

STYLE

I have tried to mislead you
I am not humble at all
I have no humility
I do not fear you in the least
I pretend to be shy
I appear to hesitate
only a sham to deceive
I suck my fellow men in
and seduce them of their trust
and then
if it suits my advantage
I lower the boom
mercilessly

I lied when I said
I have no sense of myself
I am very well aware of my style

My vanity is as vast as the scope of my dreams
My heart is that of a tyrant
My arms are the arms of the executioner

It is only the failure of my plots I fear

I wish to be the voice of reality itself.

I am angry at the insurgents of women
They have pulled the covers off me
and revealed to all
the potential behind my shy grin

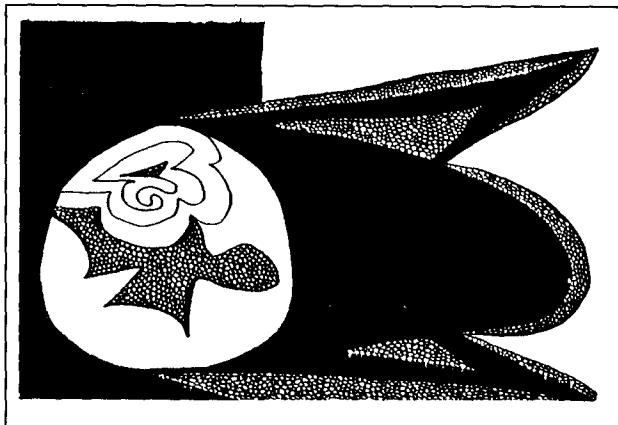


Illustration by Beth Jankola '86

all those years of docility
of being
calm
cool
collected

under any stress and strain
I will not panic in crisis
I can be counted on to be cool

and then came Women's Lib.

All my plans went up in smoke
and so

with worn out tools

I stoop
to begin again and again and
again.

Beth Jankola
South Burnaby, B.C.

Osteogenesis imperfecta

Imperfecta, delicacy of the word –
then what's perfect? the long black wisps
of baby hippy hair, the ear with its newborn fur,
the lashes, the tremorous fingers
of the broken hand
lying across the breast? the face
so dark, terrible and silent?
Nothing matters here against the fact
of this one child on its feathery pillow, tended
as seldom as possible and then
with the impossible caution of helplessness.
Whose skull in the pictures
"is in little pieces." Whose ribs
"break if you look at them."
Who was, unimaginably, born.



I am compelled to this, my line
transverses the glowing skin
as if it wept and held its breath,
and with each stroke, repents –
I have to remember.
"He has a headache," says a doctor in a dead voice.
and we are as grass.

After he died, I met a nurse on the ferry.
The sea was flat past the bright windows,
she was knitting something, we talked.
I told her I'd drawn
the one with imperfect bones.
"You mean, *glasbarnet*."
"Is that what they're called?"
the glass child.

Heather Spears
Vancouver, B.C.



Illustration by Heather Spears

Downs

The gentle word, with its taste
of soft English hills, and
blurry golden skin,
hovers over this child.



Later, it will change, in some mouths
become cruel. Words do.
But not yet.
The film on my eyes
is like silk, its warp
is the word, sweetening.

Four drains
leap to that quivering chest.
The sterile heaped machines
in unknowable order
shudder, bubble, perk, write out
tiny imperatives.
I see two hands, flat and square
with thumbs like spades.
The transverse
lines are wrong. The open palms,
condemned to life, hold up the universe.

Heather Spears
Vancouver, B.C.



Illustration by Heather Spears



Malfans, the last drawing

I did not make, though I went in, and saw
her stillness, she looked like
a gray photograph of herself. A gown
covered her outside ribcage, wherein the pressed heart
had burst or wilted – I saw
how her father had folded her hands, pleated
all the meek narrow fingers
like basketwork – taken such pains.

No, the last drawing's a sketch of her alive,
arms clenched, the visible heart
a smudge under the sternum.
She lived a time. Blind, the crural elongations
made her look old and wise, though she was small
as other babies. Her blind
mother knew her weight, heat, smell.
Important things; I did not.
Her name's erased now:
Lykke, that means joy.

Heather Spears
Vancouver, B.C.

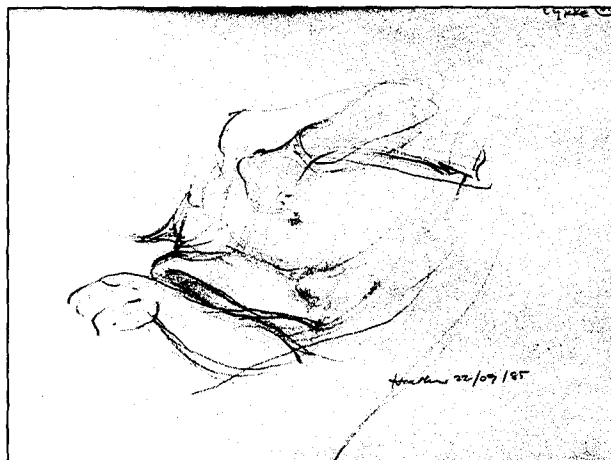


Illustration by Heather Spears

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WOMEN SPEAKING OUT

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