



remains the constant subject of her major musical compositions.

Women's "madness" in the history of literary texts, be it a real psychic state or a label imposed on them, takes on a host of forms, but is frequently and robustly interpreted by feminist critics to be a *consequence* of their desire for—or acts of—transgression against the dominant socio-sexual order. Simplistically stated, their circumstances have rendered them the victims of patriarchy or masculocentrism. But Gold demonstrates that Eve is largely a victim of her efforts to positively *buttress* traditional social norms about masculinity, despite their detrimental effects, and even as she espouses a counter discourse.

Specifically, at one point, Eve provides for Jake a definition of the recognizably liberal feminism to which she ascribes: "...we believe that women deserve full equality—economically, legally, in every way." She notes the ways in which the dominant structure of the family benefit men, the need for its reorganization, and concludes, "it's a matter of women having self-respect, and not undervaluing themselves. And employers treating women and men as equals." And Jake, hearing (for the first time?) that feminism isn't "anti-men," says he could live with

that. And Eve is momentarily happy with that because it might indicate "not just that he could live with feminism, but whether he could live with her" (79).

As if it's easy to change one's most ingrained desires and behaviours. As if it's easy to find a partner interested in "reorganizing" relationships. In reality, even when experiencing how awful Jake was, Eve repeatedly engages in major work to prop him up. When he mentions pushing his wife into a wall once when he was frustrated, "She nodded. Not saying it was ok he'd hit her, just that she understood his frustration" (216). And she insists on constructing him as a paragon of masculinity. Initially repulsed by Jake's hairless body, "as the mind flips around when you're in love, it went from seeming to her like a defect, to being something desirable, even a sign of his innate superiority.... More spiritual and sensitive. A higher kind of Man" (207).

Gold bleakly articulates what it means to be the fragmented subject of conflicting ideologies: feminism and masculocentrism. Eve more or less uses feminism as a "pull down" menu: I want this and I want that ... but not that." Consequently, her desire for parity and self-respect is continually undermined by her desire for Jake. Through her portrayal of Eve, Gold effectively highlights the psychic consequences when the historically entrenched, culturally tenacious construction of desire is such that straight women, particularly when they possess the social and economic capital to do otherwise, continue to be attracted to the romantic lead of yore: a man with greater such capital, even if the latter, as represented by Jake, demonstrates the personality traits of a psychopath.

At the novel's resolution, Eve declares Jake "dead" to her, but is he? Or will she just keep trying (not) to get over him?

Carol Ricker-Wilson has worked primarily in teacher education, as an English/Literacy consultant at the Toronto District School Board and as a course director and instructional leader at both York University and OISE/UT. In her PhD thesis, she used current literary criticism and critical literacy to examine how women read popular romance and to what purposes.

Heather H. Thomas

Blue Ruby 3

The day ended
in red sky, blue earth
I walked across

a voice that wished
burning the glass
my father drank from

across the blue
a ruby feeling
printed on my brain—

Immunity, I lost you
naming names
as if my parents

did not lie
together and apart
in the small furnace

of my self, as if
the searing healed
my scars, the sound

my own my radiance—
began its walk

Heather H. Thomas is the author of Blue Ruby (FootHills Publishing), Resurrection Papers (Chax Press), and Practicing Amnesia (Singing Horse Press). Her work has been recognized with a Rita Dove Honorable Mention Prize in Poetry, two Gertrude Stein Awards in Innovative American Poetry, and a Virginia Center for the Creative Arts Fellowship.