from us. Passed around? Was she talking about *It*? Were the mysteries about to be unfolded? Information about *It* was not readily available in those days. Schools didn't mention *It*. Movies stopped with a kiss and a mere glimpse of a bed. Pubescent girls thrilled to Rhett Butler carrying Scarlett up that long flight of stairs, but what happened once they got there?

Sister Farley went on to talk about necking and petting, skating all over the map without saying anything specific.

Quietly we listened. This had to do with boys. We were around boys each day at home, at school, at church. Those deacons whose wrists hung out of too-short sleeves, who piously passed the sacrament each Sunday, were they secretly plotting to fall on us if they had the chance? Did my friend Norman know about these things? Had his teacher brought a wad of gum that night, too?

It was heady stuff. We didn't talk much about it after class. But that night I thought about Merlie Linford, a sixteen-year-old girl who sometimes came to help Mama. You'd have to be blind not to notice Merlie was about to have a baby. I'd always thought you had to be married to have a baby, and Merlie wasn't. Did that have something to do with the gum?

Who was there to ask? The last time I'd asked Mama where babies came from, she'd said, "You'll find out when it's time."

It was time.

The next day I lay in wait until Mama was ironing so she wouldn't have to look at me if she didn't want to.

"Mama," I said. "Merlie Linford is going to have a baby, but she doesn't have a husband. How come?"

Mama bent low over the ironing board to press a ruffle on one of her kitchen curtains, all washed and blued and starched to rigid attention. She cleared her throat the way Sister Farley had done. "Well, you see," she said, "Merlie went up in the hayloft with a boy."

I shouldn't have asked. How many times had I climbed up into the hayloft with Norman to hunt swallows' nests or jump down on dusty piles of hay?

I took a deep breath. "Do girls always get babies if they go up in the hayloft with a boy?"

Mama twitched the iron back and forth over a ruffle that was already smooth. "Sit down," she said.

I sat. This was it. My heart beat fast. Mama continued to iron. I concentrated on examining a long scab on my shin bone. I'd scraped my leg on a rock the last time Norman and I had gone looking for

nests of baby birds whose progress we liked to chart. Norman had put mud on it and had been interested in how it was getting along. He planned to be a doctor.

"Pay attention," Mama said.

She told me the great secrets of life, facts and figures and details that made me glad she didn't look at me. I was a farm child. I'd seen what happened when the bull was brought to the cows. But people?

Mama covered the subject thoroughly. I'm sure she didn't want a repeat performance any more than I did.

"Remember about haylofts," Mama said. "And parked cars," she added as an afterthought.

The world was full of hazards.

Mama went back to her ironing, and I escaped outside to the protecting branches of the weeping willow tree. When I heard Norman calling me, I hid behind its trunk.

"Hey," he yelled. "Where are you?"

Last week, yesterday, I would have scrambled to my feet with a raucous, "Over here, Norman."

But not now.

Norman knew where to find me. He loped across the lawn and poked his head through the drooping branches of the willow, grinning, showing teeth too big for his thin, freckled face.

"Hey," he said breathlessly, "I spotted some magpie nests in the ravine. Want to go see them?"

I stared at Norman's knees where the patches his mother had carefully applied were already worn through. I thought of that ravine, cool and secluded and dark.

"No," I said. "I don't want to go, Norman."

He flopped down beside me. "You tired or something?"

"I guess so." I shifted a few inches away from him.

"Well, let's do something closer then. Let's look for swallows' nests in your hayloft."

"No," I said so emphatically that Norman's blue eyes widened in surprise.

"Boy, are you a grouch today." He stretched out on his stomach, resting his chin on his crossed arms. "Boy," he repeated.

I looked at him lying there, lanky, familiar Norman. My best friend Norman. We'd been playmates practically since we were babies.

He was staring intently at my leg. Suddenly he grasped my bare ankle with one hand while he pushed up my blue jeans with the other.

Visions of Sister Farley's gum, gray and pitted, appeared in my head. "Norman, stop it." Yanking my leg away, I shrank back against the tree trunk. Tears welled in my eyes.

Norman sat up. "I was just looking at your scab. I wanted to see how it's coming along."

I stared at him.

He put a hand on my arm. "What's the matter? You sure are acting funny today."

I looked into his eyes, then down at his hand. "Take your paw off me," I said through gritted teeth.

Norman drew away. A slow flush crept upward from his shirt collar, spreading to his big ears, painting them a bright, painful red. The color ran across his cheekbones and up into his hairline.

"Good gosh," he said. "Good *gosh*."

Scrambling awkwardly to his feet, he ran back across the lawn.

I heard the kitchen screen door slam as Mama came out to throw potato peelings over the back fence and slam again as she went back in. Had she witnessed the scene?

I wanted to call out to Norman, to tell him to come back, to say I'd go with him to look for birds' nests.

But all I did was lean my hot face against the tree trunk and watch him go.

During the next week it seemed as if there were babies everywhere. Each one reminded me of my heavy new knowledge.

Norman and I didn't look at one another any more. If we happened to be in the same general area, which we tried to avoid, we looked at the trees, the ground, our toes—anywhere but at each other.

The weeks went by.

Then Merlie Linford brought her baby over to show to Mama.

"I can't believe her," Merlie said. "A real, live person. And I made her."

"She's beautiful," Mama said. "A miracle."

She looked quite ordinary to me. Bald. Red. A round, chinless face and a toothless mouth.

"Hold her," Mama said to me.

I backed away.

"Babies aren't contagious," Mama said softly.

I sat down and let her put Merlie's baby in my lap. She was warm and soft and a little damp. Her fingers curled around my thumb. She looked up at me with the blurred eyes of babyhood.

Once I'd been as she was now. Someday she'd be as I was then. I'd be older and maybe have a baby of my own. Then soon she'd be older and have a baby. My baby would grow up and have a baby, and this baby's baby would, too. That's the way the world went on.

A miracle.

"What's her name?" I asked.

"Sunday," Merlie said. "Like 'Our Gal Sunday.' It's my favorite show on the radio."

Merlie, who loved soap operas and Rhett Butler and Evening in Paris perfume, was Sunday's mother. Merlie, who'd made a mistake.

But Sunday had a father somewhere, too, didn't she?

"I'm going to keep her," Merlie said.

Mama nodded. "It won't be easy."

"No," Merlie said. "No, it won't."

She came and took Sunday from me. She held her close against her neck and cried.

Norman brought me a bouquet of Indian paintbrush one day. He handed it to me, smiling shyly.

Norman had never given me a bouquet before. He'd never been shy around me before.

It made me feel different.

I liked it. He was male, and I was female, and there was something that pulled us toward one another in spite of everything. I wasn't sure what it was, but I suspected it would grow stronger as the years passed. It was age-old and mysterious and so powerful that I wondered if it could ever be held at bay by anything so insubstantial as Sister Farley's gum.

The Six-Buck Fortune

Helen Walker Jones

I REMEMBER THAT DAY PERFECTLY—every violet plum with its orange smudges, the rim of the huge blue canning kettle smeared with thick yellow slime and little tatters of purple peel. It was the day I first knew Sackler would be dead before I was old. I believed it, just as I believed in eternal families and the principle of tithing and that Mother would run off as soon as I had somebody bringing his paycheck home to me on Friday nights.

Sackler was my fiancé then, but I'd never told him I loved him. Like now, I was a washout at saying those three little words. Could I tell this aloof boy, just off an aircraft carrier, "Touch my lips with your fingers, put your shirts in my laundry, and I'll scrub the collars with my long hair"? I couldn't walk sometimes, I loved him so much. I want to tell him that now, twelve years later, but he's sitting there with his nose in the hockey scores. I'd be a fool to say, "I'm crazy for you, Honey," while he's concentrating on the Black Hawks.

We were engaged to be married then, and Sackler was sitting at the white table in my mother's kitchen. Mother hadn't run off with the meat-packing foreman yet. That would happen the next month.

"I hate shell macaroni," Sackler was saying. "My mom always used elbow." Bits of pasta clung to his moustache. He hated my cooking. He had just taken up skydiving, and I wondered if that's how he would die: one day his parachute wouldn't open and his bones would lie in a jumble in a coulee out by Mexican Hat.

HELEN WALKER JONES recently became the first person to receive an M.F.A. in creative writing at the University of Utah. Her short fiction has appeared in many literary quarterlies and in Harper's.

I wanted to tell him, "I love you so much it kills me." Instead I said, "Honey, I went down to Z.C.M.I. this afternoon and bought two plates in our ironstone pattern. Stephanie, it's called."

He said, "Dishes have a name?"

He always made fun of my bridal interests. "I had my fortune told today," I said, changing the subject. "The gypsy had two black teeth, but no crystal ball." The tile floor felt cool and sticky through my stockings. Mother had spent the morning conjuring jelly out of squashed plums, pectin, and sugar; and I'd mopped the floor haphazardly before leaving for the skull reading.

Sackler's hands were cupping his chin. "Don't tell me," he said. "The gypsy had tapestries on her wall. Of John F. Kennedy. I saw places like that in the Navy. Bedspreads hung in place of walls."

"You had your fortune told?"

"Yeah," he said. "In Singapore. She told me I'd meet a mysterious dark woman. You. And marry for money." Sackler tilted his chair back on two legs and scratched his armpit through the yellow t-shirt. "So much for the money," he said, glancing around the kitchen, grinning.

"She was wearing this blue mask like a doctor operating," I said. "And when she breathed, it sounded like a dying man."

"Like this bosun we had. He'd lean over the side of his bed and spit twice, then try and put his teeth in but they wouldn't fit." I'd written out the spelling of "boatswain" once, on a restaurant napkin, but Sackler had refused to believe me.

The gypsy's hands had smelled of garlic and chocolate, and her fingernails were press-ons. On my plate, plum jelly was oozing over the edge of my toast. One of the bottles hadn't sealed, so we were eating its contents. The clear preserves reminded me of an amethyst birthstone necklace I'd gotten in the fifth grade. "She knew I was getting married. And no lie, Sackler, I hadn't mentioned you."

"Your ring," he said. "Your diamond. She's not blind." Sackler turned his hand over and stared at the palm. "She's not a scientist or nothin'," he said.

Still, she'd charged six bucks, so I was convinced he would die. The Relief Society sisters would lay him out, wondering if white clothes were appropriate for an inactive person. They'd marvel at his lanky legs, his heart pumping even after death—wanting me—his hair already transformed to a dazzling halo. "How handsome he is in white," one sister would say, looking down at his folded hands. "It's a sailor suit," someone would call from out in the foyer.

I ran hot water into the green plastic dishpan, remembering all the gypsy had told me. I looked at the plate through the angle of the

water, suds floating off to one side like an island. When my fingers turned red, I let them bounce like inner tubes on the surface while I pictured a wedding gown so white that its shadows were silver instead of gray. A few months earlier, during a fight, I'd screamed at Sackler and smashed my hand down into the water, cursing him and slicing my tendon on a broken saucer. For weeks, I'd worn orange rubber gloves till I got the bandage off. I pulled my bare hands out of the dishwater, amazed at the shock of cold air, wondering if the gift of telling the future startled the brain in just the same way.

After supper that night, Sackler and I put on our matching parkas and drove downtown to the movies, circling the block till somebody backed out right in front of the theater. We were across the street from the gypsy's storefront window. It was the night of the first frost. I sat in the car, shivering, while he walked around to open my door.

As I slid across the seat, I wished the gypsy would appear out of nowhere and rush up to us and say, "This isn't the boy."

But it didn't turn out quite that way. The woman *was* there, across the narrow street in front of her shop, the blue surgeon's mask hanging loose around her neck, her sleek hair pressed tight over her ears.

"Honey," she hollered when she spotted me. But it came out "Hawney." She wasn't wearing a coat, and her arms were folded so that her breasts were squeezed together, the flesh pooching slightly over the neckline of her peacock-blue bodice. I tucked my hand inside Sackler's pocket and felt the lining's frayed threads.

The gypsy's hands fluttered to the crease of her breasts as she pulled out a lace-edged hanky, wetting it with her tongue, then dabbing at the air as though she were applying spittle to each of my cheeks.

"To protect," the gypsy woman shouted, her head nodding like a springed toy. She glanced at Sackler, then turned and began pacing in front of the lit-up shop windows, looking at her feet. Something about the way her backless shoes were worn down at the heels or maybe the way her hips ballooned under the cotton gathers of her skirt reminded me of my mother.

The gypsy's blue dress swished around her bare calves. Gypsies didn't own stockings; I'd forgotten to tell Sackler that. He was standing behind me in the ticket line with his hands up under my parka, cupping my breasts. I wondered if anyone had noticed. His hands were large with thick fingers, greasy under the fingernails and in the creases of the palms because, at that time, he assembled automatic transmissions all day and the grease was always there unless he sanded the top layers of his skin with Lava soap.

I love this man's hands. They do something for me that white teacups and notes in my lunchbox and even drunken confessions of desire don't do. I hate to admit that about the drunkenness, but Sackler is so sweet and romantic on Friday nights when he comes home from Better Days reeking of cigarette smoke and Jim Beam. I've always liked the smell of bars.

His touch felt so comforting to me that night in front of the theater, especially since I was suddenly, blindly convinced that the six-buck gypsy knew what she was talking about.

"It wasn't true what she promised," I said quietly to the dark street, wishing my hands back in the dishwater, for warmth. "I'm not going to lose you, Honey." I turned my head so that my mouth touched his shoulder. In light from the marquee I saw the shadow of my own hair, wispy and long, flipped up like elf boots against the faded gray of Sackler's parka. I could almost feel the imprint of the gypsy woman's fingers on my scalp—the heat, the pressure, the comfort of thumbs working in the hollows just behind the ears. I could feel Sackler's breath in my hair, and I thought of a dying man.

My husband would die, and my babies would die, and I wondered if there were two bright red spots on my cheeks where saliva had touched them. It was like the time when I was ten, and I saw President McKay outside the west entrance to the Tabernacle. He reached out and touched the top of my head for a second, and for months afterward it seemed like the hair in that one spot was no longer dead but living tissue.

My eyes were burning, the people around me were blurred, and I felt faint with helplessness. Sackler was staring at the pretty girl in the ticket booth. The glass around her was dark green like bulletproof glass on a limo. I wondered if ticket-taking happened to be a dangerous job. I wanted a column of bottle-green glass around Sackler so nothing could ever take him away. I wanted to draw him deep into my body, to give him a dozen babies, to keep him above ground, out of caves and mines so that the prophecy could never come true. How was I to know he'd take up skydiving, or still drive drunk at age thirty-one?

I pressed the weight of my body against him, from his chest to his thighs. "Let's go home," I said.

"Your mom'll be there."

"Forget the smell," I said. "Forget the blood." Just that week, Mom had hired on at the meat-packing plant as a sausage girl. The pay was great, but it was dirty work. Her shift ended at ten P.M., and I knew how the house would look when we came in. A trail of stained clothes would start just inside the back door and end at the bathroom: lum-

berjack boots, levi's, a t-shirt saying, "Damn, I'm Good." My face was wet. I wanted to say, "If you're going to die, let's jump out of that airplane together."

I hoped he wouldn't ask what was wrong, and he seemed to sense the "No, No" ticking behind my teeth so, instead of talking, he kissed me right there in the movie line, the cold metal button on his levi's pressing against my hip bone while everybody around us whispered.

When Sackler looked at me again, holding my face inches from his own, he had a sweet, helpless look that charmed me so much I couldn't bear for anyone else to see it. We left the movie line and drove home. He carried me into the back bedroom, ignoring the smell of dead meat in the house, ignoring the shower running on and on through my mother's multiple latherings. It broke my heart to know my white satin temple wedding had just flown out the window, but I couldn't stop myself.

Five weeks later, we were married on the rag rug of a justice of the peace in South Salt Lake. Our honeymoon was nothing to get excited about. We drove my mom's abandoned station wagon out along I-80 across the Nevada line and had twenty bucks apiece to gamble with. Driving to Wendover, my hands practically melted to the wheel, it was so hot. I could see that gypsy's eyes on fire in the headlights, hypnotizing me into believing my new husband was dead, when I knew very well he was right beside me on the green plastic upholstery. He was just out of the Navy, and I pictured him shipwrecked, seaweed plastered to his hair, spiny shells stuck to his throat and chest like leeches.

My mother had skipped town the week before, leaving this note pinned to the ironing board: "I love you, Hon, but I love this man more." She'd run off with the foreman, her boss. By that time, my period was a week overdue, so what was to stop me from eloping with Sackler?

Going to Wendover, you realize the Great Basin is just a desert. Even in October, the temperature can go over a hundred. We ate in restaurants where the cooks wore cowboy hats and sang onstage after the meal for our listening pleasure. Afterward we lay around in the motel room, wondering how the chandelier stayed hanging up there by such a thin wire. When I complained of boredom, Sackler asked what did I expect—I'd be jewel-bedecked, ascending the stairs to the Ponderosa Grill and Casino? "After all," he said, "it's not Niagara or the Poconos." I had showed him pictures in my bride's magazines of people kissing in the mist and lathering each other's backs in heart-shaped tubs.

"Are you still mad it wasn't in the temple?" he asked me.

"It's okay," I answered, remembering that night when I'd first kissed my virtue good-bye.

He promised, "We'll have it solemnized next summer." I loved the weightiness of that word.

"I'm sorry I ain't no returned missionary," he said. "Just a washed-up swabbie. I can't speak espanol or show off my miniature llamas or quote scriptures or nothin."

"It's all right," I said. "I picked you of my own free will. Marty got a sincere 'Dear John'."

When they found out we were newlyweds, the waiters brought us each a foil-wrapped mint and a roll of nickels. I took Niagara where I could get it after that. My mom's old green station wagon just sat in the parking lot filling up with hot green air. The baby was stillborn at eight months, complete and blond, but he never breathed.

That was the star-spangled beginning of my marriage, and so far it's lasted twelve whole years. Tonight, my husband's buff-colored Afro springs full-blown above the evening paper. He's faceless. I'm staring out the dark window, wondering why I can't carry a baby full-term when it happens every day to sixteen-year-old, malnourished illegal-alien hookers.

Twelve years ago, I didn't know this was how my life would turn out: something went wrong with five pregnancies; my mother ran off with the hot dog king, sticking me with the mortgage; my husband has always been an apprentice to somebody or other.

He races motorcycles and skydives and hotrods on Highway 57 every Saturday night with the drunk teenagers, even though he turned thirty-one last October. We never had the marriage solemnized in any temple. I sit through sacrament meeting alone, polite and solitary in my white cotton gloves.

On nights when Sackler's working late, I sit on the porch swing, wondering just when I'll become a widow. The fortune teller told me my husband would die young. Her predictions ruined my honeymoon. I was afraid to leave him alone in Wendover for fear he'd be crushed to death by a falling one-armed bandit or executed in a gangland slaying. It was her face I saw in those headlights.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not one of those crazies who believes gypsy women were once spirits who lived in fire, or that they cause the skies over Glacier Park to light up with aurora borealis. My brother's wife thinks I believe that stuff, but I don't. She's Relief Society president in Richfield, and a couple of times a year she calls and shrieks at me to run look out my kitchen window at the white and pink streaks soaring through the black night like blood poisoning creeping up an

arm. She doesn't say it that way. She just says, "Go look at the gypsy sky, Sheila." She teases me because, even though I'm not superstitious, I did visit that gypsy and, as a result, I've been a nervous wreck for twelve years.

"It don't sit well with the priesthood authorities when you start messin' with the supernatural," she always says. "We had a couple of priests in our ward started foolin' with ouija boards and such. They ended up in the psych ward, Sheila. Don't you forget that."

No matter how many times I tell her, she doesn't understand that all of that is way in the past. When I was nineteen years old and had the bumps on my skull read, I actually believed in that fortune telling stuff. I wasn't even the same person I am now. When I think about that girl, it's not me.

The gypsy said all our babies would be boys, and that my husband would work in a coal mine or someplace under the ground. This month he's learning to be a brick mason, and so far he's stayed out of tunnels and caves. Half her prediction has gone to the dogs—those boy babies never materialized except as half-formed pieces of gray and pink tissue that were suctioned out of me with sterile vacuums. They don't let you list those kind on your family group sheets, and anyway not a single one would have been born under the covenant. I won't mention the one that looked like a baby and almost breathed and who, to ourselves, we called David.

But if half the prophecy isn't true, why do I still worry so much about the other part—about his dying and leaving me a widow? There's no way I believe what that gypsy said. But maybe it swirled in my head for too many years, sliding in and out of my dreams, haunting me at the ironing board as I starched his coveralls. Once I even tried to iron his parachute, on "delicate" so it wouldn't scorch, and all the while I pictured it malfunctioning and Sackler, freefalling to his death.

Yesterday was our twelfth anniversary, so in honor of the occasion Sackler made love to me until he was so exhausted that he lay trembling on his back, his breathing ferocious, muscle spasms jerking through his thighs. He was a little drunk and fell asleep right away, so what could I do but simply lie there beside him, sharing a pillow, moonlight whitening the mounds of my breasts and the bony ridge of my pelvis, out of which only one baby had ever come, wholly formed.

Half an hour later, I pulled on my blue jeans and Brigham Young sweat shirt and drove down to the packing plant just in time for the midnight shift. It was Braunschweiger night.

When I got home this morning, Sackler was gone, his imprint still on the pillow. I washed my hands in Clorox diluted with streaming

water, shampooed my hair four times in the shower, and stripped naked to sleep, so that none of the smell would stay on me.

I put my head deep into Sackler's pillow, brushing the hair from my cheek like he does. "How about some dinner, Baby?" I whispered, to hear myself say it. It's what he says when he wants to make love. This past week, his hands have smelled of mortar. He's building a prison wall. Really. In the feathers of this pillow I smell mortar and spice and blood even after four latherings. Nothing goes down our bathtub drain except our baby boys, drifting slowly underwater, their lungs filling up, their beds cold and wet, the sacraments unsaid.

A Lot to Like

Harvest: Contemporary Mormon Poems edited by Eugene England and Dennis Clark (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), 328 pp., $14.95.

Reviewed by Miriam B. Murphy, a poet, past member of the Literary Advisory Panel of the Utah Arts Council, and associate editor of *Utah Historical Quarterly*.

HARVEST IS A GOOD TITLE for this collection of twentieth-century Mormon poetry with its bounty, variety, and degrees of ripeness and appeal. One feels a generosity of spirit emanating from this aggregate, a poetic vision that embraces the mother culture without militancy and looks outward as often as inward.

Most of the poems were originally published in LDS periodicals, but a number of the poets have published in journals such as the *Southern Review*, *Poetry Northwest*, the *California Quarterly*, *Shenandoah*, the *Kansas Quarterly*, and the *Yale Review*. These, then, are poets whom "Mormon" identifies but does not necessarily circumscribe.

The poems are, of course, the meat of an anthology, but here the editors have skimped on seasonings and side dishes. They arranged the poets in birth order (from 1901 to 1965), a common organizational device, and divided the collection into those born before 1940 or after 1939, with England selecting the earlier group and Clark the later. No birth years are provided in the exceedingly brief accounts of each poet at the end of the volume, and no outward sign indicates where England's task ended and Clark's began. This is not a trivial matter. It is of more than passing interest whether a poet came to adulthood in the generation of Hart Crane (b. 1899), Robert Lowell (b. 1917), or Sylvia Plath (b. 1932) and before, during, or after which of the century's major wars or social movements, even though few of the poems address the topics of war, civil rights, or the women's movement.

I wish the editors had written brief essays on each poet in the manner of Louis Untermeyer (*Modern American Poetry*, various editions). For a collection that is a landmark of sorts, the extra effort would have been worthwhile. The editors' comments in lieu of an introduction are sketchy, too. England does the better job of providing a context for the poems, but I wish his essay was longer. Clark's comments present his theory of poetry but do little to acquaint the reader with the diverse group of "younger" poets.

One might question the inclusion of hymn verses, despite their link to earlier LDS hymn writing. Nevertheless, the sweet simplicity of Bruce Jorgensen's "For Bread and Breath of Life" (p. 260) appeals to me. I also wonder at the inclusion of John Davies, Brewster Ghiselin, Leslie Norris, William Stafford, and May Swenson as "Friends and Relations." The editors say that these "first-rate poets" provide "standards for comparison" (p. vii), and indeed they do. Still, their presence shows a little uncertainty that these fine Mormon poets can carry an anthology on their own. They can.

Many of the poets are multi-degreed and earn their livelihoods in academia. Nevertheless, their poems are very accessible. Few display deliberate obscurantism, poetic posturing, or neurotic narcissism. Though accessible, the poems are not necessarily undemanding of the reader. The ten-line "Tag, I.D." by John

Sterling Harris (p. 49), for example, despite its simplicity, resonates volumes beyond its thirty-eight words.

Some of the poets succumb to the understandable temptation to write about ancestors, with mixed results. Susan Howe's "To my Great-great Grandmother, Written on a Flight to Salt Lake City" (p. 194) seems forced and the plains-crossing ancestor shadowy at best, while her "The Woman Whose Brooch I Stole" (p. 196) provides concrete detail that gives the poem authenticity. Loretta Randall Sharp's "October 9, 1846" (p. 103), recalling the "miracle of the quail," almost succeeds. The fourth stanza is splendid:

> A sudden whir, a throaty trill, the swell
> of speckled wings: and the dry beds filled
> with food. The quail came, strutting
> the camp, tracks faint as scattered chaff.
> The pear-shaped birds did not flatten
> shy and wild in the grass. Crested heads
> pivoted from child to child who picked
> them, eyes wide at the bloodbeat of such
> feathered fruit.

In the next and final stanza, though, she abandons deft imagery and music to tell readers in prosaic language that a miracle has occurred:

> No gun was needed to feed these six hundred
> destitute. Six times the birds circled
> the camp, six times landed. At each rising
> the flock increased, and at the seventh
> swell, the mottled augury took leave
> that saints might praises sing
> while making way to the Great Salt Lake.

A strong narrative voice runs through the collection. Iris Parker Corry tells a pioneer heroine's story (pp. 26-27) so directly and without sentimentality that poem and subject become one. The stark opening stanza is almost a capsule history of the handcart disaster:

> Nellie Unthank
> aged ten,
> walked, starved, froze
> with the Martin Company
> and left her parents in shallow graves
> near the Sweetwater.

Clinton F. Larson's "Jesse" (pp. 30-31) and "Homestead in Idaho" (pp. 33-38) recount other tragedies. David L. Wright's "The Conscience of the Village" (pp. 51-60) tells of an aging Brother Daniels who saw God and Joseph Smith "one rainy night." Another narrative, "Millie's Mother's Red Dress" (pp. 135-37) by Carol Lynn Pearson, manipulates the reader, but I let it carry me along anyway because we all know Millie's self-sacrificing mother. Compare this poem with May Swenson's "That the Soul May Wax Plump" (p. 280), which shows a master at work on a similar theme.

As one might expect, the lyric voice is also very strong. I like "Fishers" by Robert Rees (pp. 96-99), which captures precious moments between father and son, although the poet comes close to losing his terrific "catch" to sentimentality at the end and may have lost it for some readers. In "Somewhere near Palmyra" (p. 100), Rees effectively uses concrete imagery to lead readers toward an understanding of the Prophet Joseph (ll. 10-21):

> personages of fire,
> jasper and carnelian,
> dispersing the morning dew;
> images that bore him
> through dark of night
> terror of loneliness,
> blood of betrayal,
> the ache of small graves,
> to death from the prison window
> where, wings collapsing
> through the summer air,
> he fell—

"Gilead" (pp. 101-2), also by Rees, is far less successful and near its close offers two lines—"and at once all the trees of the field / clap their hands and rejoice"—that unhappily recall the muse of Joyce Kilmer.

Kathy Evans's "Handwritten Psalm" (p. 171), as delicate as a lyric can be, shows the power of a light, understated touch. Entirely different, "Psalm for a Saturday Night" (p. 94) by Eloise Bell sings like a psalm of David and on one level

ironically mirrors the biblical psalmist's self-absorption. But that is just one facet of this well-crafted gem.

Laura Hamblin's "Divorce" (p. 229) has an elliptical feel that is almost oriental. And Richard Tice demonstrates his mastery of the often-abused haiku form (p. 213). This one is exceptional:

night rain
against the water, young rice
into the rain

Lance Larsen writes with clarity, vigor, and control and is a keen observer of the telling detail. "Passing the Sacrament at Eastgate Nursing Home" (p. 237) is an outstanding poem on a religious subject. I also like his "Light" (p. 233) and "Dreaming Among Hydrangeas" (p. 235).

Other poems I found especially pleasing include Veneta Nielsen's "Nursery Rhyme" (p. 6), Donnell Hunter's "Children of Owl" (p. 69), Vernice Pere's "Heritage" (p. 115), R. A. Christmas's "Self-portrait as Brigham Young" (p. 132), Dixie Partridge's "Learning to Quilt" (p. 150), Clifton Jolley's "Prophet" (p. 167), Mary Blanchard's "Bereft" (p. 198), M. D. Palmer's "Rural Torillas" (pp. 204-5), Timothy Liu's "Paper Flowers" (p. 248), and many more.

Other readers are sure to find a lot of poems to like in *Harvest*. Moreover, the best poems in this collection compare favorably with those of the "first-rate poets" included by the editors. This is an important literary work, a landmark that suggests greater things are yet to come.

The Papers of the Prophet

The Papers of Joseph Smith: Volume 1, Autobiographical and Historical Writings edited by Dean C. Jessee (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1989), v, 557 pp., $19.95.

Reviewed by Roger D. Launius, command historian, Military Airlift Command, Scott Air Force Base, Illinois.

IT TAKES A METICULOUS PERSON to edit historical documents. No amount of effort should be too much to obtain the stray fact, to check the transcription, the context, and the details of an edited work. Dean C. Jessee, a research historian in the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Church History at Brigham Young University, is such an individual. Widely recognized as a leading authority on the documentary records of Mormonism, Jessee has edited two previous book-length collections of documents and has either written or edited numerous articles. His experience and understanding are evident in this inaugural volume of *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, and his efforts will enrich all students of Mormon history.

This publication begins a massive undertaking to make generally available in a reliable edition the papers of the founder of Mormonism. Jessee explains that prior to this publication effort, Joseph Smith's *History of the Church* had served as the best source for a study of his life and times. However, limitations in format, completeness, and accuracy underscore the need for a comprehensive edition of his papers" (p. xxxiv). This book of documents, subtitled "Autobiographical and Historical Writings," is the first of a projected three-volume "series in what we hope can become a comprehensive publication of his papers" (p. xxxiv). It is a work intended to present everything Smithian, whether by authorship or relationship.

The work contains twelve documents, written between 1832 and 1844, relating the history of Joseph Smith and the Church. These include:

1. History, 1832, from Joseph Smith Letterbook 1, LDS Archives.

2. "Joseph Smith to Oliver Cowdery," from *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate*, 1 (December 1834): 40.

3. History, 1832-34, from "History of the Church, A-1," pp. 1-187, LDS Archives.

4. "Extract from the Private Journal of Joseph Smith, Jr.," from *Times and Seasons* 1 (November 1839): 2-9.

5. History draft, 1839, from Unnamed Manuscript, LDS Archives.

6. History, 1839, from "History of the Church, A-1," pp. 1-240, LDS Archives.

7. Orson Pratt, *A Interesting Account of Several Remarkable Visions, and of the Late Discovery of Ancient American Records* (Edinburgh, 1840).

8. Orson Hyde, *Ein Ruf aus der Wuste, eine Stimme aus dem Schoose der Erde* (Frankfurt, 1842).

9. Joseph Smith, "Church History," from *Times and Seasons* 3 (1 March 1842): 706-10.

10. "The Prairies, Nauvoo, Joe Smith, the Temple, the Mormons, etc.," from *The Pittsburgh Weekly Gazette* 58 (15 September 1843): 3.

11. Joseph Smith, "Latter Day Saints," from I. Daniel Rupp, *An Original History of the Religious Denominations at Present Existing in the United States* (Philadelphia: N.p., 1844), 404-10.

12. Alexander Neibaur, Journal, 24 May 1844, from LDS Archives.

Jessee notes that this seemingly eclectic collection of documents belongs together because they deal either historically or autobiographically with the life of the Prophet and were written either by him or under his direction. The many works in this collection are, according to Jessee, just as much Joseph Smith's as if he had dictated or penned them himself.

By far the two largest documents in the collection, accounting for 317 of the volume's 555 pages, are items 3 and 6, the two histories taken from the manuscript of the "History of the Church." Items 1, 2, and 9 were also printed in Jessee's *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith* (1984), but the remainder of the materials collected here have not been conveniently published for a broad audience in recent years.

As always, Jessee's work is a model of historical scholarship. All documents are transcribed as written, faithful to the original spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. Jessee offers an English translation alongside item eight, the one document written in German. Admirable annotation provides additional background information, and the book includes an extensive biographical register, set of maps, chronology, bibliography, and facsimile reproductions of parts of the most important documents.

Although Jessee indicates that he received the full cooperation of the LDS Historical Department Archives in preparing this volume, the increasingly restrictive policies of that institution have made it virtually impossible for others to review the original documents published here. In this setting, Jessee's work becomes especially significant, since it may be as close as most historians can come to the papers of the Prophet. We can only hope that the distrust on the part of Church leaders toward scholars and followers can be eliminated in Utah as it is now being done in eastern Europe.

In spite of my concern about restrictive archival policies, *The Papers of Joseph Smith* is a first-class work, a major accomplishment, and I look forward to future volumes in the series. The editor, the sponsoring institutions, and Deseret Book Company should be commended for undertaking the project.

Nothing New under the Sun

New Religions and the Theological Imagination in America by Mary Farrell Bednarowski (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), xiv, 175 pp., $25.00.

Reviewed by Gary Topping, curator of manuscripts, Utah State Historical Society.

WHILE IT IS BEYOND the capability of any book to demonstrate the infinite capacity of human belief, there seems nevertheless to be little reason to doubt the existence of such infinitude, and Mary Farrell Bednarowski offers further evidence of it. Her slim volume offers comparative examinations of six homegrown American religions, three from the nineteenth century and three from the twentieth, all indicating that theological creativity is alive in this country and providing fresh ingredients for the stew of American intellectual life. These new ingredients, however, originate almost solely outside academia and established religious traditions, coming instead from among those unschooled in formal theology and philosophy.

Of course, inventing new religions is a favorite cottage industry in this country, and Bednarowski had plenty of examples from which to choose. No student of American religious history will be completely pleased with her selections, given the difficulty of slicing a valid cross section; one wonders, for example, at the omission of the Seventh-Day Adventists and the Jehovah's Witnesses. Bednarowski chose these six—Mormonism, the Unification Church, Christian Science, Scientology, Theosophy, and New Age—according to two criteria: each has an appreciable number of adherents, and each has produced a literature extensive enough to sustain serious analysis.

Objections to specific choices are also possible: the Unification Church, for example, originated in Korea, not America; and the phenomenon she calls "New Age" is hardly an organized religion at all, but rather a barely related multitude of localized groups. To the first objection, Bednarowski points out that while the Reverend Sun Myung Moon did found the Unification Church in his native Korea, it has flourished primarily in America, and America enjoys a primary importance in its theology. To the second, she claims to find a common core of New Age thought in the works of Marilyn Ferguson and the Dominican Matthew Fox. (Perhaps it is worth noting at this point that since the publication of Bednarowski's book, the Vatican has put some distance between Roman Catholic theology and the New Age by suggesting that Fox refrain from publishing for a year while he reflects upon his relationship to the Catholic tradition.)

In organizing her comparison, Bednarowski groups her subjects into three pairs, each containing one religion from the nineteenth century and one from the twentieth: Mormonism and the Unification Church; Christian Science and Scientology; and Theosophy and New Age. She then compares the teachings of each pair on four fundamental theological questions: the nature of God, human nature, the nature of the afterlife, and morals and ethics. She often discovers almost as many differences as similarities within the pairs, which at times makes her groupings appear artificial. (There are, after all, no direct historical connections among the pairs.)

Still, pairing is an effective analytical device, for similarities do exist on some essential points. The most compelling of the similarities are between Mormonism and the Unification Church, who share important Christological and anthropological concepts and a belief in America as the primary theater of theological destiny. The weakest links are between Christian Science and Scientology: in spite of the word "science" in their names, neither exhibits a basis in any kind of discernible science or scientific method.

The weakest aspects of this book are its lack of critical analysis and its overall thesis. Bednarowski's accounts of each religion are descriptive rather than analytical; and to that extent, they succeed very well. She has read the scriptures and the basic literature of each religion and digested them thoroughly. Few readers will come to this book with an understanding of more than one of the religions discussed; the book is a fine reference tool for comparing the groups on the four fundamental theological categories it discusses. But Bednarowski, who operates from a liberal, ecumenical Protestant perspective, seems incapable of identifying an outworn, inconsistent, or untenable idea when it is handed to her. Such criticisms as she does broach are delivered as a slow-pitch softball. The apologists for each of the six religions have seen those pitches before, and they hit them out of the park.

One would like to think that progress in theology and philosophy is possible, but it can never occur unless we permanently lay aside dead ends and untenable propositions. Yet this book offers too much theological dead wood exhumed from the rubbish heaps of the early Christian era: pantheism (or at least a divine immanence perilously close to it), Gnosticism, Pelagianism, and other concepts once popular but eventually rejected for good reason. Too many of those old dogs, to change the metaphor, simply won't hunt anymore, yet they limp and creak across large expanses of this book, and Bednarowski can't seem to tell them from Lassie and Rin-Tin-Tin. And so one wonders, after turning the last page, why she thinks the American theological imagination is so vigorous, since there is so little here that is genuinely new, and even less that can be sustained by anything more than the infinite capacity of human belief.

BRIEF NOTICES

The Political Theory of Liberation Theology: Toward a Reconvergence of Social Values and Social Science by John R. Pottenger (Albany: State University of New York, 1989), 264 pp., cloth, $44.50; paper, $16.50.

LIBERATION THEOLOGY emerged in Latin America during the late 1960s as a merger of Christian moral theology and radical, often Marxist, politics aimed at overturning the inequitably distributed wealth and oppressive governments in the Third World. Through the 1984 silencing of Leonardo Boff, a leading liberation theologian, and the recent closing of two seminaries advocating liberation theology in Brazil, the Catholic Church has repudiated the movement's excesses. Nevertheless, it remains a potent force within both Catholicism and Latin America.

Mormon thought has so far remained uninfluenced by liberation theology, but Mormon missionaries in Latin America have sometimes run afoul of the movement indirectly when they have been accused of being agents for imperialistic American policies and institutions. Thus, it would seem desirable for Mormons to become aware of the forces causing turbulence in that area of the world. Pottenger's book, though high in price and academic in tone, is one possible source of such information on the intellectual foundations of liberation theology, its history, and its leading advocates.