

SARAH BURGESS

a FemINist maNifesto



I have violated the sacred book
and I feel good.

Sick of being dogged
by your dogma,
I won't join this
herd of terrified sheep,
won't become a drone
to the drone of inviolable
nonviable sermons.

Refusing to comply
I will not be yours to ply
to bend like a straw in the wind.
Won't join this happy homey family based on compromising
me.

Sisterhood can stifle:
just another set of sightless
clams hiding in a communal shell-
might squash
our flimsy little hearts."
perpetuating our separateness,
our Otherness.

A bunch of stunted shrubs
Leaning on each other for "strength":
a grove of weaklings
crippled by the storm of years, jealousy guarding tears, shackled by fear.

I won't be a part of you
I want to be a whole.

A tall, torn tree rising solitary
new branch reaching higher
new root reaching wider

for every sorrow.

Together we are strong, yes,
and together we stay weak.
Enough of standing together
we must now stand

Alone.

Sarah Burgess is a student of Women's Studies at the University of Victoria. Her work has previously appeared in The Claremont Review. She is currently working on defining a feminism for herself.