

#### Terms of existence

the cleaning lady was plump  
 irish and cheerful  
 kept young riding around  
 the rooms of strangers' houses  
 on noisy efficient machines  
 in an aura of summer pastels:  
 blue, in the cotton and the eyes  
 pink, about the skin and hair

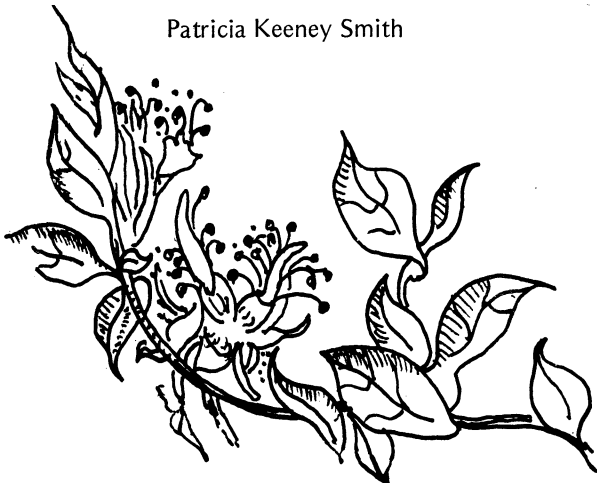
she bred public servants  
 who might also be plump  
 and cheerful and come  
 like bargains from Woolworth's.

I broke it up:  
 Will I disturb you, I asked  
 If I.....

On the instant she vanished  
 As the peremptory voice of her station  
 Pleaded NO PLEASE PLEASE  
 You must carry on as though  
 I were not here.

I have not seen her since!

Patricia Keeney Smith



#### Profile of an Unliberated Woman

I was a dish  
 to be eaten off  
 to be broken  
 I suppose to  
 fall wherever  
 I fell I wish  
 I had been  
 more (or less)  
 breakable I  
 was blank  
 white un-  
 patterned  
 and I had  
 only the usual  
 contrariness  
 the irritating  
 resistance of  
 all inanimate  
 objects.

Miriam Waddington

#### Portrait: Old Woman

Old woman, cabbage queen,  
 gourd-tapper, fortune-  
 hunter in teacups —  
 the black plumes  
 of your hatboat  
 quiver in the wind  
 tremble with secret  
 piracy as your knowing  
 hand touches without  
 gloves the supreme  
 trophy of the world's  
 cargo — peppersquash.

When you come home  
 to your rooming house  
 with the reddest apple,  
 the most grooved most  
 crenellated peppersquash,  
 the other old ladies  
 will vote you the  
 prize for picking, you  
 will be snow-white and  
 rose-red, you will be  
 royal at last,  
 queening it in the  
 communal kitchen of  
 your rooming house.

Miriam Waddington.

