

L'ADOLESCENTE A LA DECOUVERTE

Pour tâcher d'éloigner ma vie de ce système si gourmand
je prends encore recours aux études . . . pour sauver ma vie.

Travailler un peu partout, des situations enrichissantes
et les autres.

Je désespère beaucoup moins ces temps-ci
peut-être que ma vie est importante?

L.J. Grandbois

There Is No Real Problem Of Pain

It's the blood that fools me.
Every month I think I'm wounded.
I clutch myself and stagger.

The first time was the worst;
I thought it was fatal.
But she patched me up
and off to play skipping.

(all she wears is gold and silver,
all she needs is a nice young man. . .)

Now that I'm a Grown Up
kisses better
don't always work
and dolls can be ripped
out of me.
I can proclaim my womanhood
proudly
but only to other women
and, even then, with a whisper

or a mask: it's that time
of the month again,
you've got a visitor,
got your monthly—

Cute names for a mess.
Our grade eight name was better:
The Curse.

Remember health classes.
We complained why don't
the boys have to get one too?

They tried to trade it off
for wet dreams
but we weren't stupid,
just one more way
of giving them an advantage.
They don't have to do dishes either.

After class the giggling boys.
What do you do when you get IT
while driving in a car?
Stop at a Kotexaco station.
Red shoes on Thursday
means you've got IT.
In grade nine they knew
because of my red chair.

Now they can tell
from my sigh of relief.
Safe for another month.
And he says god you're a
bitch what's your problem
anyway, got your period?

and frowns at that sign
of weakness.
I feel guilty about
those little spots,
that lack of control
over my own body.

On T.V. they play soppy music,
surround her with flowers
and butterflies to talk about
Feminine Protection.
Never see her struggling
in public cubicles
or cursing the empty machine.

Costs a dime, sometimes two,
and in some washrooms
there's no provision
but you can buy a safe
in any colour you like.

Sometimes I worry.
I could be bleeding to death
and not even know it.
Calmly stopping it up
and letting weeks go by
before realizing
I'm a dying woman.

Passing months remind me
of my own mortality.
The splash of red
is my fragility/stability.
There is no real problem of pain
but every month I think I'm
wounded.
I clutch myself and stagger.

Sandy Lewis