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Letters

Dear Maria Jacobs (Literary Editor):

We are writing to you with regards to a poem published in *Canadian Woman Studies* (Vol. 6, No. 4, Winter 1985). The poem in question is entitled "I Want A Stud For A Week" by Bernice Lever of Richmond Hill.

We, the undersigned, take exception to this poem in any publication but especially in a women's publication on the basis that it is pornographic. Apart from the fact that we think this poem is unsuitable for publication, we also take special exception to the poem being placed at the end of the article "Management Development for Women: The Program at George Brown College." The article addresses a serious problem of attempting to increase the number of qualified women in management positions at George Brown College. To then follow this serious article with such a vulgar and sexually degrading poem, we think defeats the point the article was trying to make.

Therefore, we suggest that more consideration be given to the value of any future poems or articles which may be considered pornographic. We suggest that such articles are not suitable for publication.

Sincerely,

June Kingshott
Lorraine Blanchard
Loreen Miskevich
Dr. Robert Gwilliam
Ruth Harrison
Grizelia Schanderl
Terry Dance

The George Brown College of Applied
Arts and Technology
Toronto, Ontario

Maria Jacobs replies:

These readers have failed to see the poem for the words. Lever does what Irving Layton says poets have to do: she shouts out loud what no one wants to hear. Admittedly, it is not a genteel poem. It is unpleasant and shocking because it gives vent to an unpleasant and shocking truth with which most women, and perhaps as many men, are confronted at some point in their lives. The truth is

that we depend on another for love and understanding; when that other deserts or fails us, we are powerless to do anything but wish passionately that we were through with dependency, once and for all.

The poem is a *cri de coeur*, a shriek from the gut if you will, against an intolerable condition. To appreciate the poem it is not enough to read merely the words. Pornography, by its nature, is two-dimensional, flat; it presents human bodies as interchangeable, divisible, dispensable. Far from pornographic, Lever's poem has depth - in fact it describes an abyss. It deserves to be heard. Please read it again.

APPLES IN A PIE

My friend makes pies

rolls the pastry thin
on floured wax paper
arranges the dough in the pie plate
adds raisins and cinnamon sugar
to the slices of apple

I have pared for her
perched on her cupboard drinking wine

My mother pressed the pastry into circles
with her glass rolling pin
fluted the edges of the crust
between her fingers
carved flowers in the lid
to release the steam

I pared the peel from each apple
into one long ribbon
to drop over my left shoulder
to see the initial of the man I would marry
outlined on the tiled kitchen floor

My husband carved our initials
in the crusts
baked pies perfect
like pictures in a magazine
followed the recipe in the Red Roses cookbook
his mother had given him

when he left home
when he left me
he packed the rolling pin

Don't put all your apples in one pie
I caution my friend

Shirley A. Serviss

Edmonton, Alberta