

WOMANLOVER

At night your arms as cool
As wineskins in a running stream
Restore my soul.

By day I walk the valley
That consumes your gifts,
Valley devoid of the shadow
Of a rock, or tree.

Unlike one bound in chains,
Spreadeagled to the sky,
I entered
The sisterhood of flame,

To break the pinions of my mind:
To free you with the energy
Your hands pour into me
Throughout the night,

The energy that swells my lips, desire
to press my swollen hands
to women, everywhere;
To share the fire

That melts my knees.
Then let these
Solid bones be burnt,
And burn these blistered feet;

Burn all but the bird
Inside me, and let free
The fire of legend, torn from the sun,
The fire men stole from me.

Martha Shelley

17TH STREET' 1

what else.
but a genius of sexuality claims me:
(intellectual night of your own making, love
on a mattress springs failures to life,

(afterwards you applaud my mouth at the door)

you astound me being
in London & away
from me
so fa,

(& I so plain
can't fondle

your extremities.

Leslie Wolff

A wet November night.
Smearred on the street, I see
Leaves from a maple tree,
Like newspaper strips in paste
Waiting to be a mask.

Halloween is past, November mist,
And what face will I wear
This year, what Christmas mask?
Where will I sleep on Christmas night?

Martha Shelley

Photo by E Bedoz

A woman enters my life
Quietly,
Like walking through a door,
No fanfare,
Or heartthrob;
She just walks in
And is.

I'm stunned
By the simplicity.

- Heather

To Martha Wherever You Are

High school meant boy-chasing
And lonely nights we spent together
Longing for recognition
Smoking pot
Tripping
Your face would float in front of me
Your body
And the walls would close in
Lesbian = typhoid fever
Never
Boys come first -- I went steady
Saw you in school
Talked on the phone, never kissed you
Fucked every night
Faked every night and
Thought of you, never touched you
Boys come first.
Now every once in a while I dream about you
Wake up wishing you were there.
How's married life treating you?
Better than having parents, I hope.
I dreamt I saw you and
You were so cold you started shivering.
"She knows I'm gay" I thought and
You rubbed it in.
But weren't we closer, more honest, kinder
Less clinging, more giving, softer, more forgiving
Didn't you know me better
Than he ever did?
And didn't I need you more?
Wouldn't have thought so then,
But I know so now:
When the boys come first
The girls come last . . .
I keep hoping I'll run into you
Or you'll write
In my last dream you lived in D.C.
I tried to kiss you hello and you
Backed away.
You were so tall I had to crane my
Neck to see your face.
"Still seeing Bill?" I asked.
"Yes" you said with a sneer
"He's a beautiful guy."
These dreams are for shit.
Why does the past keep popping up on me?
It's shaping my present
I cannot forget a friend.

- Cara

LESBIAN
POETRY

ESTRANGEMENT

Why is it when one wants
most to touch . . .
One turns away?

Is there some perverse
desire to hurry
toward disaster?

Is there no way
to speak forthrightly,
Damned the Guns . . . Full Speed Ahead!?

I see our ship will founder
on that reef . . .
but stand here,
hand paralyzed on the tiller . . .
sails full rigged . . .
and make no move to save us.

Can speaking . . .
be more damaging than silence?

Can reaching out . . . be filled
with more terror,
than sitting on my hands?

How does one recapture
that awareness . . .
that needed so few words . . . ?

There must be some flaw in me
that demands rejection.
For as surely as I turn away
my head
to avoid those things I'd
hoped never to see
I bring disaster down upon us.

If I could feel even a spark
of response . . .
an awareness of even a momentary
openness

Then perhaps I could say . . .
"Be with me don't muddy what
we've had in this tawdry way . . .
there must be some flaw in me
which cannot fill your needs . . .
but let me try." . . . but pride
and prudity seal my lips . . .
to share you with others
paralyzes my desire
I'll take my pricks first hand . . .
.. or NOT AT ALL.

FRIENDS CRY HAVOC ALL ABOUT US
BUT I MAKE NO MOVE
I only cry inside where none can see.
for my mind whispers incessantly
THEY ALL KNEW BEFORE ME

- 'bara
1960

come out!

25c

35¢ outside
NYC

A LIBERATION FORUM BY & FOR
the **lesbian community**



Photo by B. Winstead.

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love each other love ourselves