

## Silhouette

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Edition 2005)*

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# Silhouette Women's Edition: A Woman's Journey (2005)

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et al.: Silhouette Women's Edition: A Woman's Journey (2005)

*Silhouette  
Women's Edition  
2005*

*A Woman's Journey*

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The mission of the SSU Women's Forum is to promote, advocate, educate, and support the women of Shawnee State University and the community at large.

For more information on the Women's Forum, go to:  
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The Women's Forum gratefully acknowledges the generous contribution from the Shawnee State University Faculty Senate whose financial support made this special edition, *A Woman's Journey*, a reality.

**COVER ART ALISSA BLOOMFIELD**  
**KENTUCKY SUNSHINE MORNING**

**COVER DESIGN: HANK WARING: PHOTOSHOP**



*A Woman's Journey* is dedicated to Roberta Milliken, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of English at Shawnee State University.

Dr. Milliken, on behalf of the Shawnee State University Women's Forum, we dedicate this special issue of the *Silhouette, A Woman's Journey*, to you with our heartfelt thanks for sharing your skills and talent for the betterment of women in our university and the community. *A Woman's Journey* is a fitting tribute to your skill, vision, and tireless efforts in establishing the first series of Women's Studies courses, making the Women's Studies Minor at Shawnee State University a very real possibility in the near future. We support your vision for a university Women's Center which will serve as an information resource and support for all people. We are grateful to you, Dr. Milliken, for choosing Shawnee State University as a part of your own life's journey.

**2004 Shawnee State University  
Women's Forum Steering Committee**

*"I've learned that people will forget what you said,  
people will forget what you did, but people will never  
forget how you made them feel."*

Maya Angelou  
(b. 1928)



*"One isn't necessarily born with courage, but one is  
born with potential. Without courage, we cannot  
practice any other virtue with consistency. We can't be  
kind, true, merciful, generous, or honest."*

Maya Angelou  
(b. 1928)

**KINDERGARTEN, CLOSETS,  
AND FAT FREE LUNCHES**

**KELLY DUNAWAY ALBURG**

*Dedicated to my daughter, Elizabeth Anne Walsh, now 15.*

Her summer-laden eyes, used to opening no earlier than ten, looked up at me from a bowl of Kix cereal and skim milk. “Hey, Mom. Is this fat free?” Somewhat awestruck by the impact my newly professed low fat diet was having on my five-year-old, I stopped long enough to nod my head, a gesture quickly abrupted by her next question.

“Do they have fat free food at Mimmy’s school? I think fat free tastes good.” Although I could have unleashed my sermon on the nonnutritional value of most school lunches with their staple of hamburgers, corn dogs, and pizza, I merely urged her to hurry up, wondering if my mother had entertained such questions on my first day of kindergarten.

Looking at my watch I realized there was no time for nostalgia or a lesson on school nutrition. “Elizabeth Anne, where are your shoes?” I asked, as I searched frantically under every piece of furniture. No answer. Realizing that her silence signaled the end of commercials and of any mother-daughter communication, I rushed upstairs to gather the clothes she had chosen for her first day. As I had expected, she had chosen a pair of cuffed fuchsia shorts and a yellow shirt with pizza stains on it. Wishing that I had double-checked her outfit the night before, I sprinted to her closet to grab the nearest Disney dress. It was then that it happened.

I cannot be so dramatic as to say that it was her favorite doll, a baby blanket or even an old photograph that warranted the unbelievable rush of raw emotion that crimsoned my face and belabored my breath; no, instead, I had fallen prey to her jumbled closet strewn with Barbie dolls, backpacks, cleats, baseball caps, and rollerblades. All I could do was to stand there—the victim of a disheveled closet that would have otherwise frustrated me.

As the tears began to burn in my chest, every window of Elizabeth’s short life flung open—her birth, birthdays, first tooth, first steps, first words, all of which now seemed even more



precious than they had at their respective moments. I sat down on her bed, clutched the uncoordinated outfit to my face, and wept. What was I doing? How could I send her into a cruel world of unrelentless teachers, demanding extracurricular activities, competitive girlfriends, and hormonal boyfriends while she sat innocently downstairs suspecting nothing?

“Oh please Sis. He’s only going to kindergarten. He’ll be home by three.” My words spoken to my sister two and a half years before when her son was entering kindergarten now mocked me and made me feel even more foolish than I already appeared. I had truly believed that this day would not bother me since Elizabeth had been in daycare since she was a newborn and had grown fiercely independent ever since. But at this moment she seemed to me just a baby, a tiny child who was not prepared to face the realities that thirteen years of public education and socialization would thrust upon her. Now her innocence was in the hands of teachers, principals, and cruel, naïve peers. Of course, I would be there at the end of the day trying to dry her tears because of an impossible writing assignment, a purposeless leaf collection, or an unforgiving best friend. Would my “It will be all right; I’ll help you” or “Love yourself, you’re beautiful” be powerful enough to erase all of her insecurities and misgivings?

I now imagined all of the irate parents that I had seen on the *Oprah Winfrey* show who blamed their children’s schools and teachers for their child’s delinquency, apathy, and mile-long criminal record. Before, I had scoffed at these parents for their unjust accusations and lack of parental responsibility; however, now in my moment of self-pity and fear, I thought, *Hey, maybe these parents are right; maybe if I never let her go to school then she will be more successful and well-adjusted and she may even stay out of prison!* I had sunk to my lowest and cried once again.

Looking back on my moment of reckoning, I realize that the underlying motivation for my weeping on that sultry August morning was that I feared Elizabeth would no longer need me. At least now she still needed me to brush her hair, read to her each night, kill the spiders outside, and kiss her boo-boo’s all gone.

Even in the silence of the night she still needed to creep into my room, slide next to me, and nestle safely in my arms. Would she still need me or even want to need me once other people began inhabiting her world? I could not know for sure.

Unable to confront this at the time, I snapped back to reality with the *Looney Tunes* theme blaring from downstairs, which meant that it was 7:30 and we were late. I dried my tears on her comforter, pulled a *Lion King* dress from her closet, laid her self-chosen outfit aside, and walked sullenly down the stairs.

“Guess what, Mom? I found my shoes. Hey, where’s my other clothes?” Spying the dress in my hand, she looked disappointed at my choice but conceded that it would probably be cooler on an already humid day. She dressed herself, brushed her teeth, put on her shoes, combed her hair, and out the door we went.

On the way to Lewis County Central Elementary, her excitement was evident by the nonstop chatter and questions that bombarded my bluntly aching head. “Do we have to take a nap? I hate naps. Naps are for babies. I’m so glad my Mim is going to be my teacher. Do you think she will let me read? She says that she will let me read a book to all of the kids.” I wondered if my mom, Elizabeth’s “Mim,” was as apprehensive as I was about the day ahead and how her grandmother-granddaughter relationship would suffer from the teacher-student relationship she would have with Elizabeth during the next 185 days.

“Can I put on some of your lipstick?” she asked as she fumbled through my purse wearing the same frustrated expression I wear when the lipstick seems buried in the darkest recesses of the purse. Discovering the lipstick, she mimicked my actions by twisting the mirror completely to her side and, with great concentration, applied the rose lipstick flawlessly. This scene only intensified the ache in my heart and the overwhelming insecurities that had permeated my morning.

Once we entered the school lot I knew that I had only five minutes to get to the high school to begin my first day. Elizabeth had already jumped out of the car before I had shut off the engine and walked at least three steps ahead of me all the way to the



gym, a place she had been many times before with my mom. Walking behind her I already felt unneeded and unwanted and my pain festered.

As she neared the gym doors, the gate to a world of which I may or may not be a part, I yearned to run to her, envelop her in my arms, and hold her until I was certain that she would walk out of those doors the same confident, self-motivated, beautiful little girl that I had nurtured these five years. But it was too late. She had disappeared inside the gym doors by the time I reached her. For a moment I even hesitated to enter the gym, assured that I would enter to find her sitting contentedly with all of the other children, unaware of my absence.

But as I swung the gym door back, there she stood, my blue-eyed angel, clutching her pink and purple Simba backpack so tightly that her little knuckles were whitening, the tears trying to fall as they rested on her long, summer-lightened eyelashes, and her ponytail beginning to slip from crown to nape. "I want to go home." Her words, spoken from pursed, quivering lips, were the words I had thought I wanted to hear all morning, but now as I faced my distraught child I prayed for her to be strong. All morning long I had been the weak one, she, the strong; I, the emotional one, she, the rock. Now all of that dissipated, as did all of my insecurities. What mattered was that Elizabeth needed me today more than she had ever needed me before, and I was there being the strong one, the stable one, the rock.

I then did what I had desired to do seconds before; I stooped to meet her watery eyes, drew her into my arms, pressed her gently to me and whispered, "I will be walking right beside you." Hand in hand we entered the gym, both of us wiping tears from our moistened cheeks. This tender moment was short-lived as Elizabeth spied her Mim across the gym floor, broke free of my hand, and ran into my mother's outstretched arms. Mom motioned for me to go on as she seated Elizabeth next to the other kids on the bleachers. I waved to her, blew Elizabeth a kiss, and left the gym. As I was leaving, I turned around one last time just to be

certain that Elizabeth was settled, and sure enough there she sat chatting away to the attentive little girl next to her.

Walking out of those doors I no longer felt unneeded, although my heart was still heavy with concerns about the challenges that lay ahead for my daughter. Although I did not know if she would need me on the first day of school in the years to come, I was sure that on this day she had needed me. I also was certain that when she needed me in the days to come that I would be walking right beside her, especially on those days when she learns that all people are not created equally, beauty is skin deep, baseball is a man's sport, and school lunches are not fat free.



SOLITUDE

THELMA SHIREY

ACRYLIC ON CANVAS

**A WONDERFUL MOTHER**

**LINDSEY MCROBERTS**

(DAUGHTER OF KRIS LILES)

She is always there when you need her  
And sometimes when you think you don't.  
She always knows how to make you feel better,  
But sometimes she just won't  
Because she knows sometimes you have to learn on your own  
What this crazy world is all about.

Her love is never ending  
It's strong and deep and true.  
As her child, you always know  
It's a love meant just for you.  
So, even if you have a sister,  
Or a pesky little brother,  
There is always enough love for all  
When you have a wonderful Mother.

*“Woman must not accept; she must challenge. She must not be awed by that which has been built up around her; she must reverence that woman in her which struggles for expression.”*

Margaret Sanger  
(1879–1966)

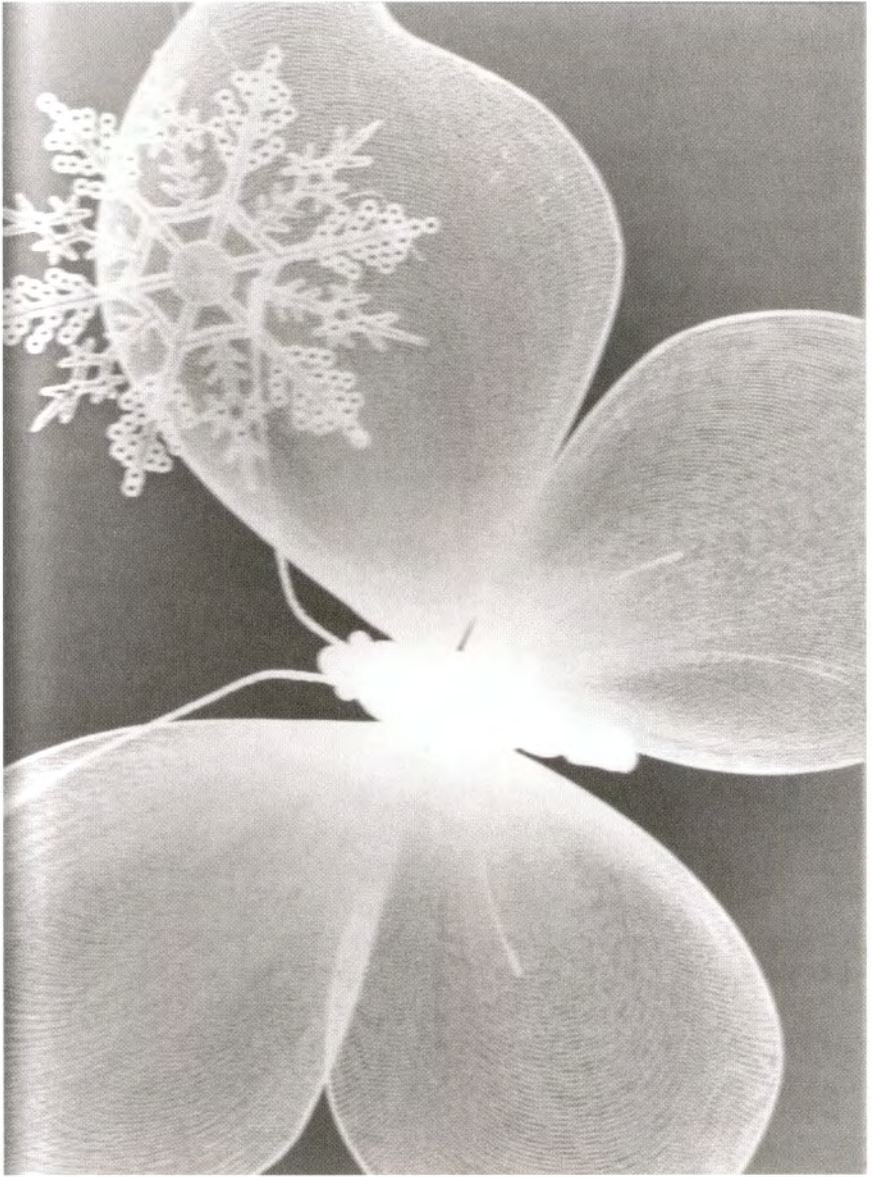


**PURPLE IRIS**

**SHERRI POWELL**

**ACRYLIC ON CANVAS**





**ANGEL IN THE SNOW**

**JENE WRIGHT**

**PHOTOGRAM**



“It's a simple thing really,”  
said my Grandmother,  
pausing to sip her coffee.  
“There's no need to mourn.”

“You wake up one day  
and you find that the pot is still there  
but all the flowers have gone.”

So when I found her,  
So quiet,  
So cold,  
So still,  
at first what a shock.

But then I thought,  
what an odd little pot you've left behind.

*“Men, their rights, and nothing more; women, their  
rights, and nothing less.” (motto of The Revolution  
newspaper)*

Susan B. Anthony  
(1820–1906)

I come from a long line of women...  
An endless legacy of brazen whores  
Who shirk their duties, forget their chores  
Who have the nerve to actually speak  
Who wear things that reveal physiques.  
We forget the dinners, watch them burn  
Who let the house look like it's been upturned.  
Women who forget their places and try to vote  
Who want the room where Virginia wrote  
The yellow wallpaper has all been torn down  
Like Ophelia, in heavy dresses we drown  
The weight of the world seems so heavy at times  
And we pray that we will be absolved of all of these crimes.  
We apologize, sir, for the way we deceive.  
But I hate to tell you, I feel sorry for Eve.

*"I do not wish women to have power over men; but over themselves."*

Mary Wollstonecraft  
(1759–1797)



**MEXICAN DANCERS**

**LINDSAY MIDKIFF**

**COLOR PHOTOGRAPH**

**WITHIN MY MIND**

**JANE JOHNSON**

I love it when the grass is green,  
The sky dark blue or in-between.  
The meadows reaching to the sky,  
Tinged in red and yellow dye.

The house is white and needs no repair,  
The family inside is filled with care.  
Gaily laughing, filled with hope,  
In this home none ever mope.

The fresh pine scent of all the floors.  
Is fragrant when walking through the doors.  
The smell of breads, the clean white sheets,  
'Round about and softly creeps.

It's lovely here, yes indeed,  
The garden's full of brand new seed.  
If you can't see it, you're not blind,  
It's here I live-within my mind.

*“Do not wait for leaders; do it alone, person to person.”*

Mother Teresa  
(1910–1997)

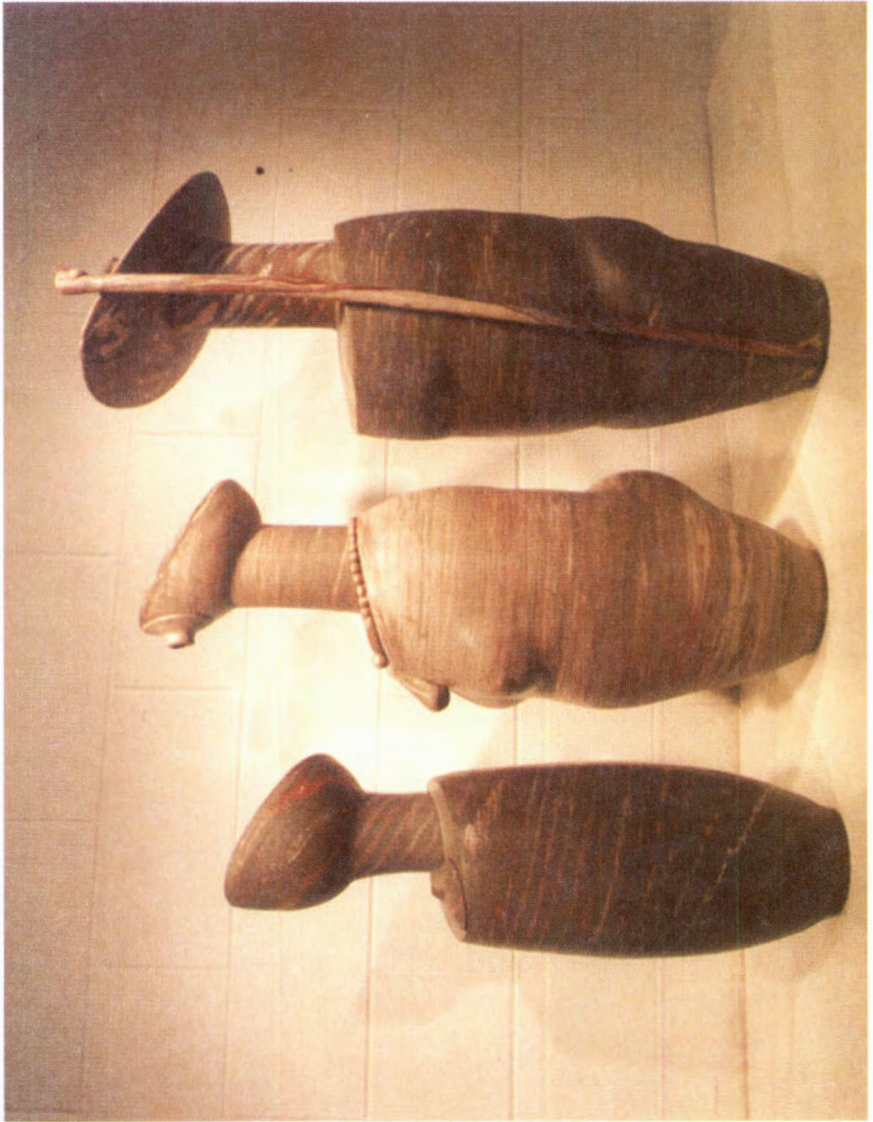


**WELCOME HOME**

**GAIL INGALSBE**

**WATERCOLOR**





**YORUBA LADY, YORUBA MOTHER,  
AND FULANI HERDSMAN**

**MICHAEL OLUGBILE**

**COLORED STONEWARE CLAY**

To today's youth, vacations mean visiting theme parks, taking cruises and going to the beach—anywhere to spend money on what has been conceived the great American dream and getaway. Ah, such vacations where the children are entertained while the parents go in the opposite direction. As a child, I could not even imagine eating in restaurants and sleeping in rooms that would be serviced daily much less going in a direction other than the one selected by my parents. During my youth, vacations meant that we would all squeeze in the family camper and take off for parts known and unknown. And heaven forbid if by some chance we would end up in a motel room for the night!

The first style of camper I remember is a silver Hi-Lo pop-up. It was so named, because when not in use the top half would cover the bottom half and create a type of moving box. Dad would back the brown 1960 model Chevy that my mom always hated toward that sun-lit beaming package until you could hear the thump of the metal ball against the hitch. The Hi-Lo was advertised to comfortably sleep a family of six. I never could figure out what made up that family, but I suspected it may have been a family of little people, not unlike what may have appeared in the *Wizard of Oz*. The couch let into a double-sized area for my parents, and two pull out boxes would rest atop each end of the trailer for my teenaged brothers, Neal and Terry. My twin sister, Jean, and I shared the dining table and benches, which dropped to make a hard sleeping area. Jean slept on one end and I slept on the other. If we went to bed mad at each other, we spent the biggest part of the night kicking each other in the back. Not that it made any difference how much sleep we got, because my dad snored loud enough to waken the dead. Each morning we rose at the same time. There was water to be drawn, a disgusting Johnny pot that needed emptying and beds to return to designed functionality before we could even think about fixing breakfast.

Since the entire floor surface of the trailer could be crossed in three giant steps or less, mom would shuffle us outside while

she prepared breakfast. We usually had something quick, because we had to get on the road to see some giant ball of twine or pick cotton from a field. Sometimes we had fried eggs, toast and bacon. The smell of that salty fried meat would waft across the trailer top and make its way ever so gently to the hungry mob outside.

On one vacation, we journeyed to the Great Smoky Mountains where we stood along the scenic overlook and witnessed nature's splendor of evergreen. It was there that Terry pulled a fresh, pink flower from along the roadside. Terry's admiration for one of God's loveliest creations surely had to be borderline illegal at best. He clenched the wildflower between his teeth, covered his head with his hands and danced the Flamenco atop a retaining wall overlooking the valley. It was at the Great Smoky Mountains that Neal burned the tips of his fingers while trying to light the Coleman camping stove. It was there that my mom's weight broke through the thin layer of canvas on the camping stool that served as additional seating and crashed to the camper's floor. The camper shook with all the might of a California earthquake. It was there that we spent time together.

Time passed and my brothers joined the military, married and began their own families. Our traveling band of merrymakers decreased to four.

On another vacation, we trekked to the Florida Keys, or Key West, where we crossed a bridge that spanned seven or so miles. It was there that the smell of wharfs and fish overpowered the sense of smell. It was there that mom fell in love with Key Lime Pie, and we toured a silk screening plant. It was also there that we continued to empty the disgusting Johnny pot, we still carried water, and we still took showers in the park's shower house. The catch to showers was that we had to take them while daylight was bright because the park's water tanks used solar power, which meant evening showers were ice cold. It was there that I imagined my little black and white teddy bear with his eyes bulged out hanging from a homemade noose.

A few years later dad had moved the silver pop-up into an elderly lady's yard located near his construction job—a mere five

hours away. He wanted to spend part of the summer with us. Mom wholeheartedly agreed. After all, the garden would not need attention for a couple of weeks. So, we packed for yet another trip in what I believed was the dinkiest shelter on the face of the earth. Dad could see that we were not very happy with the arrangement.

“Girls, I can’t wait for you to see what I’ve done with the trailer,” Dad said. “It’s real modern, and I’ve even rigged a shower for you.”

It sounded great, but we soon realized that not a whole lot had changed in camping conditions with the silver box. We still had to use the disgusting Johnny pot. We still carried water and the modern shower. Well, let’s just say that the shower curtain and tubing were in the middle of the yard. We carried water, which we heated in the trailer and poured into the tank area above the shower. We had to do this before we could undress to clean ourselves in the darkness of the shade trees.

In our spare time, Jean and I entertained ourselves with walks through the woods, singing, and playing board games. Mom channeled our creativity and talent to stay inside the lines to coloring cartoon characters on the top half of the Hi-Lo. She hung this assignment in front of us like a carrot dangling in front of a horse.

“Your dad will really like this,” she would say knowing that all little girls want to please daddy.

In was in the evening we built campfires and roasted hot dogs and marshmallows. It was in the evening we played cards, and we learned the necessity of paying attention to counting cards and taking “tricks.”

Over the next few years, we graduated to a newer, more modern, twenty-seven foot camper of varying shades of green. Even though it was longer and more modern, the summer we followed dad to Roosevelt Lake we realized that the camper still did not have air conditioning. We no longer needed the Johnny pot, but we still were not to use the camper’s toilet facilities. Dad parked the camper near the shower house so it would not be such a long walk.



On this vacation, Jean and I took along our bicycles so we pedaled our way throughout the park, walked along the nature trails and played on the swings. It was there even as teens we were to abide to a quiet hour because dad had to rise at five o'clock each morning. It was there that Jean and I decided to sleep outside on tri-folding aluminum chaise loungers so that we could have time to ourselves. But it was also there that our sleeping arrangements proved to be like scenes from a Laurel and Hardy movie.

The first night I rested my buttocks above the top third of the folding chaise, which promptly tipped over backwards. Naturally, between my screams and my sister's hearty laughter my parents woke to untangle me from the unruly metal that twisted around me. The following day a small summer shower left water nestled in the trees above the camper. Some of it fell onto the trailer's awning. Mom, noticing a droop in the awning above where I lay in a half dream-like state, took the end of a broomstick and pushed upward at the low hanging water bubble. As the captured rainwater fell to earth, I swear at least two gallons of that cool liquid soaked me. The next night as we were all sleeping soundly, I awoke to heaviness across my feet. Certain I had kicked off my blankets, I reached for my dad's Navy blanket. I pulled and pulled but I could not get the blanket to stretch beyond the area of my knees. It was then that I became aware of an overwhelming outdoorsy stench. It was then that I realized that I was pulling on the skin of a stray hound dog with long, floppy ears and not the material of a blanket. Hard as I might, I could not coax the dog to leave my bed so I turned to Jean and said in a heavy whisper.

"Jean, there's a d-o-g on my bed," I began.

Jean just moaned so I repeated, "there's a d-o-g on my bed."

Sitting bolt upright on the chaise lounge, Jean's reaction was not to my news but to the odor that hung heavily around the campsite. Jean coughed.

"Whew! What's that awful smell?" she asked.



By then my feet were asleep and the numbing sensation threatened to crawl up my legs. Jean gagged and gagged finally waking my parents who rescued me from a gentle old stray that was just looking for a place to call home.

Yes, camping is not for the faint-hearted. My parents, products of The Great Depression, and brothers and sister, all products of the Baby Boom now realize that vacations, much like any time spent with family, is quality time. We ate meals together, we played together, we talked with each other, we worked together, and we cared about each other.

Every now and then as I move along life's busy highways, I catch myself looking with envy at today's colossal motor homes and oversized campers that approach forty-five feet in length. Even though these campers have all the modern day conveniences of Internet connections, cell phones, satellite systems, and microwave ovens, I have to admit that I become a little downcast. Every now and then, I wish I would see one of those silver pop-ups pattering along the roadways behind a 1960 brown Chevy. Because in overcoming the struggles of that time we were truly a family.

*"You cannot shake hands with a clenched fist."*

Indira Gandhi  
(1917–1984)



**STORYTELLER**

**GAIL INGALSBE**

**TERRACOTTA CLAY**

**TONY**

**SADIE HACKWORTH**

Blankets, pillows beneath the table make a cozy private nest.

Just right for a four-year-old when he and “doggy” need a rest.

Dr. Seuss, and Richard Scarry, bedtime stories made for two.

Dandelions, crayon drawings. “Mommy these are for you.”

Cuddly, little boy no longer, tall and slender, now fourteen.

Science fiction, rock music, head filled with teenage dreams.

Video games, endless phone calls. No time for mom anymore.

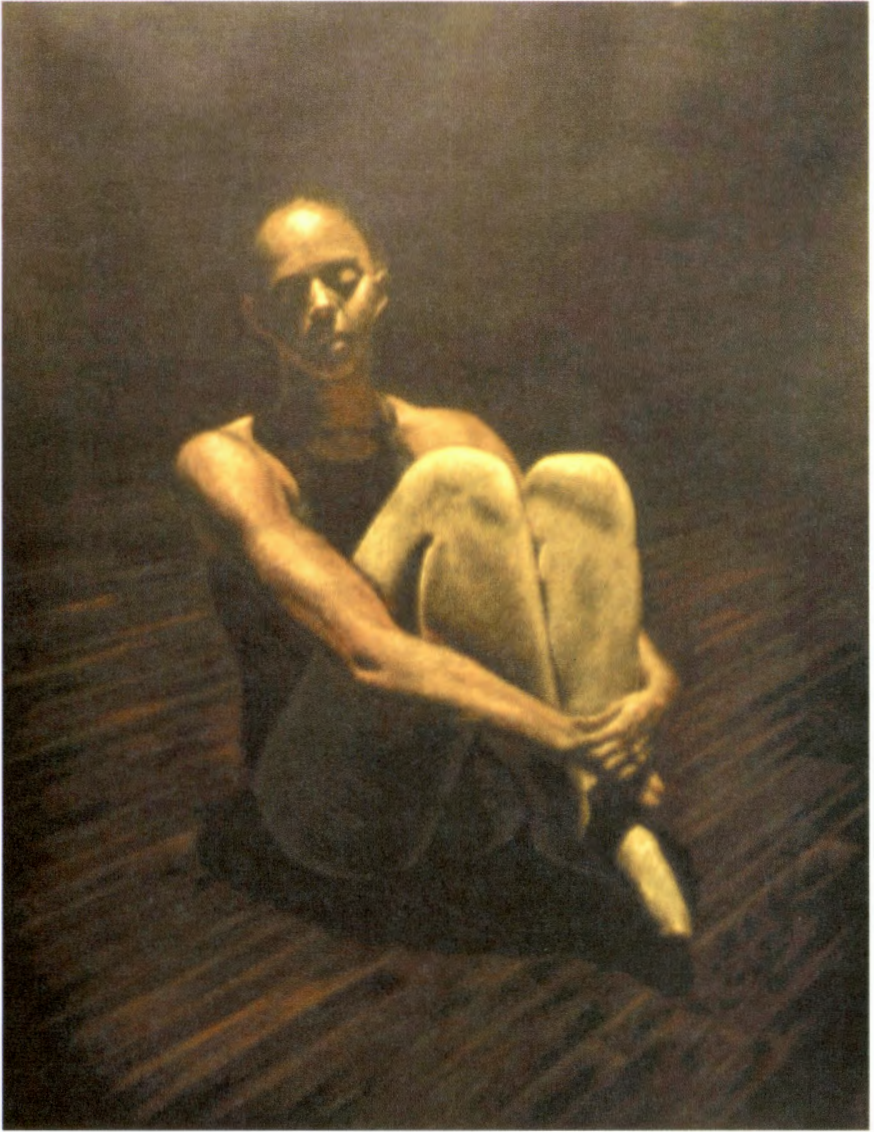
Always busy with his friends. I miss my little boy of four.



**WAITING**

**ISABEL GRAZIANI**

**PHOTOGRAPH**



**SEATED DANCER**

**DELYNN COPOLETTI**

**PASTEL ON BLACK PAPER**





**COUNTRY CRISP**

**LAURA BETH POTTINGER**

**WATERCOLOR AND MIXED MEDIA ON PAPER**



**JEN WATER**

**TYLER FERGUSON**

**ORIGINAL SCAN OF 35MM PRINT WITH WATERCOLOR EFFECT**

## MY MOTHER'S DAUGHTER

ALISSA BLOOMFIELD

Women have come such a long way. This is the idea that has been stressed throughout my formal education. Women have overcome many obstacles and society's views of women have changed dramatically from the days of extreme oppression. Women have long had the ability to vote, own land, and other such equal opportunities. Not only that, but efforts have been made to avoid gender specific language, women's sports have begun to gain the recognition they deserve, and, according to Sharon Gmelch's *Gender on Campus*, "The number of women presidents of colleges and universities has been growing. In 1996, they made up 16 percent of the top leaders in higher education." Gmelch also asserts that "Women now make up 56 percent of all undergraduates and 53 percent of all graduate students. They also comprise 40 percent of all first-year professional students and earn 39 percent of all PhDs." However, according to Gmelch, "Academic disciplines still tend to be segregated by sex. Women outnumber male undergraduates by an average of four to one in education and health sciences, while men far outnumber women in many sciences, math, and engineering."

Why is this?

When I was around twelve or thirteen, I was rummaging through my mother's old photographs, laughing hysterically at the pictures of her and my dad in their hippie-wear. My dad in his patchwork bellbottoms, my mom in her psychedelic maternity outfit. Eventually, I stumbled across my parents' senior yearbook. At first, I was laughing at all of their classmates' bouffant hairdos and tortoise shell glasses. However, I came across something that allowed me, for the first time, to see my mother as something other than the mom I had known her to be for years. My mom. After a lifetime of taking for granted that it had been my mother's sole ambition in life to marry my father and have children. I read her answer to an interview regarding her dreams and aspirations. She had wanted to be a nurse. She had wanted to go to college.

"You never told me you wanted to be a nurse," I said.



My mom looked anxiously at my dad, who pretended not to hear.

“You never asked,” she said quietly.

“Why didn’t you do it, then?”

“Well, it’s a long story, but basically, your papaw wouldn’t let me,” she said.

“Didn’t Uncle Bobby go to college?”

“Yes, but that was different.”

“Why was it different?”

“Well, your papaw believes that a woman’s place is in the home, keeping house, raising children...”

“That’s right,” my dad interrupted.

“Oh, Danny, hush!” my mom laughed, but I knew she didn’t think it was funny. “Anyway, I told your papaw I wanted to go to college, I made good grades, and graduated third in my class. But, he still thought it would be a waste of money to send a woman to college.”

This took me by surprise. In all of my thirteen years, it had never occurred to me that there were things in her life that she had wanted but had been unable to attain. She was a great mom, and I just couldn’t imagine her being anything else. I was overcome with feelings of guilt for having taken her for granted, sorrow for her inability to achieve her goals.

“So, why didn’t you go to college after you and Dad got married?” I asked.

“Because your dad didn’t want me to. He didn’t want me to have a job, either.”

All I could think of was that I was never going to be like that. I was never going to marry a man who would treat me the way my dad and papaw treated their wives. I was going to be like my Aunt Tammy. Tammy was going to college. She was going to be an accountant and live in New York City. And she was NEVER going to get married. I wasn’t either. Not if it meant I had to give up all of my dreams.

My discovery of the yearbook opened up a line of communication between my mom and me, which had not



previously existed. Of course she had always shared stories with me of when she was a little girl. However, there were always certain parts she would leave out. Now was the time for her to fill in the gaps.

My mom was the second to the oldest of four siblings. When my mamaw became hospitalized due to an illness resulting from a difficult pregnancy, my mom had to take over for her. She not only had to care for her younger brother, who was still in diapers, but she also had to iron Papaw's clothes for work, fix his coffee, bring him his socks, clean the house and cook for the family. She did all of this and still managed to graduate third in her class. There were thirteen years between my mom and her younger sister. So, at thirteen, my mom took on the responsibilities of raising a family. The most astonishing part of this, for me, was that she had an older brother. However, none of these things were his responsibility. He was a man, and this was woman's work. This was not the first time my mom noticed a significant difference between the expectations of herself and her brother, and it certainly would not be the last. He would be able to get a job; she would not. He would be able to buy a car; she would not. He would be able to go to college; she would not.

At one point, my mom can remember more than eleven people living in a very small farmhouse with her family. Most of them were my papaw's brothers, who worked on the farm. My mom and my mamaw would work for hours preparing meals for the men. My mom says she can remember her mouth watering for a taste of the blackberry cobbler she had worked so hard to prepare. However, she and my mamaw would never dare eat a bite until all the men had had their fill. She recalls how the men would come in, dirty and sweaty, after a hard day's work and devour every morsel of food that was on the table. Very rarely would mom get to enjoy one of the fluffy biscuits she had baked. Even when she did, it was long after the biscuits had lost their warmth.

My mom would grow up to marry a man, whose attitude toward her was not so far removed from that of my papaw. He did not want her to get a job. Yet, as he got older, he seemed to resent

her for never having contributed to the family financially. I know that my mom is not perfect, but my dad seemed to find wrong in everything she did. She would make him huge, home-cooked meals of meatloaf or fried pork chops with all the fixin's. Yet, he would become infuriated because the biscuits she made had come from a can, or because the desert had come from a box. I suppose he felt that, since she did not work, she could at least take care of the children, clean the house, do the laundry, shop for groceries, pay the bills, and most importantly cook him a meal from scratch.

But today, things are different. Women have come a long way. I have grown up in an entirely different generation than that of my mother, one of endless opportunities and I have been taught differently. I know better.

Or do I?

I always told myself that I would never let a man tell me what to do, or keep me from doing as I pleased. However, when my high school sweetheart, the man I hoped to marry one day, told me that we could not continue to be together if I went to college, I didn't go. It was not that he thought women should not be able to go to college, or that women had no place in the work force. His reasons for not wanting me to attend college differed greatly from those of my dad and my papaw. They stemmed from his own insecurities. As hard as I tried to convince him otherwise, he still believed that I would find someone better than him, smarter than him, if I went. I didn't go. I had wanted to go to college my whole life. It was something I had looked forward to for as long as I could remember. However, it was more important to me to be with the man I loved. I convinced myself that I would not have been successful in college. I told myself that it was better that my dad would not have to take a second job to pay for my college expenses. I got married and followed my husband to a place I did not want to be, working at a job I hated. I did this for three years.

My husband and I had attended a training school to become telecommunication installation contractors, certified in Central Office installation. The job required us to travel to various

places throughout the United States, installing high-speed Internet systems, ATM alarms, and other telecommunication equipment in the central offices of major corporations. Our company paid for our airline tickets, often first class, as well as our hotel accommodations, mileage, and other expenses. For a young couple, we were doing quite well.

With a few years of experience under my belt, I decided that it was time for me to apply for a higher position. I mentioned to my boss that I was interested in a lead installation technician position. The position would entail a little more responsibility and a certain degree of authority, but less manual labor. I felt I was up for the task. However, before my boss would ever even allow me to interview for the position, he wanted me to make sure it was okay with my husband. He would only let me apply if my husband did not want the position himself. After all, it should go to him first, if he wanted it. I was confused. My husband had not even mentioned wanting to apply, I had. He was happy where he was. Regardless of who applied, shouldn't the job go to the one most qualified and capable of performing the tasks required? I did not assume that person would be me, but I felt I deserved a fair shot at it.

At one point, while still working in the same field, I was faced with a situation that I had only read about or seen on TV. My boss told me that if I ever wanted to excel in my field, I would need to do two things. I listened anxiously for what I would need to do, willing to do anything in order to get that pay raise, not to mention the recognition. What he said, however, would forever change the way I felt about myself. He told me I needed to drop the southern accent and get breast implants. It was the only way I would ever be respected, he said. He told me that really pretty women could get by on their looks. But since I was just okay in the looks department, I would need something else to get me by.

My tongue felt like a limp oyster inside the gaping shell of my mouth. I did not say a word. Instead, I felt horribly embarrassed. All of my insecurities had been confirmed. I never mentioned, or even seriously considered, applying for the position again.

I had always heard stories of sexual harassment or discrimination and wondered why women allowed it to happen. I had read about how women who had been targets of such occurrences often felt guilty, responsible for what had happened to them. I was always puzzled by this, knowing in my heart that I would not feel that way if it ever happened to me. However, when the day came that I was faced with this situation, all the rehearsing I had done in my mind of what I would say and do failed me.

A few years later, still working for the same man who had humiliated and degraded me, I was once again faced with a situation that I had thought myself to be well-prepared for. My boss insisted that I accompany him to a job site nearly two hours away from where my husband was working. I did not want to go. However, when I voiced my concerns to my husband, he assured me that it would only be for a few hours, and that everything would be all right. I disregarded the lump that was forming in the pit of my stomach and got in the car with my boss. The entire ride to the job site was filled with sexual comments. I said nothing as I stared out the window, wishing I were somewhere else. When we arrived at the job site, I was relieved. However, my anxieties were revived as we entered the building and I realized that we were alone. It was late in the day, and most of the workers had left for the evening.

I quickly set off to finish the job, so we could leave as soon as possible. When the work was completed, we had to wait for a call from the main office to let us know that everything was running smoothly. It was during this time that he began to make jokes about stopping off at a hotel on the way back to my husband. The more comments he made, the more uncomfortable I felt. Finally, I had endured enough and told him that I would be waiting in the car. When he asked me what I was willing to do for the keys, I knew I had to get out quickly. I turned to leave, but was unable to escape before he grabbed a handful of my right butt cheek and squeezed hard. I was, once again, humiliated.

As we drove back to where my husband was working, I was trembling. I was confused, ashamed, embarrassed, and afraid.



Confused as to why it had happened, embarrassed that it had, ashamed of myself for not saying anything, and afraid of what my husband would do if I told him. I did not tell him.

Eventually, I decided to quit my job and go to college. My husband supported my decision to go back to school. I suppose that three years of faithfully devoting myself to our marriage was enough to prove to him that I could be trusted to go to school. We both returned to our hometown. He got a job and was more than happy to support me through my college years. Growing up, I often thought about what I wanted to be when I grew up. In my mind, there were only two choices. A nurse, or a teacher. I would nearly faint at the sight of blood, and strange smells made me nauseous. So, I quickly ruled out being a nurse. That left being a teacher. I chose to major in early childhood education, because that was what I felt I was capable of accomplishing. It was something a woman could succeed at, regardless of her accent or breast size.

When my husband and I settled into our first home together, after having traveled and lived out of hotels for three years, I felt that my life was that much more fulfilled. I had a purpose. I could finally fulfill my role in life. I was a wife, a homemaker. I liked the sound of that. It was something I knew I could do well. I would work diligently to make sure that everything was always in its place. Along with working and going to school, I made sure that all of the laundry was done, my husband's clothes were laid out for work, his lunch was packed, and the cabinets were filled with groceries. I always made sure that his dinner was on the table, warm and ready, whenever he got home. The dinner had to consist of at least four or five items, and had to include meat. This was especially important. I would lay all other things aside in order to assure that this would take place. I would be upset if I was unable to accomplish this task. My husband did not expect this of me, and would not have said a word if I didn't do it. However, I felt it was my duty. I thought I would be a failure if I could not accomplish this one simple task.

I suppose I could still hear the angry, stinging insults that my dad would yell at my mom when dinner was cold or was not what he wanted. I yearned to be, for my husband, all that my mom could never be for hers.

Growing up, I remember thinking how lucky boys were. They didn't have to do dishes, or laundry, or get their own coffee. Through observations of my parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, I learned the ways of the world. The women in my family worked hard, regardless of whether or not they were paid, or even recognized, for their efforts.

I watched as my mom worked hard to manage our money, raise us to be good people, clean the house, and serve my dad. By serve, I do not mean his dinner. My mom practically lived as a servant in her own home. Not simply because she did things such as bringing my dad his socks, or cooking him breakfast, while at the same time preparing a home cooked meal for his lunch, but because she was never recognized for the contributions she made to our family. My dad never thanked her for these things. Rather, he expected this and more. It seemed that everything she could do was not enough.

My mom did her best to instill a sense of pride in her daughters. She taught us that we could be anything we wanted to be. She never told me that it was my responsibility to prepare a large meal everyday, while still maintaining my home, going to school, and working. My husband certainly never expected these things of me. Yet, I placed these expectations on myself.

Having grown up in this generation, with endless possibilities at my fingertips, why do I still feel like a failure if I am unable to remove a stain from my husband's shirt or if there are dust bunnies flopping on my ceiling fan blades?

It is true that women have come a long way. However, I feel that we still have a long way to go. I know that, no matter how hard I work, there are some positions for which I will be paid less, simply because I am a woman.

I am now in my senior year of college. I cannot believe I have come this far. I feel like a completely different person from

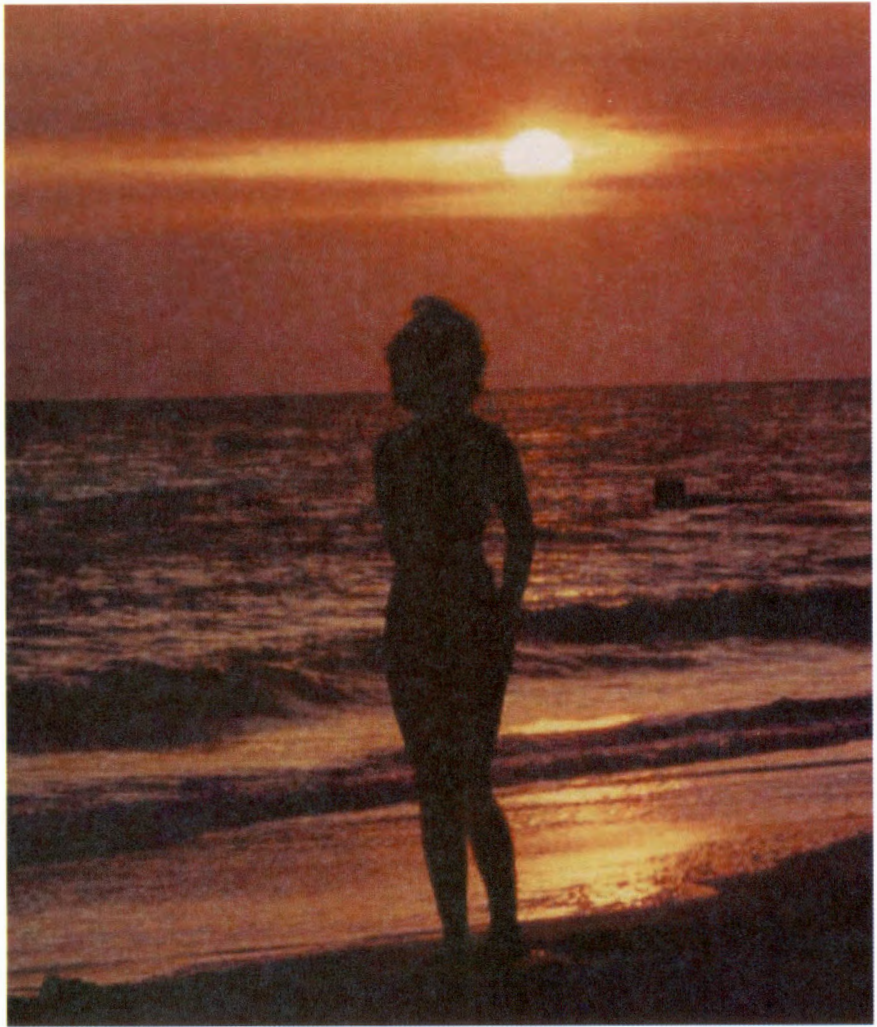
the woman who quit her job rather than stand up to her boss. College has allowed me to find myself. It has given me a sense of accomplishment, because it is something all my own. I have had no help, and no one else can take the credit. I still have nagging feelings of self-doubt. I sometimes wonder if I can accomplish the goals I have set for myself. However, when I feel like giving up, I think of my mom, and how she was never given the opportunity to try.

Women have come a long way. We have. But we haven't come as far along as we might. Or should.

Why is this?

*No one can make you feel inferior without your consent."*

Eleanor Roosevelt  
(1884–1962)



**JEN SUN**

**TYLER FERGUSON**

**COLOR PHOTOGRAPH**



**EUNICE FAU**

**LITTLE DUTCH GIRL  
1975**

**QUILT**

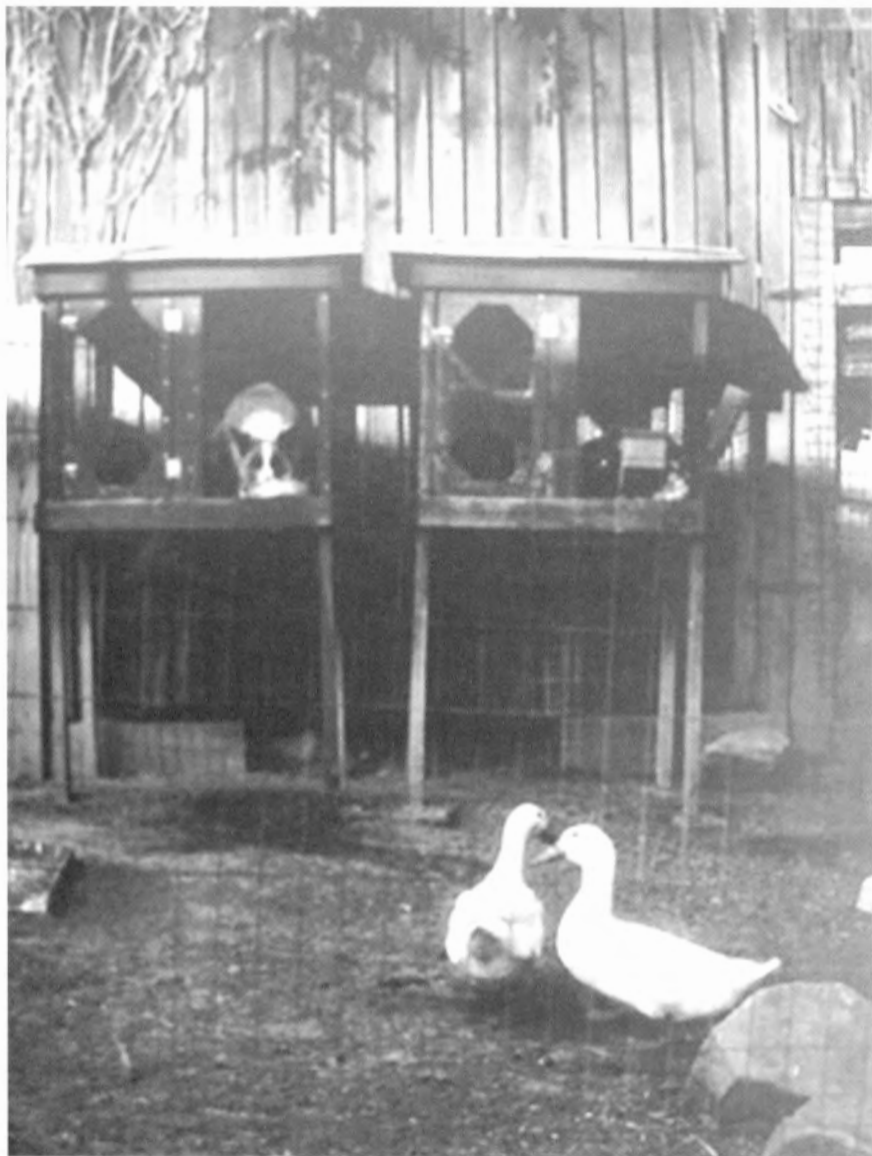


**ELSIE SHABAZZ**

**1897**

**HANDQUILT**

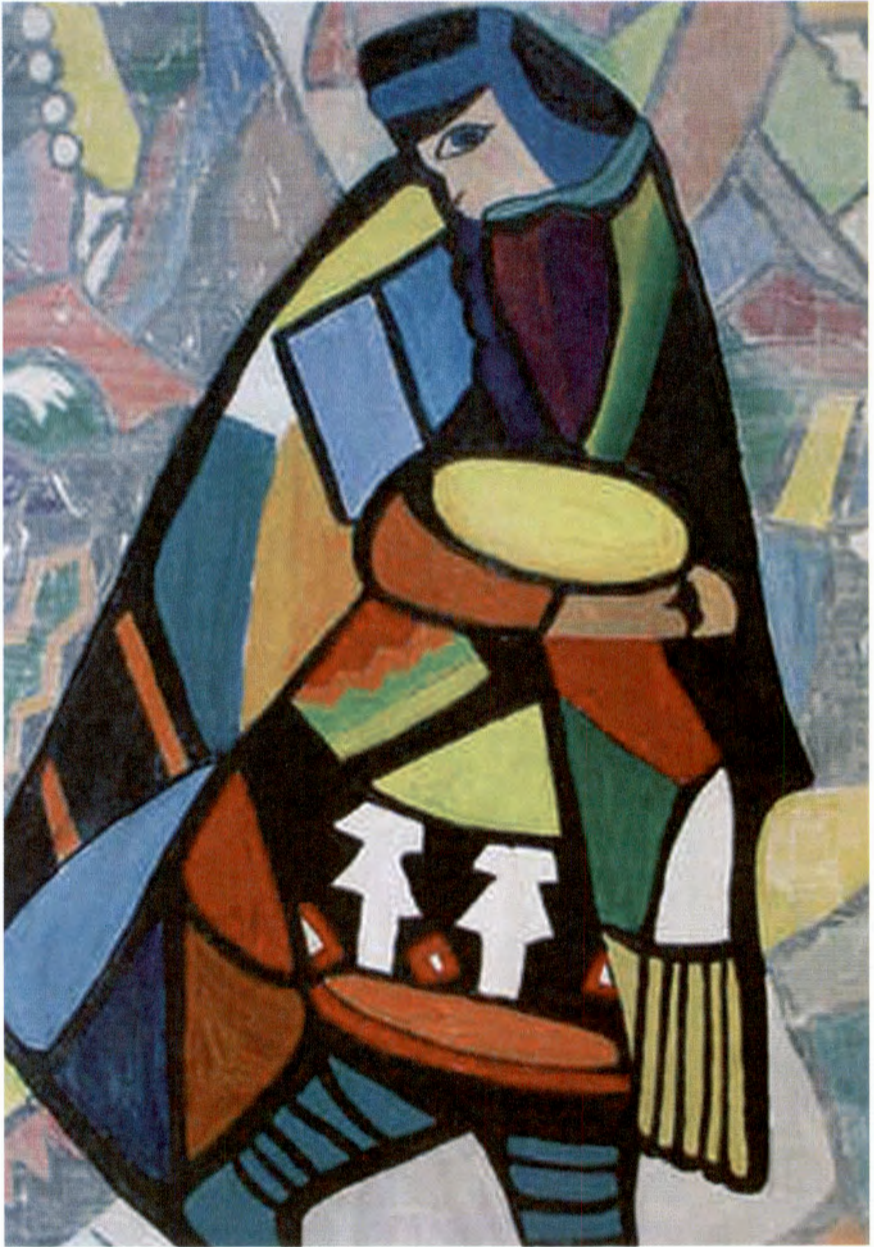




**DUCKS**

**LAURA BETH POTTINGER**

**B&W PHOTOGRAPH**



**BLUE CORN MAIDEN**

**GAIL INGALSBE**

**OIL ON CANVAS**

**THE MATRIARCH**

**MIKEL STONE**

She holds her family's torch proud and high.  
Leadership of the generations—  
She guides with wisdom and love.  
Her family, like gems, gather to create her crown.  
The torch shines ever so bright  
As she passes it from her still hand.  
And the gems in her crown shine on,  
As she delights in her reward.



**ANOTHER DAY**

**ISABEL GRAZIANI**

**PHOTOGRAPH**



**EBONY SKY**

**JO KOENIG**

ACRYLIC ON CANVAS

Look into her eyes,  
Do you see it?  
Do you see the sparkle?  
No you don't, not today,  
It is gone now and sadness has overcome.

Drooping eyes stare deep into mine,  
Her depression overwhelms me,  
Her sadness seeps into my veins,  
As I grab her wrist and cover her slashes,  
My lips touch her forehead to comfort.

Why does she always cry?  
Why does she want to die?  
No one can save her but I,  
But I don't know if I should try.

Should I let her relieve her position,  
For this life forever?  
Or will the sadness leave her sometime?  
Can I deal with her pain,  
Do I want to?

Should I patch her up and forget?  
Should I kiss her wounds?  
Should I hold her and say everything is alright?  
I can, and I will do for her.

We hold together, intertwined,  
We rock in unison and tear at the eye,  
I kiss her cheek and wish for relief,  
Same as before and same again.

Why does she always cry?  
Why does she want to die?  
No one can save her but I,  
But I don't know if I should try.





**DUFFY'S DEVOTION**

**MONICA STAFFORD**

**PHOTO COLLAGE**

She was an aspiring writer too.

A plagued writer she often said. The gremlins, she called it. That urge to write down her thoughts, sometimes in the middle of the night that wouldn't let her sleep till she called forth those black pica characters to life with her words.

And she was pretty. Forty's movie star pretty. The faded black and white Polaroid doesn't do justice.

Just look at her.

She was a star basketball player in high school because of her incredibly slinky yet nimble height. Just as she wrote from an incredible nimbleness of mind.

She wrote. About everything. Constantly.

Even though she was destined to be a housewife, then a mother, then a war time fly-girl who worked in the Wright Plant putting together airplanes while grandpa fought the Germans, she still managed to record her life. And her family's life. And her thoughts... vividly. About anything and everything.

A whole life lived and put down in words on paper and pieces of cardboard and napkins. Anything that was available to write on. She had a few of these published in little known publications. Her creations with words stand as testimony to her once active mind and her zest for life. Now they are gathered in heaps of ink and dead trees, hiding the fact that their creator lies motionless along with them. Maybe thoughtless too, in a prison encased within white matter because of a disease that has erased those phrase-bearing gremlins from her mind.

Alzheimer's is no respecter of persons. It eventually visited her too. Of all the diseases she could have contracted this was the most insidious and ironic of them all. A disease that first takes your memory and then your words from you. Maybe the gremlins just left a door open too long or some distant ancestral gene decided to work its evil just to show the rest of us that even beauty and gifts will eventually bow to the master of all.

Her extraordinary mind eventually must have tired from trying to run from the inevitable and just welcomed the freedom of nothingness. There is no more struggle to put down in words the innermost workings of her mind. No more 3 a.m. inspiration. Just an endless blank sheet on the canvas of her mind. No black words to break the monotony. No gnawing gremlins. Just perfectly peaceful, lily-white nothingness...the last thing she would have wanted.

She could have been anything she wanted to be. College basketball star? Journalist? Writer? Instead she willingly chose to be a wife and mother and our very cherished grandmother, and Life got in the way of her dreams. But luckily the gremlins stayed. Just in case she changed her mind.

Sometimes I see in her eyes that she is still there. When I visit her and she recognizes me and her frail blue hands reach out to touch my face...I see it. Some flash of that old fire inside her mind. Life and the creative power of words she can no longer speak even though she tries. And then it extinguishes just as quickly back to the dying ember that remains. She resides in a world apart from the rest of us. And the world and the rest of us are worse for it.

I wish she could see me now. Her only granddaughter about to graduate college with a degree in English. A wordsmith. That thing that wouldn't let either of us alone.

I think she would be proud.

And glad that she passed maybe a small amount of her gift on to me. I meditate on her words now since I cannot talk to her. They span the gap sometimes between our two separate worlds. And then, when I miss her the most and hear her laugh in my father's voice, I read the lines she wrote just after my grandfather died...

“Three years ago you left us,  
And now I walk alone,  
With sweet and lovely memories  
Of the years we called our own.

But now our kids and grandkids,  
With the things they say and do,  
In a little gesture or a smile,  
I catch a glimpse of you.

Although I miss you every day and  
My heart sometimes fills with pain  
I'm looking forward to the day  
When I'll see you once again."

...and I am comforted from the power of her words and the strength of her character that still can touch my life.

I can't look at this picture and be sad. Even when every day I see the stark contrast of then and now. Her black dress stands out against the white background. Like black words on fresh paper. The difference which can only be seen if both exist simultaneously in the frame of this world. You have to take both or none at all. She knows. And now I know, too.



**UNTITLED**

**ARTIST UNKNOWN**

**B&W PHOTOGRAPH**



*“But the problem is that when I go around and speak on campuses, I still don't get young men standing up and saying, ‘How can I combine career and family?’”*

Gertrude Stein  
(1874–1946)

*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”*

Margaret Mead  
(1901–1978)

*“A woman's suffering is too intimate and personal for the state to insist, without more, upon its own vision of the woman's role, however dominant that vision has been in the course of our history and our culture. The destiny of the woman must be shaped to a large extent on her own conception of her spiritual imperatives and her place in society.”*

U.S. Supreme Court decision, 1992

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