

[of their] vulnerability to conflicting social messages about femininity and maturity. (213)

It was precisely for these reasons, however, that Julian, as a female mystic, was

... historically important, ... [for her] visions reflected some of the deepest spiritual currents of the life of ... [her] day and made ... [her a] respected interpreter of the ideals to which medieval secular society gave at least lip service. (Labarge 130)

<sup>1</sup>"The term was generally applied to a wide spectrum of pious women living quasi-religious lives in a way adapted to their circumstances and location" (Labarge 115).

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*Cherie Bova is a Ph.D. candidate in the Graduate Programme of Sociology at York University. Her areas of research include Gender and the Criminal Justice System and Gender and Culture.*

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## CAITHLEEN BRADY

### For St. Catherine (and intrepid women everywhere)

Thin wings expand and rise  
on scented air  
forced flight  
in autumn chestnut skies.

The dream passes from  
day's glow to night's desire  
with a single breath.

And St. Catherine's head  
leaves its Siena box  
to join finger, femur, breast bone—  
with a thousand, thousand confes-  
sions—  
to come together and  
colour the dreaming once again.

Somewhere Philosophy lies  
sleeping  
hushed by drone and drum  
of the coming millennium—  
on underbelly fastened  
to St. Catherine's wheel

—an old trick.

But wheel and woman  
once parted, keep company.  
And while wheel's groan  
Philosophy's comfort sweetens  
its revolutions  
summon *her*  
from fragmented resting  
to resist the blinded forward roll  
of another generation.

*Caithleen Brady lives and writes in Cambridge, England.*