

changes that are taking place in your local clerical labour force, and will begin to take action to create a clerical training system.

This is a moment of large and historic challenge for the training and education community. Can we change it quickly enough to effectively assist one in four working women to equip themselves for the revolution in their work?

*Alice de Wolff has been an activist in for over 20 years. She is currently a research and policy analyst with a preference for working on issues relating to women's paid employment.*

<sup>1</sup>For instance, in one bank, all the employees had either a university degree or 15 to 20 years experience, while the formal requirements for the job were high school graduation and experience in a bank (de Wolff). In a credit card call centre, employees were required to speak several language and have high school education, but over half had at least one university degree (Bird and de Wolff).

#### References

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## JOAN BOND

### Checking Out

Ahead of me, man in black in profile  
thin head & neck curving into his shoulder  
like a coat hanger, he turns in slow motion:  
"Do you play the trumpet? Is that your son?"  
His wife, in front, flings him a look  
of dirty laundry, and leaning towards me, confesses  
"It's his medication."  
She pays the cashier for toilet paper, washcloths & Vaseline  
while he stares past me to the end of the line,  
sighs dropping from his foolscap face  
like coins into the clerk's palm.  
"What's your son's name?"  
His wife swivels him forward;  
another confession as her shoulder shoves into mine:  
"It's hell." They toddle towards the mall;  
she carries the bags, he carries her purse  
and all his memories inside it.

*Joan Bond's poetry appears earlier in this volume.*

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