Transformative Poetics: Refiguring the Female Subject in the Early Poetry and Life Writing of Dorothy Livesay and Miriam Waddington

Laura Jane McLauchlan

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TRANSFORMATIVE POETICS: REFIGURING THE FEMALE SUBJECT IN THE EARLY POETRY AND LIFE WRITING OF DOROTHY LIVESAY AND MIRIAM WADDINGTON

by LAURA McLAUCHLAN

a dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of York University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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UMI

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Dedication:

To Joyce Elizabeth McLauchlan

and to Raymond Albert Rogers

and to Lauchlan Wilton Rogers

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Table of Abbreviations

AS	*Apartment Seven*
CPDL	*Collected Poems: The Two Seasons*
DLSP	*Dorothy Livesay Selected Poetry: 1926-1956.*
DLUM	Dorothy Livesay Papers, Department of Archives and Special Collections, University of Manitoba Libraries.
D&N	*Day and Night* (1944)
GP	*Green Pitcher* (1928)
GW	*Green World* (1945)
JWS	*Journey With My Selves*
MEP	"Symbolism and the Metaphysical Tradition in Modern English Poetry": Sorbonne Thesis (1932) Dorothy Livesay.
MWCP	*Miriam Waddington Collected Poems*
MWNA	Thesis Miriam Waddington National Archives, "Learning to help in the functional setting of a Child Guidance Clinic," (1945).
ny	no year
RHLH	*Right Hand, Left Hand: A True Life of the Thirties* (1977)
SP	*Signpost* (1932)
SS	*The Second Silence* (1955)
UMD1	University of Manitoba, Papers of Dorothy Livesay, Personal Diary 1927-1929.
UMD2	University of Manitoba, Papers of Dorothy Livesay, Personal Diary March 1928-September 193O.
UMB3F2	University of Manitoba, Papers of Dorothy Livesay, Autograph Book, Box 3 Folder 2.

WPNA Miriam Waddington Papers, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa.

Introduction: Gendering the Subject in the Modernist Poetics of Miriam Waddington and Dorothy Livesay

The goal of this dissertation is to explore from a feminist perspective the contribution of the early work of Dorothy Livesay and Miriam Waddington to Canadian modernist poetry. The strategy I will use to pursue this goal is the linking of representations of female subjectivity in Livesay's and Waddington's unpublished life writing and published poetry, an approach to criticism which Janet Todd defines in *Feminist Literary History* as a "kind of historically specific, archival, ideologically aware but still empirically-based enterprise, using a sense of specific genre as well as notions of female experience" (7). This study will situate the gender-based articulation of female subjectivity in Livesay's and Waddington's lyric poetry and life writing within Canadian modernism. I have chosen to focus on these writers' early books of poetry in order that my discussion of female subjectivity might be productively linked to a Canadian modernism which included female poets writing about themselves and their own gender. In all but one of four chapters I limit discussion to Livesay's and Waddington's work before the mid-fifties in order to remain within the parameters of Canadian modernism.

It is my thesis that both Livesay's and Waddington's early writing constitutes a transformative poetics that signifies the weakening of patriarchal authority -- God, male poet, and father -- as the exclusive medium of cultural authority, while moving to refigure the female subject. As Chris Weedon notes: "because the subject is the crucial site of the fixing of meaning, subjectivity is also the site of potential revolution" (89). I argue that the process of textualizing a transformative "I" is central to both Livesay's and Waddington's early poetics in a period in which gender was a crucial, albeit often overlooked, factor.

For the purposes of this dissertation I define poetics as "principles promulgated or exemplified by a poet or critic" (Holman 384). The early poetics of these female writers were

not for the most part "promulgated" in theoretical papers. My central resources in this study have been their life writing and poetry. Livesay's and Waddington's early work is focused not on the objectivity idealized by 'post-Eliot' male modernists such as A. J. M. Smith, but on the subjectivity of an emerging female-centred poetics found in the work of Virginia Woolf, Katherine Mansfield, H. D., Edith Sitwell, and Amy Lowell. Sydney Janet Kaplan contextualizes Mansfield's "stylistic evolution" with regard to women's roles in the twentieth century in terms of a "social change" related to "the rise in women's expectations" (5-6), which was more pronounced in the avant-garde expatriate communities of Europe in the twenties, but which also occurred in post-colonial countries such as Canada. As Diana Relke notes in "Literary Mothers and Daughters: A Review of Twentieth-Century Poetry by Canadian Women," "until recently the important events in the history of Canadian poetry have been recorded in terms of those concerns which have preoccupied male poets," rather than taking "the rise of women's expectations" into account.

For me, at least, a first step in relinquishing a bias which had led me to think of Canadian modernism as a male movement, was to read the Canadian women poets of the period. My study of the life writing of Livesay and Waddington provided proof that gender difference was a central concern in their early writing. It followed that the largely overlooked significance of gendered subjectivity in lyric poetry of the modernist period might well lead to fresh readings of both female poets and their male contemporaries.

A great deal of male-centred literary criticism in Canada has not acknowledged the contribution of modernist female writers, implicitly placing female concerns as peripheral to the "new." I will use the hitherto buried perceptions of Livesay's and Waddington's unpublished life writing to reinforce a reading of their early lyrics as expressions of an emerging female-centred poetics within their own, always evolving, versions of Canadian modernism. When Tom Marshall wrote a series of articles on Canadian modernists for *Canadian Forum*, he noted

that Livesay "went forward to articulate the life of a twentieth-century woman. . . [and her early work] in turn looks forward to the work of Waddington." Marshall concludes that "[i]n [Livesay's] case 'modernism' has meant something more than eclectic detachment" (17). In engaging in analysis of the "something more," I will reassess the importance of both Livesay's and Waddington's contributions to Canadian modernist poetry, and, also, suggest the value of working towards a gender-inflected reconceptualization of English Canadian modernism. In focusing on female subjectivity in Livesay's and Waddington's life writing and poetry I pursue an examination of their work which will, I hope, contribute to an emerging critical literature about Canadian women's poetry in English. This study is intended to challenge critics of Canadian poetry to consider that modernist women poets have a significant, always 'highly individualistic,' contribution to make to our understanding of female subjectivity, particularly within cultural discourse concerned with the modernist Canadian lyric. My goal is to induce other scholars to reread Canadian modernist lyric poetry by both female and male poets and re-examine the way it is theorized and taught in relation to gender difference.

Two Lives

Both poets were born in Winnipeg, Manitoba and spent their early childhoods there. Livesay was born in 19O9 and Waddington in 1917. They earned undergraduate degrees in literature from the University of Toronto -- Livesay in 1931 and Waddington in 1939 -- and both earned diplomas from the School of Social Work at the University of Toronto: Livesay in 1934, Waddington in 1942 (Blain 663, 112O). Waddington entered Social Work with an avowed desire "to help change the social system" (AS 19). As their friendship began in the early 194O's Livesay and Waddington shared an interest in left-wing politics as well as a growing commitment to Canadian literature. Despite these affinities, it is important to

remember that Livesay and Waddington are from different cultural backgrounds: Livesay is a gentile insider of the Canadian literary establishment, and Waddington (born Dworkin) is a self-described "outsider" to the traditional Anglo-Saxon and Protestant establishment as a Jewish daughter of Russian immigrants (AS 36).

The decision to study their writing together is based on the desire to explore both shared concerns and differences between the two. One of their important differences in relation to Canadian modernist poetry is chronological. Livesay's first two books, *Green Pitcher* (1928) and *Signpost* (1932), represent "[t]he first books of modernist poetry broadly available in Canada, and written by a Canadian poet who was to develop a substantial reputation" (Arnason 13). Waddington's first book, *Green World* (1945), appeared during the second wave of Canadian modernism, after the hiatus in Canadian publishing precipitated by the Depression in the 1930s and by the Second World War.

When considering Livesay's contribution to Canadian modernism there is a significant gap between *Signpost* (1932) and *Day and Night* (1944). This gap can be explained with reference to Livesay's commitment to communism. Livesay joined the Communist Party in 1932, and left it in 1939 (Blain 663). Livesay chronicles her activity during this time in *Left Hand, Right Hand*. The Communist Party offered social activists such as herself a gendered critique of Canadian culture while "attempt[ing] to challenge the confining boundaries of women's lives" (Sangster 156). In hindsight, Livesay found that the Party's theoretical commitment to gender equality was misleading. Within *Journey With My Selves* she chronicles the high cost she paid in practicing "free love" with male comrades (JWS 141, 149-15O). She writes that while leftist theory maintained "we were free and equal," the practice lagged far behind (1977:124).

"Being of independent mind and rebellious nature," Miriam Waddington possessed a passionate temperament similar to that of Dorothy Livesay. However, as a Jewish-

Canadian, she knew race-hatred first hand. As a child, and later as a young woman, Waddington faced discrimination because she was Jewish. She recalls that while still living in Winnipeg she experienced anti-Semitism as part of everyday life:

> Canadian society during the twenties and thirties brainwashed every schoolchild with British Empire slogans, and promoted a negative stereotype of all Eastern European immigrants, but especially of Jews. . . . During all my primary school years, the phrase 'dirty Jew' had regularly been hurled at me from the street corners and back alleys of North Winnipeg. (AS 5)

She has written of the resentment she felt as a teenager of her own "difference from my Canadian friends whose parents had been born in Canada of English background" (AS 5). The Dworkin family moved to Ontario at a time when "(t)he Muskoka resorts advertised themselves as being for Gentiles only, and the sign NO JEWS ALLOWED was a commonplace. . . and no Jew could get a job teaching in a Canadian university until after World War II" (AS 4O). In her first books and beyond, Waddington explores female subjectivity from the perspective of what she refers to in her poem "The Bond" as the "Jewish me." Her work stakes a place for the "I" traditionally outside the dominant group in terms of both gender and ethnicity. Her first language was Yiddish and, while it is beyond the parameters of this study, the influence of this decidedly 'other' tradition on Waddington's work deserves further scholarly research. In *Apartment Seven* she notes that the Montreal Yiddish poet Ida Maza was the first "real writer" to read her poetry (AS 3). She recalls "I had been writing poetry for about four years, and my mother must have mentioned it, because Mrs. Maza at once offered to read my work" (AS 3).

Livesay married Duncan Macnair in 1937 and promptly lost her job with the B.C. Welfare Field Office since "[a]t that time no married woman could be legally employed in the professions of teaching, nursing or social work" (JWS 156). She recalls that because of the lack of paid work after her marriage, she became "deeply depressed" (JWS 156).

Biographer Lee Briscoe Thompson summarizes Livesay's writing in the 194Os and 195Os in largely negative terms:

> In personal poetry of the 194Os and 195Os. . . an increasing sense of stricture and confinement. . . weighted her feet, saddened her song. It was a predictable condition in one who was the mother of two; wife of an authoritarian and flinty older man; working woman beset by financial and professional anxieties; western Canadian female writer in a national culture dominated by an eastern male elite; and citizen of a nation with a self-image of reserve and caution. (8)

One might argue that Waddington's work is similarly "weighted" with "predictable" references to motherhood, "financial and professional anxieties" and a marriage which ends in divorce. But further investigation will reveal that such assertions lead to reductive and misleading conclusions which tend to diminish significant work.

The gritty detail of economic hardship and urban squalor, which both observed as social workers, finds its way into a significant number of poems from the 194Os and 5Os. As their friendship developed, Livesay and Waddington corresponded about balancing family and work outside the home, as well as about Canadian poetry . Their engagement with the particulars of their own lives is richly evident in their life writing. In their poetry, one finds a corresponding commitment to a non-elitist version of modernism which both registers gender difference and explores it.

"Modernism" and English Canadian Poetry: Notes from a Feminist Perspective

The term "modernist" enhances most of the literary reputations of the writers it touches, yet its definitions and chronologies are various. While Canadian literary history has lionized "The Young Turks" -- "Canada's 'angry young men' of the 192Os" (Morley 67) -- it has been slow to think through the significance of gender in the literary community

of English Canada during this period. In the first wave of modernism, Dudek and Gnarowski praise "the strong modernist individualism" (3) in lone practitioners such as Arthur Stringer, W.W. E. Ross, Raymond Knister, and Dorothy Livesay (4). The second wave of the forties in Canada was a time in which Frank Davey sees "A. J. M. Smith's version of modernism dominat[ing] Canadian poetry. . . partly through the influence of *Preview* magazine" (160).

As a female contemporary of Arthur Smith (b1902), Frank Scott (b1899) and Leo Kennedy (b1907), Dorothy Livesay shared their interest in rejecting a stale poetic tradition while drawing inspiration from sources which included a previous generation of men and women both abroad and in Canada. Livesay and the female poets who published after her, in the late thirties and forties, including Waddington, Margaret Avison, Anne Marriott, and P. K. Page, are not lesser poets than their male contemporaries. In their poetry they used the stylistic innovations of modernism as did their male contemporaries. But female, not male, subjectivity was at the centre of their literary endeavour as modernist writers.

When I use the term 'modernism' in this dissertation I refer to the "converging processes of modernization" as applied to the poetry of English Canada circa 1920-1955 (Wohl 68). I employ a chronology which stretches Canadian modernist poetry from the twenties when modernist poems by Canadian women and men were published in Harriet Monroe's *Poetry* (Chicago) (Arnason 8), moving through the late twenties and early thirties when Livesay published her first two books, and up to the mid-fifties.

David Arnason's essay "Dorothy Livesay and the Rise Of Modernism in Canada" (1988) has been particularly useful: first, it (tentatively) offers a working definition of modernism in the context of Canadian poetry; second, it counts women poets as part of the period; and third, it focuses on Livesay's achievement as a modernist poet. With Davey, Arnason recognizes that Smith had "a powerful influence in making literary reputations, not

the least of which is his own" (6). But rather than accepting Smith's version of modernism he proposes "a little literary revanchism." A critic without an explicitly feminist orientation, Arnason nevertheless includes female poets left out of many accounts: Livesay's mother Florence Randal Livesay, who both subscribed and contributed to *Poetry* (Chicago), and her friend Louise Morey Bowman (Sullivan xi), as well as Constance Lindsay Skinner (Arnason 8-12). Experimenting with free verse and unconventional themes, these poets were part of this first wave of modernism.

A published poet herself, Florence Randal Livesay gave her daughter an early exposure to modernist verse. Dorothy Livesay notes in her memoirs that her mother "bought most books and anthologies of Canadian poetry that appeared in the boom years of Canadian nationalism, the 192Os." As a result, Livesay recalls, "I knew and admired the free verse of the first Canadian imagists, Arthur Stringer and Louise Morey Bowman" (JWS 9O).

Inside Canada, criticism of modernist poetry has often stressed "the renovation of Canadian poetry along modernist lines" (Dudek and Gnarowski 24) as a matter of shifting formal properties such as free verse, irregular rhyme, or lack of rhyme, and use of vernacular speech patterns. Arnason offers the following useful formal definition of modernism in relation to poetry:

> Modernism, as I will use the term, refers to a rejection of conventional nineteenth century poetic structure. It is characterized by a movement away from rhyme and regular poetic feet. It abandons poetic archaisms such as 'thou' and 'thee' and 'wouldst." It is suspicious of the narrative mode, preferring the lyric. In its earlier manifestations, it concentrates on the individual image. Its later manifestations move it toward a concentration on the metaphor, often the tough intellectual metaphor, and towards a highly charged language. Objectivity and irony become its defining qualities, and its chief words of praise. (6)

I dispute Arnason's view that "objectivity and irony become [modernism's] defining characteristics" by suggesting, instead, that "objectivity and irony" became the "chief

words of praise" of influential critics of modernist verse such as A.J.M. Smith. However, it is true that in Livesay's *Day and Night* (1944) and *Poems For People* (1947) what might be considered markers of "objectivity" are found more frequently than in her first two books. In certain poems in these volumes, references to "man's building heart, his shaping soul" (PFP 17) and the "infant" as the upcoming "upright man" rising to "[o]ne's certain self--supreme self consciousness" (PFP 5), seem to turn away from the female as subject in favour of the universal "mankind." However, as I will show in my final chapter, in other poems such as "Serenade for Strings" and "Five Poems" female subjectivity remains the central concern. And few of the poems in either of the above-mentioned books are predominantly ironic. In Waddington's *Second Silence* (1955), the code of "objectivity" exists in unresolved tension with the intense female subjectivity of the birth poems "Night in October," and "Fables of Birth." Once again, as with Livesay, objectivity is not a dominant feature.

In the light of recent criticism on modernism as an international movement stressing women writers and historical context, I wish to temper Arnason's formal definition of Canadian modernism with a consideration of gender within modernist poetry. Borrowing from critics of modernism outside of Canada, I see modernism as ". . . the product of a many-layered culture in the process of disintegration and recomposition" (Wohl 68). In Canadian modernist poetry this "disintegration" and "reintegration" resonate with a gendered tension over who speaks, and who, or what, is silent, or silenced.

"Properly speaking," writes Brian Trehearne, "Canadian Modernism begins somewhere in [The McGill] *Fortnightly*, yes; as well as in the *Newfoundland Verse* of Pratt and the early volumes of Livesay" (252). However, by the time Trehearne arrives at this statement, late in his book-length study, he has developed a myth of the origins of Canadian modernism which all but cuts Livesay and other women poets out of the picture.

In *Aestheticism and the Canadian Modernists*, Trehearne focuses on W.W. E. Ross, Raymond Knister, F. R. Scott, and A. J. M. Smith, as well as John Glassco. Livesay falls just outside his analysis, and so, too, evidently, do the women poets of Canadian modernism's second wave. Central to Trehearne's study of the early group of Canadian male poets is the premise that "delayed Aestheticism from the 192Os" influenced them along with modernism.

He sees a division between two generations of Canadian modernists, the first influenced by the aestheticism of Wilde and the aestheticist theory of Pater; and the second, later generation influenced by the realism and social activist writing found in the work of Auden and Spender. In Trehearne's analysis, the two generations of writers who were Canadian modernists created different versions of modernism. Trehearne mentions Dudek and Layton as belonging to the second group of "delayed modern[ists]" who represent "a Modernism substantially different from the Modernism of the first group of Modernists" (314). Of the differences between generations, he has this to say:

> That they were hostile to one another is natural, given that each generation brought to the Modernist impulse antithetical tastes, the first for the Aesthetic, the second for committed realist poetry. Only by recognizing each generation in a context larger and more complex than inherited literary Modernism can we understand the Modernism of this country; and such recognition can only come when we grow sensitive to the multifarious ways in which influence, whether cultural, artistic, or political, whether mediated by time or immediate, has shaped Canadian literature from first foundations onward. (314)

Trehearne makes the valid point that "literary Modernism" changed between generations of the male poets he considers. Yet, Livesay and Waddington both tend to present challenges to the male-centred version of modernism he explores.

Literary influence is notoriously elusive. However, Livesay's early journals make numerous mention of female modernists Virginia Woolf and Katherine Mansfield. Indeed

these are the writers her early journals emphasize. While she was a younger contemporary of Scott and Knister, Livesay was probably less indebted to the aesthetic movement, as well as to male modernists such as T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, than were the male poets with whom Trehearne is concerned.

Reviewing Livesay's *Selected Poems: 1926-1956*, Northrop Frye called her "an imagist who started off, in *Green Pitcher* in the Amy Lowell idiom" (1971: 84). It should be noted, too, that while the imagist movement collapsed by the end of the First World War, Livesay went well beyond imagism. Her lyric style seems at least as indebted to the prose styles of Woolf and Mansfield as much as to Lowell. Livesay's poetry changed significantly between her first two books *Green Pitcher* (1928) and *Signpost* (1932) and *Day and Night* (1944) and *Poems For People* (1947). Frye notes that in *Day and Night* "a social passion begins to fuse the diction, tighten the rhythm, and concentrate the imagery" (1971: 85). In grappling with "the modernist thesis of cultural break" (Wohl 72) and "the imaginative proximity to revolution" (Williams 106) both Livesay and Waddington are quintessentially modernist.

Numerous critics still pursue a view of modernism -- by emphasizing the accomplishment of T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and James Joyce -- as "strictly that of the male line" (Sidney Janet Kaplan 9). Evidently following this androcentric bias and applying it to English Canadian poetry, Trehearne refers to Dorothy Livesay only three times, and to Waddington not once. For me, the excellence of his contribution to Canadian criticism in *Aestheticism And The Canadian Modernists* (1989) is undercut by his inability to consider the modernism of female poets. In writing of the second wave of Canadian modernism in *Canadian Modernists*, Frank Davey, too, seems to demonstrate an unavowed preference for male poets of the period, for just as Trehearne writes of the first wave of Canadian

modernism as being by and about men, so Davey writes of the second wave as if the men are, once again, the only important contributors.

In their own published life writing, both Livesay and Waddington have a different perspective as they look back upon the making of modernist poetry in Canada. To use Waddington's phrase of Livesay to apply to them both, each "had the development of modern Canadian poetry passionately at heart" (AS 20). The continuing sense of "imaginative proximity to revolution" (Williams 106) informs Livesay's *Day And Night* (1944) and *Poems For People* (1947) and Waddington's *Green World* (1945), and *The Second Silence* (1955).

In Livesay's two books published in the forties, female subjectivity and class inequality are interwoven with coming to terms with the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War and World War II. The reaction against T.S. Eliot's version of modernism -- where Livesay had, as critic, found "an absolute lack of social value" (RHLH 64) -- is manifest in her subsequent poetry. Livesay led the way within Canada in turning away from Eliot's and Sitwell's high modernism. And the reaction against high modernism was something Livesay and Waddington shared.

In Waddington's *Apartment Seven* "modernism" is referred to in the context of the second wave period, from the early 1940s into the 1950s, a time when English-Canadian nationalism and modernism fused. Waddington portrays a dynamic Canadian community of poets who sought to make their poetry "new." She recalls a vital literary community of men and women in three Canadian cities: Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver (AS 24).

Gillian Hanscombe and Virginia Smyers ask why when "women were not a sidelight of the literary production of the period. . . . the men's names have emerged since as the stars?" (xvii). Suzanne Clark suggests, as if in direct response, that the emergence of a broad range of critical work favouring male writers as interested in 'ideas' has been a

crucial factor in forming a modernist canon. She notes that in the United States modernist writing came under the scrutiny of "the modernist criticism" of the New Critics such as John Crowe Ransom who "used aesthetic anti-sentimentality to make distinctions, to establish a position of authority against mass culture." Clark states that "mass culture was a feminized enemy they saw as powerful and dangerous" and suggests that the New Critics conflated sentimentalism with the traditional, and the traditional with the feminine.

In Canada, I find this "feminized enemy" in the critical work of A.J.M. Smith and in the poetry of F.R. Scott. Smith's version of modernism, as he wrote in 1936, sought to toughen the "soft heart," "soft soul," and "soft head" of "the Canadian poet" (Dudek and Gnarowski 39). Smith called for a poetry which was "objective, impersonal, and in a sense timeless and absolute" (Dudek and Gnarowski 40). Here is Clark's critique of this position as it was manifest in "the American modernist literary criticism" of the New Critics:

> In order to avoid admitting the rhetorical situation of literature, which engages it inevitably in culture, history, and desire, the American modernist literary criticism endorsed a formalism which avoided ideology by calling women ideological, and rejected their sensible attachments to the everyday. (6)

From Clark's perspective, this led to a "double bind" for female modernist writers. And in Canada the "soft heart" stereotype associated with women writers came also to be associated with what Smith called the "romantic" and "conventional" "bulk" of traditional Canadian verse (Dudek and Gnarowski 38). The critique of the "sentimental" customarily conflated a "love idealized, sanctified, and inflated" with femininity, while for an influential critic like A. J. M. Smith, modernist poetry was associated with stereotypically masculine qualities valuing intellect over emotion. Smith wrote in 1936 that "[t]he fundamental criticism that must be brought against Canadian poetry as a whole is that it ignores the intelligence" (39). "[I]ntelligence" was a quality New Critical writing tended to claim for

the male poet and a few women such as Marianne Moore (1887-1972) and Elizabeth Bishop (1911-79) who did not, explicitly at least, focus on female subjectivity as did poets such as Edna St Vincent Millay (1892-1950) and Sara Teasdale (1884-1933).

Numerous critics approved the less female-centred aspect of Livesay's writing after *Signpost*. For example, in *The White Savannahs* (1936), W.E. Collin commented that "[s]he has developed beyond her egocentrism to devote herself to a human cause" (153). In praising a shift from the "Narcissus-like posture" of contemplating [female] subjectivity to political poems which spoke of "Man" and human beings as "brothers," Collin prioritized the thematic concerns of socialism as superior to a nascent feminism. When Livesay wrote poems which spoke of "man" and "mankind" she reverted to a language which was easier for her male critics to read and less objectionable to those influenced by new criticism's admonitions against feminine sentimentality.

The combination of affiliation with male-dominated radical politics, the poetic influence of Auden and C. Day Lewis, and critics representing New Criticism, put the North American female modernist of the thirties and forties in a difficult position. Waddington recalls:

> . . . at University, I met the doctors and saints referred to in Omar Khayyam's *Rubaiyat*, and most of them -- during the late thirties and forties -- were believers in the new criticism. Some of the so-called new ideas that floated around in those days are by now clichés: that literature is a world unto itself, that a poem should not mean but be, that the form itself is meaning enough and it is therefore irrelevant to search for a deeper human core. There was also the notion -- very widespread -- that the poem should be detached from all personal experience, that the writer should be distanced and objective, that the 'I' should not intrude too often or too passionately. Also, the more easily you could relate the poem to myth, theology, or traditional works of literature --but not to politics or social issues -- the better and the more universal the poem.
> (AS 166).

The above quotation makes it clear that Waddington defined her poetics in opposition to the male critics who espoused the "distanced and objective" stance within lyric.

Clark represents the difficulty of the woman writer of this period in terms of contradiction linked to an "unwarranting of feminine authority" and coming up against the promise of a new freedom. In responding to the challenge of the period she suggests that modernist women "worked to change gendered identity":

> Modernism for women represents. . . a doubleness as well as a double bind: not only the unwarranting of feminine authority but a rupture of conventional womanhood that promises freedom. Women such as Emma Goldman or Edna St. Vincent Millay or Louise Bogan or Kay Boyle. . . have been happy to seize the moment to escape from the confining categories of gender. Modernist women worked to change gendered identity within writing. We should not risk missing the extent to which *women* were the modernist revolutionaries. (8)

Although Clark surmises that "modernism invented. . . [a] writing which would rupture. . . conventions," she insists that "it did not make it possible for the feminine subject within language" (7-8). The modernist woman writer had a particular, heavily gendered, yet often critically "unmentionable" struggle if she sought to explore the subjectivity of her own sex (Clark 8).

As I have noted, the broad picture of modernism in Canada as formulated by A. J. M. Smith, Louis Dudek and Michael Gnarowski, Frank Davey, and Brian Trehearne, emphasizes male modernist poets and critics over women poets. Continued reluctance on the part of feminist critics to engage with periodization when writing about female poets may lead to a lasting neglect of the women poets' work. Many critics have recognized Livesay as a significant poet, and there are now a few book-length studies of her work, including Lee Briscoe Thompson's *Dorothy Livesay* (1987), and Nadine McInnis's *Poetics of Desire* (1994), as well as Sandra Hutchinson's Ph.D. dissertation "Form and Vision in the Poetry of Dorothy Livesay, 1919-1984" (1986). Nonetheless, there is no

book-length study of her role as a leading Canadian modernist. Waddington's contribution as a modernist poet has received even less attention than Livesay's. And to date there is no book entirely about female modernist poets in Canada. As Frank Davey has observed, critics should not overlook "the power of the act of naming" (1988: 106) when using terms such as 'modernism' and 'postmodernism.' In applying the term "modernism" to Livesay and Waddington, I mean to wrest some of "the power" of this particular term for Livesay and Waddington and, perhaps, in future work, for other poets such as Margaret Avison, P. K. Page, and Anne Marriott.

The Modernist Lyric

The "lyric" as a genre, and the modernist lyric in particular, are notoriously resistant to definition. There are two important aspects of lyric relative to Livesay and Waddington, and the concerns of this study: first, its traditional association with music, and second, its efficacy as a vehicle for the speaker's response to experience. As David Lindley points out, "[f]or critics in all periods the etymological derivation of 'lyric' from the lyre has furnished one element of the definition of lyric as universal" (1). In the "Foreword" to her *Collected Poems: The Two Seasons*, Livesay states "[w]hatever the cause, always, I believe, I hear music behind the rhythm of words" (v). Similarly, in her essay "Song and Dance" she writes that "[b]ehind all poetry is the song" (40), and she recalls her mother playing nursery rhymes on the piano while she and her sister sang along. The Ukrainian immigrant girls employed in the house sang Ukrainian songs which her mother translated and published (41). The songs which she writes about are in women's voices. This traditional association of the lyric with these songs may have helped to make Livesay's poetry a female-centred medium. At the same time, it was not in rhymed poetry, but in free

verse, in the rhythms of speech, that Livesay felt most at home. She writes in "Song and Dance":

> I was happiest breaking into free verse. . . . This free expression was suited to my own rhythmic sense and was dictated, no doubt, by my own breath groups. . . . I always said the poem aloud. (43)

Her own singing voice was less than perfect. She recalls "I could not sing beautifully or keep my voice true" (41). In poetry, therefore, she made a "song" which used the speaking voice.

Livesay's "Song and Dance" states: "I. . . tend to shy away from academic poets and academic critics. They miss the essence. The essential remains: Song and Dance." As an aspiring poet, Livesay read an older generation of Canadian poets with attention to the formal qualities of lyric. She was particularly sensitive to antiquated language and rhyme by rote, "nearly suffocating with suppressed laughter" when Wilson MacDonald gave a reading of a poem which rhymed 'Little Brown Dee' [her own nickname] with 'To whit to whee!" (JWS 98).

In Waddington's early manuscripts the lyric is a vehicle for entering "a world all my own" (WPNA 1933). That "world" is not simply a site of girlish fantasy and escape. In her unpublished journals, English and Yiddish lyrics are recorded side by side. Delight in the musicality of poetry is evident in her earliest rhymes. But in her first book *Green World*, the rhythms of speech predominate. Waddington writes with admiration of Souster, Livesay, and Marriott "givi[ing] voice" (AS 23) to the Canadian "man [and woman] in the mass [sic]" (AS 23). Her own lyric voice presents "ordinary, anonymous people who would never make the headlines," people who speak without "English accents" (AS 32).

Waddington grew up conversant with both North American and British lyric poetry, and with the Yiddish tradition of lyric. At Ida Maza's apartment in Montreal she recalls as a school-girl listening to poets reading their poems: one of them likening the heart to "the jumbled untidiness of an unmade bed" (AS 5). In her first book of poetry the shadow of the Jewish Diaspora and the holocaust are interwoven with a commitment to a new kind of poetry: a lyric which explores subjectivities which were quite emphatically not representative of a privileged group. In Waddington's first two books one finds the "credibility of colloquial speech as an alternative to. . . impersonal modernism" (Arnason 6); qualities which Davey (although not referring to Waddington) attributes to the "mainline American modernism of Pound, Williams, Blackburn, Olson, Corman" (Davey, 1980, 174). Whatever her literary influences, for Waddington colloquial speech and modernism were interwoven: recent history and literature belonged together.

Two further elements in the slippery history of the modernist lyric seem noteworthy with regard to Livesay's early work: first, the advent of imagism; and second, the implications of a reaction against what has come to be called high modernism. As Waddington makes clear in her essay "Apartment Seven" she, too, was very aware of "the movement of modernism" (AS 24). Her extensive use of both free verse and colloquial speech in *Green World* underscore a reaction against high modernism, shared with poets such as Livesay and Souster.

Imagism is the initial "poetic vogue" which launched modernism between 1912 and 1917 (Abrams 82). Under the tutelage of Ezra Pound, imagism provided a foundation of "Don'ts" for modernist poets to observe. Abrams offers helpful crib notes on this movement:

> Imagism was a poetic vogue that flourished in England and, even more vigorously, in America between 1912 and 1917. It was organized by a group of English and

> American writers in London, partly under the poetic theory of T. Hulme, as a revolt against what Ezra Pound called the 'rather blurry, messy. . . sentimentalistic mannerish' poetry at the turn of the century. Pound, the first leader of the movement was soon succeeded by Amy Lowell. . . . (82)

Livesay's early lyrics are particularly marked by the influence of a verbal compression which we have come to associate with imagism. Waddington's work was less influenced in this way. However, true to the imagist credo, her first book used the rhythms of speech rather than mechanical rhyme. At the same time, it should be noted that when *Green World* was published in 1945, imagism was already long-finished.

In her earliest published work, Livesay moved away from the "conventional" in versification through both free verse and experimentation in other poetic forms. Lorraine York's essay "A Thankful Music: Dorothy Livesay's Experiments With Feeling and Poetic Form" is helpful in pointing out Livesay's early, and continuing, experiments with poetic form. Rather than identifying completely with imagism, Livesay began her career as a published poet with an experimental treatment of various forms including the ballad and the sonnet. But even when working in these forms, she tends to assert a new "freedom" through disregarding traditional rules. Where ballads are traditionally "impersonal" (Abrams 12) her ballad "Perversity" in *Green Pitcher* emphasizes the plight of a particular female, and, as York points out, whereas traditional sonnets follow a rhyme scheme, Livesay's "Sonnet for Ontario" in *Signpost* "follows no regular rhyme pattern" (16). For her part, Waddington displayed less interest in formal experiment in her first two books. She accepted free verse as the form of her own day.

In *The New Poetry* (1917) editors Harriet Monroe and Alice Corbin Henderson called for "concrete and immediate realization of life" quoting Yeats's call for "a style like speech, as simple as the simplest prose, like a cry from the heart" (Rosenthal 18-19). This

new "style," "get[ting] rid not only of rhetoric but of poetic diction" (Yeats in Rosenthal, 18) is present in Canadian modernism in the work of Livesay, Sutherland, Souster, and Waddington. In *Green World* (1945) one finds the extension of subject matter to urban life, an extension which Lindley describes as one of the hallmarks of lyric modernism (75). This significant element within the modernist lyric tradition has been rather muted in Canadian literary history.

High modernists theorized modernist form for their own elite group of readers. Arnason notes that by 1932 Livesay "separates herself from what has come to be seen as the mainstream of modernist writing. . . typified by Eliot -- high modernism" (16). In "Decadence in Modern Bourgeois Poetry," a 1936 radio talk included in *Right Hand, Left Hand* Livesay spoke against "The Waste Land" in particular, and high modernism in general, proclaiming that "bourgeois art is dead" and that "a new art, the proletarian is being born" (67). In reaction against high modernism Livesay's and Waddington's early poetry tends to stay within lyric form and within the rhythms of speech. Issues of "cultural and political responsibility" engaged both Livesay and Waddington in their poetry of the late thirties and forties. They eschewed the aesthetic poets' reverence for "art for art's sake." Both of them were attracted to the "revolutionary impulse in modernism" played out in "externally-referential poetry."

In *The Auden Generation*, Samuel Hynes gives a summation of Day Lewis's account of the "problem of the modern poet." Quoting Day Lewis, Hynes notes "the problem is seen as a personal one: 'how does the individual poetic mind relate to the conditions of the world outside?'" (43). Livesay and Waddington read Day Lewis with avid interest. But where Auden's generation of male poets assumed in the common usage of their time, that "mankind" encompassed all humankind Livesay's and Waddington's lyrics share the additional complexity of a focus on female subjectivity. In their work in the

forties and fifties, Livesay and Waddington also adopted these 'universal' terms in their poetry. As university students, they had been taught to refer to both a writer and a reader, when speaking in the abstract, as "he." Their acceptance of this usage in both poetry and critical writing underscores the gender bias of an education within patriarchal culture which many of us educated decades later were also taught to regard as neutral.

For me, gendered subjectivity is a central issue in the Canadian modernist lyric. Where male poets such as F.R. Scott assumed -- both by way of polemic and in verse -- that the lyric speaker in the modernist poem was the modern male, and that modernism belonged to "the boys," female poets such as Livesay and Waddington occupied, as female poets, the position of outsiders. They were doubly chastened by a colonial mind-set which took it for granted that all the truly great poets in English were born and raised in the Old World. Against the premise that the poetic subject was male, they had the example of Emily Dickinson, as well as a first generation of modernist writers such as H. D., Sitwell, and Woolf and many lesser known others.

The rejection by Canadian modernist poets of formal elements such as predictable rhyme, antiquated diction, and regular poetic feet, may be productively linked to the rejection of a cultural past which confined women to secondary status, and the poets of Canada to a colonial and patriarchal past. As young female poets, Livesay and Waddington adopted the modernist impulse to 'make it new' within lyric poetry and extended it to their own emerging feminism. The modernist lyric was a central means to explore a rupture with the old world in their own textual terms.

Female Subjectivity and the Author

Over the past thirty years theoretical writings of French critics Jacques Derrida, Roland Barthes, and Michel Foucault have challenged North American and British literary critics to interrogate the liberal humanist notion of unified subjectivity, centre, and self. Critics refer to the dismantling of these concepts with a range of terminology including poststructuralism, modernity, and postmodernism. Precise definitions of each of these separate terms is difficult in itself and yet most would now agree that, taken together, these terms represent theoretical stances which challenge notions of unified subjectivity, and of 'Truth,' whether vested in "God" or in "Man."

Alice Jardine's *Gynesis: Configurations of Woman and Modernity* (1985) approaches the challenge of post-structuralism from the position of an engaged feminism. She includes post-structural theory under the umbrella of modernity, warning North American feminists that as long as we do not recognize new kinds of artificial and symbolic constructions of the subject, we will be engaging in dated polemics. The immediately positive side of engaging with post- structuralist theory has been the calling into question of traditionally male-centred notions of authority. As Sally Robinson points out "the deconstruction of unitary identity has meant dismantling the humanist fiction of Western Man as universal subject and of Woman as the negative term which guarantees his identity" (Robinson 3). From this perspective, post-structuralist thought seems to dissolve the concept of "Western Man" and, one might think, to unfetter those interested in female subjectivity to pursue their subject. However, as numerous feminist critics including Jardine have noted, "Theory" also presents feminist scholars with challenges which go beyond any simple notion of liberation from patriarchal culture.

Working "at the site where feminist criticism and post-structuralism are presently engaged in dialogue," Cheryl Walker explores post-structuralism's questioning of the "author" with reference to the work of both Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault (553). In the following passage, and throughout her article "Feminist Literary Criticism and the Author," a discussion of Foucault's work is central:

> According to Foucault, in his essay "What Is an Author?" (1969), th[e] authorial presence has disappeared. In the modern period the author is an effacement, an absence of the personal, who writes him-or-herself out of the text, through the strategies of fictive composition. Nonetheless, we still have what Foucault calls "the author function," which allows us to classify "a Woolf novel," for instance, as a different kind of entity than a novel by Jane Austen. The author-function is not a subjective-presence but a signature. . . . (Walker 551)

Walker adopts Foucault's term "the author-function" while arguing, as a feminist critic of poetry, for "re-animating the author [and] preserving author-function" (553). The terminology -- "author-function" and "re-animating the author" -- marks the self-conscious separation which post-structural theory makes between the one who signs author and the finished text.

In *Sexual/Textual Politics* (1985), Toril Moi suggests that in accepting the traditional view of the author as "the source, origin and meaning of the text" one replicates the stance of "the patriarchal critic":

> For the patriarchal critic, the author is the source, origin and meaning of the text. If we are to undo this patriarchal practice of authority, we must take one further step and proclaim with Roland Barthes the death of the author" (Moi 62).

Post-structuralist theory opens source texts -- in this dissertation life writing and poetry -- to many possible readings, none absolute. Despite Moi's prescription for what "we must" "undo" a significant number of feminist critics have refused to accept the death of the female author. In "My Statue, My Self," Elizabeth Fox Genovese reflects on a privileged

elite of "white male authors" who have, to her mind, unfairly proclaimed the death of both the author (Barthes) and unified notions of subjectivity (Derrida, Barthes, Foucault) not just for other white male authors, but also for women and men outside the privileged group (18O).

Social theorists such as Jean Baudrillard (1977) have described late modernity in terms of the "political economy of the sign," and Jean-Joseph Goux (1991) makes similar claims in describing it in terms of a "culture of substitution." In their analyses, Baudrillard and Goux link the increasingly socially-impoverished conceptions of human identity leading to discourses such as that on the "death of the subject" to the erosion of social relations by increasingly dominant categories which were initially associated with economic realities, but which have come to pervade all forms of late modern culture under such rubrics as globalization. It is therefore no coincidence, they argue, that the severing of the relation of the signifier and the signified, the separation of the author from the text occurs simultaneously with the free rein of economic value which floats around the world in money markets, without inhering in any specific material commodity. There is therefore a "triumph of the code" of valuing signs which erase mutually-dependent and contextually-specific forms of social relations. A case can therefore be made that -- in linking feminism and critiques of capitalism as Livesay and Waddington both do -- resistance to patriarchy as well as to the increasing domination of economic categories can form the basis of a female subjectivity which posits a transformative viability that challenges structures of late modernity, as well as perspectives like post-structuralism, which replicate, rather than challenge, these forms of domination.

In dealing with both life writing and poetry of Livesay and Waddington, I have found no easy answers to how one considers the author, or deals with subjectivity. It does, however, seem fairly clear that the "I" in an archival journal by Livesay or

Waddington usually refers, in a more 'proximate' manner, to use a narratological term, to the human agent or author. Influenced by post-strucuralist theory, and yet drawn, as a North American feminist critic of women's poetry, to affirm the "importance of difference" and "agency" of women writers, Walker sketches what she refers to as a "third position" between whole-hearted affirmation of the death of the author and subject, and the refusal to engage with such concepts (553). She writes:

> What we need instead of a theory of death of the author, is a new concept of authorship that does not naively assert that the writer is an originating genius creating aesthetic objects outside of history but does not diminish the importance of difference and agency in the responses of women writers to historical formations. (56O)

It is the "historical formations" of late modernity which Livesay and Waddington -- in both their emerging feminism and the socialist beliefs -- make more problematic than do the male poets of Canadian modernism.

"The power of language belongs with recognition of the bodily roots of subjectivity" (Braidotti 9O). While accepting these "bodily roots" I find it useful to make a distinction between "real-life women" (Braidotti 9O) and the cultural texts we may generate. When I use the phrase female subjectivity in this dissertation, I refer to a construction of words and, yet, at the same time, because of the simultaneous focus on life writing, these words refer backwards and forwards in time to the real world, a site of feminist struggle. In other words, I am countering the increasingly decontextualized world of late modernity with the specifics of the link between poetry and life writing so as to challenge that decontextualization in a feminist poetics.

In *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory* Chris Weedon notes: "because the subject is the crucial site of the fixing of meaning, subjectivity is also the site of potential revolution" (89). Recent critical works by Liz Yorke and Shari Benstock display

an engagement with post-structuralism, postulating that language constructs subjects-in-process. "Language," writes Benstock "is not merely a social-cultural medium of communication (a tool) but the very fabric of subjectivity" (17). This "fabric of subjectivity" is of central concern in this study. As literary critic Liz Yorke observes in *Impertinent Voices*, "the female body is always mediated in and through language - in relation to the social/political world- as well as in psychological relation to others" (Yorke 12). If language has been a site of oppression for women, writing on female subjectivity can be explored as a site of struggle and potential liberation. With Di Brandt, Liz Yorke, and Rosi Braidotti, I see poetry playing a role which rejects "the traditional vision of the subject as universal, neutral, or gender-free and the binary logic which sustains it" (Braidotti 90).

In a brief review of central works of feminist poetry criticism in North America, Walker avows that, notwithstanding her commitment to post-structural theory, she shares with Alicia Ostricker, and Donna Bennett, and others, a belief in "the role of literary expressions in bringing to consciousness conflicts buried in the poet's psyche" (563). From her perspective as a feminist critic, Yorke asserts the imperative of claiming "the powerful transformational medium of poetry in an ongoing process of re-vision and re-interpretation within cultural forms" (13) . In my reading of Livesay's and Waddington's work, poetry is a site around which discussion of the hitherto "invisible" or "hidden" may occur so as to enrich our appreciation of an earlier period while connecting us to the struggles of a previous generation.

Life Writing and Female Subjectivity

As Barbara Godard notes in "Ex-centriques, Eccentric, Avant-Garde: Women and Modernism in the Literatures of Canada," feminist critics have worked for "the establishment of a broad definition of the canon of Canadian literature to include para-literary forms, travel writings, journals and letters" (58). Letters and journals, may, in fact, be a means by which women writers learn to transgress, to challenge what Waugh calls a "norm of human-ness" which has not included 'lady poets.' As Waugh notes:

> For the woman writer, the. . . implication is that, if 'I' is spoken or positioned in a discourse where subjectivity, the norm of human-ness, is male, then 'I' is. . . displaced, 'I' can never in any material or metaphysical sense be at one with myself. (11)

In considering the life writing of Livesay and Waddington together with their poetry, I will examine these journals and letters both within the parameters of this broader definition of English Canadian literature, and as a medium which locates female subjectivity as a basis for resisting dominant forms of expression.

In Waddington's work this mediated record is linked to what her essay "Outsider: Growing Up in Canada" describes as "two cultural aspects -- Yiddish and English Canadian -- (which) did not come together in me for many long years. They simply existed side by side and I devised two codes of behaviour, one to fit each world" (AS 40). The trouble she found in both "worlds" led her to write poetry: "(t)hat's why I also had to create a third world, my own invented one. . ." (AS 38). As Patricia Duncker notes in *Sisters & Strangers: An Introduction to Contemporary Feminist Fiction* (1992):

> The experience of being forced into a particular marginal position does have implications for a woman who finds herself writing from the rim of the circle. Her relationship to the language she uses, to the forms she inhabits, will be different from the acknowledged legislators of the literary traditions. Her position will affect how she is published or why she remains unpublished -- and how she is read. (ix)

Waddington produced work which is marked by the spectre of a dominant, often hostile, WASP establishment against which the female subject is both marginalized and reactively poised to speak as rebel outsider.

Recent critiques of Livesay's letters and poetry by Pamela Banting and Jennifer Henderson present Livesay as, to use Banting's phrase, "Daddy's girl" who, within the family romance, plays Athena to her father's Zeus. Centred as it is on the process of female subjectivity, my reading finds a transformative emphasis in Livesay's life writing, whereas Banting's reading finds a static "old story," in which patriarchy is reinscribed. To the contrary, I argue that in setting out to be a poet Livesay entered a territory where her father, a lover of prose, was no longer in control of the "girl."

The near invisibility of female poets in Canadian modernism is attributable only in part to the failure of writers and critics who, if not themselves male, have been trained to valorize males and look for the significance of any period in men's lives and their work. It has also to do with the perception of a lack of connection among women poets during both the first and second waves of Canadian modernism. When I spoke to P. K. Page after a reading she gave at York University in the fall of 1993, she noted that as a young woman poet she felt little, or no, sense of connection with other women poets. Phyllis Webb, who knew Waddington in Montreal in the late 1940s, makes a similar observation in a recent interview.[1]

Hanscombe and Smyers suggest that for female modernist writers in England "[i]t is [the] simultaneous breaking with both literary and social conventions which constitutes the radicalism common among them which makes it possible for them to form a network" (11). Within Canada the links between female poets seem to have been more tenuous in the first half of the twentieth century. In part this may have been due to a perception, explicit in life writing, that 'Men' would always be the important ones. Alliance with influential

male poets and critics was vital to a woman poet's success. However, Livesay and Waddington shared a background in both social work and affiliation with radical political interests. Their early life writing forms a kind of path of connection leading up to their correspondence which begins in the mid-forties. The case I make in this dissertation is that Livesay and Waddington began the process of politicizing female subjectivity in terms of gender. Life-writing provides a textual ground from which we may delineate an emerging sense of resistance to traditional femininity.

Waddington refers to transforming modern poetry in a passage from *Apartment Seven* about Dorothy Livesay, whom she first met in the 194Os:

> . . . she believed that the day had come for modern poetry to proclaim itself in Canada. We all believed that the colonial attitudes and habits of mind of the poets who were then dominating the Canadian Authors Association and their official publication, *Canadian Poetry Magazine*, needed to be completely transformed. And we believed we were the ones to do it. (AS 2O)

Her written statements recognize Livesay both as deeply committed to her own work, and having "the development of modern Canadian poetry passionately at heart." (AS 2O) In addition to Livesay, Waddington's female friends included aspiring writers such as Margaret Avison and Anne Marriott. Waddington recalls Livesay as a slightly older and more established poet who became her friend in the early forties:

> Dorothy Livesay and I. . . met and corresponded. . . . Let's say Dorothy Livesay was very encouraging in those days. . . . I did look up to her, yes, very much, I would say. I felt very honored that she bothered with me. She always came and visited us. . . . She sent (her work), I still have it. And she would send poems as she wrote them. She'd send them. She was a great writer of letters. Oh my God, I must have written. . . . She didn't keep all my letters only some of them. . . but I wrote her hundreds. (Taped Interview with LM)

I will trace this literary friendship of over thirty-five years through an examination of fifty-three letters by Livesay in the Waddington Papers at the National Archives and twenty-four letters by Waddington in the Livesay Papers at the University of Manitoba.

As Josephine Donovan writes in "Towards a Women's Poetics," friendships can play a vital part in strengthening the female artist's resistance to the dominant male culture's diminishment of women. Donovan focuses on the importance of female friendship among writers. In her words: "For the silenced other to begin to speak, to create art, she must be in communication with others of her group in order that a collective social construction of reality be articulated" (101). Further attention to the archivally-placed letters of female poets during the modernist period may yet yield evidence of an emerging female community of writers and enrich our understanding of hitherto neglected connections between the "cultural, artistic" and "political" (Trehearne 314) as they apply to both male and female poets. In examining what I call the 'I of ink,' that is, the 'I' of life writing which is not necessarily published, together with the 'I of print' in the poetry, I am seeking to explore the troubling, yet vital, links between life and lyric poetry.

Self and (M)others

Gayle Greene observes in *Changing Subjects: The Making of Feminist Literary Criticism* that "(f)eminism happened when women learned to say "I" (11). In my own "say(ing)" of "I," modernist female poets such as Livesay and Waddington have played a vital role. The stylistic evolution of both Livesay and Waddington was undoubtedly influenced by the work of older modernist writers such as Mansfield (1888-1923) and Woolf (1882-1941). Their writing was also influenced by social change pertaining to Canadian women. The work of Nellie McClung (1873-1951) and Emily Ferguson Murphy

(1868-1933) had helped to make a previous generation aware of maternal feminism, which Janice Newton describes in terms of an emphasis on "women's special maternal role (not women's autonomy)" (1995: 9). Neither Livesay's nor Waddington's early life writing and poetry give any evidence that, as young women, they considered women a morally superior sex, as did McClung. Their life writing does, however, attest to the fact that both writers sought political equality with men. As a graduate student in Western Canadian history at the University of Manitoba I had studied the social thought of Nellie McClung and Emily Ferguson Murphy. McClung reflected the values of a still colonial Canada when she claimed "Alfred, Lord Tennyson" as "our poet" (McClung 3O1). This earlier generation of Western Canadian feminist writers seemed at pains to record that they were, to use McClung's somewhat disingenuous phrase, "simple-minded, hopeful people" (3O1). Livesay notes in her memoirs that by the 192O's "Nellie McClung and Emily Murphy (Janey Canuck) were already legendary. Through the[ir] efforts. . . Manitoba in 1916 became the first province to grant women the vote" (JWS 5O). However, commitment to women's issues was always more complex for socialist women. As Janice Newton makes clear in "The Alchemy of Politicization: Socialist Women and the Early Canadian Left," in the first decades of the twentieth century "socialist convictions at times alienated" socialist women "from conservative allies in other movements" (1992: 119). My point is that the gender critique which these poets inherited from the previous generation had both maternal feminist and socialist strands.

During their youth and in the years which followed Livesay and Waddington struggled for gender equality both as committed socialists and as poets. Their early poetry contains a much more nuanced exploration of gender than I found in the neat binaries of darkness and light, good and evil, temperance and drunkenness, male and female, so evident in the writing of Nellie McClung. It is important to note that the neat binaries found

in McClung's work may well not have been present in the written work of socialist women in the first decades of twentieth century Canada: women who "had to make tactical choices" finding, as Livesay would, too, during the Depression, that "[c]ommitment to women's issues meant alienation from the left, or alienation from allies in other organizations" (Newton 1992:141). Livesay and Waddington made few explicitly feminist statements in their writing up to 1955. Whereas the more explicitly feminist (and conservative) McClung wrote, as she put it, to leave "some small legacy of truth" (xi), by contrast, for Livesay and Waddington emphasis falls on the "[i]nterrogation" (Livesay 1972: 28) of self, other, and life.

Far from idealizing the struggle of the previous generation of women, Donovan notes that many modernist writers ". . . probably because of uncertainties about gender identities -- were in rebellion against their actual or literary mothers" (x). As I will discuss in the final chapter, both Livesay and Waddington saw their own mothers as highly frustrated women, to use Livesay's phrase, "in an unacknowledged revolt against the woman's place in the home" (JWS 52). Livesay recalls that her mother was a conservative who tended to react to morality "in typical Victorian fashion" (JWS 31), "implant[ing]" "inhibitions" in her daughters while her father "urged" "many freedoms" (JWS 15). The preference for her father is marked throughout Dorothy Livesay's life writing. At the same time her school girl diary very early observes that men, like her father, had easier lives than women like her mother: labeled "[s]lovenly" by her husband and yet bound to her home after she had children, defined primarily as a mother and wife (JWS 31). Livesay writes:

> A sense of family and individual conflicts dominated my teenage years in Toronto. It was only with my best friend, Gina, that I felt at ease, free to speak out my real feelings concerning the institutions of family, religion and capitalism, from all of which I longed to break free. (JWS 31)

As a teenager Livesay formed the aspiration to combine rescue by "Prince Charming" with "a purposeful feminist career as a novelist" (JWS 31).

By Waddington's account her ". . .mother was a rebellious feminist who never accepted her woman's lot. Subverting the text of life was her favorite pursuit and she worked at it with a passion" (AS 204). Waddington has affirmed that the mother in the title story of *Summer At Lonely Beach* resembles her own mother, "a passionate admirer of the written word and of the feminist movement. . . ." (1). Both Livesay and Waddington found their mothers extremely difficult to deal with. Each in her youth sought to remove herself beyond her mother's grasp. Yet, by my reading, when they explored gender in poetry, Livesay and Waddington brought their mothers' lives, and traditional "woman's place," to the page. As adult women they returned to enigmas their own mothers had faced as wives and mothers.

The tension between rising expectations for women, and return to a traditional middle-class ideal of woman as homemaker after World War Two, was, I believe, an added impetus for breaking with old ways of writing in a form which as DeKoven writes of modernism, "inhabits the space of unresolved contradiction or unsynthesized dialectic" (10). In their lyric poetry, a nuanced register of the tension between traditional gender roles and feminism is part of the "unresolved contradiction" -- first evident in their early life writing -- that marks Livesay and Waddington as modernist writers. But the "contradiction" is never simply a matter of tradition (past) in opposition to egalitarian feminism (new).

Poetry has played a preeminent role in both writers' lives. As Livesay writes in *Selected Poems: The Self-Completing Tree* "whether a leap is possible, a miracle of changed feeling, changed thinking -- that is the theme of these many poems" (1986: 3). In an essay entitled "The Golden Eye" Waddington states that "the poem always knows more

than the poet" (1984: 66). For both writers, poetry has been a central means of exploring the subjectivity of the culturally lesser-known 'Other.' Along with Di Brandt, I suggest that "poetry is one of the most powerful tools we have to help us remember who we are as women, where we have come from, what was done to us, and what we wish to do about it" (Brandt 1996: 43). I believe that both through reading and writing texts, women can recognize and combat the internalization of negative messages about their own gender. Notwithstanding their "rebellion" against their mothers, Livesay and Waddington inherited a background of first wave feminism. The "transformative" element I locate in their poetics represents an engagement with "serious questions about gender identity," questions which these lyric poets inherited from their biological as well as their literary mothers (Donovan x).

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[1] Webb states: "I suppose one of the marked differences between then and now is that I didn't think of myself as a 'woman writer' and there weren't many things that reminded me that I was a woman trying to write....there were hardly any women writers in this group. Miriam Waddington turned up occasionally, but there wasn't much resonance between the two of us at that time...there were a few other women coming and going with the men usually."(321)

Chapter One: "Someone's Trying to Speak": Female Subjectivity in Dorothy Livesay's Early Life Writing and Poetry.

"You would know more about me if you could read poetry old man," writes Dorothy Livesay in an undated early letter to her father (DLUM B37 F2). In their focus on learning "more about me," Livesay's first two books of poetry *Green Pitcher* (1928) and *Signpost* (1932) -- when explored with her life writing of the same period -- constitute an oblique challenge to patriarchal authority. In the first poem of *Signpost* the reader is told that "(s)omeone's trying to speak" (3) but, in the "staccato" of this turbulent first poem, the identity of that "someone" remains ambiguous. At points in the poem the disturbing "someone" seems separate from the lyric speaker, at other points the threatening sound seems to originate "in [her] head." From the first poems in both of Livesay's early books of poetry "speak[ing]" as subject is charged with the possibility of disturbing the balance between self and other. Read from a gendered perspective this upset marks a revisioning of the known world.

As Cynthia Hogue suggests in *Scheming Women: Poetry, Privilege, and the Politics of Subjectivity*, "modified by aesthetic and cultural codes, female poets also transform them" (xvii). This chapter will consider Livesay's early diaries, academic thesis, and her two first books of poetry. I read the diaries Livesay kept between 1927 and 1930, and her 1932 thesis on "Modern English Poetry" together with her early poetry as initiating a transformative process, "a web of action/pulling" her reader in "to play/new, unknown games/ making" the female subject "a centre" within modern poetry (DLCP 275).

On both a formal and substantive level Livesay's early work is charged with tension between received patterning and the process of new design. As such, it manifests an ambivalence which is characteristic of literary modernism, displaying what DeKoven in *Rich and Strange: Gender, History, Modernism* (1991) refers to as "unresolved contradictoriness"

(21). In this chapter, I will consider the manner in which Livesay's diaries illuminate what DeKoven calls the "oscillating moment to moment ambiguity" (14), the "unsynthesized dialectic" (21) of tension not only between male and female, but within the female subject who brings conflicting selves to the centre of lyric.

Writing thirty years apart, Desmond Pacey and David Arnason have both linked Livesay's early poetry in *Green Pitcher* and *Signpost* to a reaction against "the ornateness and involved rhetoric of late Victorian verse. . . (Pacey xi)."[1] However these critics do not theorize a connection between modernist formal practice and female subjectivity. In this chapter, I link Livesay's use of modernist formal practices to her reading of the work of female modernists such as Virginia Woolf, Katherine Mansfield, H. D., and Edith Sitwell.

As suggested in the introduction, life writing provides a textual 'underground' in which to explore the female as subject-in-process leading up to the published work. This linkage of life writing and poetry is therefore central to a consideration of textual representations of female subjectivity. In *Journey With My Selves*, Livesay recounts that as a young woman still at home with her parents in Clarkson, Ontario, she refused to play a Chopin prelude for Charles G. D. Roberts. Instead, she directed her discussion with him to the modern free verse movement in poetry (JWS 94). The episode is recounted as follows:

> . . . my mother sought to please the poet by playing some Beethoven sonatas. She played with feeling, but with no technique. The poet urged me to play a Chopin prelude which FRL told him I knew, but I stubbornly refused. I knew that I had no technique either. Instead we discussed poetry, the modern free-verse movement. "The hardest poetry to write is free verse," Roberts told me. I didn't agree; that would have been to admit to being a mere dilettante, which I did not believe I was. For me, though, free verse was the easiest to write: the rhythms so close to speech, delighted me. . . . I was sharply aware of his worldliness, his elegance. I dared to challenge this: I called him the grandfather of Canadian poetry, and this miffed him. (JWS 93-94)

In refusing "to play" Livesay "dared. . . challenge" Roberts with a new form in which he too was practitioner rather than an omniscient judge. For the young female poet the free verse

poems were "the easiest to write," while for "the grandfather of Canadian poetry" they were "the hardest" (JWS 94). An interest in modern "rhythms. . . close to speech," led Livesay to break the old rules of traditional poetry.

"Underneath stories of quiet little girls," writes Valerie Walkerdine, "are murderous fantasies. These are not there because they are essential to the female body or psyche but because the stories of our subjugation do not tell the whole truth: our socialization does not work" (xv). The late dian marino (sic), a gifted teacher and a professor of Environmental Studies at York University, used a concept in teaching which she called "creative misinterpretation," taking a phrase, or idea, to apply in a different way to new ends which challenge dominant perspectives. In a 'creative misreading' of Walkerdine's phrase "underneath stories," I mean to elaborate a process-oriented representation of female subjectivity. The fundamental tension in Livesay's early writing is, as I read it, between feminine roles in which women have been defined through men, and a refusal of such patterning -- most often expressed 'under cover' whether in dreams recounted in the journals, indirectly explored in academic writing, or, last and most powerfully, inscribed in books of poetry.

In *Journey With My Selves*, Livesay writes that as a young poet she "was. . . disgusted with the poetic pose that dictated there must be a young adoring maiden constantly visible at the poet's feet" (96). The place assigned the "maiden" in Canadian literary culture circa 1928-1932 reflected the gender-patterning of the period, a gender-patterning which, while still configuring the female in relation to the dominant male, whether father or male poet, was also open to challenge and change.

Shirley Neuman writes that "the entire process of inventing a self in autobiographies" can be read "as a double gesture by which the narrator presents herself or is read as culturally defined as a woman and as 'different from cultural prescription' as both the product of social

discourse and as individual" (218). This concept of "a double gesture" which Neuman applies to women's autobiographies can also be applied to female subjectivity in poetry in which the "I" within lyric may be read both as "woman," and, at the same time, may work to critique "Woman" as essentialist category. As the introduction states I use "female subject" and "female subjectivity" to emphasize the process of reading and writing subjectivity in the female rather than fixing the "identity" of a "Dorothy" conflated with text. The "I" pushing the pen is, as Neuman emphasizes, engendering the written "I" of subjectivity in a 'double gesture' of cultural prescription and individual invention. Livesay's writing situates "unsynthesized dialecticality" in female subjectivity: in her writing the female is not an observer but rather a self-divided speaker within a gender-polarized world.

Following the example of Pacey in his introduction to *Selected Poems of Dorothy Livesay: 1926-1956*, many critics have found *Green Pitcher* (1928) and *Signpost* (1932) "mainly lyrics of personal emotion or nature description, short, simple, direct and restrained," poetry which, in summation, is "not as significant as it might have been" had it reflected a later period when "her political interests became dominant" (xv). As a representative critic of his period, Pacey, too, overlooked the "richly significant relevance" of female subjectivity to any critical exploration of Livesay's early work. However, as noted in the introduction, a number of feminist critics including Diana Relke and Pamela Banting and Lorraine York have more recently opened Livesay's early writing to feminist interpretation.

Both within Canada and abroad, recent feminist criticism has begun to revise the literary history of the modernist period. Gilbert and Gubar state in *The War of the Words* that the code of objectivity they locate both in male modernists' theoretical writing and in their poetry was formulated in response to the advent of women into literary high culture. Sydney Janet Kaplan claims that there is both a "hegemonic definition of modernism" and a "submerged" female voice. The "hegemonic" version is focused on "legitimizing masterworks

such as *Ulysses* and *The Waste Land*" with a "rhetoric and doctrine to explain and justify that body of work" in large part written by T. S. Eliot (8). Kaplan writes as follows of the "submerged voice in this formulation":

> . . . the female. . . achieves its decisive formulation in the mid-to-late twenties -- not only because of legitimizing masterworks such as *Pilgrimage*, "Prelude," or *To the Lighthouse* but because there developed a rhetorically effective doctrine to explain and justify that body of work. For this rhetoric and doctrine [Woolf] was in large part responsible." (8)

As mentioned in the introduction, Livesay's life writing verifies the fact she was reading the "masterworks" of modernist women such as Mansfield and Woolf as well as the better known men. Woolf's *Jacob's Room* is buried in the garden by the mother in Livesay's radio play "The Times Were Different" (RHLH 134). The young female protagonist tells us "I was allowed to read. . . the moderns, like Hemingway and Lawrence. But it was different with one book, one written by a woman!" (RHLH 134). Kaplan's statement about the "doctrine" of "the female" version of modernism being "explain[ed] and justif[ied]" implies a cohesive version of female modernism. However the work of female modernists such as Richardson, Mansfield, and Woolf did not receive much attention in discussions about modernism until the advent of feminist criticism. The premise seemed to be that women writers did not really fit.

As Livesay's play intuits, the gender-politics of the period could make the modern book "written by a woman!" seem more of a threat to the given order than a book by Hemingway or Lawrence (RHLH 134). Accordingly, in Livesay's radio play "The Times Were Different?" the Canadian matron of the mid-192O's takes up her husband's spade and buries *Jacob's Room* (1922) seeking to protect the innocence of their daughter, burying female modernism using good Southern Ontario dirt.

Livesay's Journals: 1927-193O

The earliest extant journal of Livesay, dated 1927-1929, is located in Special Collections at the University of Manitoba. It has a marbled hardback cover with lined pages. It opens with a sketch of D. K. Livesay by the poet's sister, Sophie Livesay. The journal is handwritten with unnumbered pages. The second extant journal, dated 1929-193O, is also handwritten and unpaginated. The two journals are of a piece. Together they cover the period when Livesay began a B. A. (Honours) in modern languages at Trinity College, University of Toronto, and spent her third university year (1929-3O) at University of Aix-en-Provence, ending with her return to Toronto. In these journals the focus is not on the record of where Livesay is, or with whom, which one customarily associates with diaries. Instead, they explore the dilemma of the artist as a young woman unsure whether, as she states at the end of the first journal, "D. K. Livesay would rather be happy and loved than an artist."

In her life writing in these two early journals, there is debate both about whether a woman can be a writer and about which genre she as a writer will choose. Two opposed codes of meaning are explored as "conservative" and "modern." The conservative code is allied with patriarchal order affirming female fulfillment in marriage, and the "moderns" are associated with female artist figures such as Woolf and Mansfield.

Reflecting on the "diary" form in her "Personal Diary 1927-1929," Livesay considers "her book" both "an expression of self" and a work within a genre in which women such as Fanny Burney have described "the externals of an interesting life" and in which Katherine Mansfield had written in a manner Livesay recognized "as important, as creative, as her definite work." Unlike Fanny Burney's famous diaries which are full of the events of daily life, as Todd notes in *The Sign of Angelica*, "muted, excised and clarified by the older Fanny Burney, the famous novelist" (274), Livesay's own "diary" is concerned with "thoughts" and

"transitions." She had read both Burney and Mansfield and rather than staying, as Burney had, with externals, Livesay emulated Mansfield, the modernist. However, while Livesay approved of "Katherine['s]" journals being published, she felt that her own diary should be "burnt."

In her journal of 1927-1929 she conducts a debate about her future. Within it she is of two minds, divided between needing to pull back into a protective anonymity, and daring to become a writer. The journals constitute a space where she could write of this inner conflict without fearing the disapproving audience from whom she had "heard" about poor, dead "Marjorie Pickthall":

> It is only a very vain, a very blind person, who saves young diaries. And the time must come for me to burn mine. . . one's thoughts one's transitions, are useful things to remember: but they should be kept forever private, and buried in the end of one's coffin. . . . I have heard that in Dr. Pierce's life of Marjorie Pickthall he has printed parts of her diary of no importance. Had she realized, how quickly she would have burnt them!
>
> As for myself, I once wrote a diary with romantic dreams of publication. O thank whatever gods there be that I am beyond that stage now! Honestly and sincerely beyond it.
>
> Yet still I wish I had the courage to say, as Disraeli, "I want to be Prime Minister," and be it. But ambition with me is an evil to be fought, because it makes my imagination unbalanced. (DLUM D1, Jan. 20, 1928)

This passage conveys the repressive power of stereotypical notions of femininity, and suggests that "ambition" is not a matter of courage, but rather, if one is a female, and Canadian, of "an evil to be fought. . . ." While the "diaries" refer to the widely recognized Emily Dickinson and Katherine Mansfield in idealized terms, Pickthall is mentioned only this once in the shadow of her biographer who is found to have quoted from writing which she, could she have known, would have "burnt." In the poems of *Green Pitcher*, the spectral "wraith" with her Keatsian "aching sorrow" (5) is one of the less substantial lyric representations of female subjectivity.

In Livesay's journal, Pickthall is seen as "an almost," a spectral figure, a "wraith" in the pliant hands of a male (Atwood 179).[2] Here Livesay faces one of what she will later call "these riddles" which threaten her sense of vocation as writer. If the "young" woman values her writing and dares to build a literary reputation, she risks being as severely judged as Pickthall was shortly after her death. If she keeps her writing "forever private," then she will never be known.

As Janice Williamson notes, for Marjorie Pickthall and her generation, the dominant gender codes confining the female poet to the position of ornamental angel had begun to be challenged on the political front by feminism and on the literary one by modern verse. For the already successful "poetess" Marjorie Pickthall, the "revolutionary horizon" (Anderson 104) of the twentieth century presented complex challenges which Livesay (the next generation) was left to take up. Williamson writes in *A Mazing Space*:

> The image of the middle-class Victorian woman as decorative window dressing became unsettled when woman began self-reflexively to examine her own gendered role. For those Victorians born in the 1880s womanly ideals and expectations were marked by both 'change and continuity.' Gendered codes of earlier generations were both affirmed and interrupted creating a contradictory relation to the 'feminine.' The middle-class ideal, the 'angel of the house,' became as much a limit as a model. The stereotypical spinster or the 'mannish woman' remained the alternative to the married woman of the period. Caught between the hegemonic conception of 'feminine duty' and the imaginative possibilities of the 'modern' woman, Pickthall's self-analysis as 'misfit' seems entirely comprehensible. (169)

Whereas Pickthall presents herself as "a misfit of the worst kind" (Pickthall in Willianson:168) when she writes her friend Helen Coleman in 1919, Livesay -- a little over a decade later -- conveys in her journal a similar sense of not fitting when she states: "I dare not let my dreams escape, they are so wild" (DLUM D1, Jan. 20, 1928). Feminine gender patterning served as a central tension in both writers' careers, but it would seem from Livesay's 1927-1929 journal that Pickthall, the best known Canadian woman poet of the previous generation, offered a spectral warning: to conceal her wild dreams and her book.

A little over a month after it was begun, the journal announces the forthcoming publication of *Green Pitcher* with the note, "I am afraid of any kind of notice, of any kind of fame. I am afraid that it will cheapen me, make me forget the things I create come through no volition or no power of mine" (DLUM D1, March 9th, 1928). "[N]otice" involves trespass. It means crossing over the chasm between the private hand-written book -- a book Livesay had promised herself eventually to burn -- and entering the public domain of print culture.

In a passage which is presented without contextual introduction that would situate it as either a dream or reality, Livesay writes:

> The Prince said: "The trouble with being a poetess is that you have to be deep -- isn't it!"
>
> So I, thinking he meant it as an assertion, and was explaining things to me, I put on my pride and submitted graciously to the dictum. "Yes. I suppose you are right."
>
> When all the while he must have meant it as a question. My answer should have shown that I was simple underneath it all. (DLUM D1 March 5, 1929)

During her senior year at Glen Mawr School, Livesay was invited to a ball at Government House when Edward, Prince of Wales, visited Toronto. There is no record that she spoke with the Prince (JWS 66), but the conversation fragment which she records two years later illustrates the debilitating sexual stereotyping which still applied both to the "poetess" and to Livesay herself. Poet Dorothy Parker's strategy against being labeled a "poetess" was to be what she called a "smarty." She recalled in a *Paris Review* interview "Dammit, it was the twenties and we had to be smarty" (75). It was fashionable for women in certain circles to be irreverent following the light lyric style of Edna St. Vincent Millay. But in her school-girl life writing Livesay reports that she could muster no clever ("smarty") reply. Tradition weighs her down, in the figure of the regal "Prince" who uses the diminishing word "poetess."

For a male poet to be called "deep" would place him in the visionary category of the great (all-male) Romantics: no "trouble" there. But for a well read young woman, and an

aspiring poet, having to be "deep" was out of key with the time. It meant the possibility of being mocked for writing "of no importance" like Pickthall, and if one persisted it also meant didactic combat against a culture which wanted its "little girls" made of "[s]ugar and spice" (RHLH 136). In "submitt(ing) graciously to the dictum," the diarist accepts as "assertion" what she later decides was a question. The value for the female of what Woolf in *Jacob's Room* calls "[b]eauty in its hothouse variety" (JR 67), the pleasing but unchallenging surface, made having "to be deep" undesirable not only to Livesay's "Prince," but also to the young Canadian poet who grew up within a culture which upheld limiting stereotypes that women have first beauty and then babies, while men have great thoughts.

"Katherine" [Mansfield] and "Virginia" [Woolf], are referred to numerous times in Livesay's first journal. The references to these writers seem especially significant since they deconstruct "traditional conventions of fiction which restrict the roles of women" (Kaplan 86). These modernist writers question the whole "manner of our seeing" through language, as Woolf does in *Jacob's Room* (1922), to describe "life" not in terms of courtship and marriage, but, rather, as a brilliant but quickly changing "procession of shadows" (70).

The male voices quoted within the first journals -- her father, the Prince [of Wales?], an unnamed critic -- all serve to minimize rather than enhance the adult female's claim to subjectivity either through derogatory comment (father about mother), or through affirming stereotypes which suggest that a "poetess" is undesirable as a woman. Here again is the "unsynthesized dialecticality" of female subjectivity. If her own society continued to reify women according to limiting stereotypes, Livesay's early journals contain evidence of challenging herself, as a writer, to "see" possibilities for the female as subject beyond the confines of the seductive female stereotype of the beautiful, charming 'jeune fille.'[3]

In an entry of the previous year, Livesay reviewed the proofs of *Green Pitcher* and reported ". . . people will likely call it 'Charming'. . . As yet I have reached no greater beauty

than charm. What I long for is power, fire. . . " (DLUM D1, April 20, 1928). The text of the dream/dialogue with "the Prince," who may as well be the Prince Charming of fairy tale, suggests the constriction which even the most privileged and boldly ambitious of Canadian young woman poets faced when coming of age in this period. In Livesay's subsequent work "plung(ing)" (SP 45) and "diving" (D&N 37) will be associated with a female speaker's desire to break away: both moving with the drowned "Virginia" [Woolf] "[d]own, down" as well, in the same poem, as "flying" (D&N 38).

The source of Livesay's ambivalence about the publication of *Green Pitcher* is the desire not to rule out a "conservative" future prescribed for the female of her time and class with reference to husband and children. In *Scheming Women* , Hogue stresses that some women were disempowered because of their sex but "privileged because of class and race." Gentile and economically secure women poets have had a "differing relationship to privilege" (xx) than have women poets born without social status and/or born Jewish or Black. Hogue suggests the need to "resist idealizing assumptions of commonalty among women, as well as to clarify how. . . poets relate to privilege as well to oppression" (xx). Livesay's life writing makes it clear that she had a privileged childhood. She was well aware that she could be a writer if she chose, but equally aware of the contradictory assumption that good girls would fulfill themselves, not as "bluestockings," but within marriage.

Livesay's journal indicates the influence of a middle and upper class-bound assumption of the time that a girl's true vocation is marriage and children. Her journal refers to the writing of George Moore who would, she surmises with evident approval, consign all women to care for "the more serious concerns" of households, leaving men to sustain "Art." Shared class assumptions blend together with patriarchy. The formidable novelist, George Eliot, is blamed for the "sticky porridge" which results when white middle class women defy tradition and pursue their own individual work. Livesay writes:

> George Moore hits it on the head "... Women like art until the more serious concerns of life begin for them, and George Eliot, who had no children, continued to stir a sticky porridge all her life long.... [sic] Women have succeeded as actresses and as courtesans -- yes, and as saints, best of all as saints; they have worshipped with the gods that men have created."... . I want to write quite a profound essay on "Women and Art" -- combating Virginia Woolf. (DLUM D1, March 24, 1928)

Rather than writing a "profound" essay "combating" Woolf, Livesay, for her next volume of poems, wrote in a letter to her mother that she proposed to title her book with Woolf's words, beginning with a list of three possible epigrams from *Room Of One's Own*. Within what she refers to in 1928 as "fitful gusts" of poetry, Livesay pursues alternate female "faces" and "selves." The diaries textualize a gendered conflict between "conservative" codes of meaning and the "wild" dreamings of one who seeks to become more than "man's world" seems to allow one of her sex. The textualized "selves" speak on both sides of this struggle.

In "A Dream," a two-page passage written in December 1929, Livesay records the presence of a "Fairy Godmother": "we were on a train, running up and down the corridors, when the Fairy Godmother -- a little crinkled up woman with soft white hair -- found me." Given a wish, the narrator responds "I wish that I may love someone with my whole self. . ." But "not like the ordinary Fairy Godmother," the old woman responds:

> "No! Don't say that. You will have plenty of experience without wishing for it."
>
> "Will I?"
>
> She nodded, wisely. I ran the whole length of the train trying to think it out. When I found her again I kneeled down before her, lifted up my face: "I wish to be a real artist."
>
> The light seemed to break into fragments. She must have waved her wand. "But oh, my dear, that will be cruel. There will be pain."
>
> "I know." Knowing, I woke up.
>
> This is perhaps the most definite dream I've had; and yet the most imaginary, the farthest from reality. It was like being seven again. (DLUM D2, Dec. 21, 1929)

The "I" on the train first wishes for romantic love, a wish linked both to the romance plot of fairy tales, to romantic novels, and to the fast finish Moore predicts for the most modern of women's artistic aspirations after marriage. But within the modern enclosure of "the train" the seemingly timeless and "natural" wish to "love someone with my whole self" is dismissed. The "wish" the "Fairy Godmother" grants requires the volition of "think(ing) it out, and then the "break(ing) into fragments" of one reality for a "cruel" process in which "there will be pain." Like the hero in a male bildungsroman the "whole self" in the dream wakes "knowing" that she has a difficult struggle before her.

Livesay characterizes campus life at the University of Toronto in the late 1920s in terms of division of the sexes in an environment where "the possible role of women as writers was. . . very much questioned" (JWS 95). She laments finding in the life at university ". . . never a kinsprit (sic) face, someone to laugh with" (DLUM D1, Oct. 2, 1927). The kindred spirit she missed in university she creates in early journals which are, after all, "thoughts. . . (and) transitions" written to her older self (DLUM D1, Jan. 2O, 1928). Excelling as a poet and winning the Jardine Prize for ". . . not prose, but a lyrical outpouring," Livesay recalls in her memoirs "that award. . . lost me a social life" (JWS 95). In September 1928, Livesay wrote that ". . . life is constantly frustrating self and art is constantly giving freer scope, within" (DLUM D1, Sept. 27, 1928). Within the diaries her kindred spirits are the writers she admires, most notably women, ". . . Emily, Virginia, and Katherine" (DLUM D1, Jan. 12, 1928). Dickinson, Woolf, and Mansfield provide a female community within the journal. They are the empowering company which the journal orchestrates with a female muse figure, the "crinkled up woman," a mother bearing the prefixes "Fairy" and "God," who sanctions her wish to become that "unnatural" thing among her sex: "a *real* artist."

The power to become "a *real* Artist" is also linked to Livesay's dream of the Fairy Godmother who, like the famous woman poet supporting Esther Greenwood in Sylvia Plath's

The Bell Jar, responds negatively to her "wish" to be loved. Plath's Esther states, "I might well get married and have a pack of children someday." The "weird old wom(a)n" replies, "in horror. But what about your career?" (Plath in Bennett 127). As Bennett observes in her study of female poetics, Plath's "weird old wom(a)n" and, I would add, the "Fairy Godmother" of Livesay's journal, react, on behalf of a young woman aspiring to write, against traditional gender roles which, from their perspective, tend to ease women out of literary achievement through binding them -- in literature as in life -- to the romance plot. In both Plath's novel *The Bell Jar* and Livesay's early journals we find the "double gesture" (Neuman 218) of at once representing cultural prescription, and reacting against it. In both passages "weird old women," and not the young "self," support a "wish" which involves writing new texts rather than accepting old ones.

One of the things which traditional poets tended to need, and women had tended to lack, was a classical education. Both Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Virginia Woolf wrote of the serious impediment for a female writer of lacking a university education. Desmond Pacey states that the "University of Toronto was [in the late twenties] a very congenial environment for a young writer" (xiii). Although women were allowed to be students and able to seek advanced degrees, they were absent both from faculty and in course lists of writers. The lack of female professors, and the all but exclusive study of writing by and about men, was clearly not entirely "congenial" to Livesay. In Livesay's journals of the period there is a pervasive note of ennui. In November 1928 she writes: "I can scarcely bear. . . any study that is not delight - bringing, and so profitable for my mind, constructive for my thought." She concludes that "the institution of a University Degree was born in Ugliness itself." Although noting "(o)f course this sounds childish, possessive," she adds that ". . . this narrow learning gives me no way to prove myself, to understand what I have or have not" (DLUM D1, Nov. 28, 1928). What the young Livesay refers to as the "narrow learning" offered in the

"University Degree" was, as Woolf made clear in a *Room of One's Own*, based almost completely on a study of civilization as the creation of "Man." Small wonder, then, that in speaking of "myself," a young female, privileged even to be allowed into this androcentric world, displays a contradictory attitude: she is both bored by the "history of kings" and critical of herself for "sound[ing] childish. . . ." While it set her apart from her peers as a "bluestocking," modern poetry was a medium in which the "prov(ing)" of a "self" could occur. For the young Livesay the idiom of everyday speech, present in her first books, can be read as a transformative link between a poetic tradition by and about men, and what feminist sociologist Dorothy Smith calls alternate ground "beyond the immediately known" (83).

Livesay's early journals engage her reader in an ongoing and sometimes contradictory process of exploring gendered subjectivity, as when she ends the 1927-1929 journal by claiming that a list of her recent poems have predicted the future, and then, in apparent refusal of the power of her poetry, resolves that she is not going to be a poet after all. In the following passage the gender patterns of the day seem to close like an iron door and only conventional codes of femininity seem to offer "The key":

> The key to all these riddles is that D. K. Livesay would rather be happy and loved than an artist. So I am defeated everywhere -- a conservative and a woman. I have come to believe even, that "the world is wiser than the moderns"! (DLUM D1, Mar., 1929)

The aspiring writer "D. K. Livesay" is figured, on this last page of "Her Book" (DLUM D1), in the apparently abject position before the received wisdom that the "world" is "wiser than the moderns." The particular "world" of which she writes evidently claims poetry for males. The emerging female writer must, it seems, be suppressed to ensure that she will be "happy and loved." As Hogue might suggest, the choice of marriage and children over "art" represents both a romantic resolution of her class and a "defeat" of the woman as artist.

In the second journal Livesay challenges herself to come to terms with the alternate reality of being known not only as "Dorothy," or a privileged White Anglo-Saxon Canadian girl, but as the author of texts. In a dream recounted while staying in Aix-en-Provence, the "new pensionaire" is presented:

> The newcomer smiled, turned to me: "And who is D. K. Livesay?" she demanded.
> "Oh just that: D. K. Livesay," I answered (modestly).
> "Indeed you're more than that. I remember now! I read your ---"
> Our hostess beamed. She was "in the know." She hastened eagerly to explain who I was. And all the while I kept on smiling, shyly, modestly. . .
>
> God, how living with people creates vanity. That has happened before:
>
> "My daughter, Dorothy." Dorothy smiles shyly. "Oh Dorothy! Dorothy Livesay," cries the visitor.
>
> How can I become simple, natural, eager, when all that "precocity" is in the back of my mind? It is so fatally easy to take oneself for granted. And after that, the world has trapped you. (DLUM D2, Nov. 11, 1929-1930)

For Livesay, life writing was a central means of not taking "oneself for granted," and therefore provided an important expression of the struggles for a transformative poetic of female subjectivity. The dream gives way in this passage to meditation on construction of the gendered social self. The repeated adverbs "shyly" and "modestly" suggest the 'correct' (subservient) patterning of female submission within the society of her place and time. But the dream itself plays with a script in which "D. K. Livesay" is not only a "modest" girl but recognized as "more" with reference to a published text. The avowed aspiration of becoming "simple, natural, eager" stands in opposition to the "precocity" of having published. Also, as "daughter, Dorothy," Livesay had been raised to esteem writers, even as a child she had collected signatures of the "Somebod(ies)" of Canadian literature including Charles G. D. Roberts, F. P. Grove, Duncan C. Scott, and neighbour and family friend Mazo de la Roche (DLUM B3F2).

In "Personal Diary March 1929-September 193O," written in Aix-en-Provence, Livesay recounts fragments of conversation which suggest the persistence of gender conflict as a concern in her life. The young French girl whose family she lives with asks her, "Pourquoi les garcons sont-ils tellement egoistes? Est--ce que tu peux les supporter?" No answer is recorded. The question is apparently the notable thing. On the next page Livesay recounts how, while climbing with the girl and her family, conversation shifts from "les garcons" to "les femmes":

> Half way up the mountain, when Joel began talking about women -- we all became fearfully alert, listening to each other. X dropping his questions down at me, about the strange American woman who has no *dot*. . . and I shooting them up to him, laughing.
>
> "Elle donne elle-meme, Xavier! Et aussi, souvent, elle gagne sa vie, meme mariee!"
>
> . . . this kept recurring, all day. Madame, you see, knows my other self as her children do not. But I wonder whether she knows! Because I seem to change selves like garments. So now it would seem the most natural thing in the world to renounce everything of the old life and to accept their traditions, their beliefs, their country. . . (DLUM D2, April 27, 1929)

The gender patterning of the bourgeois French family seems, in this passage, to reduce the female to a "dot." The "strange American woman" interpreted by Livesay to "Xavier" is presented as a figure of "imaginative possibilities of the 'modern' woman." The French family conventions naturalize -- that is, make "the most natural thing" -- of the acceptance of male egoism and female submission. The figure pursued in the journal is the "other self," the one who records questions and privileges her own uncertain dreams. The following passage reads:

> This has happened before, this transformation. . . I always wondered whether it would last: whether there was any permanent *me* that would demand expression. How can I know? I seem to be a person without a country - "a house with neither wall nor door." I become the people I live with . . . .
>
> This is a tremendous failing. Yet it leads to knowledge of others. If I am no one, there must be some compensation in being everyone. . . ! (DLUM D2, April 27, 1929)

The uncertainty about "any permanent me" explored in this passage may be read as illustrating what Marianne DeKoven calls the "modernist writers' irresolvable ambivalence" (4) in relation to subjectivity. In the company of Xavier, his sister, and mother earlier in the day, Dorothy reports herself to suggest that change in North American gender roles is a positive thing. A women may earn her own living, even if married. Once alone the young female Livesay experiences her own lack of fixed (girl/wife/mother) identity as both loss and liberation. What is clear is that neither the convention of patriarchal authority naturalized within the French family nor the example of the modern American woman successfully define the life goals of the recording "I."

The speaker in Emily Dickinson's poetry celebrates being "Nobody," and turning from "an admiring Bog!" to an individual reader she can question, "Are you -- Nobody -- Too?" (133). As numerous feminist critics have observed, the liberal humanist notion of becoming a unified "Somebody" has rarely extended to women. Woolf's female speaker in *Room of One's Own* reports of being ushered off "the turf" of the culturally-privileged male onto a path occupied by women "for 300 years in succession" (8). Revolutionary socialist struggles which Livesay came to support in the thirties privileged class analysis over feminist analysis. But as Livesay has remarked, she came to recognize that only "(i)n theory were [women] free and equal as comrades on the left" (RHLH 124). In her early poetry Livesay found a medium in which the exploration of female subjectivity might be placed at the centre of culturally consequential speech. Modern poetry provided a space where authority could shift with the wind and "everyone," including those buried and lost in anonymity, might be heard "trying to speak" (SP 3).

Livesay's Masters Thesis (1932) -- "Symbolism and the Metaphysical Tradition in Modern English Poetry"

Livesay's Masters thesis illustrates a selective widening of the academic study of "modern poetry" to include the voices of women poets, among whom she mentions Edith Sitwell, Amy Lowell, and H. D. As many British and North American feminist critics have now remarked, and as I noted in the Introduction, previous formulations of the Modernist Canon both in England and North America have tended to privilege what Kaplan would call "the men's line" of Pound, Eliot, and Joyce" (9). These writers are considered as emblematic of modernism, while the work of literary "mothers" such as Woolf, Stein, and Mansfield is often neglected.

Women poets do not dominate Livesay's thesis on modern poetry and it is never explicitly feminist. However, keeping Kaplan's assertion in mind that "(m)others represent what must be escaped from," one may see that Livesay's chapter on Edith Sitwell represents a significant recognition that modern poetry had both mother (Sitwell) and father (Eliot). From the first paragraph of the thesis, Edith Sitwell is the more influential presence. An opening quotation from Sitwell marks the direction Livesay will follow. As critic, Sitwell assumes the role of (female) interpreter of both "modern poets" and tradition. The prominent use Livesay makes of Sitwell's poetry and criticism tends to demonstrate a willful disruption of any reading of modern poetry which would surrender control to "the men." For Livesay, "leaving the tradition that leads from Wordsworth. . ." had partly to do with locating traditions which would serve rather than inhibit her own poetry. Sitwell assists Livesay's analysis from the first page of the thesis in which the first person "I" is rather striking:

> I think it cannot be denied that one of the principal reasons why certain critics, and a large part of the public, feel unable to understand the aims of modernist poets is that

> these poets are leaving the tradition that leads from Wordsworth, and are returning to an earlier line of poetry." (Sitwell)
>
> The "earlier line of poetry" met with another movement -- that of French symbolism: a movement not unlike, often in a curious way repeating, the first. It is the purpose of this essay to show the combination of these sources has greatly influenced such contemporary poetry as that of T. S.. Eliot and Edith Sitwell.[4]

In her discussion of Symbolism, Livesay states that "the important gift of Symbolism. . . was free verse" (UM MEP3O). While avowing the significance of "vers libre" to modern poetry, the thesis focuses discussion on the "symbol." Livesay defines the "symbol" as "a mask representing the experience of the artist, and creating further experience in the mind of the onlooker or reader." In a marginal comment, the Sorbonne professor marking the paper mixes French and English mixing "pourquoi faut-il un masque? Projection (better?)" (DLUM MEP16).

For the female poet writing out of a tradition in which male poets dominated, the concept of "the mask" might open a field of signification through which the female poet might appropriate power traditionally vested in the male. Margaret Homans recognizes the creative potential of the concept of the mask for both nineteenth and twentieth century female poets in freeing them. She suggests that "an exclusive valuation on the literal, especially identifying the self as the literal, is simply. . . ratify[ing] women's age-old and disadvantageous position as the other and the object" (Homans 218). Behind the device of the mask, the gender of the poet is no longer a matter of essence but rather, according to Livesay, links the poem to the process of sensual perception and of "emotional experience" which both sexes presumably share (16).

Livesay's chapter on Sitwell's poetry focuses on a close reading of selected poems illustrating her early indebtedness to Donne, and certain poems' thematic interest in "death and decay," as well as an appeal to the "'inner ear and eye' of the intellect" (59). Along with this attention to Donne, Livesay also discusses the "terse wit" of Marvell (64), Baudelaire's

"symbolism," the "musicality" of the Symbolists "whose elements are alliteration and assonance of vowel sounds together with internal rhyme" (65). She looked to Rimbaud for "texture" and "confusion of the senses" (67) and to Laforgue for "freer, bolder rhythms" (61).

The Symbolists offered an immersion in sensual rather than cognitive experience. Within the thesis, Livesay asserts that "complete subjectivity and preoccupation with the mystery in things was the kernel of symbolist philosophy . . ." (18). In the code of "complete subjectivity" as adapted by Edith Sitwell, Livesay notes the poet's ability to "create" one's "own world," however far from the dominant reality of one's time and place (62). Perhaps one of the most significant elements in Livesay's discussion of Sitwell is the repeated reference to "the poet" not as universal male, but rather as "she."

Female Subjectivity in Livesay's Early Poetry

As noted in the introduction, Arnason claims that "(t)he first books of modernist poetry broadly available to the reading public in Canada, and written by a Canadian poet who was to develop a substantial reputation, were Dorothy Livesay's first two collections, *Green Pitcher* in 1928 and *Signpost* in 1932" (13). *Green Pitcher* is now a rare book. Reading its twenty-five poems printed on sixteen green chapbook pages, one may recall Frye's cryptic note on "Miss Livesay's poetry" written in "the "Amy Lowell idiom" (84), and Sandra Hutchison's assertion that both *Green Pitcher* and *Signpost* represent the poetry of innocence rather than experience, somewhat like Robert Louis Stevenson's "A Child's Garden of Verse" (22). Both comments seem dismissive, albeit in different ways, but one finds them repeated in commentary from various critics. My own reading of these two first books will suggest that rather than constituting traditional verse about childhood, these lyrics are compressed reports on coming of age as a female: in poems such as "Staccato" past codes of gendered subjectivity do not seem

pertinent to the night world, and in "Green Rain" they dissolve in the "green rain" of a modernist lyric.

Green Pitcher and *Signpost* are volumes which play out the poetic "line" -- as in "Protest," the last poem of *Signpost* -- maneuvering between old and new form and diction. Eighteen of the twenty-five poems in *Green Pitcher* are in free verse. The book tends much more often than not to fulfill Arnason's first criteria for literary modernism in that it rejects more than observes "conventional nineteenth-century poetic structure. And it is characterized by a movement away from rhyme and regular poetic feet." With the exceptions of words such as "wraith," in the poem of that title in *Green Pitcher* and "a-quivering" ("Protest") in *Signpost* it abandons poetic archaisms such as 'thou' and 'thee' and 'wouldst.' And it is "suspicious of the narrative mode, preferring the lyric" (Arnason 6).

In *Green Pitcher* the breaking of old conventions of verse is part of breaking with prescriptive notions of femininity (GP 1). Both at a formal and thematic level, *Green Pitcher* provides a lyric record of conflict and contradiction within the lyric subject. These are markers of what Marianne DeKoven analyzes as "the oscillating moment to moment ambiguity" (23) characteristic of literary modernism. Both *Green Pitcher* and *Signpost* are works which are fundamentally concerned with textualizing female subjectivity, and with examining the "chance and change" that the speaker in Charles G. D. Roberts' poem "The Tantramar Revisited" could not face (158).

Green Pitcher

Diana Relke has noted that the title of *Green Pitcher* can be read as a female appropriation of poetic power: "male writers can write with the phallic pen, the female poet creates the body-of-work, a "Green Pitcher" from which she can pour out lyric song." Relke

links "the green pitcher -- the image of the poet as vessel --" to what she reads as "Livesay's refus(al) to be haunted by patriarchal notions of poetic creativity" (1986:228). The modernist note of contradiction and ambiguity begins with the first poem, "Sympathy":

> There is a silence on a country road
> Where I have found alone
> Your shy mind groping for a hidden word
> Before the thought has flown.
>
> And always, in all quiet, I shall feel
> Your impotence with words--
> Whether you saw a mountain's silver peak,
> Or just, the flight of birds. (GP 1)

The uneven measure of five and three-foot lines tends, in itself, to suggest a relationship which, while measured, is not equal. The speaker within "Sympathy" finds a text which laments the "impotence with words." The "words-"/"birds" end-rhyme suggests the power of the speaker who has assumed the disarming posture of "sympathy" while announcing what I read as a usurpation of the poetic power of flight. The "silence" running between the "I" and "you" is set in uneven meter and uncertain rhyme.

In "Professions for Women" (1931), Virginia Woolf writes that when she first began to review books she encountered the "Angel of the House," a figure who illuminates the attitude of the speaker of Livesay's "Sympathy." This figure represents an analogous encounter both with another and with the self. Woolf writes of "the Angel":

> . . . when I came to write I encountered her with my very first words. The shadow of her wings fell on my page; I heard the rustling of her skirts in the room. Directly. . . I took my pen in my hand to review that novel by a famous man, she slipped behind me and whispered: 'My dear, you are a young woman. You are writing about a book that has been written by a man. Be sympathetic; be tender; flatter, deceive; use all the arts and wiles of your sex. Never let anybody guess that you have a mind of your own. (6O)

Livesay's "Sympathy" precedes Woolf's article and yet Woolf suggests the vital affinity between what I see as Livesay's exploration of the "submerged voice" of modernism, a voice Woolf ". . . developed a rhetorically effective doctrine to explain and justify." (Kaplan 8) Livesay was aware of both Woolf's and Mansfield's work when she wrote *Green Pitcher*. Her first journal mentions Mansfield with particular admiration, while Woolf's *The Common Reader* and *Mrs. Dalloway* were published in 1925, and in 1931 while a student in Paris preparing *Signpost* for submission as a second book, Livesay read *A Room of One's Own*.

The lyric "I" in "Sympathy" begins with what seems to conform to the traditionally feminine "Angel('s)" advice. The title of this poem seems to announce the supportive and unthreatening lyric voice of a pliant and dutiful daughter speaking to the potent, or impotent, male. The phrase "impotence with words" suggests a recognition of something missing in the "you" to whom the speaker refers. Just as Woolf came to use the image of a benevolent, selfless, feminine "Angel" for the muse she had to "murder" in order to write, so Livesay's title "Sympathy" presents a pleasant and submissive surface which the phrase "your impotence with words" tends to belie. If the male "you" cannot find words, the speaker will.

In linking life writing with a reading of the poems, it becomes clear both that gender is of fundamental significance in Livesay's biographical writing and that this concern appears in her early lyric verse. But, most contemporary feminist critics would agree, the speaker within lyric is not equal to the "I" in the journals. Even so there is some connection between the "I" of lyric, and the "I" consumed by issues of gender within the journals. Livesay herself made a direct connection between speaker in poems and the poet in life. As already noted, Livesay's Sorbonne thesis discusses "the mask." She was evidently interested in capturing some sense of the always shifting "state of mind" behind the mask of the persona. She states that ". . . always the personality is behind -- suffering, disillusioned, cynical; or gloomily acquiescent.

The whole poem, however objective it may seem, is the symbol of the poet's state of mind" (MEP 31).

The poem "Impuissance" is pastoral, but the swain rather than the maid is the object of the speaker's desire. It is unthreatening "boy(s)" and not men who are figured as desiring and being desired in both "Impuissance" and "A Boy in Bronze." In the latter, the female speaker produces a fresh reading of a traditional "Bronze," praising the body of the objectified male ". . . body's symmetry, Its young desire/It's growing urge/For flight." In "Impuissance" the lyric text is presented as a record of a desire which "would not" be said. The speaker proclaims:

> I longed to cry out,
> "Stay! stay! I am here"
> But the words would not come:
> My feet were held fast.
> Instead I watched the wagon
> Pass through the gate
> And lumber along the road
> Till the boy was only a swaying form
> Against the sky. (GP 5)

In this fourth stanza it is the lyric "I" who is (to repeat the phrase from "Sympathy") "impotent with words." She/he need only call out to stop the sun-touched transit of the object of desire with "his bronzed face/And strong, lithe body." Just as "Sympathy" explores the speaker's relation to a "you" who can not speak, "Impuissance" is concerned with an inability to speak out and name one's self and one's desire. Within patriarchal society, female desire is more closely circumscribed than that of the male, and the text of the poem both explores desire and puts it under erasure; the subject in "Impuissance" longs to "cry out," but the "words would not come." The "puissance" to express desire is, however, demonstrated in the text of the poem. The reader receives the declaration of presence: ". . . I am here." But the "I" is neither named or even pronominally gendered, and thus holds back not only on "the boy" but also on

the reader (GP 4). Yet, the poem turns around the desire to reveal the self. The speaker both cancels the possibility of connecting with the desired male, and then eloquently reverses the silence with speech. The French title, "Impuissance," uses a foreign language to return to the "impotence with words" first found in "you" (GP 1), now found in the silent self. There can be no simple appropriation of poetic power for this speaker and, although "Sympathy" may suggest otherwise, she shares the sense of impotence that she attributes to her companion. In "Impuissance," power is transformed from a heavily-gendered concept to lyric power of "wind running among the rushes." The wind of change moves from speaker to reader. This "wind" breaks the silence with its irregular rhythms, placing both speaker and reader "(i)n the field by the river's edge," and raising the possibility of a return in which self first "cr(ies) out" to an other, and then is able through the breath line of free verse to "hear" (GP 5).

In the poem "The Invincible," the speaker visits "the. . . garden" which can be compared to the "dark" and "strange rhythms" of modern verse which are then twinned with the "elms" in a poetic landscape and where "blinded men" can not see:

> In the dark garden
> I hear strange rhythms
> Rising and falling:
> Deeper and deeper
> The elms delve their arms
> Into the helpless earth
> And suck the young wines
> Of spring.
>
> Stronger and bolder are elms
> Than blinded men. (GP 3)

In Roberts's sonnet "In The Wide Awe and Wisdom of the Night," the speaker affirms "the august infinitude of man." (107) In the night he is grounded in the "utter and eternal thought of Him." (108) But in the night world of Livesay's "The Invincible," there is no supreme signifying "Him" to reassure the speaker of the "august infinitude of man," as manifest in

patriarchal culture, but rather a sense of a force that is "(s)tronger and bolder" than those who claim mastery over it. The garden world of the poem itself is not, of course, "natural" but a carefully constructed linguistic site in which men appear in an unrhymed summation, as "blinded." In *Oedipus* and *King Lear* we watch the action and know why the blindness occurs, whereas within Livesay's poem "blinded men" are the given. To make sense of the text, the reader is challenged to reach "(d)eeper and deeper" into the poetic ground of modern poetry; a ground on which an old order of "the Invincible" "Him" (God) is in eclipse.

In the poem "Phantasy in May," the lack of both power and pleasure in the feminine "pale. . . sober. . . chaste" candles is juxtaposed with the "swaying and flaunting" endurance and the laughter of the "harlot" flowers which resist the extinguishing power of the "ancient" male wind. In a journal entry of May 2Oth, 1928 Livesay writes:

> Respectability is a good weapon but I have forsaken it -- quite consciously. 'Phantasy in May' to my amusement shocks polite people. No longer do they think me "a sweet girl." And so in a way there's a victory gained, and much laughter. . . (DLUM D1, May 2Oth, 1928)

The use of (r)espectability as a good weapon suggests the perception of need to arm the (female) self. In "forsak(ing)" "respectability" in "(s)waying and flaunting" free verse, the speaker moves between figuration of women, first as flora "scarlet and russet, amber and gold/(i)n the wind" then, in stanza three, as antiquated candles like the stereotype of proper ladies:

> Candles flicker and flutter palely
> On the dark altar:
> Candles are yellow and steadily bright,
> Trying never to dance
> But to gleam palely, soberly, chastely,
> In a weak imitation
> Of electric light.
> Comes the wind--
> And pouf! They are gone!
> And the altar is black

As the unstarred night. (GP 7)

Anne Crannie Francis, reading (prose) fantasy as a gendered genre suggests that women writers of fantasy -- "(h)aving scrutinized the category of 'the real' and found it to be a phallocentric construct," -- have set out to "use the fantastic to deconstruct that reality, and realign, and reform it" (45).[5] Livesay's "Fantasy" works to a similar end by exploring the stereotypical representation of women and the omnipotent "He," which is not God, but an "ancient Fury." "Phantasy" is a poem which mocks the feminine stereotype of virginal candles while allying the speaker with the irreverent "harlot," as well as celebrating the female-centred "Ha! Ha!" response to the "Doomsday" of male authority:

He may blow and blow
Till Doomsday---
And blow he does!
And tulips bow and bend
Till the moment he thinks
They will sputter out.
Not they!
Ha! Ha!
They laugh
They are weak with laughter;
They can hardly dance
To the song he sings.
They totter and reel like drunken harlots
And fall quite helpless
In each other's arms. (GP 8)

The above-quoted middle section of "Phantasy in May" suggests a female community in which one may be "weak" and "fall quite helpless" without fearing harm. This sorority of "harlot" tulips -- rather than the "virginal candles" -- suggests a free verse upset of the old binaries of good ("virginal") and bad ("harlot") women. In "Phantasy in May," the "candles" "gleam palely, soberly, chastely" while the "drunken harlots" are within the "accursed city," but the old pieties sound out of order. The candles are "virginal" objects of use, the "tulips" are, by

contrast, "laugh[ing]" beings which insist on their own "gainsaying." In a world of "[o]ld grey gardens" and huffing "wind" they exist, as sensual beings, for themselves.

In "Phantasy" the "ancient Fury" is not female (as in classical Greek myth of the female Furies) but male and sent "running" in free verse which "Phantas(izes)" a break with old codes of authority as it observes the break with old patterns of rhyme.[6] The "tulips" ". . . dazzle his eyes/His watery eyes/But never, ah, never,/Go out." Wind can not extinguish them. "Phantasy in May" provides its reader with a delicious moment in which to celebrate an irreverent female homo-erotic community collapsing "[i]n each other's arms," as an "ancient Fury" exhausts his breath.

In *Green Pitcher* cultural fictions of female submission and passivity are explored through a series of lyrics which quickly change tone. In "discovering myself" in the last line of "The Foresaken", the speaker refuses to suggest either through metrics or rhyme that the formulation is pleasing. The speaker is both present and cancelled. The poem enacts the subject's entrapment within inanimate "nature." The poem plays between a sibilant "self" as "still" "stone," and the repeated assertion "I found. . . ." In her use of "quivering" (ie. in "The Foresaken") Livesay animates nature in the final poem of *Signpost* "spring/sets. . . trees a-quivering" (SP 61). If the poem is a mask, as Livesay suggests in her Sorbonne thesis, then it may constitute a "landscape for the living" to use Jeanette Armstrong's phrase (5), in which even when suppressed as in "Wraith" and "The Forsaken," gendered subjectivity is always in play (Armstrong 5).

In "Reality" the re-visionary power of "my dream" is set against a "sudden" waking:

Encased in the hard, bright shell of my dream,
How sudden now to wake
And find the night still passing overhead,
The wind still crying in the naked trees,
Myself alone, within a narrow bed. (GP 6)

"Reality" presents the "sudden" waking from "the hard, bright shell of my dream," a kind of womb-like space of safety and vision, into a night world in which the self is "alone." The poem's four ten syllable lines offer a metrical harmony which the one six syllable line -- "How sudden now to wake" -- interrupts. The poem's one sentence evokes the linguistic compression of H. D.'s imagism with a single rhyme between "overhead" and "bed" reminiscent of Emily Dickinson who rhymed not by rote but with reason. The central verb phrase ("to wake") marks the shift between the world of "my dream," and of the challenge of "reality" when one is confined to a "narrow bed." In itself this image of "awakening" is richly allusive of female subjectivity, from Dickinson's poetry, which was first published in the 188Os to Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* (1899) and Edith Sitwell's long poem "Sleeping Beauty" (1924). The last three lines of "Reality" establish a second sublunary space, a night world in which the speaker experiences no comforting sense of definition from an other, no visionary "dream," (GP 1) but the isolated existential perception, (recurrent in *Green Pitcher*) of "(m)yself alone" (GP 6). The prominent images of "the dark garden" (GP 3) and the night world in Livesay's first book of poems signals a renegotiation of "Reality" in an alternate space, a both dreaded and desired textual 'room of one's own,' where "night. . . overhead" interlocks with the "narrow bed" of a lone female speaker within patriarchal culture (GP 6).

The "I" which speaks in the last two poems in *Green Pitcher* speaks of the "sharp clarity" of night (GP 16) of watching "slaughter" with neither heroism nor horror. The paradoxical qualities in both last poems in *Green Pitcher* correspond to what Livesay sets down as "a riddle" at the end of her 1927-1929 journal when she states: "D. K. Livesay would rather be "happy and loved" than a poet" (DLUM D1). In the final poems in *Green Pitcher*, one faces an imagist sphinx which refuses to explain its message but instead leaves its reader to struggle as must the young Canadian poet, circa 1928: both as a woman and as a poet. The

speaker describes a pattern in which "(w)hales are the waves" and violence occurs "(a)gain and again," and where no mercy is asked and none shown:

> It is a night of slaughter
> But for me
> Meditation. (GP 16)

In this poem, titled "Chinese," the speaker "pull(s) closer" the "cloak," "pac(ing)" beyond the range of "harpoon(s)" and yet inside the charged space of poetry. While the speaker's gender remains under a "cloak," if read as female her position seems analogous to that of the self textualized in Livesay's journals where the recording self mediates on whether to choose marriage and family, or become an artist. A speaker is using modernist verse as a "meditation," as a space to textualize a disturbance in her own night vision. In "Meditation" we are given the bare bones of a drama in which violence recurs as "I pace back and forth" (GP 16). With imagistic compression, "Chinese" conveys an exotic landscape littered with harpoons. Just as there was no comfort in the community of "quivering" stones in "The Forsaken," so there is no comfort among whales, frequent as waves, "harpooned/Again and again. . . ." The poem does not read as a factual account, but neither is the speaker herself a "whale" victim. Although the me in the poem reports the enactment of an androcentric drama of men seeking whales, it is no man but the fist of night which "pierces a writhing back." The speaker presents a troubling vision of a "slaughter" which the title suggests is as alien to her as the calligraphy of "Chinese" characters. Yet, as in "Staccato," the night world of poetry clearly challenges her to puzzle with nightmare images.

In "Fire and Reason" the night is paradoxically described as a "sharp clarity" rather than a space in which, as in "Old Man" (SP 38), perceptic : is easily disoriented and lost. If patriarchal power is the dominant "reality" by day within Livesay's early poetry, the night

world, the world given to "(m)editation" and dream, constitutes a central space in which to explore the distance between the "You and I" named in "Fire and Reason":

> I cannot shut out the night--
> Nor its sharp clarity.
>
> The many blinds we draw,
> You and I,
> The many fires we light
> Can never obliterate
> The irony of stars,
> The deliberate moon,
> The last, unsolved, finality of night. (GP 16)

In "Fire and Reason," the "deliberate moon" rides over the "many fires" -- home fires representing "steady certain light" (SP 38) -- of life within the patriarchal home. Critic Estella Lauter writing of another female poet's use of moon imagery wonders "what happens when a woman raised in a scientific age identifies with nature, the object of science. . . [begins] to ponder whether a woman can use the traditional equation of woman with nature for her own purpose?" (99). When she studies Livesay's early poetry in her doctoral dissertation, Diana Relke suggests that in her early poetry Livesay mediates between nature and culture. In "Fire and Reason" the "deliberate moon" and "irony of stars" mark a turning away from the day world of sun, "reason," and circumscribed codes of knowledge dominated by what Roberts called "the august infinitude of man." Day is finite in "Fire and Reason" and night represents the infinite questions unsolved by science. "Fire and Reason" is a free verse poem without any of the certitude promised in Roberts's sonnet "In the Wide Awe and Wisdom of the Night." It faces "night" without any of the formal codes of traditional poetic order, without rhyme and without even lines. It is a poem in which there is no other authority than the "sharp clarity" of reckoning with night. From my perspective, night's "sharp clarity" signals a new vision on the part of the speaker who is learning to trust the night world of dream and revision.

The "prince" and "fairy Godmother" of Livesay's life writing do not reappear in her poetry. But the struggle to situate a culturally-consequential female subject as speaker within what her diaries refers to as "Art" occurs undercover throughout *Green Pitcher* in lyrics where the sex of the lyric "I" is often not specified while, at the same time, these lyrics repeatedly explore the relation between an "I" and a "you," an "I" in the process of pronouncing on the "impotence" of an old order and proceeding in the breath line of free verse to explore the new.

Signpost (1932)

In "Form and Vision in the Poetry of Dorothy Livesay" (1986), Sandra Hutchison writes that *Signpost* documents Livesay's "first forays outside the garden of childhood and its adjacent 'little wood,' her first tentative steps towards the 'experience' for which she had yearned" (32). Hutchison echoes W. E. Collin's *Canadian Forum* review (1932) of *Signpost* which suggests that Livesay's "revolt from romanticism" had not been entirely successful. Collin had commented that the young poet was "writing from her own mind" without "enough contact with life," and therefore her style was not yet fully modernist (191). Collin's position has, with Pacey's faint praise for Livesay's early work, perhaps influenced critics such as Debbie Foulks. In "Livesay's Two Season's of Love," Foulks dismisses as superfluous both Livesay's early books, faulting what she reads as a "steady romantic emphasis," while adding a dismissive note on Livesay's early treatment of gender roles:

> Prior to her most concentrated period of political activity in the 193Os, Livesay's poetry exhibited a steady romantic emphasis. The intimate verses which Livesay wrote in her late teens and early twenties display a precocious poetic talent and fervent emotional intensity. They also reflect her obsessive reliance on the conventional sex roles which were taken for granted in the society in which she lived. They reveal her personal vulnerability to the destructive effects of these stereotyped patterns of love relationships. Yet, even in this youthful period, the poet occasionally shows a resentful reaction against the constricting influences. (Foulks 63)

Where Hutchison's image of the young Livesay taking "first tentative steps" tends to make a toddler of a poet, Foulks's descriptive vocabulary is limited to binding the young female poet's work with belittling stereotypes in describing the poetry as an "intimate," "precocious," "fervent" display of "personal vulnerability" with occasional "resentful reaction." Her article lends itself to the reinscription of the very "stereotyped patterns" which she seeks to critique.[7]

F. R. Scott writes in his poem "Overture" of the modernist period which Livesay helped to introduce: ". . . The tissue of art is torn/With overtures of an era being born" (350). Critics of Livesay's early work from W. E. Collin to Hutchison have missed the manner in which *Signpost* moves away from 'the experience" of the male "I" to record in a female key "an era being born" with its eruption of uncertainty and ambiguity. "Staccato" and the poems which follow explore how, in modernist verse, "the tissue is torn" between old and new, male and female, and the poems do this through interrogation of both traditional patterns in verse and of gender.

In Lee Briscoe Thompson's *Dorothy Livesay* (1987), *Signpost* is seen as neither "romantic" nor "jejeune," but is linked to continental modernism as practiced by both Sitwell and Eliot. Thompson writes:

> Livesay was hardly the first Canadian to write in free verse but she was a young poet writing at a time when vers libre was still viewed with a certain amount of displeasure. Her choice in *Signpost* of exactly half traditional verse and half free or innovative verse forms represented a declaration of some independence from received models, including the highly structured preference of her mother. (22)

The "declaration of independence" was not against her mother, to whom *Signpost* is dedicated.[8] In fact, as we will see later, Florence Randal Livesay actively helped in the preparation of *Signpost*.

The poems in *Signpost* are organized under three categories: "Sober Songs," "Pastorals," and "Variations." The categories seem traditional and, not surprisingly, perhaps, Thompson judges them as "primarily a concession to the fashions of poetry publication, "for almost every poem could be justifiably reassigned to one of the other sections" (28). I would suggest, instead, that poetic categories are both observed, and revised. From my perspective, these poems question old patterns and old ways of knowing.

Kaplan locates questioning at the centre of what she refers to as the "rhetoric and doctrine of a woman's line of British modernism . . . consolidated by Woolf" (11). A letter which Livesay wrote her mother in 193O indicates her close reading of Woolf's *Room of One's Own* and reveals that she considered choosing a title for her own book from the pages of *Room of One's Own* (DLUM). Livesay's mother helped her daughter prepare *Signpost* for publication. Florence Randal Livesay was, as David Arnason notes, interested in modern verse forms (8). The archival correspondence makes clear that she shared much of the work in preparing the manuscript for publication from typing to advising about the selection of poems. In Livesay's eleven-page hand-written letter to her mother dated March 3Oth, 193O, "Realities" was the last of three titles suggested from *Room of One's Own* . Other titles included "Deviations," and Signals."

Livesay states that if "Realities" is chosen as title, the new book should be introduced with the following epigraph from Woolf's *Room of One's Own*:

> What is meant by reality? It would seem to be something very erratic, very undependable - now to be found on a dusty road, now in a scrap of newspaper in the street. . . . (DLUM B37, F11)

Significantly enough, this passage of Woolf's opens with a question, a form of construction with which *Signpost* both begins and ends. Livesay writes her mother that the title *Realities*

"satisfies me very much, as it stands for all the fights I've had with a good many people on the subject of reality" (DLUM Letter to FRL Mar 30, 1930). Written two years after the publication of *Green Pitcher*, this letter underscores the influence of female modernism from England, even as it emphasizes the importance of questioning "textual realities" traditionally defined by dominant males (Smith 83).

In the first poem of *Signpost* one finds irreverent "Staccato," rather than "Sober Song," free verse rather than traditional meter and rhyme. In this first poem "waking" alone is an occasion for both fear of the outside world, and an unsettling swing between desire and disdain for an absent "you." In "Staccato" the dark side of what I have called transformative poetics occurs in the poem's register of turbulence and confusion. This is a poem which records the difficulty of claiming language for the "I" no longer completed through the presence of a male "you." "Staccato" enacts the process of the female subject using the "Staccato" of modernist verse as a means to 'sound' her own mind and find where she is. The voices outside in the first part of the poem move inside the "head" as it proceeds. The at first externalized "someone" is, by the end of the poem known to reside within the self.

The title "Staccato" suggests abrupt or distinct elements or sounds. The speaker opens with a stanza-long question set in free verse. The speaker hears wind as a source of disturbance, a menacing force. At first "he" is described as an intruder:

> That must be the wind
> Pushing at my blind.
> That must be the wind
> Trying to force his way--
> Certainly, the wind.
> Who else? (SP 3)

The intrusive figure pushing and trying to force his way seems at first to be feared but through repetition of "(t)hat must be the wind" he becomes a familiar nothing ("Who else?") present in the absence of "you," or a (once) promised prince.

The poem presents both a cover story for the speaker's desire for "you," and an undercover story of conflicting desire and fear. For me the poem's power is in its refusal to offer a comforting resolution.[9] "Staccato" ends, as it begins, with a question relating to "wind." To be chosen as a partner in marriage, the female must, Livesay's journals suggest, be willing to renounce all artistic aspiration to the lyric wind. In "Staccato," such renunciation is refused as the lyric "I" struggles in the night world. There are no simple answers within the process of the poem. The absence of the significant other, the "you," is a source of confusion and ambivalence. The "Prince" in the journal entry, discussed earlier, said "the trouble with being a poetess is you have to be deep" (DLUM D1). Being deep meant trouble for the girl of eighteen. In "Staccato" that "trouble" erupts.

With the second stanza, the speaker ". . . challenges the taut darkness: Nothing stirs." The passage is metrically uneven and unrhymed. It enacts the difficulty it records:

> Then whisper, whisper, whisper--
> Someone's trying to speak:
> Cackle, mutter, cackle--
> Someone nearly laughed. (SP 3)

In the "(c)ackle, mutter, cackle" one hears the "Nothing" wind change into a "Someone. . ." who sounds like a parrot.

From the perspective of symbolic language, repeated reference to the "parrot in a cage" seems as an emblem for that which is "fumbling," "cage[d]," and "hungry" in the self:

> All hours I hear it talking, talking,
> Like a parrot in a cage,
> Mumbling to itself
> Words of helpless rage:
> Talking, muttering, talking
> Fully half the night,
> Cackling to a heedless wind
> In a heedless flight. (SP 3)

There is a correspondence between the self and caged bird: ". . . the parrot in a cage/And I too deep, Too slumber bound to rise--/Turning, I sleep" (SP 4). Sleep itself has been a kind of golden cage, a room (not) of one's own, in which one exists to be taken. The parrot is a mimic which repeats words without meaning. Like the nineteenth century 'Angel in the House,' the parrot of the house (encountered again in "Green Rain") was present to decorate and entertain. Bennett notes:

> To Woolf, the Angel represented everything a woman was supposed to be: sympathetic, charming, utterly unselfish, domestic, self-sacrificing, and, above all, pure. Her nature was, of course, fictitious but therein lay the roots of her immense appeal. It was, Woolf discovered, "far harder to kill a phantom than a reality." (2)

In "Staccato" the parrot offers no domestic comfort, and the phantom is not an angel but nevertheless serves as a possessing force, hard to extinguish. The speaker identifies not with a traditional gaze of a patriarchal master but with the tormented caged bird, and a sleeping self, which, between them, suggest hunger, discontent, and fear. The poem accentuates "repetition," beginning with "That must be the wind/Pushing. . ." and "That must be the wind/Trying. . ." to a kind of stutter, a "Fumbling," "Mumbling," "Talking, muttering, talking" which while persistently intrusive, apparently fails to say anything.

"Staccato" would seem to suggest the rage that Woolf forbade to women writers. As the voices within "Staccato" sound out a broken syntax of cackling, the subject splits between the parrot and the sleeping "I." The parrot is linked to its cage and a signifying process which dictates empty repetition such as the "Crack, crack crackle/Creak" of stanza five. The formal elements of "Staccato" announce rupture with traditional rhyme, meter, and syntactically polished performance. The lover configured as "you" is never more than a phantom within the poem.

In "Interrogation," a tentative "I" questions a "you" who is described as engrossed by work. With the image of the bird the speaker evokes an alternate heaven juxtaposed to the work of the textual "you." The simile, likening the speaker to a bird, provides an emblem through which to represent the unequal status between "I" and "you":

> If I come unasked
> Will it be
> As if a meadow-lark
> Suddenly
> Startled you as you worked
> And you smiled,
> But were not disturbed --
> Scarce thinking, even,
> Of the bird or its heaven? (SP 12)

Through its modernist form, seen here in irregular line length and highly selective rhyme (be, suddenly), "Interrogation" eschews the traditional metric value and predictable rhyme in favour of something new. In its repetition of "If" the poem calls to mind Rudyard Kipling's preeminent "If" which holds out the possibility of full subjectivity -- father to son -- if one is male. Livesay's "If" erases all reference to gender. It displays no didactic formulations about what one must be. Rather it is a poem which asks rather than tells. It asks for a suspension of old manners and old systems of etiquette.

In Pickthall's "The Wife," the "great hours" of the male are set against the wife's inability to interrupt since, as she puts it, "Living I had no might /To make you hear." Livesay's "Interrogation" records the ardent desire to interrupt, to come unasked, breaking learned patterns of behavior which confine both Pickthall's "The Wife" and the woman in Livesay's "City Wife."

Through the persistent coming which the speaker posits in the first line of each irregular stanza, "Interrogation" breaches the traditional etiquette which represented cultivated ladies of the nineteenth century busy with needlework "utterly unselfish, domestic" waiting for the man.

Through the simile of self as meadow-lark -- with a separate reality (its heaven) -- the subject speaking within "Interrogation" is symbolically equivalent to the young female attempting to come unasked within the text of a poem to speak of herself and thus a whole different reality.

In "Pastorals," the middle part of *Signpost*, the speaker stands at the transitional space ("the archway") between the past and the "noonday" of now where "some clear voice [is] singing out/Music I knew long since. . . ." (SP 27). "Threshold" presents a kind of compressed bildungsroman in which the protagonist "gaze(s) over well loved fields/Before. . ." leaving home, pursuing "my way." However, as female bildungsromans have been observed by Elizabeth Abel to break with linear patterning, so in this poem and poems such as "City Wife," "Green Rain," and "Old Man" which follow, the inner space of home is not simply a space to be left, but a site of return, where "the fire within" is a metonym for the body housing "the heart." The natural world with its "wild raspberries and grass" (SP 3O) and "hornets" -- becomes a textual site of "(h)aunt(ing)," a space the old man knows by day but must retreat from at night. The night world figured prominently in *Green Pitcher* as a space in which the power of the (male) sun fell under eclipse in lyric-centred "meditation." The "pastoral(s)"in *Signpost* do not simply represent "more nature poetry" (Thompson 22) but work, as Relke suggests, to mediate between nature and modern culture. The explicit focus on female subjectivity in such poems as "Green Rain," and "City Wife" is upon an inner world gained in turning away from "romantic thralldom" of male-female romance towards a natural world in which the female is both allied with nature and yet an active agent with a life of her own.[10]

The male characters in "Old Man" and "Vandal" are described in postures which suggest loss of authority. In "Old Man," "Knowledge of things" dissolves within the night world of the poem:

Knowledge of things was nothing but a light,

> The old man thinks, that vanished with the day:
> Now that the dark has come he stands and gropes
> Each roughened tree beside the gate, that he may know. . . (SP 38)

The new way of knowing which the "Old Man" seeks is analogous to the wife's "know[ing]" of self in the following poem, "City Wife" (SP 4O). They record a rich ambiguity in which one finds "unrest," doubt, and questions, rather than the inflated verities which A. J. M. Smith found in traditional Canadian verse.

Livesay's poems in *Signpost* suggest new ways of knowing which lead the lyric subjects in her poems not to rhapsodize over nature for its own sake, but through a trajectory from the "roughened tree" (SP 38) and "the earth" (SP 45), to "plunging into light" (SP 39) and "(s)tarting the fire" (SP 45) of human community. But humans have to be watched. The old man who would teach wasps is named "(v)andal" for the fire he sets (SP 37). The knowledge of the old man with his "red wand" is possessed by his dream that the wasps are "men burned in bed --" (SP 37).

In "The Intimates," the male and the female are set together as celebrants. The male's repeated exclamation -- "See what the bees have done!" -- provides not authoritative pronouncement, but rather, an occasion to wonder together at the glory of celebrating the exchange between bee and delphinium. Neither God nor "I" and "You" in the poem orchestrates the bloom of the flowers. "(B)ees" are represented as having produced "(m)ass on mass of blue delphinium/High in my arms . . ." The repetition of "mass" in combination with ""High" provides an ironic evocation of Catholic and High Anglican "mass," yet the bees are not presented in a hierarchical chain of being. The intimacy between the two in the garden comes from sharing an ability to "see" "Blue r(u)n riot." If God has not necessarily made the delphiniums, neither has man. For me, "The Intimates" suggests a new way of seeing the

human garden, using the poetic line to surge forward in free verse while breaking old conventions which signaled, if not business, then 'the garden' and patriarchal order as usual.

In Bliss Carman's work, "landscape remains pastoral and life simple," the garden "Edenic" (Brown & Bennett 171), but in Dorothy Livesay's *Signpost* the middle pastoral section revises pastoral to reveal a renegotiation of textual authority: neither God nor his gardener have the last word which is, instead, most often given over to a subject configured as "she" or as "I." In "The Intimates" the rupture with the premodern pastoral is enacted through a marked break with traditional form (SP 31). The irregular line length and absence of rhyme mark the modernist push to make it new:

> Mad laughing fountains splashed and ran,
> Colour was captured in a snare
> Of blue,
> And only blue
> Lay in the shadows of the grass
> And outshone the sun. (SP 31)

This passage refigures the visual field of the pastoral in the snare of language. The progressive metrical expansion moves from one metric foot "of blue" to the two foot "And only blue," and the four foot "Lay in the shadows of the grass" to break in the final, uneven, five syllable "And outshone the sun." The "see" and "bee" rhyme playfully underscores our chance to recreate the familiar poetic topos, offering an occasion to "see" both the subject "bees," and the lyric "I" in new ways.

"Green Rain" is one of Livesay's most anthologized poems and, appropriately, it appears at the numerical centre of *Signpost*. It is a poem in which female subjectivity is celebrated through its connections with a female line. The poem is what Liz Yorke calls a "work of reminiscence" in which the speaker locates her own position as subject with reference to her grandmother. "I remember" occurs five times in the poem's eighteen lines. "Green

Rain" privileges the retrospective glance of a woman remembering a woman: it is a poem in which a female speaker modifies her own perception of meaning through poetic process.

The figuration and simile in opening lines evoke the enveloping presence of the grandmother:

> I remember long veils of green rain
> Feathered like the shawl of my grandmother--
> Green from the half-green of the spring trees
> Waving in the valley. (SP 32)

The imagist credo had proclaimed the need for poetry to make what Pound called a "(d)irect treatment of the 'thing' whether subjective or objective" (Pound 18). In the tangible "thing(s)" summoned within this poem, one finds the natural world of "long veils of green rain" and "the half-green of the spring trees" associated with "the shawl of my grandmother." But the grandmother herself remains elusive: her subjectivity is at once at the centre of the poem and yet, rather like Roberts's divine "His," only profoundly female-centred, it radiates through the poem. It is not the physical presence of the grandmother which is described but, rather, "her voice, rising and falling--/Rain and wind intermingled" (SP 32). In "Staccato" I note that "trying to speak" is a preeminent struggle. In "Green Rain," the grandmother's voice carries no explicit message. It is rather a rhythm which continues with the repetition of "I remember" throughout the poem. The musicality of this poem is based on the rhythm of ". . . her voice rising and falling" all the while revising the past. It is not, then, the romantic "love's house" which occasions this lyric, but rather a change in perspective:

> I remember on that day
> I was thinking only of my love
> And my love's house.
> But now I remember the day
> As I remember my grandmother.
> I remember the rain as the feathery fringe of her shawl. (SP 32)

When the book first appeared, reviewer Charles Bruce found a "curious and rather beautiful fatalism" in *Signpost*.[11] But I would argue with particular reference to "Green Rain" that the volume constitutes not the fatalism of accepting a fixed pattern, but rather a "resounding" -- that is an echoing and reverberation (Williamson xi) -- of female-centred process which is antithetical to fatalism.

In the award-winning poem "City Wife," the process of the female subject is set in the context of testing male-defined "reality" through the "plunge" into shifting perception and dream.[12] In "City Wife," the female speaker stands apart from "reality -- the scarlet sun" and her husband "(a)bsorbed in the day ahead, which means to him/Only the day between concession lines." The "Wife" speaks from the textual territory of what feminist critics Gilbert and Gubar refer to as "re-vision and recreation" and Williamson figures as a process of "sounding" and "re-sounding" through which both female gender patterning and literary tradition shift shape.

Within "City Wife," the "wife," having "plunged" into "the wood," enters a territory not of "concession lines" which order her husband's life, but "a line of pale wild cherry trees/Too lovely to be startled by a sound/Too young to be enchanted by the wind" (SP 42). The ordered "concession lines" are analogous to the traditional metric contract of the iambic pentameter lines of traditional verse which "breaks over all" in "City Wife" with the italicized:

> *Jet crows beating their tireless wings,*
> *Fighting northward where the snow still clings:*
> *Strong crows breaking into strident song--*
> *And now I remember how the winter was long.* (SP 41)

In this instance, remembrance of a too-long winter sounds a note of rupture which is also reflected in a break with the ten syllable beat of the lines. The metric break is thematically repeated with ". . . strident song." In "City Wife" the venture is not -- as in de la Roche's

quatrain in Dorothy Livesay's autograph book -- personal "fame,"[13] but rather the exploration of altering "(d)ream into changing dream. . . ." This represents a resistance to the preordained order of what "the wife" calls "things I ought to do. . ." (SP 40). In turning away from the definition of self as "Wife," the female subject reports her shifting process of "song into song" (SP 41). The "spring" which the "City Wife" makes is toward trusting her own ways of knowing and feeling. Her delight in "watching the elms" stands in contradiction to the measured world confining her husband to endless repetition in work, and exists in tension with the measured pace of the poem.

"City Wife" illustrates the distance between a man and a woman in a traditional society. But while the "concession lines" of the husband's world can be linked to a plodding (metric) tradition, the wife's "line of pale wild cherry trees," is in itself a line which breaks with the old measured pace, first to hear, and later in the poem to speak of a "singing festival" (SP 41) which "cries to be expressed. . . " (SP 41). "The City Wife" is, like other speakers in Livesay's early poetry, fundamentally concerned with whether or not what is new in the female voice will register with the male. She wonders:

> . . . -- If I speak, will
> he look,
> Will he open his eyes and gaze suddenly into my face,
> Starting the fire of my joy, and the sweet unrest? (SP 45)

The wife's question in "City Wife" can be linked to questions asked in earlier poems in *Signpost* such as "Interrogation," and "Protest," questions about subjectivity in relation to the authority of the dominant "you" whether configured as lover, father, or other left undescribed.

In "Protest," the last poem of *Signpost*, irreverent couplets enact the teasing presumption of a speaker within a text which plays out like a jazz variation on the traditional lyric. Here is imitation of the Canadian "masters" (Lampman, Carman, Roberts) with a difference which makes a windy spring game of opening "closed" form. The rhetorical gesture

of question suggests irreverent teasing as does the use of the self-consciously antiquated "a-quivering." "Protest" is a poem about female subjectivity disrupting what A.J.M. Smith had called "the poetic subject" with "flame-enchanted" (t)hrusts" of the "(s)carlet" leaf-tongue into speech. A stolid tradition would seem to challenge a speaker who responds:

> Can I help it, if the spring
> Sets these trees a-quivering.
>
> So the maple now remembers
> Scarlet of her lost Septembers,
>
> And in flame-enchanted mood
> Thrusts her thought on solitude?

The personified maple "(t)hrusting" her thought into speech and ending in the space of poetry even as the speaker hangs back coyly asking, "Can I help it. . . ." plays out a double gesture of a female "I" exploring her own "flame enchanted" subjectivity. The speaker is swept, through alliance with the speaking maple and signifying wind, into the "ecstasy--" of poetic speech:

> Can I help it then, if I
> Seize forgotten ecstasy--
>
> Give away closed thoughts of mine,
> Hang my secrets on the line? (SP 61)

In these last lines of "Protest," the "line" is used as a site of playful transgression: the poetic line (traditionally the 'ink-waysting toye' of the male) and the clothes-line (site of female/domestic labour) fuse in a "line" of print. The first and last poems in *Signpost* open and close with question marks. They call their reader to continue the process of interrogation of language, in protest against the invisibility of female subjectivity, "breaking old metric values" in order to open a changed lyric to a new generation of women.

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[1] Pacey does not use the term "modernism" in his "Introduction" but refers instead to the "battle for simplicity and directness against the ornateness and involved rhetoric of late Victorian verse,...(in which) Ezra Pound, T.S.

Eliot and Edith Sitwell were leading poetry beyond imagism into the exciting new complexities of symbolism." Pacey credits women poets "like Amy Lowell, Elinor Wylie, Hilda Doolittle and Edna St. Vincent Millay..." for "experimenting with new technical effects."(DP xii).

[2] The quotation from *The Robber Bride* concerns Tony who is a female historian at University of Toronto's (fictitious) McClung House. The passage is about Tony's feelings for her dead mother: "She hovered just out of reach, a tantalizing wraith, an *almost*, endowed with a sort of gauzy flesh by Tony's longing for her" (179).

[3] For a discussion of the manner in which visual representation continues to reduce women to limiting stereotypes see Mariana Warner, *Monuments and Maidens; The Allegory of the Female Form* (1985).

[4] Dorothy Livesay, photocopy of her Sorbonne thesis, "Symbolism and the Metaphysical Tradition in Modern English Poetry," 1932. All subsequent references to this thesis will be made in the dissertation as MEP. Passages of Donne which portray women in an unflattering light, or challenge their right to speak are not selected for scrutiny, ie. in Livesay's thesis.

[5] Walkerdine observes "...if we want to understand the production of girls as subjects and the production of alternatives for girls, we must pay attention to desire and fantasy."(1990: 104)

[6] For a discussion of the significance of the Furies in *Oresteia* and in the context of Western tradition see Luce Irigaray (36-37). Irigaray writes that the Furies represent the "ghosts of" Orestes's murdered mother. "These women cry vengeance. They are women in revolt, rising up like revolutionary hysterics against the patriarchal order in the process of being established." It is interesting to consider the implications of Livesay's change of the sex of plural "Furies" to the singular "Fury." She presents the wind as a huffy patriarch at the end of his powers.

[7] Both Sandra Hutchison and Lee Briscoe Thompson use Livesay's categories of "Innocence" and "Experience" to organize their critical writing on Livesay without exploring the complexity of "Innocence" in Livesay's work. Thompson's consideration of the complexity of *Signpost* belies the relevance of the chapter title under which she includes *Signpost*: "Songs of Innocence." The use of these categories tends to re-inscribe Collin's suggestion that the volume portrays a "lack of experience" (following Collin) with adult sexuality. Livesay's comments in the "Foreword" to *Collected Poems: The Two Seasons* suggest that a complex "pull between" dichotomy is "characteristic of being a woman...." See "Foreword" *Collected Poems: The Two Seasons*, v. In her unpublished 1977 Diary she writes: "I am certain that some adults retain their innocence throughout life. Particularly some women. My mother...also my sister & myself. I approach people believing in them; again and again I mistrust their motivation. Yet again and again believe....This does not make me pure, or without cruelty or without guilt." No page entry under "Useful Notes On FRL, Diary 1977 Box 2 Folder 5.

[8] See "Dorothy Livesay's Correspondence with her mother, FRL, 1926-1952," The Papers of Dorothy Livesay, Special Collections, University of Manitoba, (Box 37, Folder 11).

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[9] Walkerdine's essay, "Some day My Prince Will Come: young girls and the preparation for adolescent sexuality," provides interesting commentary on the persuasiveness on the ideal of the prince in contemporary female gender formation. (87-106).

[10] Relke's dissertation suggests that Livesay's early poetry engages in the task of "poetic mediation." She adds: "For Livesay the personal is always the universal: whether she addresses the theme of female powerlessness in heterosexual relationships or the woman poet's experience of patriarchal literary conventions, she depicts the struggle as part of the larger conflict between nature and culture" (224).

[11] Charles Bruce, "A Canadian Poet," "Star" (Halifax), 10 December, 1932, 10. Box 10, Folder 4, The Dorothy Livesay Collection, Department of Archives and Special Collections, University of Manitoba.

[12] In *Journey With My Selves* Livesay recalls writing "City Wife" against the reality of the farm husband. "I felt that the farmer, although part of the rhythm of the natural world, was insensitive to its beauty. Above all, he was insensitive to the personal needs of his womenfolk, their very psyche. Like (Raymond) Knister, I was reading Martha Ostenso's *Wild Geese....*" (JWS94).

[13] Mazo de la Roche: her autograph in Livesay's Autograph Book speaks of trying to "capture fame" with graceless "dagger thrust." Signed and dated 1st July, 1926. The Papers of Dorothy Livesay, The Department of Archives and Special Collections, Box 3, Folder 2.

Chapter Two: "I," "Unknown": Female Subjectivity in Miriam Waddington's Early Life Writing and *Green World* (1945)

In a letter to her friend Waddington in 1945, Livesay recognized in *Green World* "the only probing poetry we have" (WPNA). In suggesting the need to "Probe," that is to "examine searchingly," to venture beneath surfaces, to investigate that which is not immediately evident (Davidson 586), Livesay's words provide a fitting introduction to Waddington's early life writing and poetry all of which explore "the inner underground life" of her own sex, first in unpublished journals, and later in her first published book of poetry.[1] After Waddington had published two books, Milton Wilson called her a "very uneven" and "unsatisfying poet" while conceding that her "work as a whole is more impressive than any poem or selection of poems can make it seem" (1955:83). Although early critics of Waddington's first books failed to engage with her "probing" of female subjectivity, it is at the centre of her contribution to the second wave of Canadian modernist poetry. Attention to this central aspect of Waddington's work will explain the rewarding substance of the poetry which early criticism of her first two books fails to acknowledge.

As well as being part of an emerging group of female poets including Avison, Page, and Marriott who, with Livesay, used modernist techniques, Waddington is markedly different in background: not a Gentile, but a Jew, a self-described "outsider" in Canadian literature (AS 36).[2] Waddington spoke Yiddish before she spoke English (AS 203). The speaker in her poem "The Bond," a central poem in *Green World*, asserts the presence of the "twice isolate" in both Canadian culture and the modernist Canadian lyric.

Waddington had a more eclectic range of influences than Canadian poets raised to speak and read only English and possibly French; always she had more than the English tradition of poetry, though she had that too. In her essay "Mrs. Maza's Salon," Waddington

attests to the cosmopolitan influence of the Yiddish poet Ida Maza, from Montreal, who "took charge of [her] reading" from the age of fourteen, encouraging her to read an eclectic range of British, Irish, and American poets as well as her own Yiddish poems (AS 3).

In *Apartment Seven* Waddington represents her life, as she began to write, as characteristic of women writers of her time in English Canada (AS 2O3) :

> Fifty years ago women wrote, but that didn't make them writers. They had other primary functions that defined them: to get a husband, have children, and manage a household. Their inner lives were lived anonymously and underground. The inner underground life applied to me as it did most women writers of my generation. (AS 2O3)

Waddington has noted "[a]s an issue gender did not even exist until the [English] publication of Simone de Beauvoir's *Second Sex* [1953] [and f]or my part, I accepted. . . that it would be a waste of time to try to change what John Stuart Mill called the received opinions of a whole country" (AS 34). The "received opinions" which she accepted in published criticism, she nonetheless challenged in both life writing and poetry. In Waddington's early work poetry becomes an occasion to cast off traditional rhyme and meter, to "step out" of traditional patterns in poetry while simultaneously challenging female subordination in Canadian culture (CP 1).

As stated in my introduction, Canadian literary criticism of the forties, fifties, and sixties failed to perceive gender as a factor in discussions of modernism and modern poetry. While reviewers like MacLure in 1957 found "a curious likeness of response to certain favorite subjects, say nature, love, children among female poets otherwise very dissimilar," they tended to implicitly lump female poets' interest in female, not male, subjectivity as inconsequential to criticism (63). It is as if the highest compliment a critic like MacLure might have paid to a female poet in the post-World War Two period would be not to notice any difference between her work and that of a male poet. "We could almost define the typical Canadian poet of the forties," wrote Waddington's first publisher John Sutherland, to his contemporaries in the

forties, "as an Englishman trying hard to stop being one, but so far not succeeding" (53). The "Englishman" might want to "stop being" English, but few men in this male dominant period would have willingly chosen to "stop being," or for that matter stop 'sounding,' male.

In her early unpublished writing, Waddington (nee Dworkin) uses both journal writing and poetry to pursue what she, in a later essay, calls "leaps into the unknown by means of language."[3] In the following discussion of Waddington's life writing, I use journals, unpublished poems, essays, and Waddington's master of social work thesis as a means of contextualizing what she refers to in the passage cited above as the "inner underground life" of the female writer. Within that context, I collapse the once critically maintained division between private and public in order to pursue my own probing of *Green World* as a female-centred book of Canadian modernist poetry.

As in the preceding chapter on Livesay, I have two purposes in this chapter: the first is to offer a brief preliminary account of the material relevant to this study found in the early unpublished material in the Waddington Papers at the National Archives; and the second, to explore female subjectivity in both the unpublished life writing and *Green World*. In her journals and poetry, Waddington placed female subjectivity at the centre of her own work. At the same time, in her published essays she has often written of the "artist" and "poet" in the abstract as male. In this she follows a long tradition. As Waddington has observed, "[t]he artist's material is always more responsive to him than the outside world, which usually resists his revisions of it" (AS 160). In her first book of poetry *Green World*, the patriarchal contingencies manifest in the phrase "responsive to him" are open to a shift in gender which Waddington would not attempt in her critical writing for decades.

In Waddington's early life writing, the "woman's way" of the stereotypically passive, innocent, female, untouched by the modern world, comes under the scrutiny of a girl who learned English when she went to school, and who, as an adolescent, had "nourished [her]self

on the poetry of Emily Bronte, Christina Rossetti, Elizabeth Browning, Sara Teasdale, and Edna St Vincent Millay" as well as "Marjorie Pickthall and Pauline Johnson" (AS 202). The writing self in the journals moves from the thrall of romance and traditional poetic form in the 1933-1935 period, to an ironic tone and a free verse form in the years from 1936-1944. In "Women and Writing" Waddington notes that she, too, read Virginia Woolf in adolescence (AS 203). A first generation of female modernist writers in England and America had already asserted their legitimacy by taking issue with their unequal status through their life writing, poetry, and fiction.

In Livesay's early journals, the influence of Virginia Woolf and Katherine Mansfield is emphatically marked, whereas in Waddington's life writing one finds no explicit reference to female modernists other than the transitional poet Edna St. Vincent Millay. From the beginning, Livesay's journals indicate an awareness of an emerging female-centred tradition of English modernism; as noted in the preceding chapter she calls on Woolf in her early journals as if she is her personal muse. By contrast, Waddington is, in her early journals, a Jewish girl, writing English in a Yiddish-speaking household. Her journals and poetry explore a new world. Waddington was one of the poets -- including also Souster and Layton -- about whom Sutherland could write"[t]hey are determined on principle not to ignore the coarse bustle of humanity" (51). Capturing the bustle of modern life in Canada is an interest evident in journal notes Waddington kept while a university student in Toronto, as is a populist interest in "we common average types" (MWCP 38).

Waddington's life writing includes a wide range of material: two epistolary journals, traditional verse, stream of consciousness prose, drafts of modernist poems, and academic writing. Where Livesay kept different types of writing separate, not usually mixing poetry, and never mixing prose narrative with her early journals, Waddington's journals tend to combine drafts of poems and stories along with autobiographical notes. This mixing-up of

different genres allowed her to use the journal as a work book in which she might begin with a note, and then proceed to a draft of a story or poem. Whatever the form of writing in the journals, female subjectivity is almost always the central concern. In Waddington's early journals there is an ongoing "audit of meaning" (Berthoff 11) from the point of view of the female subject. Berthoff notes that using the journal "recreates us as historical creatures," freeing us "from the momentary, the eternal present of the beasts" (12). Such an eternal present has been the domain of both beasts and women who have been silent partners within poetic tradition (MWCP 278). Modernist poetry might be read as a moment of rupture when the monologic address of the voice of "Man" is challenged within its own "fragments" (Eliot "The Waste Land" 75). In shifting the dialogue from himself to herself (AS 109), a female modernist poet performs a fundamental act of transformation in attending to female voices marginalized in traditional verse. In both Waddington's and Livesay's first works of published poetry, the speaker is in dialogue with a "self" which most often either refuses the stable referent of gender, or is gendered female.

Waddington's early journals "audit" how gender inequality works within her own life circa 1933-1943, and they also continue to "review the meanings [she] is making" with words (Berthoff 11). In Waddington's early journals we encounter open questions which one might paraphrase as follows: Why must the woman be beautiful and passive? What happens to a woman who does not fit the pattern? Why must a girl, like herself circa 1933, who thinks and writes poetry, be judged queer? Why does the concept of "identity," which (she writes) is the preoccupation of her university friend and fellow poet Margaret Avison, seem too complex, though Waddington can quite readily follow male thinkers ranging from Milton and Marx? The idea of applying the concept of "identity" to the female self is seen in Waddington's life writing as both daunting and irresistible.

In Livesay's poem "Staccato," the nightmare is represented through the ambiguous symbol of the poem's captive-mimic, the "Parrot." In Chapter One I interpret the central "unknown" as the emerging self which hammers to break out, away from the mimic position of parrot, to explore difference within a male dominant culture. In Waddington's early life writing and poetry a comparable struggle is played out.

Green World contains both a pervasive sense of cultural crisis, and a response. As Pacey has observed, in the Canada of the 193Os "[t]he Great Depression had set in, and left-wing politics were replacing literature and nationalism as the chief interests of the more alert undergraduates" (xiv). Waddington's life writing from the late thirties, when she became a student at the University of Toronto, reflects the desire to write a poetry which engaged with the pressing concerns of North American culture, including urban poverty and the care of children born into poverty. In early unpublished free verse from the 193Os, as well as in *Green World*, traditional rhyme and meter are gone and one finds in the ragged lines of such poems as "Investigator" a confrontation with a "street known" and "street knowing" "modernity" (AS 16O).

With her first book, Waddington begins to use poetry as a bridge between female subjectivity and a modern world in which neither psychiatrists, nor professors, nor social workers, seem able to answer the question "Who Will Build Jerusalem" (MWCP 8). Anne Stevenson writes of Wallace Stevens' refusal to locate "Jerusalem" what Stevenson calls the joys of art, "anywhere but in the individual imagination illustrat[ing]. As perhaps no other poet so clearly does, this illustrates the break with the romantic tradition which gave impetus to modernism" (54). In Waddington's poetry I find a similar emphasis on shifting ground, moving, with the creative imagination, to challenge both speaker and reader to know their world, neither through nostalgia about place, nor through the opinion of experts, but, rather, through imagination. *Green World* ventures into the breach of failed vision of both self

knowledge and social connection: matters which, in Waddington's work, constitute gender as a crucial concern.

Although *Green World* is uneven, it is a work which fulfills the elevated status which Waddington, in subsequent critical writing has attributed to poetry as a genre "related to culture and religion" (WPNA "The Creative Process in Writing)." In *Green World*, Waddington takes questions about female subjectivity which first found expression in her life writing and she sets them into "the momentary verbal limit" of her own free verse. She meets the "crisis of modernity" with modern rhythms and lineation which foreground, not observation of old rules, but rather, the process of making poetry new (AS 162).

The Journals of Miriam Waddington: 1933-1943

Twelve years before the publication of her first book, *Green World*, Miriam Waddington's earliest journal creates her first reader as an "Unknown," as "my best and most complete friend. . ." This reader is addressed on the first page:

> Dear Unknown,
> This diary is going to consist wholly of letters to you. You are somewhere and somebody, and some day I'll meet you and you shall read these letters. You are my best and most complete friend and I am going to tell you everything. (WPNA April 2O, 1933)

Waddington's first journal is in a soft-back scribbler with the appropriate title "The Challenger" under which Waddington, the fifteen-year-old girl, writes "what we all need, a challenger." The imagined reader is configured as both "challenger" and one who may end the state of isolation of which the "I" of both Waddington's journals and lyric poetry speaks. In Waddington's early life writing the known master narratives which configured female identity within bounds of passivity, service, and sleep come up against the inky hand of a modern

teenage girl, and later a young woman, who ventures to address the "Unknown" in recognition that the old narratives no longer serve within her own life.

Throughout the journal, the issue of unrequited love for one "Marvin" -- an artistic Jewish young male from Montreal who is "beautiful mentally, spiritually" -- provides a loose but unifying theme with which the journal entries of 1933-34 begin and end. The young Waddington critiques the conventional end of the romance plot in marriage. Throughout the four months of writing the journal, Marvin both remains with his girlfriend, Faegal, and fails to answer the young poet's letters. He is much less a real person in the journal than a muse figure for Miriam Dworkin, an Ottawa teenager, to begin to write. As in Livesay's early diaries, the young Waddington's principal interest is not a day to day record of family or friends. Instead the focus is on using language as a mode of expression and tool of investigation to explore female subjectivity. Dissatisfaction with women's lot both as spinsters and wives in patriarchal society is the point from which Waddington's life writing begins. She writes in the 1933 journal:

> Spinsterhood does not particularly appeal to me. But then--neither does life at 40 in a kitchen appeal to me. It's so funny. I don't want to look forward to marriage like 100% of the girls I know. I won't be a slave! That's what marriage means. Slavery for the woman, & in a lesser degree, even for the man. After all -- 2 years, 3 years of happiness & the rest of your life you pay & pay & pay.
>
> Enough! I've still got 10 more years to think of it. (WPNA May 3, 1933)

In configuring a self with "10 years more to think of it," Waddington turns the attention of her ideal reader, Unknown, away from "Marvin," the idealized beloved. Love poets such as Petrarch shifted attention onto themselves in claiming love for their lady. Unwittingly parodying the convention of courtly love, the young female journal keeper uses unrequited love as a guiding literary trope through which she is authorized to explore not the indistinct "other" but the proximate self.

The dissatisfaction which Waddington records with the limited roles assigned to women extends to her critique of the patriarchal organization of seating at Synagogue. When she occasionally attended synagogue with friends, "I felt out of place and didn't like being singled out to sit on the hard wooden benches in the women's gallery" (AS 37). Growing up in a secular Jewish family, she was sent to a Yiddish school with a "permissive atmosphere" of which she writes, "[w]e were encouraged to question our teachers, [and] to work at our own pace," and a One Big Union Summer camp organized by Fabian Socialists (AS 36-38).

Within the journal, Waddington speculates on God not as the male patriarch of Judaic tradition but as female. She reveals a questioning "I" inclined to examine the convention of female submission in love. Even as she proclaims her love for Marvin, she challenges the status quo of both Christianity and Judaism in writing:

> My materialistic conception of Jehovah is that of a woman. A plain woman with coils and coils of hair. Is God the power? Is there a God? Or is the world a chaos? I think it must be. (WPNA 1933)

The "materialistic conception of Jehovah" as a plain woman is not associated with the cataclysmic power of the old Testament patriarch Yahweh. Among the most Orthodox Jews, married women had their hair, as "their crowning beauty" hidden, or completely shorn, "so as not to attract men from prayer or study" (Rosten 337).

Having set forth the image of "God" as female the text immediately doubts this entity's agency, wondering "Is God the power. Is there a God?" In its reference to chaos the text returns to the world before all written record. Revisioning the "Genesis" account of creation, so as to conceive of God as a woman, spins the power authorizing patriarchal codes of meaning into the chaos and doubt of modernity. With the master narrative of patriarchy out of place, the female God in the text is an unstable and shifting presence, like the fairies,

mermaids, and sprites the reader will encounter, later in this chapter. With her long braids, God appears within textual figuration as a supreme presence who, if "she" exists at all, exists without the power conferred by traditional Western codes of meaning.

Waddington's early childhood education had encouraged her to question both external authority and her own mind. Having moved to Ottawa, she used her journal to question her infatuation with Marvin, and to ask herself and "Unknown," the fundamental questions which recognize the agency of the female subject beyond the constricting confines of her society's gender patterning of the female. In her writing the female ranges, as the reader will see, from a sister to a Caliban who does not fit with the norms of her society to the eminently questionable authority of the female God she wrote about at fifteen.

Waddington notes in her first journal a dissatisfaction with Oscar Wilde's ". . . coarse repulsive face! Such sensuous lips." In a subsequent entry, she finds her own visage equally flawed. Artistic temperament seems to be experienced as something which prevents those who possess it from successfully fitting in with the group. Wilde had, of course, been persecuted for his difference from heterosexual culture. The journal is a place where the young Jewish-Canadian can explore her discomfort with being -- albeit in another sense -- different.

The self in the mirror is the first object of Waddington's questioning and subject of the "bricks and mortar" of textual process:

> Have you ever felt tired of yourself unknown? And have you ever looked into the mirror and been confronted with your face and suddenly realized how unsymmetrical it is? That your forehead is too low, and your mouth is vague, indefinite and weak. . . . That your face is too wide at the cheekbones and the chin too tremulous. And the lips pale and pouting. And the eyes set too close together and murky. If you haven't I have. And it's the most inglorious sensation.
>
> I'm tired of it all. Tired of being considered eccentric and queer. . . . How am I eccentric? Because I read what are considered "deep books"? . . . . Because I indulge in poetry writing? All right that's something that 99% of us try to do. Because I'm not afraid to say what I think? But it is so senseless to be afraid! So -- how am I different? . . . . What do you think Unknown? (WPNA June 11, 1933)

The questions in this passage shift from the self and face of "Unknown" to the narrating "I" who is "(t)ired of being considered eccentric and queer" because she reads "deep books" and writes poetry. The assertion of lack of energy runs through the first journal: the female God is not "the power," and neither is the young woman, who experiences herself as lacking power even as she challenges herself. Waddington's expression of disgruntledness conveys a lack of connection with other dissonant voices as well as a seeking of connection through the questions addressed to "Unknown."

Her own "unsymmetrical" face is linked to the "eccentric" difference between Waddington and her more conventional school friends. Many of these friends seem to have been Jewish themselves; however, concern with being different because one is Jewish, not gentile, may have triggered an increased desire not to be visibly different. But as can be seen in the above-quoted passage, being different is also presented as "indulg[ing] in poetry writing." For the young Waddington, definition of the writing self involved studying that self first of all as girl facing a mirror and then returning to her desk to ask her unknown questions, using her own writing process to assert a bond between an anguished isolate self and a future reader. The textual self is a first witness for the writing self.

Waddington's early journals present a textual record of bonding with a much-desired future reader, and with the female writing self. The bond between the "I" writing and "Dear Unknown" reader is made in entries in which gender difference, like a jazz chorus, plays a recurrent but always shifting part. The male artist (Marvin in the 1933 journal) is allowed to be eccentric with some impunity but for a girl to pursue poetry as anything more than "an Indulgence" represents a venture into a forbidden unknown territory. Not surprisingly, the reader finds reference to a desire to rewrite, word for word, the poetry of Edna St. Vincent Millay. In taking poetry seriously "Miriam" begins a life where it seems all her words may,

like the female God she imagines, be without power. Millay had made people listen; for this reason, her words, for a time at least, seemed the only possible words.

Whereas the printed lyrics of Millay could not be written again, the questions within the journals were about the received order of being and knowing. As a grammatical sign the interrogative marks other possibilities within the cultural script of the female. It is the most representative sign in the journal of the young writer: the sign of a questioning self. As Shari Benstock notes, "[f]ocusing on image and metaphor as primary modes of representation, literary criticism often dismisses as perfunctory the work of grammar and punctuation" (xv).

In her own early journal, Livesay, too, indicated a similar ambivalent isolation judged by her girl self as "of no consequence." In the above excerpt from Waddington's journal, the writing self seeks both to fit with the "us" of the group, and say what she thinks. The question mark is the grammatical sign of her attempt to share her own dis-ease with the reader. The abstract idea of a "The Bond" with another outcast member of her "twice isolate" group will appear in her first book (MWCP 9-1O).

In the journals her sole ally is Unknown. Unable to find understanding among her own acquaintance, the young Waddington conjures a reader with whom she may converse. When Inez, a female friend referred to more than once, tells her "I know I haven't gotten to the bottom of you yet. But I will!", the young writer is momentarily caustic in tone, "(w)e can laugh at her can't we? Yes, yes. We can laugh." The journal's explicit questioning of traditional female definition of femininity through assigned social roles (schoolgirl, sweetheart, housewife) precipitates an invigorating sense of a textually-based relationship which the aspiring poet herself may work with Unknown to sustain. This "I" is not merely a schoolgirl self; she has the added dimension of the textual self she creates through her writing.

Waddington's early journals display none of the linguistic pyro-technics of Imagism, Vorticism, or Surrealism, yet I would suggest that they, too, challenge their reader to consider

what Benstock calls the transformative powers of language. In the following pages I explore the manner in which unpublished life writing by Waddington begins to challenge the self that is fed up with assigned societal identities. In the first two chapters of this dissertation these "two ways" of exploring "cultural representation" of the colonized subject come together. There is both the voice of the critic and the voice of the 'submerged' unpublished writer speaking first of all to herself about whether or not she will be able to make room within a patriarchal language for her own still anonymous, culturally invisible self.

Waddington's unpublished record is full of self-effacing recantations that the writing "I," who has been too bold, is therefore "ridiculous." In more than one instance, the rebellious self-seeking young girl is replaced by a more culturally decorous and correct "I" which records displeasure with a different version of self: "when I read the sloppy stuff I wrote yesterday I feel sick. Consider it vagary -- please. It's silly and it's sloppy & I hope it isn't like me" (WPNA July 6th, 1933). The correct "me" of this entry would evidently stay within the received pattern of Millay's "lovely light."

In considering Livesay's journals, I commented on the record of significant dreams in which "Dorothy Livesay" is singled out as exceptional. Waddington's 1933 journal recounts a dream in which, rather than appearing exceptional, she is diminished as a "formula female" who is both "little" and submissive when paired with a remarkable male artist figure (Kolbenschlag 13). The entry describes the dream as "extraordinary," "nice," and "rather sweet" but later when receiving the fairy-tale kiss, the female "I" within the dream feels "terribly tired and sad" (June 27, 1933). The conventional story of Sleeping Beauty is reversed rather than reinscribed: the female arrives at the home of the sleeping Marvin. Contrary to the situation in which the Prince comes looking for Sleeping Beauty, here the female dreamer is the one in pursuit. However, on entering Marvin's house she finds two generations of older women, his mother and grandmother, who are the all but mute keepers of

the pampered male-artist figure. In the dream, women exist to serve him; as they usher her in, they elicit a promise that she will not wake him:

> They answered quietly and hushed me up. Then they led me into a room where there was a piano & a fireplace opposite it. At the far end of the room was a couch. And at the other end of the room, by the window, were two armchairs. Marvin was lying sprawled across the couch, face down. His mother explained that he had played too long & it had excited and exhausted him. She asked me to be quiet, and to wait till he got up himself. I sat down in an armchair, and started to think that music was a form of insanity. It had the same power of carrying you away, leaving you reckless, and with a glorious abandon. It carried you right out of yourself, away from yourself, and brought out the dormant form of insanity, which lies, I thought, in everyone. (WPNA"The Challenger Notebook," 1933-34)

In relation to the dream, the significance of Marvin's presence in the journal takes on depth: he is the quintessential male artist as both the object of desire and eclipse. The repeated emphasis on a silence which protects the artist is heavily gendered. The three women are to be silent in order to protect the privileged male's sleep and the silent service of Marvin's mother and grandmother tends to place them in the traditional role of female 'appendage' to the male.

The sprawled male artist figure does not serve women, but as the Promethean male, is carried away through the power of his art. Marvin's form of insanity is not seen as specifically male. Instead, meditating on "music" (itself an element of poetry), the female "I" finds the potential for this form of insanity first in the neutral "you" and finally in "everyone." The first sleep, the sleep of the privileged man, is followed by a "reverie," that of the woman. Hers is not the sprawled sleep of the son but a kind of dismal descent from which she rises with fear:

> Then I felt suddenly tired. I closed my eyes, and thought about dismal things. I was half asleep. How long -- I do not know. (WPNA)

She is met, on waking, with Marvin's question "what is it little Miriam?" When she is asked to explain what is wrong, she replies, "Nothing. Only I would like you to kiss me, because I

love you." The dream records an antagonism which the dreamer can not yet explain to herself. It revises the fairy tale of the sleeping beauty so that privilege is explicitly placed with the male. It correctly suggests that the male kiss will not bring lasting happiness. But within the dream, art remains the domain of the male and love is what is sought by the female. As the dream ends, the mother and grandmother have slipped out of the house, leaving Miriam in their place to play her female role.

A few months later Waddington records the end of the largely one-sided romance which has been the pretext through which she began to write. The configuration of the writing self is markedly different from the Petrarchan lover: it is passive, not active. Female gender patterns in Canada in the 193Os encourage her, as female, to figure her self in the passive role. The entry of May 27, 1933 concludes, "And so, dear Unknown, we can write 'finis' to the Marvin complex.... And now the Sleeping Beauty waits for another prince charming! And how fickle is the mind of youth and woman." Stereotypes are affirmed with the still deliciously seductive (for the woman) image of sleeping beauty, accompanied with not only the passivity but also the misogyny of the dominant culture.

But three days later there is another entry and further movement away from "living out" what Kolbenschlag calls "the Pygmalion script" of conforming to the "sculpted, shaved, painted" and "pedestaled" designs of the male. Writing is a means to "bud" on one's own:

> Dear Unknown (a la convention) , Well-congratulate me! Ahem -- I am a budding young author! Swell ---huh? This is my big day. Am I thrilled! Wouldn't you be? Just imagine -- they actually printed "Thank you" and "In a Cemetery. . ." (WPNA May 3Oth, 1933)

The cliched idiom of the passage is not the usual tone of the journal -- which tends toward a register of dissonance and uneasiness -- but rather the "swell --- huh?" of a self presented as nothing special, nothing different, an insider. In *Apartment Seven* Waddington states "I was a

typical girl, and maybe that's why it took me so long to become a writer" (202). In her aspiration to be this typical girl, "I" is split in the early journals with a figuration of self as rebel, not willing to stay within the confines of the "formula female," and the self as desirable object for the culturally-dominant male. As Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson note, "the autobiographical occasion (whether performance or text) becomes a site on which cultural ideologies intersect and dissect one another, in contradiction, consonance, and adjacency" (xix). The desire to present the self "they actually printed" as an "ordinary girl" is evident in the syntax of the above passage; publication threatens the girl who is subject to "*his* meaning" in a dream in which the young women in her culture are raised not to excel, but to fit (Smith&Watson xix).

The journal ends with a selection of hand-written early poetry organized like a chap-book. It begins with a verse which foregrounds the use of writing to create the equivalent of "a room of one's own":

> I live in a world all my own
> My thoughts are my friends
> and my soul is my home. (WPNA 1933)

When she writes that she "dream[s] Edna St. Vincent Millay's poems at night" (1933), Waddington suggests the power that poetry has for her to create an alternate reality. The "world all my own" is set up in poems which, unlike the dream of Marvin, suggest not a family home in which women serve the young male artist, but a place in the world made through poetry.

The "world all my own" begins with the first poem "Ocean by Night, To Miss Jones," in which the ocean is a sea of female-centred play. Here the "dismal things" and the "terribly tired and sad" finish of the prose part of the journal are counterpointed by the "ocean prancing"

of the "mermaideens." If the adult world threatens in the journal to overwhelm the young "Miriam," poetry is a medium she can "own." Here is an excerpt from the first poem:

> Tiny, Tinkling Tambourines,
> Sounding from The Turf,
> Dainty, diving mermaideens
> Dancing on the surf.
>
> Dashing--dipping--dancing
> A million milk-white steeds,
> Across the ocean prancing
> Each wave the other leads. (WPNA April, 1930)

The poem conveys a delight in play with "[s]ounding" out poetic language. Both the night world and water imagery signal a sea-change from the world of day-light and solid ground. The emphasis is on the play of female sprites, "Lovely sea-nymphs of the dark," who as "Tiny" and "Dainty," are stereotypically feminine and yet, as "mermaideens," charged with a "moonlight" which suggests female magic. The dance of the "mermaideens," set in miniature scale with its "Tiny, Tinkling Tambourines," portrays a female-centred celebration. In the fantastic realm described "magic moonlight" plays with "dashing" steeds who move with the mermaids beyond the constrictions of girls in the 'real' world.

In a 1992 interview in Toronto, Waddington stressed that the lyric speaker within her poems has no sex and no gender and is, in fact, an eternal child. She was emphatic:

> It isn't a real, personal 'I,' that's the whole point. . . . I'll tell you. . . this is my idea of poetry. . . . When nature deals out the genes she doesn't care if you're a male or a female. She deals them out and lucky you if you've got it, and also sorry you. [But] it's a ten-year-old child without sex at all who is writing that poetry, and it is always a ten-year-old child. There's no man or woman in it at all. It's a ten-year-old child and the angel of poetry that's doing that. (Waddington taped interview, March 1992)

The assertion fits, at first, only with poems such as the one just discussed. I asked her what happens when that ten-year-old child encounters a world which is particularly hostile to

women. She laughed, conceding that "a lot more comes into it. But that ten-year-old child is a natural force." The intentional fallacy defined by the New Critics reduces such statements by an author to irrelevance (Wimsatt 1014). But the developing theory of life writing tends, while aware that the text and the writer are never the same, to insist on reconnecting the writing self with the text produced.[4] I have come to see Waddington's insistence that the ten-year-old writing the poetry is a natural force as an imaginative means of escaping cultural definition as a girl and woman; that is, as 'subject to' the universal humanist "he" of the male. In modernist poetry, Waddington found a genre in which modern women poets had trespassed with men, against rules of meter, rhyme, and antiquated diction. But before breaking those rules, her early life writing -- with its hand-written record of poems -- suggests that poetry begins as a vehicle through which the girl is able to play with language and, in this play, to explore a generic means through which to speak in a voice which is not confined within the gender codes which configure her sex.

In her earliest unpublished poetry Waddington explored "the oracular gift" of a voice untamed by the quietly smothering forces so deplored by Carol Gilligan in her study of the coming of age of young women in Western society. Life writing leads to a trusting of the process of a textual self, moving away from objectivity and a linear proving of an argument, toward a lyric voice which, whatever its age, insists upon the transformative possibility of poetry.

The journal of 1934-35 is a black scribbler which includes journal entries, quotations, and fragments of dialogue. In an entry of April 6th, 1934 the season intersects with the writing self's "newness & strangeness & wonder":

> Spring does things to you, doesn't it? It does to me. Today I felt the stirrings. . . . There was and is a great mass of something in me struggling to escape. A sort of yearning & longing to shake off everything dull & heavy & wander forever under a free blue sky. It is such a strong feeling too. (WPNA April 6, 1934)

The colloquial language and speculative questioning invite the reader to think about what spring does to the sensate self. As noted in my introduction, Homans theorizes that because nature was considered female, the Romantics conflated women and nature, while the male poets contemplated a passive "her" as silent partner to their (male) inspiration. In Waddington's journal of 1934 Spring is represented as challenging the female self of winter to escape, "to shake off everything dull & heavy and wander." As in Livesay's early writing, nature is seen not as a silent maternal force but as an active one which challenges the "colonized subject" to change; this challenge will find poetic form in *Green World* (Smith & Watson xiv).

Waddington's journals foreground the most seductive element in a female subjectivity created through patriarchal alliance and heterosexual romance. In an entry of August, 1934, Waddington moves from leaving the identity of her reader "Unknown" to a new position: "I think I shall love you. And you will love me -- Yes?" In identifying "Unknown" as the man she "will love" she comes close to consigning the journal to the service of a romantic project, not so much the record of a young artist as a woman seeking a partner. At the same time, she insists on growth away from the perfect "jeune fille":

> There's no use fooling myself. I'll never regain that sweet enthusiasm and wonder that I had at fifteen and during the first part of my sixteenth year. People can not expect me to be eternally naive. I'm growing, and that "sweet, wholesome & refreshing" type of girl has no place in me now, unless I *force* it. And I don't want to be artificial. I must be only what I am. But what in the hell am I? Oh it's such a muddle. (WPNA December 26, 1934)

The muddled "I" asking questions, brashly making assertions, has lost the common sense logic of her own culture. This textual "I" represents a split subject, unsure whether to place emphasis on the mysterious wisdom of a woman's dream, or to own a muddle of selves, none of which fits. Significantly, she experiences this refusal not as legitimate rebellion but as

confusion. With the above entry one version of the difficult and uneven process of "growing" away from the immobilizing pattern of correct female behaviour has been set down on a page.

Waddington's early journals of 1933-1936 are marked with the sense of the female self as secondary to a cultivated and dominant male while, at the same time, in self-contradiction, they display both implicit and explicit challenges to the subservient configuration of the "sweet wholesome and refreshing type" consigned to a feminine role. In her work from 1935 on there is a departure from the seductive languor of what in "A Woman At Evening" she refers to as ". . . her woman's dream" of gentle submission to the will of a man (NA Notebook 1933-35). In "A Woman at Evening," the woman is pictured as emblematic of her entire sex, she is "[s]trange and mysterious with ancient/Far off wisdom."[5] Rather than suggesting an essence of far off female wisdom, the poems from 1936 are more self-consciously modern in theme and idiom and they tend to suggest a social critique of the power of patriarchy as figured in "the smug blue sheen of heavy/ jowls that waited orders" from "old men" (WPNA Notebook 1937-38).[6]

In *Apartment Seven* Waddington notes that she and other modern Canadian poets read "the new British poets -- Auden, Lewis, Spender, MacNeice. . ." (AS 22). The unpublished poem "We of 1937" reflects a political awareness suggesting the influence of these modern British male poets, and undertakes a critique of a militaristic male-dominant elite, emphasizing the culpability of "the old men" who "sat and/wasted time and urged us to wait" while "the/world was crumbling" (WPNA MG31D54). The reference to the "crumbling" of the world is, of course, a phrase which suggests the rise of Fascism, leading up to World War Two.

In subsequent journals, Waddington's writing shifts from autobiographical entries to fragments of stories and drafts of poems which focus on men and women as both intimates and adversaries. Consider the handwritten "Weekend," from a notebook of 1939:

Men have become sterile
Don't know how to make love anymore
First beer, then line up single file.
And then they sleep because they are too tired
Yet love is admired.

We have memorized
Our turn to laugh. We never miss the cue.
Smiles come single, joy is polarized
For fantasy we have the foam of beer,
This is now, my dear, now and here. (WPNA Notebook 1939)

The brash speaker announcing the "now" and "here" suggests discord between the sexes. "[S]terile" men "line up" in the first stanza, "single file" to relieve themselves. The reference in the next stanza to the women's "turn to laugh" suggests a technological society of well-socialized love objects rather than the laughter of lovers. The poem speaks out of a time when marriageable girls like Waddington -- as one can see her in archival pictures circa 1940 -- applied fresh lipstick and swallowed their anger that their male-centred culture had seduced them into domesticity without the reward of romantic "love." In place of a female-centred magic, evident in the juvenile poem "Ocean By Night," we are told that "for fantasy we have the foam of beer." The poem suggests what women have to lose when they are dutiful bed-partners in a male-centred reality; they risk losing dreams of their own.

In a journal entry of the same year, Waddington again articulates a social consciousness in terms of the oppositional leftist rhetoric of the day: a rhetoric through which leftist poets tended to subsume references to women with references to "workers" and "the working men." Without explicitly mentioning her own approaching marriage to Patrick Waddington, she indicates a need to "ally" the engaged self with "someone, something." Interestingly, she considers that the alternative to this engagement is the "objective" analytic position she was taught to observe at the University of Toronto. As Gabrielle Griffin has noted, the code of objectivity has very often served "patriarchal thought [which] does. . . represent itself as

emotionless (objective, detached, and bodiless)." The style of the following journal entry from the 194Os suggests the influence of female modernists. The passage follows the process of her own non-stop rush of conflicting thought. She speaks in the first person:

> I think I must identify myself with someone, something at this time. This, if ever, is not the time to be objective, or super-intellectually above things.
>
> I'm willing to let my humanity drag me into the struggle on the side of the working men. They, losers or winners, ought to win for the sake of justice. I think they will. Anyway, it is the only chance for a *full* life which today must include a social consciousness. I don't want to go under the purple ether with T. S. Eliot and that gang. . . . I'm a person, I've got to live on all planes that I know; I can't, like some sink myself in the specialization of one subject. That's really a mind turned to mechanical use.
>
> About reality. Take the reality of love. Nothing is more fundamental, moving than a man and a woman. I'm sure that I saw something very real, today, but I can't prove it.
>
> The back of a man's trench coat -- he was leaning toward a smallish woman in some dark windblown clothes. They walked down into a street car tunnel. I watched them fade into it. It was somehow very significant. There seemed so much urgency in the fact of their togetherness -- it was inevitable.
>
> I don't get the feeling of urgency about most people that smoose around the Royal York. Or any dance hall. After all, one can sleep with a bitch anytime. And one can find a man anytime, wherever. It's not particularly urgent. (WPNA 1936-1939 Notebook March 18, 1939)

In this entry a woman who is available for sex is categorized as "a bitch." The remark conveys a casual misogyny: a man looking for sex is a "man," a woman doing the same thing is a "bitch." Yet, even as this journal entry reflects sexism, it also conveys the very different perspective on male-female connection in the brief account of the windblown couple observed in "their togetherness." Taken as a whole the passage foregrounds a shifting, and contradictory, point of view. The passage can not pronounce upon either scene as "reality." Instead it explores a shifting scene and shifting feelings. In mixing diverse representations of coupling with her own thoughts on reality, Waddington represents a kind of writing which Hanscombe and Smyers discuss as representative of the modernist period. They observe that

an interrogation of objective reality was proceeding in physics, in mathematics, and in psychoanalysis:

> What is startling and different is their pursuit in language of what was taking place in physics and other mathematical languages, and in psychoanalysis: the radical hypothesis that nothing objective exists, that a separation between 'subjectivity' and 'objectivity' is spurious, that the observer (so called) is intrinsic to every phenomenon. (9)

Notwithstanding these interrogations of objectivity, most males of the period held fast to the view that both literature and history were the record of men. The male "I" still spoke for all humanity unless, that is, one was reading writers like Woolf and Mansfield. Representative male modernists such as T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound tended, as products of their culture, to read and represent the female half of the human race as coming and going through history "talking of Michelangelo," nameless and ephemeral to both art and (male) artist. As DeKoven notes, in Eliot's "Prufrock" women "are either the banal degraders of high culture, dispensers of the quotidian 'teas, cakes, and ices' or the disappointing and even disgusting, yet unattainable, objects of Prufrockian desire" (DeKoven 19O). In her journal Waddington conveys the sense that high modernist "T. S. Eliot and the gang" have not caught with their "purple ether" the "*essence* (sic) of things" she has seen on the streets of Toronto (WPNA Notebook 1936-1939. March 18, 1939).

There are no references to contemporary women writers, other than Margaret Avison, in the brief journal entries from 1939 to 1945, but Waddington does single out Yeats, Proust, and Rilke, with particular admiration. However, Waddington has noted elsewhere that she was reading women writers too. Not surprisingly, their names do not often appear at a time when, both in life and in literature, Waddington found that male claims for attention came first.

Waddington asked and received permission from the "anti-woman" "great Milton Scholar" A. S. P. Woodhouse to write on "Milton and Women."[7] Her essay reveals an interest

in gender uncommon for her time and a grasp of the history of women's oppression under patriarchy. She recognizes the need to read Milton in the larger context of androcentric tradition, writing that:

> In order to estimate properly Milton's view of women [marker writes 'woman'] it is necessary to trace briefly the historical position of women in society, as well as the social, religious, and cultural influences that molded Milton's thought on the subject. (WPNA "Milton's Views of Women" 1)

This excerpt from the beginning of Waddington's essay reflects her early recognition of seeing gender in the importance of historical context. Her reading infers an understanding that literary works express, and respond to, cultural value placed on "the subject." Waddington locates "three approaches to the subject, all of them concurrent, but not always consistent" (WPNA "Milton's View of Women" 7-8). What interests me here is the expectation that a male writer considering "women" will not present one unified argument over a life-time but will likely hold views both in accord and at variance with received tradition. This presentation stresses that a male writer, too, may well register the shifts of view and self contradiction which she has described in her journals as "muddle" in her own writing.

The paper on Milton traces the Christian tradition of misogyny from Catholicism into Protestantism. Waddington's great professor, A.S.P. Woodhouse, was known to be anti-women, yet Waddington chose a topic on which it might have been assumed he would be biased. Although trained to write essays in 'correct form' which, then, meant keeping the first person out, Waddington once breaks into the first person to assert a personal commentary -- writing, "it might be tentatively suggested (by me) that man represents Reason to Milton, and woman represents Passion" (WPNA "Milton's View"). The parenthetical "(by me)" ventures a small but definite step away from the valorization of 'objective' scholarship. Although Woodhouse gave her a good mark on her paper, her independence of mind was not always

appreciated. It is not surprising to read Waddington's assertion in 1939 that she is "not sufficiently dead to be a good student . . . ."[8]

Just as E. J. Pratt, "the most celebrated Canadian poet of the period," was "a man among men," so the Canadian women poets of the late thirties and early forties, were very much "women among men."[9] They were products of a culture which privileged men and educated women in what men had thought, and written, leaving their own sex's writing out as of secondary interest. In "A brief record of women in academia," Caplan writes:

> One woman's college president, noting the potential for education to question our subordinate position in society, has said that 'to educate women to take themselves seriously, at all is, in itself, a subversive act.' There have been long-standing beliefs that men represent the mind, women represent the body, and the mind is superior to the body. In this context, to acknowledge that it is legitimate for women to develop their minds raises the spectre of women leaving their 'natural,' inferior place. (15)

Waddington's work repeatedly refers to the influence of teachers both in university and before it. From an early age, and throughout her life, women teachers had a markedly strong, although not exclusive, influence. As already noted, the first poem in her handwritten verse collection is dedicated to a female teacher, and Waddington's book of short stories *Summer at Lonely Beach* (1982) "is dedicated to my teachers and the memory of my teachers" and names eight women and six men.[10] At the university level Waddington names one male and three female professors.

Waddington's journals from 1939 focus not on her own relationship with a significant male -- as the earlier journals did -- but, rather, on drafts of poems, brief notes about her own ideas, and captured impressions of city life. Omission of the male is significant: the still fragile creation of the female writing self is the focus. Accordingly, we no longer find a verbatim record -- as in the 1936 journal -- of what "he" said. In fact, the journal of 1939 does not even

mention her marriage to Patrick Waddington. Margaret Avison is, in contrast, mentioned twice. In April of 1939 Waddington writes:

> I long to be close to myself -- were it even the sad old tortured self of long ago -- I long to feel I am my own -- but I feel not so anymore. Whose am I then, whose?
>
> Went for a walk with Margaret Avison.
> We took the Yonge Street car to the end of the line and walked over the crossroads. It was dry & cold - the wind blew us from all four sides. (WPNA April 16, 1939)

As young but already-published lyric poets, both she and Avison might well be figured at "the crossroads": between traditional female expectations and venturing forward as modernist poets. As an about to be married woman, Waddington records feelings of alienation not only from her male-centred culture but also from herself. The question -- "[w]hose am I then, whose?" -- posed without answer, suggests an ongoing struggle for self definition through textual process. In writing these words down she addresses not an 'unknown" reader as in her earlier journals, but her own writing self. The image of the two young female poets, windblown, at "the crossroads" suggests a point of transition without offering a sense of future direction.

Susan Leonardi analyzes women's experience after they ceased to be "locked out" of Oxford University in England by noting how women writers such as Vera Brittain and Dorothy Sayers -- who attended Oxford during the period just before and after the First World War -- created women characters who challenged their male-centred cultural tradition. There is a sense in Waddington's life writing from 1939 to 1944 that she, too, is preparing to use her liberal arts education at university in order to talk back to a culture in which "the Canadian poet" is still very much British and male (Sutherland 53). The first challenge is in the hand-written journals addressed principally to herself. ...

Waddington writes at the start of the 194Os that contemporary art is no longer a territory forbidden to women and relates that reality to the "dominating core of. . . society":

> The dominating core of our society is to make money, to acquire material beauty, show possession. This preoccupation with money forms the boundary, the frame, the skeleton of the society. Beyond is a vast 'outremer' which is vague and chaotic and uneasy & which no one cares about. Here everything goes because it does not matter, has no power, and is therefore beyond the pale of serious concem. It is in this vast cimmarion region that art is created, and that outlaw spirits must thrive. Naturally, only a few spirits care to venture into this vague, unknown and unadvertised region; most are content with what they find inside the circle. There are no directions, only currents, no pointers, only indications. (WPNA October 13, Notebook 194O)

The female voice Woolf figured as "inner" in *Room of One's Own*, Waddington figures in terms of "outlaw spirits" on the margins in her notebook of 194O.

The vague and chaotic and uneasy, less-securely-situated voice, reminds me that circa 194O most women still had less monetary status than their male contemporaries (WPNA October 13, 4O).[11] Through both life writing and poetry the parameters circumscribing a "woman's dream" are open to her "outlaw" revision of self. But the 'haunting' question remains, how successful can the female poet be in locating both a self, and an audience, in what she figures spatially as the "vast outremer."

Waddington's early interest in fantasies of mermaids, a fairy tale prince, sleeping beauty draws on a tradition of fairy tales which, of course, existed long before modernism. However, rather than reinforcing traditional female roles of subordination, in Waddington's early, and subsequent, writing the use of fairytale seems to extend to the "vast cimmarion region" of art as a means "of shifting something in the mind, just as so many fairytale characters shift something in their shape" (Warner ix).

The material order is, in Waddington's notebook of 194O, embodied in the core of patriarchal values represented by "money," "material beauty, and "possession" (WPNA October 13, 194O). This order tends to evacuate the living substance from the "half poet" who without cultural authorization remains unsure of herself in a culture in which she knows herself mainly with reference to what she calls "the core." A self-described "middle-class social

worker," Waddington writes that in 1943 "only half of me was a poet," noting that in 1944 there was a sleeping artist within her which woke up only intermittently.[12] Waddington writes:

> This problem of identity. Key to Avison that is. Kafka is occupied with it. It absorbs M. [Avison]. She says - "it's all such a joke - identity." No one can really know who he is.
>
> To me that's very strange talk. Maybe I'm not intellectual enough to appreciate this problem of identity. I don't think it exists for me. I never think about it. Of course first I sink into the entity of me - Miriam. Then Miriam is absorbed & sunk & drowned in the great beard of Jew. Then, outside that circle, or interwoven, is the area of system. I identify with a communist system. . . . Then there's the world. Physical world of streets, sun, people, jazz. In all of these are me. And so easily am I lost in them. Where's the problem of identity?
>
> Of course, when I was a lad[?] I often stopped & thought to myself. "What if this is a play, & I'm acting on a stage and someone's watching. Suppose I wake up and find I'm not me at all.
>
> This feeling always amazed me, gave me a feeling of being a stranger in the world. I suppose in a small way it was my groping for identity. (WPNA October 22, 1943)

The male-dominant tradition they had both encountered at the University of Toronto had, of course, taught both poets to question identity, or as Avison put it: "who he is." Judaism and Marxist politics also tended to sink the female self in focusing on the exploitation of another class. Like the earlier passage objecting to "the purple ether of Eliot," the writing process in the above passage displays a 'stream of consciousness'[13] which feminist critics trace to early female modernists such as Dorothy Richardson, Woolf, Gertrude Stein, May Sinclair, as well as Mansfield (Blain 9OO).[14] The process of writing about "identity" seems to function a little like a long hook seeking to reach for the sleeping artist, "absorbed & sunk & drowned," in androcentric-centred systems of thought. In its circling process, this passage suggests the influence of female modernists such as Woolf. It sinks, it circles, and it rejoices, as Woolf had, in the urban rush of "streets, sun, people, jazz." Even as it denies "[t]his problem of identity," the passage pursues new ways of knowing not "who he is," so much as "who" is asking. In beginning to explore the stream of consciousness of her own writing style

Waddington follows the "small way" of a groping female self which knows what she knows in opposition to received tradition.

Masters Thesis (1945): "Learning to help in the functional setting of a Child Guidance Clinic"

In *Apartment Seven* Waddington describes the year she spent in the "Advanced Course, for social workers already in practice" as "the most liberating, painful, growth-producing educational experience of my life" (AS 33). Where as an undergraduate Waddington had studied the thought and the literature of famous men, in social work she studied the social thought of pioneer women social workers from the Victorian period. At the Philadelphia School, Waddington chose as a supervisor Dr. Virginia Robinson who subsequently became what she referred to, in a 1992 interview with me, as her "spiritual mother." Livesay also chose to become a social worker, as did Margaret Avison. The discipline was not only open to women but to some degree focused on female-centred theory and energy.[15] The thesis she produced the same year as *Green World* is a document which is pertinent here for three reasons: first, it emphasizes a commitment to the process of the first person singular; second, it focuses exclusively on women; third, it discusses the significance of accepting "the negative" in the self. Each of these concepts will be relevant to my reading of female subjectivity in *Green World*.

Livesay's M. A. thesis at the Sorbonne follows the convention of objectivity. Waddington, in marked contrast, sets the autobiographical "I" at the explicit centre of the learning process her thesis describes:

> When a student enters a new setting and undertakes to give a service unfamiliar to him, something happens to all the experience that has been gained in former training and

> professional practice. A mysterious disorganization takes place. If formal organization has been strong, total, the present disorganization has the same characteristic totality. And yet, somewhere in this chaotic and disorganized self something mobilizes toward this new and desired goal of development, and the first connection is made.
>
> With me it was structure. My physical presence in the clinic, my office, telephone and mail box all proved to me that I was there. The truth is, I needed those constant factual proofs to verify my presence, for actually very little of myself was there in the first weeks, most of myself was hanging back and cautiously waiting to see what this was all about. (WPNA Thesis MG31 D54.23.3)

In referring to the generic student as "he," Waddington both reflects the convention of the time, and perhaps implies the prestige of the "he" of a male-dominant discipline.

The process of arrival which she documents is analogous to the process of asserting the self as a writer. There is reference to the need for the external reality of office, telephone and mail box and a correspondent sense of doubting the self, needing proofs to verify my presence, and even with "proofs" finding "very little of myself was there." The thesis tells the story of conjuring the self to appear; a conjuring which foregrounds a slow, "painful," process (MWNA Thesis).[16] She states that "all movement is process, and neither structure, function, nor feeling have the separate existence. . . that they appear to have in the cold white pages of a thesis." The writing self is linked to an external world of physical being and historical context, which the text as physical artifact tends to flatten and reduce. In saying no to this reduction within her own thesis Waddington uses the "cold white pages" in a new way. She insists on the connection of what she writes with a human context which may, or may not, nurture the writing self.

The textual selves in both Waddington's life writing and early poetry might be said to suffer from the problem of "too little self" which Waddington analyzes in both herself and the female clients who are the case studies of her Master's thesis. In both herself and the mothers she interviews, Waddington locates a fundamental lack of "self." The first phrase of this passage might be read as a found poem:

> Not enough self, or a self so tenuous that it feels threatened by the smallest breeze, or a self so entangled with the self of the child that it is no longer. . . capable of independence. All of these problems which are the fundamental problems of life emerge in the interviews with parents around their relationships with children. . . . (WPNA Thesis 37-38)

While locating the lack of agency in "not enough self" in the client mothers of disturbed children, Waddington tellingly represses the copular verb which would give the first phrase normal syntax. Within the thesis, she comes to recognize that her own "process" of growth in writing the thesis has also fundamentally related to problems of "self," specifically her own self, "for it challenges her whole self and calls into question all that she is" (WPNA Thesis 52).

In *Green World* the negative female-centred self loathing is explored as a part of what the thesis calls "two-sided nature." Waddington writes that she sought to understand, in the negative, "the thing that says no in a person when the other part of him [sic] says yes." This use of "him" for "person" in the abstract indicates both correct usage and immersion in the syntax of a written language still very much by and for men. The generic individual remains male, but the specificity of the thesis is that of a female writer with female clients: each of the clients Waddington mentions in the thesis is a woman. She writes that the negative is the space where the female person must enter her own thought-process and go into the unknown to "t[a]ke back some of the problem into herself" (MWNA Thesis 26). Here is the negative:

> The negative can be ignored, but not eliminated. It can be diverted to channels outside the clinic so it does not ruffle the surface of the interview. But usually the child pays for it. I know now that the other side will find expression anyway. . . (WPNA Thesis 22)

The emphasis of the thesis is on the relationship between the female caseworker and her adult female client, the mother of a disturbed child. From the perspective of female subjectivity

the thesis considers the need to articulate the difficulty of being a fully human adult in a culture which denigrates the importance of both women and children. Both the woman client and the female caseworker must be given the opportunity to articulate "the negative," that is their own anger, self contradiction, rage. Waddington allows that

> . . . this new understanding of feeling in its two-sided nature was probably the most powerful catalyst in my whole learning process. It enabled me to break through a certain dead-level of tone which until now had always dominated my interviews. At last I was freed from the compulsion to recognize and identify only with the positive, and I could range with my clients into whatever area their necessity demanded of me, be it positive or negative, pleasant or painful. I had become like the poet's mistress, who can sing both high and low, instead of monotone. (WPNA Thesis 24-25)

The reference to "the poet's mistress" is undoubtedly positive. But to this reader, at least, the simile "I had become like. . ." suggests a gender barrier still in place for Waddington circa 1945: the poet is male, the singing female not another poet but, rather, a mistress. Significantly Waddington figures a female "who can sing both high and low, instead of monotone." The proximity to the male poet and poetry is a liberating element for the "mistress" and, by extension, it is also liberating to the professional woman writing of the "two-sided nature" of feeling.

Not mentioned in her thesis, Waddington's mother had, for her, represented much that she, in her youth, at least, associated with the negative including anger, frustration, and "useless female rebellion" (MW interview with LM). Margaret Homans notes, "women have internalized their oppressors' negative view of their sex" and she speculates that "[i]f women reject maternal figures it is because they have been conditioned to do so by masculine culture. . ." (15). In both Waddington's thesis and in *Green World*, as the reader will presently see, the "compulsion to recognize and identify only with the positive" is renounced. However, within the thesis, the recognition of the negative does not, in itself, allow the writing self to assert a self who is also a poet.

From my perspective, Waddington's thesis is a textual record of a woman beginning a life-long process of authorizing herself and other women to "sing both high and low," is to articulate their own conflicting experiences of self. Without being explicitly centred on women, Waddington observes that the problems women must face in coming to terms with "the negative" in themselves and the world around them. What Avison had called "[t]his problem of identity . . ." is in Waddington's thesis a problem of exploring the process whereby the female self gathers "enough self" to be.

Green World: "Probing Poetry" (1945)

In a comment which is characteristic of androcentric modernist poetics Waddington writes:

> If he is an authentic poet, the poet's self is never just a private self. His anxieties speak for all our anxieties. He may, as John Stuart Mill pointed out in one of his essays on poetry, be engaged in a dialogue with himself; but if he publishes his poems, he wants us to overhear him. (AS 109)

In shifting the dialogue from "himself" to "herself" within her own poetry, the female modernist poet performs a fundamental act of transformation. She introduces a subject which even later criticism of the fifties and sixties has not formally recognized as poetically worthy of words. Her dialogue posits a difference which she uses poetry to explore. But the premise of difference from what Sutherland called "the typical Canadian poet of the forties" remains implicit within the poetry. It has waited for readers who are ready to pause and rethink this period.

As Waddington has noted, "[p]art of the problem of modernism is to accept that not everything can be unified" (AS160). Modernist poetry can be read as an expression of rupture

within contemporary culture expressed in poetic syntax of "fragments shored against [its] ruin" (Eliot 75). But as Waddington notes elsewhere, poetry is more than an avenue into a representation of this ruin:

> Poetry is the most psychically sensitive form of literature as well as being the most ancient and most closely related to culture and religion. Therefore it ought to be studied not only for its aesthetic or synthesizing qualities, but for its revelatory ones: through it we may arrive at a deeper level of awareness of who we are collectively. (WPNA "Teaching Canadian Poetry")

Green World does not fit with the modernism of Eliot and Pound. It is a work which displays a shift in emphasis away from the "implicitly masculine aesthetic of hard, abstract, learned verse" to explore a female-centred modern verse (Gilbert & Gubar 154). In *Green World* Waddington responds to the questions about female subjectivity expressed in her life writing. These questions were still largely unasked within Canadian culture, when she introduced them into her poetry. Such significant early published poems as "Green World" (MWCP 1), "In the Big City" (CP 7) and "Morning Until Night" (CP 15) evoke what Marianna Warner (writing of Angela Carter) calls "a means of flying - of finding and telling an alternative story" (ix).

Although reviews were favourable, the year 1945 was not an auspicious moment for the female poet's "dialogue with [her]self" to be heard. Gerson notes that female poets like Waddington who did use modernist methods were "seldom taken as seriously as their male counterparts" (Gerson 54-55). Reviewing *Green World* favourably for "Canadian Verse," Alan Crawley found that "much of the charm of the writing comes from the skillful recording of visual beauty and from [Waddington's] sensitive feeling for the loveliness of language" (Crawley). Ten years later, Desmond Pacey called the "dominant theme" of *Green World* "the beauty and goodness of the natural world, suggested by recurring images of greenness and growth" and set in contrast to the "twisted and frustrating nature of contemporary urban

society" (56). In addition, Pacey commented on the volume's "straightforwardness of. . . technique" in contrast to the early work of P. K. Page and Patrick Anderson (56). The dominant tone of both reviews suggests that while *Green World* displays "charm" and "loveliness," there is little else, really, to say about this first volume of verse.

Numerous critics have tended to find *Green World* "boring," or, as Jacobs surmises, "too simple" (26). One of the difficulties in writing about *Green World* has been the range of my own response. I thought, for a time, that reviewers had been kind in their perhaps rather deliberately vague comments about the book. There are definite flaws in the prosaic phrasing and a lack of attention to structure in a number of poems.[17] Certain phrases tend to jar such as "[f]ame's blandishments grow sour to the taste" and the "thought that waggles in my brain" (in "Dog Days"); a cliched reference to "the surge of blood" (in "Into the Morning"), a somewhat awkward reference to hands and feet as "end organs" in the same poem, an antiquated reference to "the blooded stars," and the inexplicable allusion to "your sombrero accent/Roll[ing] over my senses like prairie sunshine," at the conclusion of "Uncertainties." These defects undermine the poetry, as does the declaration, in time of war, that "[n]othing can save us but our own reserves." None of these flaws in the poems are cited by Crawley or Pacey.

Yet, in their faint praise, these critics have also tended to overlook the complexity of the "I" within *Green World*; a complexity which is, in fact, neither "charm[ing]" "passive," nor "simple," but consumed with the "exploration of contradictions" which makes the book, flaws and all, a work of art. Frye seemed to recognize this when he wrote that "the most successful poems in *Green World* are "strikingly original" and display a "distinctive quality" (Frye 1971:51).

In *Green World*, female figures are portrayed in the context of mourning, prostitution and economic oppression, and with regard to the fear of violence in poems such as "Ballet,"

"The Bond," "Girls," and "In the Big City." The young female is repeatedly figured as hunted and hurt within her own culture. The few older women represented in *Green World* offer no answers for the younger ones. In the poem "Ballet" the women in mourning can present only a "flowerwise" pattern, an emblem of grief. "[T]he foul granny," in "Investigator," has no answers as she "[s]its counting last year's newspapers lost in a timeless litter" (CP 5). But there is also, in these poems, the assertion of strength and the transformative power centred around the lyric "I."

It is the lyric "I," addressing a changed world, an "I" not always identified as female, which offers an altered vision both of self and "girls" (MWCP 7,12), and the recognition of a "twice isolate" "woman" as "kin to me" (MWCP 9). I focus on the most successful poems, which include "Green World," "Gimli," "The Bond," "Investigator," and "Summer in the Street," as well as the final poem, "Morning Until Night." But I also discuss less successful works, such as "Portrait," "Tapestry," and "Girls" because they are vital to the overall process which I read as the "probing" of female subjectivity to make visible "the inner underground life."

Both Laurence Ricou and D. G. Jones describe the title poem, "Green World" as, to quote Jones, "mark[ing] the fundamental direction of her poetry, and its fundamental strength" (146). While praising "Green World" as both "rhythmically and aurally beautiful," Ricou regards this poem as dealing with a "conventional situation: the speaker of the poem steps out of doors, perhaps on a late spring morning." My reading is markedly different from his, for what he finds "conventional" I read as charged with significance. In this first memorable poem the speaker ventures forth as a voice, an "I" without sex within a text which is resonant of the child's first landscape; the mother's body, "curving" inside, in the first stanza, alive to the "green rhythms" of the first metric marker: the heart. The poem is a "step out" and away from

the past "cast[ing] out of focus" all that is known of the world. The "I" is catapulted with the first phrase into the poetic space of "feel[ing] the green world."

The green world, into which the "I" ventures in the first seven-line stanza of the poem is not, as Ricou would suggest, simply "a metaphor [for the] growth of a plant" (144). Instead this world is described as a space of poetic revision "beyond all geography," a "transparent place" which nurtures a growing self. I read this space as both suffused with the presence of the maternal and, for all its register of trouble, as "the inside sphere" of poetry in which the speaking "I" can play out a transformative process. This enclosed space in the first stanza is as close to a womb as language can bring us. In this receptive, alternate green world the subject both steps out and is held:

> When I step out and feel the green world
> its concave walls must cup my summer coming
> and curving, hold me
> beyond all geography in a transparent place
> where water images cling to the inside sphere
> move and distend as rainbows in a mirror
> cast out of focus. (MWCP 1)

As was noted of her first collection of unpublished poems in her 1933 journal, Waddington claimed poetry as a distinctive generic space, "a world all my own," here represented as a green world.[18] The feeling "I" enters the green world of free verse contained in the traditional length of the sonnet, in order to pursue the compelling "must" of its own need, to be held, not as a lover holds the beloved, but rather, in the "inside sphere" of a mind conceiving the possibilities of selves within the charged language of poetry. The phrase "water images" draws our attention to poetic construction as artifice, the means of poetic signification. The imagery intensifies in complexity at its centre, with the "sphere"/"mirror" end rhyme emphasizing "mirror."

The mirror in "Green World" is not that of the Evil Queen of fairytale, nor is it Ovid's bucolic "pool, silver with shining water" where Narcissus "mistakes identity for difference" and, reaching for himself, drowns (Williamson 1986:177). Neither is it the "absent center," in which Pickthall's female speaker in "The Spell" finds "[a] pool like glass that gives on an empty room." Instead, "Green World" creates a topography in which the speaker first "step[s] out" of what I read as the known world of patriarchy -- the father's house -- into an alternate poetic enclosure resonant of the first home one has before birth, in the womb. "Green World" observes neither fixed metre nor rhyme. Instead it moves in the lineation of its own "step out," jettisoning the metric contract of traditional verse in favour of a lineation which begins with odd numbers of feet (nine, eleven, five syllables). Two lines mention the "inside sphere" and "mirror" within the first stanza. The even lines offer just enough balance to provide a slight pause. The mirror is contrary to Ovid's deceptive double and Pickthall's "empty room" in her poem "The Spell." Waddington's mirror opens a territory of imaginative possibility, an "inside sphere" of prismatic possibility, "as rainbows." The womb imagery of the "concave walls" which "must cup" the transitional self in the "distend[ed]" abdomen, and the explicit reference to water imagery, underscores the fluidity of movement.

In the second stanza, there are also seven lines. Where the first stanza cups, the second stanza serves to "uncup" the speaker from the "crystal chrysalis," represented here at the instant of change. What is "out of focus" within the first stanza comes to a "gold point" within the second stanza which "warms, expands, /Until walls crack." The transformative imagery draws together the "green rhythms" of free verse with images which suggest the female-centred process of birth and metamorphosis, as the waters break before birth:

> And this crystal chrysalis
> Shapes to green rhythms to long ocean flowings
> Rolls toward the sun with sure and spinning speed
> And under the intensely gold point
> Warms, expands,

> Until walls crack suddenly
> Uncup me into large and windy space. (MWCP 1)

The poem constitutes a poetic space at first "hold[ing]" the speaker and then, in the second stanza, enacting the passage of the as yet ungendered "me" "into [the] large and windy space" of modernist verse.

"Gimli," the second poem in *Green World*, also contains two matched stanzas of equal length: in this case sixteen lines. As in "Green World," the word "I" occurs only once, in the first line of the poem, and is not identified as either male or female. The "inner sphere" of the first poem is gone and we find, in "Gimli," the geographic specificity of a known Canadian place. The "I" of this poem travels over the "you" of linear track while pursuing its past in the trajectory of the poetic line. The first line situates the metaphor-making process of poetry on the free verse line, and the modern "track." The "railway track" accompanies memory "spinning" back to witness the fecundity of nature as "Frog ditches pockets of jelly eggs/Hanging from banks" and "July lilies/Bursting orange from nests of grass." In this poem the lyric "I" which "travel[s]" reads something like the "I" of what Waddington in a journal entry of November 1943 calls "the voice":

> Always in her the voice. The voice always telling her. Always in her. Saying you're a writer. Be a writer. . . Listen to that voice. It goes on all the time never stops. In me like a child I'm carrying it. Will it ever be something? (WPNA Journal 1940)

The territory of "the voice in me like a child" is the one celebrated in this poem; and that voice takes us back into its past. The poem functions as a metonym of "the green world," not only of "dark spaces" but also of poetic process. The reader may recall Waddington's insistence that the poetic voice is "without gender," "a voice" I read as, at strategic points, refusing to be either decisively female, or male, within specific poems -- notably the first three -- in *Green*

World. This "I" sees the fine detail of a particular landscape and also sets forth a roaming "I" in the lyric:

> I travel over you a swift railway track
> Spinning to Gimli's summer sudden beach
> Rusty well-water, bitter, iron-tasting
> Frog ditches pockets of jelly eggs
> Hanging from the banks. (MWCP 1)

The technological world which can diminish the human self attempting to speak in modern verse, is here an engine assisting the "spinning," "hanging," "blowing" process of memory. In the first line of the second stanza "you" repeats. In contrast to the human "you" "impotent with words" in Livesay's poem "Sympathy," the "you" within "Gimli" is a "you a swift railway track" able in the second stanza to "lead" "straight to" the past.

There are two women in the poem. Neither is described as a mother, but both offer children milk: the "shrill-voiced English woman handed us/Sad blue milk for our red pails," while the Polish woman is "the bright kerchief keeper of two cows" with "[r]ich milk foaming." English milk is "sad blue milk," while the Polish woman's is "rich." The "voice" speaking in "Gimli" celebrates the memory of a Canadian childhood which is neither sustained by things "British," nor centred on men.

Like "Green World," with its "rainbows in a mirror/[c]ast out of focus," "Gimli" reflects back on its speaker, as mirrors do. The last lines read:

> All those castles we planted in childhood
> Now bear their fruit of lighted aching windows
> My grief of waiting. (MWCP 2)

Like "Green World," "Gimli" conjures a transitional "I" able to move back and forward through poetry. The text of this poem, and the two which bracket it, suggest the protective "cup" of "the green world," and the sustenance and encouragement of childhood summers in "Gimli" within which the lyric speaker pursues alternate visions of what it is to "step out," to

"travel" as "I" alone with words on a line. In the last line of "Gimli," "[m]y grief of waiting" reminds the reader of a future time and place, a world beyond the parenthetical space of the poem.

In the third poem, "Into the Morning," power is conjured through a poem of the "strid[ing]" self with the first line "Into the deep mountain of morning now I stride" (MWCP 2). Once again the first line of the poem emphasizes a subject in motion. Although her family the Dworkins, were secular Jews, Waddington knew the Orthodox Jewish male's prayer said every morning, thanking God "I" was not born a woman. While "Into the Morning" is not a terribly successful poem with its mixed images of "[w]hite sailboats" and "wall of vein," it is memorable to me as a lyric prayer in which the theme of a divided self -- prominent in the last poem in *Green World* "Morning Until Night" -- is introduced. The image of hands dominates in this poem, the reader is told "[m]y two hands breathe in their separate ways. . ." (MWCP 2). The image suggests differences within the subject: differences which the speaker prays to nourish as part of growth.

The first line places the subject and verb at the end, rather than the beginning of the line, suggesting the somewhat daunting significance of the day world -- "deep mountain of morning" -- into which the "I" ventures forward:

> Into the deep mountain of morning now I stride
> Holding my heart a folded bird inside one hand,
> My other hand upturned splayed out against the sun
> Catches and holds the light,
> Burns fiery red, measures life's concentrate
> With rhythmic pulses. . . . (MWCP 2)

There is no magic phrase in this poem to open the mountain, only the dual source of energy drawn from the inner space of the heart held as folded bird, in one hand, and the sun to which the speaker presents "[m]y other hand upturned and splayed out" open to wonder and pain.

The speaker's desire is "[to] stride" empowered by the "rhythmic pulses" of the breath line, and to grow.

As in the two opening poems in *Green World*, the "I" is not identified as male or female. In "Weekend," a poem written in 1939, "[t]his is now, my dear, now and here" was proclaimed with the last line of the poem in the name of a "we" highly critical of "men." In "Into the Morning" the first line's proclamation "now I stride" can be linked not to the description of men or women but to the process of the lyric text, now opening a liberating space in which the speaker moves into the deep beyond the constraints of gendered subjectivity. Three six foot lines suggest long strides, unhobbled by the social impress of second sex status, which I observed in the clipped phrases of "Weekend." The tone of "Into the Morning" is close to prayer:

> . . . oh let
> All end organs draw the sun to them, and let
> All growing points turn outward. (MWCP 2)

If the night world is often associated in poetry with dream and with female lunar imagery, the day-world may be seen as territory of the male sun and of reason. In praying to be allowed to "let" grow, the speaker strides forward into "the deep mountain" world of morning. The plea to be granted permission to "grow" has particular significance in the context of the constraints upon female subjectivity as represented in both Waddington's early life writing, and the poems in *Green World* which follow.

"Portrait" is the fourth poem in the book and the first to place emphasis on the description of a woman. Like traditional ladies within patriarchal culture, the "Lady" is a fixed subject. She exists in the poem as a split image, first a "Lady by Renoir," a man-made woman in paint, an image from a simpler, "sun-dappled" time, then challenged to move from male representation of women to thinking being. The first stanza suggests a parallel between the

"pruning" hand of the gardener, and the male artist who set his "Lady" "au bord de la Seine" in a "chameleon gown," her "pointed feet" "[t]reading between hedges. . . ." There is a sense of precarious footing. Unlike the speakers of the first three poems who "step out," "travel," and "stride," the "Lady" has "pointed feet/ Treading between hedges. . ." (MWCP 2) The repeated reference to the "Lady" as "synthesize[ing] Sunday" and the call to "remind me of Sunday" suggests that the speaker relishes the peace which the portrait represents (MWCP 2). However, the presentation conveys ambivalence from the first stanza.

The speaker asks the "Lady" to "think forward" like Sleeping Beauty, to wake from a hundred year sleep to a world where there is no more fairy tale, no more "sprigs of this or that" but the fatal direction towards a cataclysm:

> Lady by Renoir
> Think forward a hundred years to our Sundays
> Ambushed by sun no longer,
> No quiet leaping between our light
> No sprigs of this or that sweetly
> Tickling the ankles,
> No river except (MWCP 2)

At the start of the stanza the "Lady," "ambushed by sun no longer," is summoned to use her own mind to illuminate a "secret passage." She must move into a new time, as we are catapulted forward with a forced jump between the last line of the second stanza which ends as if in mid air:

> No river except
>
> The slow surge of cold hatred
> Flowing through secret passages
> Under our tunneled cities,
> The murder without motive
> Ripening in a million brains.
>
> In the dull offices,
> Bursting like a sickness
> Over the angular faces of tight-lipped people,
> Blowing an ill wind

Over the sterile and severe avenues
Unflanked by flowers and frippery.

Along the close margins of the street-car tracks
Cruelty travels a safe road to a smooth ending
In our familiar country.
Here kindness is pruned and love torn up by the roots.

Sweet lady, remind me of Sunday. (MWCP 2-3)

The poem is "probing" the "tunneled cities" of the modern world. It is a world in which the old images of the female as object of beauty no longer answer the speaker looking for meaning within modern culture. There seems an implicit critique of a modernism in which sentiment was banned. The nightmare time leaves no room for sentiment. It is "unflanked by flowers and frippery" so that "cruelty travels a safe road." The "close margins of the street-car tracks" confine this speaker to an existence in which "kindness is pruned and love/[t]orn up by the roots." The romance of the "Sweet lady," however ardently invoked in the poem, is a split image for she is challenged to "think." "Portrait" is, finally, a poem which registers its speaker's desire to go back to a "Sunday" in which the world again values qualities which "T.S. Eliot and the gang" had discarded as sentimental and dated. Monstrosity exists not in Renoir's "portrait" "au bord de la Seine," but in "our familiar country," that is, the modern world.

As noted earlier, Waddington wrote of art as an alternate territory, "a vast outremer" where neither "the acquisition of beauty [nor the] show [of] possession" held sway. Within "Portrait" and many of the poems which follow, poetry becomes a territory of secret passages in which the outlaw spirit reckons with a changed world.

In the following poem, "Unquiet World," the reader moves from "Sunday," sacred to Christians, to "Friday's Festival," and the Jewish heritage. In "Unquiet World" the Old Testament "Prophet" is kept offstage, like a muse, for a speaker who, while using the imagery

of the Jewish Sabbath, speaks of renewed vision and hope for the entire "world."[19] The image of the pious wife is at the centre of the poem, and one notes that the pattern of imagery moves from the all consuming male "beard of Jew," referred to in the October 22, 1943 journal entry, to the "fold[s] " of the female's "shining hair." Both reader and speaker are "fold[ed]" together in sleep:

> Fold us smooth as shining hair
> of a pious wife in slumbers sweet,
> then wake us fresh with sabbath bread
> from enchanted sleep and look
> with us past templed ruins,
> deep as the cratered earth
> plumb our purpose and hallowed be
> the heady wine of our hope. (MWCP 3)

This brief poem has within it a dense cluster of imagery. It draws together the fairy tale of Sleeping Beauty, the tradition of patriarchy within Judaism, and the "templed ruins" of post-war Europe. None of the imagery is developed. Instead, consistent with Waddington's modernism, the reader receives fragments. The "prophet" is invoked like a male muse to "look deep" and "plumb our purpose," then having done so, to bless "the heady wine of our hope" (MWCP 3). The waking from "enchanted sleep" in the centre of the poem suggests a challenge to pursue transformative vision centred around women waking within a changed world; the old world is in "ruins" and the new one remains to be raised.

Numerous poems which follow, such as "Ballet," "Tapestry," "In the Big City," and "Girls," specifically focus on the contemporary woman and record a recurrent lament for what seems, in part, a sameness in experience articulated through recurrent emphasis on girl grief, fear, and mourning. The "I" in both "Tapestry" and "Girls" responds to "sorrows," "longing," ("Tapestry") and "the broken wings of your future"("Girls") with the offer of "mak[ing]"

something from sorrow, a work which is, in "Tapestry" both linked to the fabric of a female tradition in art, and associated with the healing power of poetic making.

"Tapestry" (MWCP 7) and "Girls" (MWCP 12) foreground the awareness of the particular vunerablity of young women within patriarchal culture. The lyric speaker of "Tapestry" is presented as the one who is "pattern[ing]" a picture on behalf of the vulnerable group:

> Girls, I will make a tapestry of your sorrows,
> Sew sequins for tears into the stuff of the sky
> Criss cross your sameness with rainbows
> Tie silken love-knots into the field of your wishes.
> I will pattern waves to the shores of your longing
> And make nests of green leaves
> Warm as mother, feed you fountains of milk
> Across the looping hours.
> Six angels will I set to watch
> The seed of your sleep. (MWCP 7)

The "I" of the speaker is making a picture rather than offering any solution to sorrows which seem patterned into the "sameness" of lives. What the girls are promised is representation within the tapestry:

> And I will drop pain sweet as honey
> Over the bare tongue, feather my stitches
> Soft as thighs and tender will be my care
> Tender as all your years, gentle
> As girl grief. (MWCP 7)

The promise to "feather my stitches" suggests the future weaving of comfort and "tender[ness]" which will be the work of the tapestry maker. Clarissa Pinkola Estes notes that "[i]n mythology, the woven cloth is the work of the Life/Death/Life mothers" (95). The "woven cloth" of a female-centred vision is made again within "Tapestry." The oxymoron "pain sweet as honey" catches the essence of seduction into cultural subordination through the roles of dutiful wives and mothers. Waddington's speaker does not claim the pain for her/his

self but, rather, suggests a certain critical distance, making sweet female pain a tapestry, a visual field, which insists on giving representation to female emotion as subject. As a politically-aware young Jewish socialist, Waddington was particularly aware that soldiers were not the only victims of war. Although war is not part of "Tapestry" it is referred to in the second stanza of the next poem in the collection which focuses on "[g]irls" as a marginalized group.

The first stanza of "Girls" evokes the "green street" of "girls" "in summer," and we hear "their curving laughter," see "the strands of their damp hair" as "tendrils reaching from the roots of their joy." The long lines of this three-stanza poem suggest the expansive "growing," the confidant female camaraderie of these unfettered youths. In the second stanza the long lines break after a cluster of images which links the future of these same girls to the destruction of war, including the fascist army, the burning of maiden villages, and the lethal chambers of destruction, all of which are in marked contrast to the "laughter" at the centre of the first stanza (MWCP 12). The crucial role of this "I" is to be a witness, to "see" what others have not. The thrice repeated "I see" emphasizes the significance of vision. The second stanza reads:

> Oh my girls, as you rush to me with your swift hullos
> I see over your shoulders the years like a fascist army
> Advancing against your still minorities destroyed in lethal chambers
> Your defenceless dreams shot backward into the pit,
> And I see
> The levelling down of all your innocent worlds. (MWCP 12)

The reference to lethal chambers and the pit evokes the concentration camps where Jews, Gypsies, political prisoners, and homosexuals were murdered throughout the Second World War. The reader is challenged to consider both the promising appearance of "my girls" in "summer," in the first stanza, and the "sorrows" associated with adult womanhood that follow in stanzas two and three. The ending of "Girls" offers no miracle resolution. The speaker is

concerned with addressing a female-centred resurrection of hope. But the speaker's promise is of a "splint" rather than any miraculous cure:

I offer myself as a splint against your sorrows
And I kiss the broken wings of your future.

"The Bond" suggests a female-centred alliance between the "twice isolate" -- two female Jews -- of "varied low estate." The poem eschews the free verse, unrhymed stanzas, which are used throughout most of *Green World* and uses quatrains, repetition, and rhyme. The traditional form is in contrast to the poem's highly unconventional subject matter. Once again, as in "Tapestry" and "Girls," the oppressed individuals are not the oppressed "working man" the focus of "social consciousness" in Waddington's journals, but rather, women of "varied low estate" (MWCP 10). The poem makes a connection between oppression and what we now refer to as issues of "race, class, and gender" that are missing in the prose passages of Waddington's journals. The speaker within "The Bond" states that she "sense[s] evil at the source" of "misdirected social force." Rhyme helps make the analysis aesthetically pleasing:

I sense the evil at the source
Now at this golden point of noon,
The misdirected social force
Will grind me also, and too soon.

On Jarvis Street the Jewish whore
The Jewish me on Adelaide--
Both of the nameless million poor
Who wear no medals and no braid.

Oh woman you are kin to me,
Your heart beats something like my own
When idiot female ecstasy
Transforms in love the flesh and bone;

And woman, you are kin to me
Those tense moments first and last,
When men deride your ancestry
Whore, Jewess, you are twice outcast.

Whore, Jewess, I acknowledge you
Joint heirs to varied low estate,
No heroes will arise anew
Avenging us twice isolate. (MWCP 9,10)

This middle section of "The Bond" represents in Waddington a continuing focus on female subjectivity in modern Western society. In this poem one woman speaks to another about the complicity of females with men, both individually in the sexual act when "idiot female ecstasy/ [t]ransforms in love the flesh and bone," and also collectively, as "shriek[ing]" supporters -- "a hundred windows high" -- of men marching along Toronto's Adelaide Street on their way to war. The emphasis is not on "men" as the enemy. Those tense moments first or last when they are with men suggest, instead, the bond between men and women. Between the first verses and the last two stanzas of "The Bond" the reader moves from "dawn" through noon into "the heavy night": territory which, for the speaker, "[s]ignal[s] omens everywhere." If direction has been lost in the day world, the night world opens a space from which to question who is "bond[ed]" with whom, and why.

While the women within this poem are joint heirs to "varied low estate" (MWCP 10), the conclusion to the poem suggests an alternate possibility of new self-definition through female alliance:

The heavy night is closing in,
Signal omens everywhere,
You woman who have lived by sin,
And I who dwelt in office air

Shall share a common rendezvous. (MWCP 10)

The two "isolate" females share a bond with those who are disempowered, as well as the proclamation: "Sister, my salute to you!/I will recognize your face" in which they will save themselves.

In "Investigator," the probing of the one who investigates is directed to the decay of urban civilization. With the first line of the poem the speaker is not only "street known" but "also street knowing." The repeated play with the verb 'to know' which continues in the first and second stanzas of "Investigator" suggests an emphasis on ways of knowing. Beginning with "I" and ending with "me" "Investigator" is, nevertheless, a poem in which the opening premise is not to be believed for this is a poem about a "knowing" which seems to preclude being "known."

The "Investigator" delves into "knowing" nothing but darkness and debris, opening before us a "timeless litter" of the modern world, and anything other than urban refuse and squalor remains outside the parameters of the poem. We are presented with a record of urban grotesques: "foul granny," "hunchback son," and "old man." In "Portrait" the reference to "cities" only suggests, but does not tell, what is "secret" and hidden. In "Investigator" the lyric "I" both describes the "hot streets" and sees inside dwellings:

> I could tell you and no exaggeration
> Of the in and out of houses twenty times a day,
> Of the lace antimacassars, the pictures of kings and queens,
> The pious mottoes, the printed blessing, the dust piling up on bureaus,
> The velour interiors, the Niagara souvenirs,
> The faded needlepoint, the hair pulled tight
> And the blinds drawn against day and the feel of sun. (MWCP 5)

There is no patriarch in the "once-mansion," only the "drooling senile decay" of "the old man" who sits "[p]ast the garden" and "[l]ets the sun slip ceaselessly through his fingers." The old markers of beauty, order, and symmetry so evidently remembered in "Portrait" are gone in "Investigator."

In *Writing in the Father's House*, Smart writes of the feminist critic as the "investigator" of matricide.[20] In this poem the lyric speaker is the "investigator" of an urban world in which women disappear into interiors of "faded needlepoint, the hair pulled tight."

There is no specific crime here but, instead, a death in life extending to both sexes. The urban scene is one of oppressive containment. What is of interest here with regard to issues of female subjectivity is that these perceptions are expressed in a book of poems entitled *Green World*, as opposed to a title like *The Waste Land and Other Poems*. "Investigator" contains a chronicle of an urban culture full of "dust." As such, the "Investigator" covers the "waste" land beat of what Waddington referred to in her journals as "T. S. Eliot and the gang." Whereas many of the other poems in *Green World* suggest a dichotomy between "green" nature and a decaying urban world, the "Investigator" is confined to recording decay. The irreverent tone of ironic distance is set at the start ("Just Ask Me") and affirmed again at the end of the poem when a "long lean lap-eared dog. . . Blinks wet eyes at me." The image of a garden and dog echoes images found at the end of "The Burial of the Dead," the first section of *The Waste Land*, where one finds the lines:

> 'That corpse you planted last year in your garden,
> 'Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?
> 'Or has the sudden frost disturbed its bed?
> 'O keep the Dog far hence, that's friend to men,
> 'Or with his nails he'll dig it up again!' (Eliot 63)

In "The Investigator," the dog is both present and passive rather than absent and menacing. The "dog sitting on the roof" suggests a poetic remove "for humour" (MWCP 5). The narrator of the poem responds with immediacy to the scene observed. There is no received mindset or formula of belief displayed here; the investigator moves about unfettered by "mind forg'd manacles." There is no possible "friend to men" (Eliot 63) or, for that matter women, in Waddington's poem. The dog seems more alive than "the old man" "drooling" in the last stanza. *Green World* begins, and concludes, with a very different version of subjectivity than Eliot's speaker offered in 1922 to "You! hypocrite lecteur! -- mon semblable, -- mon frere!"

In other poems in *Green World*, such as "The Sleepers," and "Lovers," the emphasis is on heterosexual love. These are successful poems worthy of separate treatment. But romantic love is not, as I read it, a central concern of *Green World*. Instead of romance, I find references to love as a culturally favoured sleep-in-life; a sleep in which the female may, or may not remain. The "enchanted sleep" of Sleeping Beauty is a recurrent motif; the most haunting question, raised in "Lullaby" is "If he never comes?"

In the opening three poems of *Green World*, as well as in "Summer in the Street," the lyric "I" waits for no man. The lyric speaker in the latter poem claims her life, her city, and the space of the free verse line to explore her own process of "passionate transport" neither stopped, nor "dead end[ed]" in a "hundred years" sleep:

> Summer in the street was a warm welcome
> Drowning me in trucknoise and the shouts of children
> Laving me deep to my tanned arms.
> Summer in the street was a sudden river
> Eddying me from the long rain in the mountains
> Lifting me from the introverted undertones
> Of the deep St. Lawrence brooding in its banks,
> Erasing the endless landscapes
> Of green and white silences. . . (MWCP 12-13)

"Summer in the Street," opens the street as a physical territory, a home place, of welcome, a space analogous to the nurturing green world of feeling within the first poem. The street is a force larger than the self, "[d]rowning me," "[e]ddying me," and "[l]ifting me." Summer, too, is figured as a moving force larger than the speaker. Here is a poem which stresses the inter-subjectivity of a woman in an ecstacy of being-in-relation not to a man, but to her own "city and summer and the street":

> . . . Summer piloted
> The sunless channels of my private mind.
>
> Until I was a woman in passionate transport
> Of love for my own city and summer and the street,
> The meadowed hush still fallow in my mind

Waking to tramcars whistling at intersections,
While my eyes joyfully accepted their new focus, saw
Faces of strangers each the flag of his own nation
Sail past me. Like allied ships

We read the signal of rescue and recognition
And saw the coast of our only comfort
Rising from maze of streets and dead-end lanes
Turned inside out, the known confusions
Transformed to brilliant pointers. (12-13)

The "brilliant pointers" come after "the known confusions." Transformative process seems a matter of "walking" through the world as both witness and celebrant open to accepting "new focus." (13)

A number of the final poems in *Green World* pose questions for which there are no simple answers. We are challenged to respond to a female-centred poetry which has "probed" modern life and is "electric[ally]" charged even as it reaches with Adam for "heaven" (MWCP 14).

In "Investigator," I noted the ironic play between being "known" and "knowing" set out in terms of what is observed on the contemporary street. "Morning Until Night" presents a coming to terms with inner division. Anyone who doubts Waddington's recognition of female complicity within patriarchy need only reread the last poem in *Green World*. It records a subjectivity split between "fresh and forgetful" innocence and the "dark interiors" of a night world of "secret" experience. The "know[ing]" of this lyric speaker involves following her, "in the wake of alley cats," "smiling and secret" as she moves out of doors. What this speaker seeks to "know" and name is her own complex and complicit female self:

Who could know my gothic garish life
Starts so simply from morning
When fresh and forgetful I emerge
From my red-brick tower to stride through fog?
Then I walk milk-young and innocent
In the wake of the alley cats
And I am smiling and secret

Against the uneasy memory of night.

The marble steps are white in the morning
Pale and white they lead to dark interiors
I turn my eyes worshipping to the sun
See far ahead of me the rainbow roofs
The white spear of the Italian church.

Everything praises this first moment of morning
Which loops and sings into the early sky
And spreads its pure curves over the angled city. (MWCP 15)

This final poem repeats the "step out," which I read, in the volumes's first poem, as a spatial marker of change within the lyric self. But this time the "gothic and garish" confusion of life in the "red-brick tower" is, according to evidence later in the poem, precisely what can not be escaped. The "I" of the poem looks a little like the fairy tale heroine for she, too, is "milk-young and innocent," but she leaves her home with a sense of inner division which is typical not of fairy tale but of a modernist text. The first stanza jettisons the objective modernist line in favour of the clutter of "gothic garish life." The "dark interiors" suggest a return to the "night" in which the no-longer innocent woman plays out her subordinate role as mistress to master within the old hierarchical tower. The poetic text, part tapestry, part choral arrangement, "loops and sings" and "spreads its pure curves" against the linear logic of the "angled city."

With "Morning Until Night," the speaker returns to the everyday world of the street, teasing the reader who may still be unable to follow the process of the "Miriam," named moving between "morning" and "night. In place of rhyme, the poem repeats in compact arrangements of sound: "gothic" and "garish," "[s]tarts so simply," "fresh and forgetful," "morning," "milk-young," and "memory." In contrast to the repetition of consonants and sibilants "starts so simply," certain other words gain emphasis. "I emerge," the words

"wake," and "night" seem to stand out to summon the descent toward the female unknown, the "sudden wolves" of the second part of the poem.

The next three sections of the poem use images from the natural world: "dogs," " foxes," "wolves," "crows" and "doves." I noted in "Investigator" that the "dog" at the end of the poem may suggest a connection with poems which come before and follow; poems which refuse to accept the waste land as final. The nightmare "dogs" and "wolves" of the second part of "Morning Until Night" insist on having an audience with the secret self in part three. It is here that the speaker both anticipates finding her name written in wind and discovers a broken face:

> Gradually I enter solitude,
> I open the door and where I thought to see
> Green meadows flowering with my name
> Miriam written in wind, a star on the sea,
> I meet only the broken face of pain
> That has dogged me all day and now has found the way
> To my secret self. There is no place left
> Hidden and whole, I turn and cry
> O God deliver me from that sad and broken face
> The crippled laugh and slow relinquishing
> Of life, I would be transformed swift
> As lightning, my evil discovered utterly
> And proclaimed in its own season. (MWCP 16)

The first section of the poem seems to play with the female as a "milk-young" "innocent," but the second and third stanza "shed" "innocence" as the "chrysalis" is shed in the first poem. It would seem through this repetition that the lyric speaker is bringing the reader back around, once again, to the departure, the "large and windy space" of the book's beginning.

Waddington's Master's thesis affirms the need of women to claim our own inner dark, to recognize the self as complicit in whatever problems emerge in our lives. The thesis provides a useful background against which to read this last poem. The speaker is now explicitly female as she is named. What has been denied in the self -- imprisoned crows --

must be known and released. Rereading Livesay's "Staccato" I find a similar suggestion of a division in the self evoked by images of the mimic, the "parrot in a cage," and "the hungry pecking bird" within the "I." But "Staccato" ends with the denial with which it begins. The "hungry bird" in "Staccato" is neither fed, nor can it fly free. In Waddington's "Morning Until Night", the "world mingles" in the last two lines:

> Now world mingles, feathers brush my sleep
> And doves and crows fly free. (MWCP 16)

With this final image the poem and the book close. In this modernist text, the disparate parts of the self are not unified but released in "free" form with *Green World's* last line. They suggest the process of flight rather than, as in "Staccato," the female exploring her fear of the "wind." In Livesay's poem "Monition, from *Signpost*," "The rush of a motor is too sudden a wind/In my mind" (DLSP 26). The compressed imagist form of "Monition" insists, as does her poem "Threshold," on a desire to pause and contemplate rather than "stride" into the modern world as does the lyric speaker in *Green World*.

In *Green World* the modern "rush of a motor," modernism, and the crisis of modernity are all brought together. Perhaps it was this bold quality which Frye recognized when he called the most successful poems in *Green World* " strikingly original." Livesay, too, recognized the book's "probing" quality. I began this discussion with a note about the uneven quality of certain poems. Livesay's first two books reflect the craftsmanship of what Eliot, echoing Dante, calls, the better maker; ("il miglior fabbro"). However, Waddington's *Green World* represents a significant moment of accomplishment in the context of English Canadian modernist verse.

If, as I have argued in the introduction to this dissertation, modern Canadian women poets have been left out of the critical scholarship on the making of modernist poetry in Canada, their published and unpublished life writing may well provide a basis on which to

reevaluate their work. The next chapter -- which concerns the correspondence between Livesay and Waddington -- suggests the manner in which unpublished archival letters by modern Canadian women poets may also help critics to arrive at a more accurate version of modern Canadian poetry in the making; a feminist version which will include, along with the ongoing and worthy study of male poets, a female-oriented exploration of modernity and the Canadian modernist lyric.

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[1] Although Smart is concerned with a literary motif in the work of male as well as female writers, Waddington's phrase "inner underground life" is in some ways analagous to the buried woman Patricia Smart has analyzed in Quebec's literature. See Patricia Smart, *Writing in the Father's House: The Emergence of the Feminine in the Quebec Literary Tradition*, (3-20). Smart quotes from the final page of Anne Hebert's *Kamouraska*: "Off in a parched field, under the rocks, they've dug up a woman, all black but still alive, buried there long ago, in some far-off savage time. Strangely preserved." Smart (4), Hebert (249).

[2] As discussed earlier the formal similarities of modernist technique include movement away from routine use of end rhyme and regular poetic feet, absence of antiquated language, and the use of the cadences of modern speech as well as free verse.

[3] Miriam Waddington, "The Creative Process in Writing," Waddington Papers, National Archives, MG31 D54 Vol 23. 3.

[4] Marlene Kadar's two recent books on life writing celebrate this "reconnection" from a feminist perspective.

[5] I quote here from Waddington's "Woman at Evening," the end of stanza one. The first stanza is unrhymed with lines of varying length. Sibilant "S's" associate the "she" who "sat and brushed her hair of an evening," -- "Silent," "shadow, " "slow," and "slowly" -- with the "Strange and mysterious" female.

[6] These lines are from a draft of a poem titled "We of 1937," This is an unrhymed two page poem with stanzas of irregular length. It is written in a collective voice of "we," of youth but the "they" in power are all of one sex, the R.C.M.P. "sleek men in red coats," and the politicians, "old men."

[7] Waddington, Letter to Laura McLauchlan, July 12, 1993. Waddington writes: "I wrote a paper for A.S.P. Woodhouse on Milton & Women as an undergrad in 1938, or 39. . . . I got an A. Tho'(sic) he was misanthropic (anti-women) in many ways. *He* was a great Milton scholar!"

[8] Nothing is mentioned of the Hebraic tradition. For Waddington's commentary on the alienating effect of exclusion from public discourse see her essay "Bias," in AS. (207-210).

[9] Carl Klinck, "Thoughts on E.J. Pratt," *The E.J.. Pratt Symposium*, 11. David Pitt recalls E.J. Pratt "as the 'convivial centre of attention in a convivial gathering of friends, mostly males.'" *E.J. Pratt: The Truant Years 1882-1927*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984.

[10] In *The Collected Poems* Waddington dedicates "Three Poems to My Teacher" to Jessie Taft one of her professors at the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Work. (MWCP 22).
[11] I am thinking here of Marjorie Pickthall, "The Wife," *The Wood Carver's Wife*, (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart) 39. Dorothy Livesay, "Wraith," *Green Pitcher*, (Toronto: Macmillan, 1928) 5.
[12] Miriam Waddington, *John Sutherland*, 7. See also AS 157, 166.
[13] M.H. Abrams *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1988: 180). Abrams notes, "The stream of consciousness, as it has been refined since the 1920's, is a special mode of narration that undertakes the full spectrum and the continuous flow of a character's mental process. . . ."
[14] In her sequential novel *Pilgrimage* (1912-1967) Dorothy Richardson sought to express a 'contemplated reality' which was also an attempt 'to produce a feminine equivalent of the current masculine realism.' See Blain, (900).
[15] One of Waddington's undated notebooks in the Waddington Papers contains notes on the social thought of pioneer women social workers.
[16] In the thesis she writes of "the hardship in getting going" noting "my teachers believed that growth is always accompanied by pain."(3)
[17] "Ballet" for example, in *Green World*," has a first stanza of six lines and a second one of five lines. I can find no reason for this structure. Waddington's unrhymed quatrains in "In The Big City" work less well than in "Who Will Build Jerusalem?" The most successful use of quatrains is in "The Bond" where Waddington uses rhyme skillfully.
[18] The line "a world of my own," quoted earlier, is from the introductory epigraph to the hand- written poems in the journal of 1933.
[19] It would make an interesting study to compare and contrast Waddington's poems with recent poetry by Rhea Tregebov, a contemporary poet born in Winnipeg in the 1950's and now living in Toronto. Both poets are Jewish women interested in female subjectivity, history, left wing politics, and both often write with insights which belong to what Tregebov, in her poem "The Bloor Line," calls "my little shadow, the Jew." (33)
[20] See Patricia Smart, *Writing in the Father's House*, "Introduction: Traces of a Murder," (3-20).

Chapter Three -- "I of Ink": Female Friendship and Female Subjectivity in the Correspondence of Dorothy Livesay and Miriam Waddington: 1944 - 1971.

"Life writing," writes Marlene Kadar, "is the playground for new relationships both within and without the text and most important it is the site of new language and new grammars. . . " (157). One significant area of this generic "playground" is correspondence. In a book review published in the 194O's in which she praised Amy Lowell's letters to a female academic, Livesay was clearly aware of the positive potential of letters between female writers. In a letter in the 195O's, she urged Waddington to read the published letters of nineteenth century women writers.[1] The extant record of the Livesay-Waddington correspondence is noteworthy in that it stretches from 1944-82, whereas the archival letters -- in the Livesay Papers -- from other prominent women poets such as Page, Avison, and Marriott begin in the 197Os. Although I wish to emphasize the emerging connections between women poets, it is important not to exaggerate the links between English Canadian women poets of this period. The links were forged in a culture in which, though women poets won prizes, male poets held more influence simply because they were men. When I spoke briefly, and informally, to P.K. Page, for example, she recalled little sense of connection to other women poets in the forties and fifties.[2] In Livesay's and Waddington's correspondence, however, a commitment to Canadian modernist poetry and female friendship merge as shared concerns.

Although Livesay's extant archival correspondence is a "very large and very rich component of the Dorothy Livesay Collection" (Banting Correspondence, 39), very few excerpts of her correspondence have been published. Banting's "Daddy's Girl" is still the only published article on her letters. Apart from the present study, the letters of Waddington have been overlooked by scholars, although she kept many letters from Canadian writers, both male and female.

In *Apartment Seven* Waddington refers to her correspondence with Canadian writers in the forties, recalling:

> I did not keep copies of my letters to [Crawley] (or to anyone else), but his letters to me, as well as those from Livesay, Avison, and Marriott, are still so alive, so full of vitality, that I believe the correspondence between writers and editors of the forties--if it is ever collected and collated -- will be every bit as exciting and intellectually varied as the letters of the Bloomsbury Group -- always, of course allowing for the different Canadian context. (AS 24)

Many letters from this varied group have disappeared. But an inquiry into both the Livesay and Waddington archival collections suggests that selected publication of their correspondence may lead to a fuller appreciation of the emerging concerns of women who, with male poets and critics, sought to introduce their fellow Canadians to new ways of seeing themselves, each other, and the world which are reflected in their poetry.

For Livesay, as Helen Buss suggests, the process of "mapping" the self, and the selves of other and female contemporaries was a recurrent part of her published life writing (150-153). In the extant unpublished letters she exchanged with Waddington the "I" of ink, the sometimes typed, more often hand-written, correspondence provides valuable insight into the difficulties both poets experienced in constituting the female as textual subject in a period in which they began to develop a female-centred community. "Outsiders may gain strength," writes Carolyn Heilbrun, "if they bond among themselves, offering each other comradeship, encouragement, protection, support" (61). The correspondence between female friends has been recognized by a number of Canadian feminist critics, including Buss and Kadar, as one means of resisting the "outsider" status of all women within patriarchal literary culture.

During the writing of this dissertation I located additional letters by Waddington to Livesay in the Livesay Papers at Queen's University.[3] While Waddington provided written permission to Queen's Archivist George Henderson for me to study her letters, neither Livesay

-- who was then aged and ill -- nor her literary executor Jay Stewart, responded to my requests for their permission to consult the letters, permission which Queen's University required to grant me accesss.

I have two goals in this chapter: the first is pragmatic, the other more analytical. The pragmatic goal is to provide readers with a sense of the archival record of a significant part of the extant correspondence between two Canadian women who were both poets and friends. My second goal is to use close readings of selected passages from the letters to explore issues related to female subjectivity within the correspondence. I examine these letters as representative documents providing their readers with a context against which to return to Livesay's and Waddington's poetry while thinking about their place as modern Canadian poets within the current canon of English Canadian literature.

In *Reinventing Womanhood* Heilbrun notes, as a Jew, a female academic, and a professor of literature in the fifties, "I pretended to be a part of two worlds, the gentile, the male, to neither of which I belonged" (61). As a poet Waddington was in an analogous position in Canada in the forties and fifties with the significant difference that as a modern female poet she was -- as I suggested last chapter -- on record in her first books as investigating the "inner underground life" of herself and her sex. The material world of Canadian literary culture remained dominated by male editors, academics, and critics. The correspondence between Livesay and Waddington deals with the anxieties felt by these two women poets. Even as they share in an emerging female-centred modernist poetry, both write of feeling excluded by male poets and critics such as Dudek, Layton, and Smith. Over the years the two explore the vocation of poetry and come to agree on the need for female-centred community.

The Livesay-Waddington correspondence suggests the circulation -- between friends -- of contradictory versions of the self: given over to poetry, and yet, to use Livesay's phrase,

"callously counting the cost"; reaching out for the "sister" poet, and yet, in a prefeminist era, evincing intermittent mistrust that they could ever sustain female alliances with each other, as women, rivalling their connections with men. In the contradictory versions of self which emerge in the letters one finds that female subjectivity is always at issue whether a poet is writing of her day-to-day life, or her poetry.

Waddington's letters often contain the impatient rush of language one associates with the modernist prose of women writers such as Dorothy Richardson, and Katherine Mansfield, and which I have found in Emily Carr's life writing.[4] In the Livesay-Waddington correspondence we encounter the 'I of ink,' of textual selves full of [the] contradictions, forces, and counter-forces of Canadian culture.

"trivial subjects": The Social Context of A Friendship

In *Right Hand Left Hand: A True Life of the Thirties*, Livesay reprinted two articles by other women, first published in 1936, which suggested that the "woman problem" is "a problem not of woman but of all society" (124-128). What Helen Buss has called "the male/female dichotomies" of the period seemed to dictate that male poets and critics form modern culture's elite; an elite which tended to view both leftist politics and modern art as the province of a new generation of men (152). In establishing their friendships with other poets of their own sex Livesay and Waddington found one means of support for their own emerging feminism.

In *Changing Patterns: Women in Canada* Jane Errington notes that "(t)hroughout the 194O's and 195O's, ideas of femininity, of fundamental differences between the sexes and of 'woman's place' persisted. . ." (76). In the adult lives of both Livesay and Waddington, to be a poet, and female, meant conflict with cultural codes of female subordination. The canonical

version of modern poetry has been so weighted towards males that one critic wonders, is "a poetry that radically dissents from the fathers, still part of modern poetry?" (Child 150). To conceive of a modern poetry that carries within it "dissent from the fathers," while still remaining part of its time, we must go back to the period, and look again. The correspondence makes it clear that both poets sought to be recognized and remembered as having played a central part in the making of modern Canadian poetry even as they, themselves, had internalized the message that men were "top dog" (AS 34).

Both Livesay and Waddington were educated to use the code of objectivity when they wrote as critics instead of "dragging in the personal element," a practice which tended to mark them as "Women" (RHLH 125). In their correspondence and outside of it, as for example when reviewing Waddington's work, Livesay recognizes the professional merit of "staying in the realm of statement," rather than "flying to" a friend's defense. Yet she also, by turns, asserted the need for a more "loving" female-centred community.

The code of objectivity is, itself, one expression of the professionalism of both poet and critic during the modern period. This professionalism is not without gender politics. But one of the difficulties of making these politics explicit has been the fact that until recently gender was not considered as an issue which applied to Canadian modernism. As feminist sociologist Dorothy Smith notes in an article on ideological structures, "(t)he perspective of men is not apparent as such for it has become institutionalized as the 'field' or the 'discipline'" (353). As both Livesay and Waddington have noted, neither their male "comrades" of the left nor many of their "colleagues" in poetry offered them equal status. Livesay writes of the thirties in *Right Hand Left Hand* "(i)n theory we were free and equal as comrades on the left. In practice, our right hand was tied to the kitchen sink" (124). As a woman poet, Livesay has remarked that she was "curiously alone" until she made the connection with younger women poets such as Waddington in the forties. To call Livesay a "Daddy's Girl," as Pamela Banting

has in her article on the correspondence between Livesay and her father, is to diminish her struggle with the sexist paradigms of not simply one particular "Daddy," but the patriarchal values of modern Canadian culture.

This correspondence between two women writers constitutes a discourse in which differences with the "sister" writer, and also differences within the writing self, are explored in an exchange where the world was for a time, at least, deliberately bracketed out. While neither Livesay nor Waddington use the critical term "female subjectivity," their writing process in lyric and life writing focuses on the textual exploration of what Waddington refers to in the liberal-humanist tradition as the "whole unified self -- physical, emotional, and intellectual," even while the 'grittiness' of sexual difference troubles the inherited liberal humanist notion of that "whole" (AS 167). The correspondence takes place over decades and even in its fragmented form one finds a record of the mutable "I" of chronological time remarking on physical as well as emotional change: "I fool myself if I do not see the wrinkles and falling teeth," writes Livesay in the 1950s. In one letter Livesay writes from the hairdresser shop, beginning a letter under the dryer while reckoning in ink with the middle-aged woman in the mirror.

In her journal of 1941, Waddington writes of "this problem of identity so central to Avison" as having less relevance to her (WPNA). Livesay, too, evidently knew of Avision's concern with identity for, in sharing a parenthetical jest, she comments to Waddington in her first extant letter to her, dated 1944, that her daughter young Marcia is "like Avison unsure who she is" (WPNA). Taken together, the letters from Livesay and Waddington suggest that both writers were, in fact, from the mid-forties on, moving away from the unified sense of self which "identity" implies, towards an "I of ink" that is an "I" in the transformative process, taking new shape within the syntax of the modernist prose. Hence, the letters often reflect the

"oscillating moment to moment ambiguity" (Dekoven 14) which numerous critics associate with the female modernism of Stein, Woolf, and Mansfield.

Kaplan writes of the "overwhelming significance of women writers -- *as women* -- in the creation of. . . modernism" (6). She notes that writers such as Woolf and Mansfield -- female writers whom I have noted are repeatedly mentioned in Livesay's early journals -- "invented new ways of shaping language or structuring reality in order to communicate experiences and feelings their inherited masculine culture would either not accept or allow" (7). Kaplan attributes this stylistic innovation to "a social change. . . the rise in women's expectations and the alterations of their roles in society during the first decades of the twentieth century" (6). The partial record of Livesay's and Waddington's correspondence which I have now read provides a register of disturbance, upset, and resistance within the historical context of the second wave of North American modernism.

Adrienne Rich writes of her own journey as a young woman poet in the forties and fifties as requiring "constant footwork of the imagination, a kind of perpetual translation, an unconscious fragmentation of identity: woman from poet" (175).[5] Their personal correspondence is a mediating space in which these women poets explore female subjectivity in a kind of episodic duet drawn directly from life. Waddington notes in *Apartment Seven* that poems were exchanged with the letters and the correspondence reflects a clear interest in each other's work. The hand-written title page of Livesay's Sorbonne thesis -- now in Special Collections at the University of Manitoba -- contains Miriam Waddington's name and her Montreal address in the right-hand margin with the request, "Return to Mrs. P.C. MacNair c/o Mrs. P. A. Waddington." Waddington recalls, "Dee wanted me to read it--probably in the 195O's."[6]

In "Form and Ideology in Poetry," Waddington writes "this dualism from my own experiences in writing. . . full of pleasure and surprise in the aesthetic area (that is, in the actual

writing of the poem) while just as often the same experiences have been painful and defeating in the area of living" (AS 158). The letters provide a textual bridge between the "pleasure" of their work and "the area of living" in which, as women poets, they both still shared the status of the "isolate."[7]

Seventy-eight Pieces Available: Puzzling the Livesay-Waddington Correspondence

There are fifty-four letters written by Livesay to Waddington in the National Archives, eighteen of which were written before 197O. Livesay saved comparatively few of Waddington's many early letters to her. There are slightly less than half as many letters by Waddington in the extant correspondence. The Livesay Papers at the University of Manitoba have twenty-four of Waddington's letters on file, six of them written prior to 197O: two from the forties, one from the fifties, and three from the sixties. The bulk of the extant Waddington letters (to Livesay) in the two archives I visited are from the 197Os, with two letters from the 198Os. But, in contrast to the earlier correspondence, the letters written after 197O tend to reflect less commitment to their friendship.

". . . too big for capitals": Four Letters From the Mid-Forties

When the extant archival correspondence begins, Waddington, aged twenty-seven, has temporarily left her husband, Patrick Waddington, in Toronto to pursue her Master of Social Work in Philadelphia in 1944. At this time Livesay is an already established poet of thirty-five, balancing writing and motherhood with two young children at home while living with her husband, Duncan MacNair, in Vancouver. Each of the four letters from the 194Os -- two by

each writer -- is a significant piece of correspondence. Waddington is separated from Patrick Waddington, alone in Philadelphia when she writes to "Dee":

> I'm sitting in my lonely nun-like chamber in the YWCA. . . . I am alone in THE BIG CITY and it feels just like it. What an overwhelming sense of anonymity I feel. I begin to marvel and wonder whether I ever was or ever will be a poet. But I'm sure to feel like my own self again in a few days -- as soon as I begin to work. . . . There is a Jewish folk song. . . "there flew a golden peacock, always to distant seas," which comes to mind. (DLUM)

This letter, written the year before the publication of Waddington's first book *Green World* (1945), reveals Waddington facing her self-doubt with honesty -- "I begin to marvel and wonder if I ever will be a poet" -- then following it with a phrase in which "to feel like my own self again" is equated with a renewed commitment "to work." The reference to the Jewish folk song sounds a note of difference between Livesay, the Gentile daughter, a self-described "WASP," and Waddington. In this passage, Waddington represents herself as the exotic "peacock." The "I" within her letter is both aware of her "own self" as solitary poet and able to place herself in a, for Livesay, alien tradition of wandering Jew. In this first extant letter to Livesay there is the perception of both their shared position as women poets, and their difference stemming in part from different ethnic backgrounds.

Their common ground is made clear in the letter when Waddington writes:

> Don't ever believe there is no esprit de corps among men as a sex -- They all look out for each other. . . now I'm removed from the sheltered status of a married woman with a husband, job, home & friends, I see things with new eyes. For instance as I walk along the main streets of this town I am impressed with the horrible brutality which underlies the general sexual attitude--maybe its the war--undoubtedly it is--but believe you me, that on the sidewalks of Philadelphia sex is not romantic. C'est la guerre. (DLUM Sept 29, 1944)

In this passage "war" is mentioned twice. The entry of America into the war after Pearl Harbour seems, in Waddington's view, to have accentuated "la guerre" between the sexes: as in her poem "In the Big City" men are predators (MWCP 7-8). The "I" writing of her

removal "from the sheltered status of a married woman. . ." is no longer positioned under cover of "husband, job, home & friends," and what she sees as a woman alone tends to emphasize the general significance of pursuing a gendered critique of everyday life. If men have "esprit de corps" then perhaps she and Dee, too, may come together, as women writers, to protect their own distinct interests.

In the letter's next paragraph Waddington notes that she is moving from her "nun-like cell" to a residence where she will make contact with another female poet: "I am going to borrow her book and show her ours, soon as I move in which will be tomorrow." Though Waddington had, in fact, not yet published a book, Livesay was already the award-winning author of two books. In asserting that she will "show her ours," Waddington indicates both membership in, and allegiance with, whatever constitutes "ours." Whatever the reality of the "BIG CITY" within her letter, there is a safe space where women "look out for each other."

In Livesay, Waddington found an older and more accomplished female writer who centred her first two books on exploring female subjectivity. As Waddington pointed out to me when she read an earlier draft of this dissertation, Livesay had published two books before F. R. Scott who, though he had of course appeared in anthologies and in little reviews, saw his first book *Overture* appear in 1945. Waddington commented, "[h]e came to the launching of *Green World* at John Sutherland's in June 1945 & I don't think he had a book yet." Livesay's influence on her younger friend was at least as strong as that of any male poet. Livesay, who sought Waddington out when she visited Toronto after reading her work, was impressed she later recalled in a review of *The Price of Gold*, with her work's "specific detail with city life at a time of social upheaval" (CVII 15). Livesay was pregnant and visiting from Vancouver when she and Waddington first met "in a long-vanished restaurant on the southwest corner of Yonge and Bloor" (AS12). Waddington recalls:

> After that first meeting we became close friends and carried on a hectic correspondence for many years, exchanging poems, literary news, and gossip. Dee had inexhaustible energy and wrote every day no matter what else was going on in her life. That spring in Toronto she began to work on 'Prelude', her poem about childbirth. It is a poem that my students--after I had begun to teach English at York --found very hard to understand; probably because the themes of pregnancy and childbirth, unheard of as they were in the forties, are still rare today. (AS 21)

In her second letter from the Philadelphia School of Social Work, Waddington notes that "with due acknowledgments of course" she has drawn Livesay's poem "Serenade for Strings" into a paper "on the birth experience" with such success that her professor Miss Virginia Robinson asked to keep it; and she adds "so you see, you are even present in the Pennsylvania School" (DLUM). In using one of the two poems Livesay had written about childbirth in an academic paper itself centred on "birth experience and mother's attitudes," Waddington uses modern poetry as commentary on female-centred experience. Her premise is that poetry intersects with and can illuminate contemporary women's lives. The "I AM crying/Exhorting, compelling" in Livesay's "Nativity" -- retitled "Serenade for Strings" in *Selected Poems* (1957) -- challenges its reader to consider a gynocentric revision of the Book of Genesis; a lower case creation of "*man!* " (SP 33).[8]

Waddington's letter, following Livesay, breaks with conventional capitalization. Throughout this two-page typed letter from Philadelphia dated "March 22, 1945" Waddington writes single space with capitalization used only for the name of her professor "Miss Virginia Robinson," described in a 1992 interview as her "spiritual mother." The lower case "bricks and mortar" of Waddington's letter suggest a stylistic departure which underscores an important change in her life. After discussing the use of "your serenade for strings" (sic) -- a poem which, towards the end, breaks from conventional capitalization and spatial arrangement, while also using ellipses and italics -- Waddington goes on in a second paragraph to note:

> otherwise i have been having a kind of st(i)rred up time which is just now subsiding. pat and i have decided to (s)eparate and go our separate ways. we have discovered

> they are different, and to live together would be ruinous for pat and hard for me. it isn't (sic) at all easy to write about, and perhaps it seems sudden and shocking to you. it was a shock to me too, when it hit me with its full impact. it was a great sorrow. . . . my going away only crystallized it. it is strange how little of it was conscious. . . with the state of the world as it is today i stand a good chance to remain forever single, and believe me i am enough of a woman to hate that. . . . i doubt there is a man in the world as could bear with me - life is too hectic and violent with me. as my teacher puts it - there is something about me (and all creative people) which is consuming to the other unless it is handled - and she thinks i am only just beginning to be responsible for myself. anyway, there it is, dee - and does it surprise you? (DLUM March 22, 45)

This separation, which is also mentioned in *Apartment Seven*, proved temporary, as did the shift to lower case.

Waddington emphasizes the significance of her year's stay at the Pennsylvania School of Social Work in *Apartment Seven*. There, she notes, "(w)ith the help of three great teachers. . . I managed to weather. . . (the) crises and to transform myself from a child into a woman who was at last ready and grown-up enough to take on the responsibilities of marriage and children" (AS34). Although Waddington has assured me -- by way of a marginal note -- that "it was [merely] easier to type that way" the lower case suggests a readiness to use language without observing old rules.

Livesay's reply begins with speculation on the lower case printing of Waddington's name in an issue of Allan Crawley's publication *CV*:

> New Westminster, April 1, 1945
>
> Dear Miriam:
>
> I said Miriam's signature in CV was misprinted and Duncan said no Miriam doesn't believe in capitals, she is too big for capitals. And I reread your letter and saw there were no capitals in it. So one half of his statement is correct? (WPNA)

In beginning this letter by reporting what she said to Duncan, and what Duncan replied, Livesay underscores her own status as a married woman. And in starting the letter with the speculation that Miriam may no longer "believe in capitals," Livesay indicates that she, too, is aware of the possibility of ceasing "to believe" in syntactic convention. Such challenges to

tradition were, of course, already evident in the writing of Gertrude Stein and the poetry of e.e. cummings. It seems significant that Livesay's first paragraph closes with a question mark: she puzzles, perhaps, more than she explicitly asks.

In the second paragraph of this same letter, Livesay treats the challenge of marital rupture as completely distinct from the syntactic one. It is as if Livesay's letter has two starts in its first two paragraphs: the opening one reads like a postscript. The second beginning tends to negate the connection between a Miriam "too big for capitals" and marital trouble:

> It was a fine fresh morning and Good Friday. . . . I sailed out to the corner bus with mail in hand, and feeling fine and fresh. So you may believe it was a blow to read your news, and a tearful reading. Your silence had prepared me for something, but not quite that. (WPNA April 1, 1945)

Her reply seems to suggest that for women like themselves, represented as "perfectionist[s] in marriage," the expectations of a life partner are impossible to meet, "[a]nd no man can stand it. Some few endure it (I think of Duncan!)" (WPNA April 1, 1945).

Livesay's letter speculates about why Waddington's marriage might have failed and why, despite admitted difficulty, her own remains intact. Livesay writes:

> In case I sound harsh, let me remind you that I twice would have left DCM, were it not for Peter. The third time Marcia swung me to a new level. And the fourth time father died. One has to be independent and also dependent, a pendulum swing, and so husband finally fits. And it wouldn't matter what husband. That is the crucial point. Almost any equal would do. The respect matters. (CF Levy, The Happy Family [sic] who is so simple yet so sound.) (WPNA April 1 1945)

This passage is valuable precisely because it uses Livesay's marital experience to discuss the "pendulum swing" between female dependence and independence. Both the birth of children and the death of her father make the marital pendulum swing back toward dependence. Waddington is told "(a)lmost any equal would do." The specific "I" caught in the movement of the familial pendulum toward the stasis of the "fit" suggests a fundamental tension between the female as independent subject, and the wife who, because of her familial obligations,

accepts dependence when "husband" "fits." The reference to received wisdom on "The Happy Family" is firmly in place to support staying, yet set carefully inside the first phrase in the passage cited above is the daring and generous admission to a childless, separated, woman poet: "let me remind you that I twice would have left. . . ." (WPNA April 1 1945).

Reference to Livesay's own writing occupies a brief space in this three-page typed letter. This abbreviation is remarkable since it manages to include the news that Livesay has won an award for her last book *Day and Night* (1944). She writes, "Yesterday it was announced I saved Lorne Pierce from disgrace, by getting the gold medal. Everybody happy but me, callously counting the cost." Behind the female poet is her prominent male publisher "saved. . . from disgrace" suggesting a reversal of conventional gender roles which configured the female as dependent on the male. Through writing the female may "save" her publisher, without being able to do much for herself. In "callously counting the cost" Livesay would seem to suggest that poetic excellence has exacted a high price. The cost, the letter seems to imply, involves the poet's often conflicting responsibilities to her family as wife and mother. The letter is concerned with the vital question of balancing female aspiration with the existing demands on "a wife" within marriage circa the mid-194Os.

Appropriately enough Livesay signs off with reference to a "vicious circle" in her then-troubled relation with daughter Marcia. She closes with reference to the "encircling movement" of her own life:

> Well must leave off this encircling movement.
>
> Maybe it leaves you to see the frustrations y u (sic) have escaped: and the way you could be useful in your present role to desperate fools like me?
>
> So write quickly. . . . Also we had a cat walked in on Valentine's Day, on Holy Thursday she had six kittens and on Easter there was one left-she had eaten all the rest. So you see what a maniacal house this is!
>
> Canst bear it?

Luv, Dee (WPNA April 1, 45)

Rosemary Sullivan notes that "(m)ost writers, at one point in their career, need the catalytic influence of other writers who share their concerns" (xi). Near the centre of the attempt to bring modernist poetry to Canada, Livesay, in the above letter, negotiates the gap between her status as award-winning poet, and her role as mother in a "maniacal house." The style of the letter tends to reflect the female modernist impulse she celebrated as a girl reading Katherine Mansfield, which involves setting down contradictory impulses -- to stay and to leave, to value stability and yet esteem revolt. In closing with the reference to the pregnant cat Livesay suggests the domestic "frustrations" Waddington may have escaped in separating from her husband; an action which Livesay elsewhere in the letter, calls a "shock."[9]

However different their personal lives were at this point, I recognize a "catalytic influence" of the "shared concerns" in the first letters (Sullivan xi). Through correspondence. both women put their day-to-day lives into words. It is, in fact, in the record of the day to day that the personal and the political can be read as indivisibly knit. Having "saved" her male editor with her poetry Livesay represents herself as caught in the "encircling movement" of one who can neither save herself or solve the enigmas which occur in her own life.

In this letter Livesay could be said to follow the technique of her contemporary, the female modernist painter Peggy Nicol MacLeod, creating a text of "busy surfaces" which art critic Paul Duval connected with "shortcomings which arose from her need to put all she felt down at once, in a single rush" (Duval 44). These "busy surfaces" are evocative of the letters which Livesay knew of other, earlier, female modernist writers such as Amy Lowell.

Kaplan suggests that Mansfield's life writing "reveal[s] how the impetus for her own innovations came out of a desperate attempt to understand, sort out, and make manageable socially unacceptable impulses and desires. . ." (5). The Livesay-Waddington correspondence

takes place over a period of marked "alteration" in women's roles. Waddington notes in *Apartment Seven*, "[t]he feminist movement didn't spring up full blown in 1970, but long before that, and this needs to be remembered. Every woman who was an artist and who wrote out of herself, her life, and her values was a feminist whether she knew it or not" (201).

The "April 1st, 1945" three page-letter presents Livesay using "the busy surfaces" of her own domesticity to delight and to entertain. Duncan's commentary on Miriam's letter suggests the connection of a family friend.[10] Livesay's household provides her with rich material for feminist revision of the situation of women within the "Happy Family." The interesting thing to note is that both the inscription of patriarchal order and the critique of it coexist uneasily in the same letter. Set off from the text of the letter, the final three word question reads like a found (Imagist) poem: "Canst bear it?" It is, after all a question for both women whether they stay or leave households; they are both caught up in a shared correspondence, a discourse of two, probing what it means to be a woman. It is Waddington's solitary predicament -- not just the devouring cat -- which makes for "tearful reading."

When Waddington sends Livesay *Green World*, the latter responds first of all that she needs another copy, having lent the first one out repeatedly. As the senior writer, she implicitly asserts her right to a second copy, a privilege for an honored friend. The judgment she delivers is both reserved and decidedly encouraging:

> At first feeling I thought it too circumscribed in thought and feeling, and resented the omission of certain poems more militant which I knew you had written. But latterly I turn to it as a very complete statement about one area of sensitivity, the psychological, and the only probing poetry we have. (WPNA Feb 24, 1946)

As noted in Chapter Two, the finding that *Green World* is "the only probing poetry we have," Livesay configures Waddington within new territory -- within the unexplored "largeness" of the "psychological" -- and also as part of a community constituted in the pronoun "we." The repetition of "Green" in the title of both Livesay's and Waddington's first books suggests a

shared emphasis on the natural world, an emphasis generally eschewed by high modernist poets. Any synthesis these writers seek is set in terms of their links with a world of organic process.

Livesay's 1946 letter focuses on the world outside households: the world where well-connected men like her friend Allan Crawley read and respond to Canadian poetry. It is evident that whether male or female a poet must be connected to a literary community dominated by male poets and critics. Livesay tells Waddington that Crawley "has been doing wonders with his public lecturing" on Canadian poets. Her next move will be to urge Crawley to cut down on Souster and "put some of your social work poems in instead." For the older and more successful Livesay, the packaging of a poet evidently, at this point in 1946, at least, involves selecting poetry the Canadian public may more readily understand: the preference here is given not to "probing" female subjectivity, but to the asexual narrator of other poems, the "street known and street knowing" social worker pacing the urban landscape in "Investigator."

". . . for it is not you Miriam who is writing this poetry": Livesay in the Fifties

I asked Waddington in an interview in the spring of 1992 what a writer wants from a critic. Her immediate response was simply "Praise!" When A. J. M. Smith visited the West Coast in the 195Os, Livesay recorded a wary reaction to Smith as a prominent male critic who had set himself up as knowledgeable compiler of what Christopher Levenson in *Canadian Poetry* calls a kind of "school team or cabinet photo" of modern Canadian poets.[11] With the sudden shift from the discouraging words of the male critic to female friendship, Livesay suggests the necessity for herself and other female poets to turn from the 'objective' stance of criticism to feed on the praise of one's friend:

> The main thing I got from Smith was the feeling that it is no use to expect any recognition today -- the public is hostile to poetry today; and poets can not judge each other's work. I have been (doing) more digging this summer into Dickinson; and the astonishing thing is how the thoroughly successful and esteemed poet of the day -- Helen Hunt Jackson -- is the only person who ever told Emily Dickinson what she so needed to know "You are a great poet."
> Read the biography, the last one, by Thomas Johnson. (WPNA Friday, August 9, n.y.)

Earlier in this letter, Livesay both recognizes Smith's growing significance in the making of modern Canadian criticism and remains skeptical of him. Livesay describes him as "very importantly busy searching out new talent," and notes that "i (sic) listened to Smith with growing disillusion." She goes on to state that she has found an "astonishing thing," not in listening to the rising male critic and poet, but in reading about women poets who conversed much as Livesay and Waddington did. The inference in this typed one page letter is clear: they must read the record of women poets in the past and think about who they are, and may yet be, to each other.

Livesay's and Waddington's construction of reality works within the codes of a dominant society and at the same time questions the given social order in which women have tended to be assigned subordinate roles. Within a society in which they, as married women, were identified under the names of their husbands, the letters between these two female poets tend to assert a textual ground in which patriarchal affiliation -- whether with husband or male editors -- is not the most vital thing. In the correspondence, lines of ragged type and of ink connect one female poet with another; both are, to use Livesay's phrase, "struggling. . . to make a woman's voice heard." As Josephine Donovan notes in "Towards a Women's Poetics":

> . . . the 'social construction of reality' has been done by males, and that construction has cast women in the role of other and seen their experience as deviant, or has not seen them at all. . . . For the silenced Other to begin to speak, to create art, she must be in

> communication with others of her group in order that a collective "social construction of reality" be articulated. (101)

From Donavon's perspective, female friendship between writers is vital to any future articulation of a women's poetics.

Livesay's letter of August 9 (ny) asserts the rich ambiguity of such connections: in life as in the letter there is the suggestion of what DeKoven characterizes as "the irreducible undecidability" and "unsynthesized dialectic" of modernist prose (DeKoven 14). Having stayed one weekend with Phyllis Webb, Livesay teases Waddington that she may be jealous, as the latter had known Webb in Montreal through shared literary activity without ever becoming a friend. In a contemporary interview Webb recalls having known Waddington in Montreal in the 1940s, but states, "there wasn't much resonance between us." Webb notes that, at the time, it did not occur to her to think of herself as a woman writer. For her an awareness of the significance of sex and gender came later. Webb recalls at the time that although Waddington was "occasionally present. . . I try to visualize the scene in Layton's living room and I don't see many women writers. . ." (321). Unlike Webb, Waddington was always aware of herself as both woman and writer. When I mentioned Webb's comment to Waddington, she reminded me that Webb was a younger poet, very much a newcomer.

Fifteen years later in an undated letter from the early sixties, Livesay writes:

> I hope you won't take it as treason, should you hear from any devious source -- the truth -- that I stayed with Phyllis Webb, when in Victoria! I was over at Art Smith's poetry workshop, Saturday last, and was anxious to save money so as to take Marcia sight-seeing when she arrives Sunday. So when Phyllis asked I gladly complied. Her mother has a very pretty house, a garden and is a wonderful cook and manager. I gather that she works also. . . . Phyllis is totally unlike her mother in every respect. She still gives that slithery cobra feeling. . . . She is intelligent you know -- admits to her own neuroses -- and has many amusing tales to tell of LIFE IN MONTREAL. You never tell me! Particularly all about Dudek. . . and the Rorschach tests she did on them all, with disastrous results, because no therapy.[12] Her main loyalty is to Layton, but she can still distinguish between his good and bad poems. I suppose you know that Williams has written the introduction to Layton's Selected Poems [sic], to appear in the

> U.S.?. . . . think you should send your poems to him. He says he wants de la musique encore et toujours. (WPNA)

Layton's good fortune with Williams is presented as something which may also be useful to Waddington. The visit to Victoria is described with verbal compression yet the "slithery cobra feeling" attributed to Webb's presence tends to dominate the letter. The cobra was for the Egyptians a symbol of the goddess as creator. Barbara Walker notes that "[t]he symbol was worn on the foreheads of deities and rulers in the position of the third eye of insight. It stood for royal spirit, healing, and wisdom" (109). The immediate response, of course, is revulsion from the "slithery" snake, but the reference to the "cobra" awards a recognition of female power to this significant fellow woman poet which the explicit description denies.

A contrast between Webb's domestic mother and daughter poet Phyllis is suggested by Livesay, but not fleshed out, and the "disastrous results" of the Rorschach tests are unspecified. The sense of alliance between writers is ambiguous and not here, at least, linked with gender. Livesay, having stayed with Webb, is grateful for the "amusing tales" which Waddington "never tell[s]" but starts off the letter teasing her friend about "treason." Treason and "loyalty" both are questioned in the context of an irreverent tone, less than serious but all the same, telling as any "tests." "[M]ain loyalty" to Layton on Webb's part does not prevent distinction between "good and bad poems." One's ultimate loyalty, Livesay seems to infer, belongs not to people but to poems.

Tracing the archival record of this friendship in letters provides readers with a focus on Canadian poetry seen from the perspective of female poets. But it can equally, I think, suggest the darkness and confusion of a time when the voice of a woman poet was less valued than the voice of a male, whether critic or poet. At times, the sense of injustice made Waddington, like Charlotte Bronte, "write in a rage."[13] In a tightly spaced letter, just over a page long, Waddington writes of an article by James Reaney on Jay Macpherson, a poet she knew and

had some correspondence with: "I object like hell to having that brand of ontario christianity [sic] and small town big city-ism rammed down my throat. All in the name of what? Literature. Frig him." Capitalization is irregular in this letter which begins with "Dear dee - glad. . ." and proceeds in erratic, unpredictable sentences replicating, as letters can, one side of an intense conversation with a close friend. A few words are underlined for emphasis as is the phrase "small-t-town Anglican," while "eternal Truth" and "ONLY TRUTH" appear with capitalization for emphasis. All of this along with the frequent use of the dash suggests that the "bricks and mortar" (Benstock xv) [14] of punctuation, capitalization, lower-case letters for usually capitalized words such as "christianity" are not being deployed to maintain the status quo. Waddington's letter indicates her awareness "that poetry is a means of communication as well as an expression, and that its impact should be primarily emotional."[15] This emphasis on the "emotional" has no place with the critics Waddington has been reading when she writes:

> You know, one of the things that scares me about Reaney and that whole group - of which Weaver is one (and he holds quite a few strings in the power-net of the CBC) is the *implicit* assumptions that social realities are at best dull, that moral interpretation is suspect of psychological problems, and that psychological interpretation is on the other hand pretentious in literature and out of place too. In other words what they like, want, admire is; No emotions; to cover up large doses of authority derived from Christian religious myth; steal the feminine principle, but in case any one suspects that's what you are using, deny there's any such thing; allow of only one kind of literature; in diversity there lies danger. no differences allowed; penalty excommunication. Make of it what you will.(WPNA no date, typed one page letter)

More than any other extant letter in the correspondence, this is the letter which states Waddington's position as "twice isolate" within a culture in which no Jewish man or woman could get a job teaching English in a Canadian university until after the Second World War (AS 4O). To see the " *implicit* assumptions" of gentile superiority return under the guise of literary criticism clearly reminded her of the "outsider" status she had as a Jew in Canada before the War. But part of being an outsider was also, as Heilbrun has noted, simply the result of being female within a period in which culture was dominated by the men.

Combined with her critique of "Reaney and that whole group" (which of course included women) is the perception that what she calls "the feminine principle" is being appropriated by male writers. Her essay "Women and Writing," in *Apartment Seven* refers to an international conference of women writers in Jerusalem in 1987:

> The theme of the conference was simply 'women do differently'. Everyone was in agreement about that. But how do women do differently? In what way? Not a single participant had an answer. . . . But it was enough that the question had been raised -- that it was in the air -- that it hovered over every session and was imprinted on everyone's mind. We all took it home with us. It was like a stone you throw into a pool; it radiates into wider and wider circles covering more and more space but always affirming that women are different. (AS 2OO)

However, thirty years before in the 1950s in Canada, there was little sense of how to go about defending the interests of women.

All other letters from the 1950s in the correspondence are Livesay's. As her biographer Lee Briscoe Thompson observes, the 1950s were for Livesay "a gray, largely frustrating decade. . ."(7). In a 1977 interview with Nadine McInnis which Livesay forwarded in a letter to Waddington, Livesay reflects that in the 1950s, "the pressures of family life" were particularly difficult for the woman poet, and suggests, as McInnis paraphrases, a "great ambivalence of feeling as a mother."[16] Some of this ambivalence finds its way into the letters to Waddington in this period:

> . . . these goddamn spinsters who sigh spinsterly and insist you must love and care for your children -- I've still no truck with them. . . having felt so long, myself, the impatience of being a parent. (WPNASeptember 17, n.y.)

In her poem "The Three Emilys" (1953), Livesay writes of the "spinsters" as artists: in this poem the women artists who are single and who are placed "crying in my head" and "Walk alone, uncomforted. . ." (CPDL 2O2).[17] The poem transforms the lone women into individual women who are known to the poem's speaker, a mother, through writing and/or painting. As

artists they "cry to me," the mother in the poem who has, with motherhood, "another kingdom barred/To them. . ." (stanza three, CPDL 2O2). What is valuable about the letter is its uncompromising record of a mother-poet's anger: the anger at the centre of everyday life in which, as a mother, she must steal time to write. In raging against the spinsterly sigh, the judgment of women with the liberty to work on their art, rather than at the deeper inequity within the patriarchal family, Livesay suggests the "inner storm" through which she, as a woman poet, will write when she speaks in the voice of a mother (DLCP 2O2).

When Livesay learns of Waddington's first pregnancy in 1946, the real and the imaginary intersect to produce optimism and excitement. The friendship between the two women is set out tangibly in the offer to return a coat previously sent by Patrick Waddington:

> If I had heard a week before, my potato sack dress would not have been cut down to a skirt, and my tweed butcher-boy coat would not have been trimmed to a fashionable cut. It's too bad. However, I should think your own coat would be useful, would it not. . . the one Pat [Waddington] sent me?. . . . Just say the word and I'll express it. (WPNA 1946 4O3, 7th Avenue, Vancouver)

This passage celebrates female subjectivity through attention to details of the "cut down," the trimmed," and the "useful." It proceeds to assert community and caring through scraps. Process is in the foreground of this passage, as it was for the artist-mother of Adele Wiseman when Wiseman writes years later in *Old Woman at Play* of "foretasting fulfillment, her fingers ready to shape the future, teasing it from the cloth. . . the flotsam of possibility" (44).

Waddington's experiences of the intensity of motherhood constitute a lacuna, a lost fragment, in the correspondence. Her letters to Livesay from this period may have survived in Livesay's currently restricted collection of Waddington letters held by Queens University. In the available material, there is only one extant letter by Waddington written in the 195O's in the Livesay Papers, Special Collection, University of Manitoba. Waddington is, however, still present, by reflection, in the letters she saved from Livesay.

Three letters written by Livesay will conclude my discussion of the correspondence of the fifties: they were written between 1956 and 1958. In her letter of 1956 from North Vancouver, Livesay begins:

> Dear Miriam,
> Just a chat while having my hair done! Going to hear Sir Herbert Read tonight, at UBC-but not being in the Dept. of English anymore, no one will invite me to the dos' [sic] which I suppose are going on. How similar are our frustrations! But I think I do not bother any more about recognition, status--it is the poem that matters. It should be recognized of course. P.K. Page's very lovely new ones from Australia are being published in *Poetry*. Why don't you try there? (WPNA July 1O, 1956)

In this excerpt, Livesay sets herself in the salon, seeking a hair-do to wear to that night's literary event, and firmly displaying her different approach to the "similar frustrations" she shares with her friend. In A. S. Byatt's latest collection *The Matisse Stories*, there is a first person account of a middle-aged female writer trashing a beauty salon because the stylist makes her look, as she is, middle-aged. Livesay is blunt about her changing looks and jests, as the woman in the Byatt story can not, that she is "half-way through menopause, all carefully cleaned up in hospital in January, so no, no caviar, darling" (WPNA). This four page hand-written letter to Waddington navigates between "the poems that matter" (WPNA) and concern for the self and female friends. She notes that the intersection between art and life may provide "the answer for us women":

> Have been re-visiting Henry Moore's Show and struggling to help a friend decide between marriage, separation, divorce, aloneness. Henry Moore provides the answer for us women -- did you know? -- Hermaphroditism! Any way I respond to and love him as an artist, more than any other of today's. (WPNA)

The "Love and pain, Darlinck" with which she signs off is a register of the equipoise she seeks between the "pain" of, as she puts it, having no "sex life at this trying time" and the "love" which she finds restored in visual art, in poetry, and in female friendship. She writes of Henry

Moore's in the well-known and much-anthologized poem "On Looking into Henry Moore" (CPDL 236).

In her letter of August 26th, 1957, she exclaims, "Returning from holiday, what a blessing your letter was! So wise and warm. I have re-read it several times each time drawing comfort." It is in this context that Livesay asserts a difference between them grounded in their experience:

> I confess I have needed some clarification in the past, on your attitude to falling in love. Because usually your letter describes some experience or affair, usually at its height, and then your next letter offers no clues, and then your next letter is mysterious about someone else -- or is it the first one? Whereas my life has been plagued latterly by few intimate relationships (new ones, that is) but by half-felt ones which lead to more fantasy than I have ever had to cope with. I make ready for an encounter (even with an old friend) by extraordinary imaginary conversations, which never approximate reality. . . . And all this welling from a profound deep uselessness. As I suddenly expressed it to a Unitarian pastor: I feel unused. (WPNA Aug 26 1957)

The "unused" feeling of the "I" at the centre of Livesay's middle years exists in contrast to the imagined lyric "I." The telling image is gone. The "extraordinary imaginary conversations" suggest a need to connect not only with this particular friend but the world where she finds herself "unused." She records the pastor's response:

> I only had a few brief conversations with him aside from public listening: but in each encounter he sounded the same note for us: accept, accept, accept. Nothing new, of course; but you know how resentfully I have kicked against the pricks; and my deadly gift for analyzing other people's weakness! (WPNA July 10, 1956)

From the perspective of feminist theory and in view of both poets' poetry and life writing, it seems clear that the pastor was wrong. Having "kicked against the pricks," as she says, Livesay records the attraction of submitting the ego to the "daguerreotype" delivered by critics:

> You say it is the critics who are mediocre: but that seems too easy a whipping-post. Fashions change, every bit in poetry as in plumage; and I accept my daguerreotype. It has been my lot never to be a critic's poet, but to have missed as well the pleasant, if fleeting, relish of popular appeal. Neighbours who borrow my book continue to say:

> "I don't understand it." But my obscurity is far too simple for the professors. All I am sure of myself, is that there is thought in the content of my poems, and music in its expression: more music than occurs in contemporary Canadian poetry.
>
> So do not rush to my defense darling. Let us stay in the realm of statement. (WPNA July 10, 56)[18]

This 1956 letter challenges both Livesay herself and Waddington her reader, and friend, to negotiate a difficult passage as female writers facing an apparently unreceptive literary community. She writes that neighbours who borrow her books return them not only without one word of congratulations or praise, but, in fact, without understanding. One has only to reread A. M. Klein's "Portrait of a Poet as Landscape" to be reminded that the male poets of the time were not necessarily companionable when they met, each "alone, yet not completely alone. . ." "everywhere menial, a shadow's shadow" (Klein 504). In Klein's poem, all the poets are male but that fact does not give much comfort. His poem struggles with "egos" and "esteem" echoing much of the desire for "*fame*" and a "green inventory" so evident in the poetry and life writing of Livesay and Waddington.

While Klein went mad, Livesay and Waddington both went on to write about Klein. They survived. Joining together as women poets is one of the ways they came through. Oddly enough, the very quarrels between them, such as the one Livesay tries to conclude in her letter from London in 1958, can be cited as evidence of the way in which they survived. They cut teeth that they would need in the world each on the bones of the other. After one disasterous meeting with Waddington in Montreal, Livesay writes from London:

> Can you not see that it is myself I am criticizing when I criticize you? This mistaken path I took could be so easily avoided -- one feels -- can I not warn Miriam? But no, we each have our own experience, and experience cannot be shared and so rarely transferred.
>
> What I have learned in the last nine years (if we take forty as a starting point) is that this desire and yearning for recognition and support is a self-destructive force. It eats you up. The ego is never sated. The more it is given, the more it must have. Therefore if one is a serious writer at all (or painter or composer) the actual purity of the work done,

> the integrity of it, is threatened by this insatiable ego-craving. For it is not you, Miriam who is writing this poetry. You are an instrument through which POETRY lives. Or I am.... Therefore when it comes through it should be recorded with a sense of humility, and a sense of offering. "I offer it back to the source of poetry from whence it came." If it is recognized by people fine. If not, fine. (WPNA Oct 8, n.d. 1958?)

Perhaps the Waddington letters in the Livesay Papers at Queens will include Waddington's response to this letter. In reading the one-sided record of Livesay's memorable letters to "Ma Chere," (the beginning of her letter from England, October 8, 1958), one is aware that the sometimes prickly relationship between the two provoked them both to engage in further struggle in forging their own point of view with regard to the place of female subjectivity in poetry.

The assertion that "... it is not you, Miriam who is writing this poetry" can be read in the context of an older tradition of inspired poetry,[19] with a female sense added of "offering" as a pragmatic side-step of selflessness, a means of getting around what has been called "the undernourished voice of woman," to use Gail Scott's phrase, within a male-centred culture. In focusing on "the actual purity of the work done," rather than self as lone woman, Livesay shifts emphasis away from the evaluation of her literary stock by (male) critics and anthologists, and gives power, instead, to work women poets can do for poetry in itself. Waddington's reply to this particular letter is also missing, but elsewhere she insists on the connection between the woman poet and the poems which she produces. Clearly she believed that a particular man or woman produces poems:

> As for myself, I have always known that all language is physiological as well as symbolic. A poem is a physical act. What after all are rhythm, rhyme, alliteration, except pulse and breath? A woman's language, like the language of any other person, expresses her pulse, her rhythms, her breath -- and the pulse and the breath are those of a woman. (AS 201)

Livesay's letters of the fifties provide the explanation for why, with "few intimate relationships... and feeling a disconnection with audience," and, as she puts it, with her

"obscurity far too simple for the professors," she felt the need to adopt a poetic stance which would arm her against a society which, despite formal awards, failed to offer her an ongoing sense of "recognition and support as a female poet." She concludes that "it is the poem that matters" (WPNA July 10, 1956). This premise seems a suitable coat of armour to protect her fundamental alliance with "the most important thing in the world -- literature" (AS 20). As Livesay develops her position in letters from 1956 to 1958, neither feelings of being "unused" (WPNA Aug 26, 57) nor the lack of interest in her work need stop her from letting "POETRY" "come through" (WPNA Oct 8,58). Personal doubt, like her one reference in the correspondence to her health in menopause, is "all carefully cleaned up" (WPNA July 56) by means of a theory which separates woman from poet. Appropriately enough, Livesay shifts, at the end of her letter of October 1958, from figuring the poet as "he." In erasing the "self destructive force" of two specific female poets -- herself and Waddington -- she "dig[s] down to basic principles" to discover not "you, Miriam" but the triumphant lower case male:

> If it is recognized by the people fine. If not fine. The writer should be wholly detached from what he has done --- [sic] <u>once he has done it.</u> If this is too mystical a view for you -- well and good. But you must recognize that it is my view and all my critical apparatus will be informed by it. (WPNA Oct. 8, 1958)

Underlining is used twice. The first time it is used, in the phrase "<u>try to be objective and understand *my* point of view. Not yours</u>." The second time, as quoted above, emphasis falls on -- "<u>once he has done it</u>." It is the "he," "not you, Miriam" not the specific, needy, ego-driven particular woman poet in the middle of marital crisis in Montreal, that Livesay represents. No specific "he" is named here, and significantly so, for in this letter Livesay embraces the abstract ground of unitary subjectivity, reduced to one universal artist figure: the male. The modest lower case "*he*" asserts, once again, the power of the liberal humanist universal ethos to call to order even the most "rebelliously" spirited woman. In representing

this passage as perhaps "too idealistic or mystical a view for you," Livesay claims the high ground of abstraction and principle. This underscores her recognition of the shift from "personal elements" of "this destructive ego business" and "temperamental outbursts," to the "idealistic or mystical view" in which "conversations with each other," even about shared "desire and yearning," are eclipsed.

"I just cannot be 'modren'. . .": Correspondence from the Sixties and Early Seventies

In their subsequent letters of the sixties and seventies, one senses in both writers less commitment to the friendship, and a haste commensurate with a desire to rush back into life with drafts of new poems, manuscripts, and readings all demanding attention. Waddington left Montreal with her two sons in 1960 for Toronto. In *Apartment Seven* she recalls that she did not leave Montreal "willingly or under happy circumstances" (163). Her marriage to Patrick Waddington had ended and she was starting a new life in Toronto. The letters of the 1970s, particularly, reflect the time-pressure under which both, now mature, poets managed to write some of their best work. This correspondence suggests that their writing-time in this period was expended not so much in writing what Woolf called "the unpublished works of women," including their "personal letters," but in published work.[20] During this period Livesay wrote *The Unquiet Bed* (1967), *Plainsongs* (1971), *Ice Age* (1975), and *The Woman I Am* (1978). She also edited two anthologies of poetry by women: *Forty Women Poets of Canada* with Seymour Mayne (1971), and *Women's Eye: 12 BC Poets* (1974). Waddington was productive both as a poet and Full Professor of English at York University, publishing *The Glass Trumpet* (1966), *Say Yes* (1969), *Dream Telescope* (1972), *The Price of Gold* (1976), and a critical study *A.M. Klein* (1970), as well as compiling Klein's *Collected Poems* (1974).

As a single mother with her two teenage boys at home during this period, Waddington felt the pressure of the poet who must earn a living through teaching her "love." She writes Livesay:

> I'm struggling with the intro to the Klein collected poems -- I find it very hard to write criticism -- Teaching drains one of ideas, & so does running around lecturing & talking about poetry -- as Blake said -- never seek to tell thy love, love which never can be told; nor ought to be. I now understand the idea of the Catholic retreat. . . . the poems though are worth all the attention I can give. (DLUM March, 1974)

Waddington fought for Canadian literature courses at York, for Klein's literary reputation, and for her own work. The correspondence stresses the practical exigencies of getting poetry to market, getting readings arranged, "intros" written, connecting with Livesay in brief visits to exchange the shop-talk of now senior Canadian poets. In a letter of June, 1965 Waddington sounds a legitimate note of concern that "you & me" will be left out of the canon which trendy younger male academics are beginning to formulate. She writes:

> I haven't had the courage to read Can. Lit. hist. as yet -- I notice that you & me are completely omitted from the poet's lists that are rattled off by Frank Davey, George Bowering, & others. . . . Earle (Birney) has managed to retain his influence, & so has AJM (Smith). The latter on a very thinnish production. You & I made a mistake not to tie onto the tail of either Dudek or Layton. No -- Earle does not call me -- I suppose he knows I am Esther's friend. I just cannot be 'modren' about divorce after 2O-3O-4O years of married life. A woman has nothing to gain & everything to lose -- you have surely experienced the unenviable social & economic situation of the single unyoung woman! Especially with children. (DLUM June 21, 1965)

Like Waddington's earlier letters, this excerpt reads like a stream of consciousness passage in Dorothy Richardson's modernist prose work *Pilgrimage*. Although the norms of 'objective' writing would treat literary reputation and divorce as chalk and cheese Waddington sets them on one "busy" and level "surface." In one dense paragraph the connection is made between who will get read, whose name and work will remain, and the mutable, vulnerable position of both Ester Birney and herself as "unyoung woman" within patriarchal society. The "modren" (sic) young men with their "poets' lists" focus attention on "Dudek or Layton" leaving

Waddington to wish herself "tie[d] onto the tail of either" of the men. It is, of course, easy enough to denigrate such an admission as weakness. However, here once again, is the dissonant analysis of the differences of treatment in Canadian literary history. This letter is not pretty in its meditation on "broken things." At this point (in1965) Waddington has not yet assumed the position of "prophetic messenger" to use Judith Brown's phrase for her status as an older Canadian poet (269). However, she takes a first step toward pursuing more equitable treatment. That step involves analysis of inequity between the way men and women poets of one generation are treated. It also involves a refusal to patch-over the gaps, losses, and "omissi(on)" so central to her own life and work.

The letters from this period maintain continuity in insisting upon the connection between poetry and everyday life; for Livesay, at least, new adventures in love find their way into poetry. As before the letters insist on digression, indirection, and open questions: so in the 196Os Livesay writes Waddington that the ending of "my 'to-be-ended' love affair is only theoretically possible and necessary. In reality it will be frightening." And wonders, almost as if to herself, "I keep writing 'notations' are they poems?" The letter then includes "today's sample," a section from "The Notations of Love," which later appeared in *The Unquiet Bed*.

In the work of these two writers, men are never purely the "Other," the essential enemy. Though in later life Livesay has described herself as bi-sexual, both she and Waddington have maintained rich connections with men. The sense of connection with male poets and male editors is something a number of critics have commented on in Livesay's work. Male poets and critics held the positions of power. They edited magazines, they held university positions. Waddington notes that within Canada "few, if any women, during the forties edited journals, reviewed books, or held positions of power in publishing or other media" (AS 2O4). But crucially in the sixties and seventies both poets moved into the same positions which previously had been held by "the men." Livesay was on the editorial board of

both *Prism* and *CV2* and held various University positions across Canada, Waddington was, as noted above, a professor at York University. Also during this period the critique of gender prejudice against women became a prominent force within Canadian culture. As Jane Errington notes, "(f)or the first time, a significant proportion of women in Canada in the 196O's was questioning the basic tenets of a paternalistic, male-dominated society" (77).

In a letter written at the start of the seventies Livesay invited, and received, Waddington's contribution for what she then called "the gals anthology," the *Anthology of Contemporary Women Poets in Canada* (1971) which she edited with Seymour Mayne. With apparent reference to something Waddington had written with regard to women writers Livesay writes, "of course I agree we've got to fight. Sheila Watson says 'We must work, not fight.' I say "we must work and fight!" (MWNA). Her position has shifted from an emphasis on poetry for its own sake to a closer connection between feminist engagement and her own work both as editor and poet. There is a clear sense of female centred community; a community which includes "the Anthology editing with Seymour." Some female poets such as Pat Lowther at first refused to contribute on the grounds that they did not wish to be set in a female ghetto. Both Livesay and Waddington realized the necessity of practical remedial measures.

In 197O Livesay solicited poems from Waddington, Page, Avison, Webb and others for *Forty Women Poets of Canada*. She noted in an unpublished letter to Lowther, that Canadian women poets needed to assert their existence as a community in the face of their "ghettoization" within a canon shaped by the tastes and the friendships of male critics and poets. In situating her own position within Canadian poetry, Livesay makes reference to Waddington and to Page, this time within the context of a larger picture of female exclusion in the emerging canon of Canadian poetry. Here, Livesay asserts the significance of her own female community more strongly than ever before:

> Yes, my dear gal, there have been anthologies with men only. And one of them is "poets of Confederation" (sic) And the most important, key figure, was left out! A woman: Isabella Valancy Crawford. Elizabeth Brewster, who has doubts also, set to and counted the no. of women represented in the last 4 Canadian poetry anthologies. The count was about 5% women. A totally unjust picture. In the main new much publicized Garry Geddes Oxford paperback anthology, *15 Canadian Poets*, which will go all over the world, there are only 3 women. . . not P.K. Page, Miriam Waddington, or Dorothy Livesay. . . . Believe me, we are not putting ourselves in the ghetto by being in an anthology of women poets. WE ARE IN THE GHETTO! . . . . And the only way to get out [is] to proclaim, our rights, our place, our worth. (DLUM Edmonton, March 11, 1971)

The urgency of Livesay's message is particularized as a timely, if ineffective, warning to Lowther, who, at that point, was both a poet with a growing reputation and an abused wife. The letters to Livesay make no reference to abuse, but they do refer to persistent ill health. In 1975 Lowther was murdered by her husband. Livesay's connections with younger women poets and writers including both Lowther, Nadine McInnis, and Joy Kogawa deserve separate treatment.[21] The question of Livesay and of Waddington's literary contribution to modern Canadian poetry must involve a reckoning with both their work and their roles in the context of a developing literary community in which women formed a vital part. A recent *Canadian Poetry* review by Christopher Levenson notes that the third version of the Geddes anthology includes Waddington, a figure whose "significance for contemporary Canadian poetry has tended to be overlooked."[22] It is also noted that although Geddes has increased "the representation of women poets. . . with only eleven out of thirty it still does less than justice to the dominant role of women poets in the contemporary poetic scene" (Levenson 138).

Livesay and Waddington have not been victims. To the contrary, they are both, as one reviewer pointed out recently of Waddington, among "this country's formidable literary survivors" (Golfman 179). Over a thirty-five year period, their letters tell something about how they came through together, absorbed, drudging, puzzled, but nonetheless prolific achievers.

Conclusion

In an undated letter sent from Vancouver in the 195Os to Waddington in Montreal, Livesay suggests that their "main trouble" as women poets may be that they have not yet abandoned "inhibition" and ventured to support one another, as women writers, more fully:

> Dear Miriam, Thank you for the loving. We all need such. Perhaps our main trouble, this inhibition between friends? Those Victorian women were amazingly warm and outspoken in their friendship. Cf. Gaskell, Browning, Bronte. Also of course, Emily D. (know her letters) (WPNA Oct 21 ny, [1954?])

In asking Waddington if she "know[s]" "Emily D.'[s]" letters, Livesay challenges her to make a connection between female friendship and a woman poet: if "Emily D." had good female friends so can they. I would suggest that in order to enlarge our "construction" of Canadian literary history in the modern period, we will do well to learn what we can of letters by and about Canadian women poets. Livesay and Waddington had a difficult friendship. They always seem a little strange to each other, and yet are committed as witnesses to each other's lives. Waddington writes Livesay in 1982 after meeting her son Peter, ". . . it was odd how when I saw him I remembered Duncan so clearly from 1942 & our threesome walk in a meadow near your house. And your cooking of a seafood casserole" (DLUM March 2O, 1982).

As I complete this dissertation in 1996, both Dorothy Livesay and Miriam Waddington are still alive, and since Waddington's move from Toronto in 1992, both of them live on the West Coast. They hear of each other through their mutual friend, Jewish by birth, Anne Campbell, to whom Livesay dedicated *Journey With My Selves*. Otherwise, they have not seen or spoken to each other in quite a few years. I found a photograph in the Waddington Photographs, National Archives, dated July, 1989. Waddington smiles, proud to stand with

her old friend, Dorothy Livesay. On the back of the original print Livesay writes "Love to Miriam, ta' auld sakes sake, Love Dee."[23] When I met Livesay in 1992 I mentioned Waddington to her, but it was not a good day for "Mrs. MacNair" as she was called by the staff of her nursing home. That day, the friendship with Waddington seemed, as my Scottish grandfather would have said "too far away." I realized as I left Livesay that it is now up to scholars of Canadian literature to read the fragmentary record of these women poets' unpublished archival journals and letters so that the "web of action" (CPDL 275) which they worked in connecting with other poets will be recognized as a part of the literary history of Canadian poetry both during the modernist period, and beyond it.

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[1] In a book review of 1946 Livesay wrote in *Correspondence of a Friendship: Florence Ayscough & Amy Lowell* that the scholar and poet had a friendship "unmarred by malice or jealousy, held together by the importance of a grand job to be done" (45). I will refer to the particular archival letter by Livesay to Waddington later in the chapter.
[2] Page gave a poetry reading at York University in the Winter Term of 1994.
[3] The Queens University Archives have a file of Waddington's letters from January 1945 to May 1996 in Box 5B.
[4] I am thinking of Emily Carr's *Hundreds and Thousands: The Journals Of An Artist 1927-1941* which was first published in 1961.
[5] Rich. 1973.
[6] Miriam Waddington, Letter to Laura McLauchlan, Summer 1993.
[7] Both writers use this word. Waddington refers to the female speaker within her poem "The Bond" as "twice isolate," because she is both a woman and a Jew. See also, Dorothy Livesay, "Isolate," *The Self Completing Tree* (46).
[8] Both "Nativity" and "Five Poems" are revised in *Dorothy Livesay: Selected Poems 1926-1956* (1957). The title of "Nativity" clearly marks the theme of birth. However, the poem's title was subsequently changed to "Serenade For Strings." The revision of an already published poem was rare for Livesay. Her return to both "Nativity" and "Five Poems" indicates the particular significance she attached to these poems. The revisions on both poems may also suggest some dissatisfaction with the versions which appear in *Day and Night* (1944). While outside the parameters of this work the differences between versions of these poems warrant attention.
[9] In a marginal note on an earlier draft of the dissertation Waddington added the following clarification on the separation, ". . .actually it was my husband who initiated the idea of separating -- I was devastated, but the new me understood it and accepted it (with help from my teachers)." The "teachers" she refers to were Virginia Robinson and Jessie Taft, two accomplished professors at the Philadelphia School of Social Work.

Robinson had done her doctoral work on "The Woman Question," nineteenth century American debate about women's role in American culture.

[10] Waddington attached a note to a draft of the dissertation at this point, "The 'too big' was a compliment. I knew Duncan," she continues, "who didn't ever have a mean thought in his head."

[11] Christopher Levenson, *Canadian Poetry*, 199O.

[12] Waddington informs me that "Stephanie, Louis Dudek's wife was a psychologist."

[13] Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*. London: Triad Grafton, 1929: 67. The comment is made with reference to Charlotte Bronte: "Her books will be deformed and twisted....She will write of herself where she should write of her characters. She is at war with her lot. How could she help but die young, cramped and thwarted?"(67).

[14] Benstock notes "Focusing on image and metaphor as primary modes of representation, literary criticism often dismisses as perfunctory the work of grammar and punctuation. We read "beyond" devalued cursory forms or details, interpreting the message emblazoned on the textual facade, often ignoring the bricks and mortar that support the edifice."(xv)

[15] This quotation is taken from the fly-leaf of the copy of *Green World* in the Rare Book Collection at Dalhousie University, Halifax. The York University copy of *Green World* does not have a dust-jacket.

[16] Nadine McInnis, "1977 Interview in Ottawa with Dorothy Livesay for University Paper," in Waddington Papers, National Archives. (exact reference not available).

[17] The poem appears in the "Faces of Emily (1948-53) " grouping.

[18] The immediate context for this remark is occasioned by a hostile reference to her work by critic, "Dr. Endicott." She records "one's sense of mediocrity not exactly banished by this morning's post: *Tamarack Review....*" WPNA.

[19] I thank Agnes Whitfield for this suggestion. Julia Neuberger's *The Things That Matter: An Anthology of Women's Spiritual Poetry* notes that what she calls "spiritual poetry" by women tended to be disregarded. She cites Nicholson and Lee's *Oxford Book of English Mystical Verse* (1927) as an exception. Her own selection of female poets includes Emily Dickinson, Emily & Charlotte Bronte, Christina Rossetti, Elizabeth Barett Browning, as well as modernist women poets including Charlotte Mew, Edith Sitwell, Amy Lowell, and H.D..

[20] Virginia Woolf, quoted in "Letters," Virginia Blain, Isobel Grundy, Patricia Clements, *The Feminist Companion in English*. London: B.T. Batsford, 199O: 653.

[21] Nadine McInnis is quoted in an interview, "I learnt my lines, so to speak from Dorothy." From "In League with some Canadian poets," Phil Jenkins, *The Ottawa Citizen*, Sunday 7, 1992. Livesay gave me a copy of this article when I visited her in Victoria, October 1992.

[22] Christopher Levenson, *Canadian Poetry*, (Check Issue) 138

[23] Photograph File, Waddington Papers, National Archives.

Chapter Four - "Are you there, are you there/Are you there?": Female Subjectivity and Late Modernism in Livesay's and Waddington's Lyric Poetry at Mid-Career.

"Are you there, are you there./Are you there?" persists a nameless voice in Waddington's "Night in October." Within the poem's allusive frame of reference the reader is implicitly challenged to recognize the subjectivity of the female: a woman in the process of bodily labour. This poem will be discussed in detail later in this chapter. I begin with this lyric question from Waddington's work because it is central to female subjectivity, as it is a central one, also, to both Livesay's and Waddington's work in the late modernist period. From the perspective of the written word on the page, the question "Are you there?" opens the text to man's cultural other. It challenges the female subject to transform her silent self through the register of a lyric response which will concern me throughout this chapter.

"Woman's position in the world, even in the modern world, is remarkably inelastic" writes poet Anne Wilkinson in 195O, "[i]n the eyes of husband, children and the world, the family *should* be enough to absorb her" (65). Yet, the poetry and fiction by women writers in the forties and fifties in Canada suggests that there was, in fact, a creative turbulence around what Wilkinson called "Woman's position" a turbulence which was, at least in part, inherited from a previous generation of women. Donovan notes:

> Despite its limited success as a revolutionary transformation, the women's rights movement did manage to raise serious questions about gender identity, such that the old certainties about what a woman was or what her proper role or behavior should be had been fractured by the early twentieth century. (x)

For Livesay and Waddington, neither motherhood nor marriage were essentially nonradical[1] and their modernist lyric poetry explores a turbulent, sometimes rebellious ferment in relation to the inelastic position of their sex.

In the work of Livesay and Waddington, modernism continues in what A. J. M. Smith refers to as a second wave in the forties and fifties (1974 80). As noted in the introduction, one looks in vain for polemical prefaces from these female writers bringing second wave feminism together with this second wave of Canadian modernist poetry occurring in the late forties and fifties in Canada. Polemics about gendered subjectivity would have, Miriam Waddington states, "mark[ed] you as a crank & complainer" at the time.[2] Deploying, instead, what Rich calls the unfathomed resource of poetry (1993 19), Livesay and Waddington are two writers from the modernist period in Canada whose poetry made gender difference an issue.

In this chapter, I will examine the manner in which Livesay's *Day and Night* and *Poems For People*, and Waddington's *The Second Silence* deploy lyric poetry to explore female subjectivity during a period when North American women seemed to retreat en masse to the anonymity of the domestic realm. In "The Canadian Woman's Movement:The Second Wave" Naomi Black makes it clear that, in fact, no such retreat had taken place. She writes instead of "growing strains and tensions for women." One of the key issues seems to be entry into the paid labour force, as well as a lack of male support on the domestic front:

> Looking back, we can see that feminist stirrings were unexpected for the same reason that they had occurred: during the 1950s and 1960s, women's domestic obligations and their self images had remained virtually unchanged while their activities had altered drastically. Most importantly, women had retained responsibility for household and family at the same time as their participation in the paid labour force increased massively. . . . (81)

In their writing about female subjectivity in the postwar period, Livesay and Waddington provide maps for rereading the time from the perspective which put women first.

In discussing their works, I will focus specifically on the experience of motherhood, as it is represented in a selection of poems from the above-mentioned work. The denigration of women's work (Newton 10) in the home is reflected in the critical disparagement of the work of female poets as "the kitchen sink brigade" (Geddes 31) when they wrote about domestic themes. An even stronger denigration, however, lay in reviews which simply passed over major poems -- about birth -- which did not fit with male modernism.

When Livesay focused on themes which exclusively seemed to deal with men, as in the poem "Day & Night," she received critical praise. Even there, however, Millar MacLure found "it takes the clangour of a larger rhetoric than this poet ever commanded to echo in the valley of modern history" (1957 64). "We shall be disappointed," he warns "if we look for anything very complex" (65). With other critics of his period, MacLure passed over Livesay's birth poems in silence. Both Livesay and Waddington have quite mistakenly been seen as lyricists whose work often lacks the complexity of 'the men.' A return to poems which are explicitly concerned with female subjectivity -- poems their contemporaries seem to have ignored -- will suggest a markedly different and more rewarding approach.

In *Wild Mother Dancing*, Di Brandt notes a long silence about motherhood in the literature she studied while a graduate student. She writes:

> Dangerous, heroic events, such as wars, in which large numbers of men risked and lost their lives, were written about extensively in fiction, why not childbirth? Having experienced both states, I could not concur that adolescence [as chronicled in the bildungsroman] was more interesting and challenging than motherhood. In fact, I couldn't think of a single experience (except perhaps being born) that involved as much, amazing, transformation as becoming a mother. (6)

Only with reference to what historian Joan Kelly calls the strength of patriarchy in all its historical forms does the neglect of writing about birth and motherhood become understandable (61). Even today Livesay's and Waddington's birth poems, and poems written about

motherhood -- with the exception of Livesay's much-anthologized "The Three Emilys" -- are not widely known. This chapter's focus on these poems -- in the books of their middle years -- will argue that their work on marriage, giving birth, and motherhood opens the confines of biological determinism by exploring female subjectivity as engaged in a female-centred "[s]earching for me" (SS 22) within a culture which had held female subjectivity behind a barricaded and disabled door (D&N 25). Rather than embracing an essentialist version of the maternal, both poets, instead, record dissonance, ambivalence, and unresolved dialecticality as they engage with motherhood, a subject which a previous generation of Canadian women writers had treated quite differently.

Despite their alliances with male poets and critics -- Livesay's with Knister, Crawley, and Pacey, and Waddington's with Sutherland and Souster -- they could never be one of the boys. The patriarchal bias which treated female subjectivity as a motherhood issue, outside cultural discourse, was a central, though invisible, force against which they both lived and worked as female poets. *Day and Night*, *Poems For People*, and *The Second Silence* are books of poetry which, at specific point, slip beneath the male dominant mind-set in North America at mid-century to explore the cultural representation of the female in the process of transformative struggle.

Canadian Modernism in the Forties and Fifties

What Frye writes about modern poetry in *The Modern Century* can be applied to modernist verse in Canada during this period. "Modern poetry," writes Frye, "tends to be discontinuous, to break the hypnotic continuity of settled metre, or a line of thought" (66). When directed at gender inequity the break in hypnotic continuity can work to mark a rupture with patriarchal codes of authority. In the poetry of Livesay and Waddington in this period,

the discontinuous break of both metre and thought can be read as a response to the hypnotic continuity of the cultural master narrative of "[t]he young man, the young man, the young man. . . ." (Woolf 1922, 45). While that shift in Europe has a typical terminal date of 1940, the emerging ethos of Canadian literature in the fifties was reflective of the shift in parameters of a continuing modernism.

In *The Canadian Forum*, the leading Canadian magazine of the forties and fifties -- in which both Livesay and Waddington frequently appeared -- one finds traces of a post-World War Two debate about women's place within modern culture (Royce 108).[3] However, in the same magazine, one finds numerous indications of male hegemony, including marginal decorations of woodcuts of female, not male, nudes, and reviews which assume that while women may be writers of poetry, their presence in numbers is undesirable. Reflecting this bias in his review for *The Canadian Forum* of Livesay's *Collected Poems*, Millar MacLure wondered at the strong proportion of [significant] women poets in Canada during the modern period, adding "[i]t is just as well that I haven't the wit to be facetious about this, but I wish I had the wisdom to understand it" (63). As was noted earlier, whatever the evidence in accomplished volumes of poetry to the contrary, most male poets and reviewers tended to regard modernist poetry as their exclusive preserve. Reflecting the period, in 1955 Wilson presents Waddington as being concerned with "Love or Children or Everyday Life," and lacking the ideas which fired the poetics of modern male poets (162). Reviewing Livesay, MacLure located "a curious likeness of response to certain favorite subjects, say nature, love, children, among women poets otherwise very dissimilar" (63). In focusing on what MacLure called something vague like tenderness or womanliness, both Livesay and Waddington risked being dismissed with the previous generation of lady poets (63). In a 1983 essay, Waddington writes that, "it takes a great energy and effort to free oneself from the constant pressure to conform to [masculine] ideology, especially when so many critics and teachers are men" (AS

209). While both poets were less politically engaged after having children, for each poetry became a central medium to free oneself from mute acceptance of the status quo.

Motherhood Issues

In *The Mother/Daughter Plot: Narrative, Psychoanalysis, Feminism*, Mariane Hirsch discusses the difficulty each generation of women within patriarchy have in seeing their own mothers outside the realm of dismissal, laughter, and stereotype. She observes that the problem is not limited to a previous generation but also to younger women today, including feminists. She writes of her experience as a new mother talking to other women involved in the same experience:

> Although as mothers we were eager to tell our stories, as daughters, we could not fully listen to our mothers' stories. This tragic asymmetry between our own two voices, was so pervasive as to be extremely difficult to discuss. (26)

Despite her mother's avowed encouragement of her daughter's poetry one finds in Livesay's published life writing that, within the family, "Mother" was not considered a fully-developed person. On becoming a mother, Florence Randal Livesay seems to have set the traditional role of homemaker ahead of her own literary work and her daughter was, in youth, at least, only sketchily aware that her mother had published modernist poetry.[4] In the Livesay Papers at the University of Manitoba, Florence Randal Livesay's archival diaries provide evidence of her own adventurous life before marriage. In 1905, shortly before marriage, Florence Randal writes of feeling daunted by the erudition of her future husband: "I know just enough to realize how little I do know and how shallow I must seem to such a connoisseur as he. . . . I don't like having him so far ahead of me!" For her daughter Dorothy, Florence Randal Livesay came to represent a traditional woman who hadn't developed. Later in her own life, Livesay saw her

mother as torn between conservatism and "desire to become a person in her own right. . ." (JWS 52).

In Livesay's autobiographical radio play of the thirties "The Times Were Different?," the "Mother" buries her ambivalence about her traditional maternal role when she buries Woolf's *Jacob's Room* "with [her] own hands." Without observing the presence of her fifteen-year-old daughter she tells a friend over tea:

> I hated it so, wanted to do something about it, with my own hands. So I got Jack's trowel and went out into the garden. I dug a hole, under the oak tree -- and there I buried it! . . . I'll show you the spot, over there beyond the hammock. O-hh! Margaret! I didn't know you were there.
>
> Margaret: (yawning) I didn't either, I've been asleep, I guess. . . .
>
> Margaret: (adult) But as I passed the oak tree, I noticed that there was a fresh pile of earth, upturned. . . . Would the tree be poisoned, I wondered? Would the tree die?" (RHLH 135)

Significantly, the perceived threat of poison comes not from a male author, or the mother's action, but from the modernist female writer, Virginia Woolf.[5] As was pointed out in Chapter One, Livesay took Woolf as what one might call a "self-selected ancestor" (Hynes 57), one whose work she quoted at length in letters from Paris to her mother back home in Clarkson, Ontario.[6]

During an interview, Waddington recalled a childhood nightmare centred around a statue -- most likely Laocoon and sons -- which she believes arose from seeing a postcard of that statue sent to her parents in Winnipeg while she was still a child. To be bound up with mother, as she was in the dream, meant being unfulfilled as her mother had been. She told me in a taped interview:

> She was artistic in her bent. . . . She was a great rebel and I didn't like that even as a child. My mother's rebellion was aimless and unfocused. I did not have a positive relationship with my mother. . . . she was dependent on me. She was devoted, she

> was fond of me. . . . she was proud. She admired me. [But] . . . my father was the thinker. He was a much more constructive person. He was much more focused. . . . She was big and I was small and I did not dare oppose her. . . . [She was] childlike, unfulfilled, would have liked to cut ice in the world.[7]

In *Apartment Seven*, Waddington recalls her mother as "a rebellious feminist who never accepted her woman's lot. Subverting the text of life was her favorite pursuit and she worked at it with a passion" (AS 204). The passion is, in the above passage, set against the ice of the world.

The female fawn in Livesay's poem "Prelude for Spring" is, in a sense, analogous to both mothers discussed here. For these mothers, the given order offered chase and chill and a recurrent sense that they were vulnerable to a greater male power. Although I will later suggest another reading, gendered difference is part of the poem:

> And now the chill
> Raw sun
> Goes greener still--
> The sky
> Cracks like an icicle:
>
> Frozen, foot-locked
> Heart choked and chafed
> Wing-battered, and unsafe,
> Grovel to ground!
> A cry
> Lashes the sky-- (D&N)

If their mothers were foot-locked with previous generations of women, in the prelude to second-wave feminism, Livesay and Waddington explored alternate possibilities for themselves when they wrote lyric poetry. And when they became wives and mothers themselves, they were able to use the broken cadences of free verse to explore why motherhood might still then -- as now -- seem, to lift a phrase from a Waddington poem, "like some great eclipse" (SS18) of female subjectivity.[8]

In Livesay's poems in *Day and Night* and *Poems For People* which relate to giving birth and to motherhood, as well as in those poems Waddington wrote in *Second Silence* on the same subject, following Livesay, one finds what DeKoven describes:

> The irresolvable ambivalence (fear and desire in equal portion) of modernist writers concerning their proposals for the wholesale revision of culture, proposals paralleled in the political sphere by socialism and feminism, generated the irreducible self-contradiction, what I will call the *sous-rature*, of modernist form. (DeKoven 2O)

In both Livesay's and Waddington's life writing, there is adequate evidence of their common desire for a wholesale revision of culture, at specific points in their young lives, along with second thoughts about that wholesale revision. Both writers seem to have seen the first-wave feminism of their own mothers as a source of volatility and frustration for women who, after all, were largely occupied with traditional women's work. They sought to break away in a genre which did not privilege a correct line of any kind, using instead a medium which would register complexity, ambiguity, and ambivalence.

DeKoven specifies that she has found "male modernists generally feared the loss of their hegemony implicit in a wholesale revision of culture," and that "female modernists generally feared punishment for their dangerous desire for that revision" (DeKoven 2O). In poems such as Livesay's "Serenade For Strings," and "Five Poems," and Waddington's "Night in October," and "Fables of Birth," the difficulty of moving into motherhood seems unsolved and insoluble (SS 23). Yet each poet wrote lyrics which registered both the apparently unresolvable contradiction and "*sous-rature* of modernist form" (DeKoven 21) along with the push of a transformative poetics, engaged with ambiguity and ambivalence. As Naomi Black has observed in the context of second-wave feminism: "[a] society in which women were equally influential would be one that took women's preferences and experience seriously and that was transformed as a result" (82). Resisting the very difficulty proclaimed,

Livesay and Waddington used the fluid line toward both a new verse, and a new way of seeing female subjectivity. In both poets' works this transition is paralleled by movement from the husk of the old world toward the new (DLSP14).

Livesay's *Day and Night* and *Poems for People*

Many of the lyrics in *Day and Night* which explore female subjectivity have been passed over by critics in preference for discussion of documentary poems such as "Day and Night," and "The Outrider," as well as "West Coast." Recent overviews of *Day and Night* and *Poems for People* by Lee Briscoe Thompson and Sandra Hutchison have not, for example, discussed Livesay's lyric sequences centering on female labour. The two books Livesay published in the forties present a balance between a socially-engaged poetry -- which most often refers to mankind and man -- and an exploration of a subjectivity other than that of men. But a significant number of the long poems in *Day and Night* are either about female subjectivity or else like "The Outrider" allude to a lost mother. "Prelude For Spring" (D&N 25-28), "Five Poems" (D&N 33-37), and "Fantasia" (D&N 37-39) refuse the mystique of motherhood which would become prevalent in the post-war years, preferring a fluid mobility for the female subject who may open the disabled doors with her own words.

Day and Night (1945) has a table of contents in which each poem is dated, so as to provide a record of a poet engaged in writing over the thirteen year hiatus since *Signpost* (1932). This is a book of connected lyrics, modernist long poems broken in a fragmentation which lends itself to expressing a break with traditional verse. Formal discontinuity mirrors a society in crisis. Northrop Frye notes that "the decline of admiration for continuity is one of the most striking differences between the Romantic and modern feeling" (1990:65-66). In using the modernist lyric, Livesay eschews the formal markers of poetic order such as even

feet and unity of poetic theme. *Day and Night* emphasizes the brokenness of the modernist inheritance of the enduring monuments and grand designs of the past (MacLure 63). If foremothers like Pickthall had been framed by Canadian culture's attachment to the ideal of the lady poet facing the great male poets with awe, Livesay's books at mid-career break the frame with the "blinding/searing/terrifying cry" of their own making (D&N 31).

Livesay begins *Day and Night* with a decisive announcement of the devastation which occurred in the period between 1934 and 194O while she had worked on "Seven Poems." That devastation is broken up in discontinuous brief lyrics which escape organizing narrative and any clear line of thought. Reference to birth and to mothers are parts of the poem. Mothers move about at a distance without offering care. In the first poem, the shell burst of war announces both upheaval and the end of confinement which is particularly resonant when set in a female voice:

> A shell burst in my mind
> Upheaving roots since birth, perhaps, confined
> Before I dreamed
> The devastation there outlined.
>
> And so my body now
> Owes no allegiance to the scythe and plough:
> I, dispossessed
> Count no blossoms on the bough.
>
> I build on no man's land
> A city not my own, with others planned
> By others dreamed,
> And with a new race forged and manned! (D&N 1)

It would seem that the speaker in this poem has been confined in roots since birth, perhaps. Yet the lyric speaker seems to hover between escape from a rooted past, and an inability to stake purposeful claim to a less confined future. The speaker neither owns the heroic past of battle, nor feels part of the new features of the city. The use of the generic man's and manned

reminds one that females play a nebulous part in this new, and that fact may be central to the alienation of the speaker. From my perspective, the inability of this speaker to assert a gendered subjectivity seems to suggest the insubstantiality of this I within the new order.

However, at the end of the seven linked lyrics which begin *Day and Night*, I shifts to the coupled we bound up with the rejuvenation of spring in the natural world. The green ribs of a single leaf are presented as a restorative power, an image which will reverberate later in *Day and Night* in "Five Poems." Here is the first stanza of the final poem of "Seven Poems":

> And life goes on. And here
> We hold a leaf upon the eyes
> And its green ribs press like veins
> Into the nerve and sinew of ourselves.
> Your finger-tip on eyelid, or my brows
> Bent in the conclave of your cheek,
> Spurs vibrant nerve to life, adheres like leaf to stem
> Stem into tree, tree rooted into earth. (D&N 6)

These verses move to root male and female in a restorative poetics of connected bliss linked to recurring waves of dream:

> No hazard here, for we
> Like sleepers plunging deep
> Into recurring waves of dream
> Cannot awake from the connected bliss
> We are asleep on the long limb of time. (D&N 6)

The connected poems which begin *Day and Night* move their reader from destruction to the challenge of transformation. Through poetry "We" are given both the meditative dream space and the fluid mobility of an undersea deep in which we may seek a new world.

In "Prelude For Spring" the mobile-water-world of now female-centred dreams opens with a leap to shore:

These dreams abound:

> Foot's leap to shore
> Above the sound
> Of river's roar--
> Disabled door
> Banged and barricaded
> Then on,
> Furrow fawn
> Through wall and wood
> So fast no daring could
> Tear off the hood
> Unmask the soul pursued. (D&N 25)

The image of the "Disabled door" (D&N 25) stands out like a card in the Tarot; a marker of a difficult transition in which one will find neither solace nor help. The fawn self is summoned to move through physical wall and wood to leap through the door associated so strongly with voice and with poetic transformation in "Lorca." But where Livesay's poem "Lorca" concludes with a movement through the doorway, "Prelude for Spring" is a poem about life perceived as a chase in which the unknown self wears mask and hood.

The mask and hood fit with a speaker who feels too threatened to reveal the gendered self. In *Wild Mother Dancing*, Di Brandt recounts the emergence of questions of gender when she studied under Northrop Frye at the University of Toronto in the seventies:

> Someone asked Frye about gender in class one time (it was a timid question in the 197O's), and Frye replied that gender was metaphorical in literature, that we are all female, for example, in relation to God, Biblically speaking, and all male in relation to nature, as the heroes of history. This made perfect sense in class, looking at literature as a self-contained body of work, full of interlocking, shifting, sliding metaphors and symbols. It was incomprehensible in my house, where the reality of my maternal body and transformed subjectivity were insisting their unmetaphorical otherness unpolitely into my consciousness. (4)

I like Brandt's point, yet when one reads Livesay's more difficult poems in *Day and Night* one has definite grounds for considering both metaphorical and unmetaphorical otherness. For example, "Prelude For Spring" may be read as one more interlocking, shifting, sliding modernist poem which uses "metaphor" to tell a story about fascist aggression: the "Proud

prowler" (D&N 25) resembles a bird of prey,[9] and Hitler was often represented as such while Western democracies were -- in the Western press outside Germany -- viewed as pursued. Whether male or female in the forties, one might have identified with the fawn fearing the lethal prowler. "Prelude For Spring" speaks to a world in which the patriarchal order has held the fawn-self "frozen, foot-locked" (D&N 28), twinning her with nature. By contrast the "Proud prowler[s]" carries with him the premise of his own entitlement to the very life of the female He hunts. While the fawn alone must "Grovel to ground" (CP129), for the united couple -- the we of the poem -- the road rolls back to a paradisial past in which galloping they ride in spring. In the following passage, the reader shifts from the dive and scuttle to the fearless union:

> Dive down then, scuttle under:
> Run, fearless of feet's thunder.
> Somehow the road rolls back in mist
> Here is the meadow where we kissed
> And here the horses, galloping
> We rode upon in spring. . . (D&N 26)

The inclusion in one stanza of a distinct tonal shift from "Fawn" as sought prey to the we of the lovers suggests an interactive movement not between self and other, but, rather, of a self aware that words have the power to shift ground. Where the lovers may move side by side and "[s]wathe sunlight over/[e]very shadow" (D&N 27) the female alone -- unaccompanied by a male -- must run a different race. She is a soul pursued.

The self under hood is confounded with the negative (" Not" and "Nor") flowing in inner darkness:

> How blind two eyes
> Shuttling to-fro
> Not weaving light
> Nor sight
> In darkness flow.
>
> (Only the self is loud;

World's whisperless.) (D&N 26)

The fawn has reason to fear. Her story represents both emerging female power and concomitant danger:

Still will he swoop
From heaven's height
Soaring unspent, Still will he stoop to brush
Wing tip on hair,
Fan mind with fear. (D&N 28)

The "Wing-battered and unsafe" (D&N 28) female is a figure in "dreams abound[ing]" (D&N 28) and these dreams are driven along in uneven lines and flat rhyme -- hair, fear -- exploring one's voice closing in with the last word on fear.

C. Day Lewis -- a poet who influenced Livesay in her return to subjective poetry -- dedicates his *From Feathers to Iron* to "The Mother."[10] Although his book is one long meditation on the birth of a first child, both woman and womb are objectified by the male lyric speaker and woman as "Mother" does not speak one word. The male speaker moves from conception to birth as witness to an event which Hynes notes "contemporary critics almost to a man took. . . as a political allegory" (157). Although Hynes does not consider the gender politics of such a response he does suggest that "there is something wrong with the critical environment in which a poem about the gestation of a baby can be taken by *all* the critics as a political allegory" (158). Where Lewis's *From Feathers to Iron* is set in the father's voice objectifying the mother, Livesay's birth poems register the shift which occurs when a birth poem is in the mother's voice.[11] Livesay's "Prelude To Spring" provides a picture of female subjectivity that is menaced because it is seen as the "Prowler['s]" natural prey.[12] Just as in "Seven Poems" the coupled "we" seem to have achieved a vital moment of balance: a moment in which they are both safe and equally human.

Livesay has called "Serenade For Strings" the "first feminist gesture in Canadian writing" (Knelman 5).[13] Here is a poem where what Brandt calls "the reality of the maternal body," insisting on the "unmetaphorical otherness" (Brandt 4) of female subjectivity. The poem is dedicated to Livesay's son Peter and celebrates his birth in April of 194O (JWS 174). In "Serenade For Strings" gestation and labour become a space of mobility in which the "firmament is riven" (D&N 31) and there is the fervent assertion of a new being whose first tap tapping is read within the furtive, insistent sign language -- an interactive womb-Braille-- which conveys subjectivity in the exhorting, compelling poetic rhythm between mother and child:

> At nine from behind the door
> The tap tapping
> Is furtive, insistent
> Recurrent, imperative
> The I AM crying
> Exhorting, compelling. (D&N 29)

The experience of labour is clocked minute by minute, both with recurrent reference to time, and, also, in primeval terms of embodied creation -- or is it destruction with boulders uprolling? -- to the fierce tropes of creation myths. In the second stanza, we are told both that it is eleven and that the "I AM" is louder until, in the third stanza, it is not the new son at the threshold, but God:

> And deep in the cavern
> No longer the hammer
> Faintly insistent
> No longer the pickaxe
> Desperate to save us
> But minute by minute
> The terrible knocking
> God at the threshold!
> Knocking down darkness
> Battering daylight. (D&N 29)

The female in "Prelude For Spring" has a face which is hidden, rather than known, and she is one with nature, a fawn, rather than human. In "Serenade For Strings," the "terrible knocking" (D&N 29) brings us back to the unresolved image of the closed door. In this poem, it is a "threshold" (D&N 29) through which darkness can be knocked down. Collapsed, too, are the polarities of day and night. The knocking and battering suggest the need to break down formidable barriers.

Within the poem's three italicized passages, there is a shift to a subjective "*me*," located in a "*[b]are body wracked and writhing*" (D&N 30) from the chorus-like narration supplicating the Good Lord to deliver us of the new lord. The italicized passages read with a rhythmic force moving first as a space of peace between contractions:

> *O green field*
> *O sun soaked*
> *On lavish emerald*
> *Blade and sharp bud piercing*
> *O green field*
> *Cover and possess me*
> *Shield me in brightness now*
> *From the knocking*
> *The terrible knocking. . .* (D&N 30)

The italicized voice seeks protection within nature rather than culture. The new lord is represented in the hierarchical world of the privileged Good Lord too proud for prison, too urgent for the grave. In this world the female is procreative: "*h]ammered and hollowed/[t]o airless heaving*"" (D&N 30). Her labour is bound to the temporal: "[t]he clock now" and the "Scrublady slishing" (D&N 31). In part iii of "Serenade for Strings," the female subject asserts the ritual significance of labour. Fusion takes place in intense knocking rather than strings, twinning rhythm with this oxymoronic and most promising pain:

> Again. . . Again. . . O again
> Midnight. A new day

Day of Days
Night of nights
Lord of lords. (D&N 3O)

Even as it summons the Deuteronomy reference to the Lord of lords (D&N 3O) this ritual is not one of traditional high holy places but accompanied, instead, with an embodied context. "Sudden knowledge" comes in tension with the clock and slow creeping of coming clean until the sibilant slishing and sloshing of the scrublady. These final moments of labour bring with them, too, the charged image of the high gear of the romance of flight, reccurring in the image of the "Steel bird" in "Five Poems."[14] "Rising and soaring/On into high gear," "Serenade" is neither totally bound to the body, nor caught up in the cloudways of flight, executing its "Serenade" through the tense control of both:

The clock now. Morning
Morning comes creeping
Scrublady slishing
And sloshing the waxway
And crying O world
Come clean
Clean for the newborn
The sun soon rising. . .
Rising and soaring
On into high gear
Sudden knowledge!
Easy speedway
Open country
Hills low-flying
Birds up-brooding
Clouds caressing
A burning noon-day. . .

Now double wing-beat
Breasting body
Till cloudways open
Heaven trembles:
And blinding
searing
terrifying
cry!

The final bolt has fallen.

The firmament is riven. (D&N 31)

The poem fuses destruction and creation in two lines after the cry. Women had traditionally been involved in taking the small stitches, with handiwork rather than art. The last part of the poem uses the long dash and exclamation mark favoured by Dickinson. The italicized message is one of release after the syntactic compression which precedes the cry:

Now it is done.
Relax. Release.
And here, behold your handiwork:
Behold--a man! (D&N 32)

Livesay's "Serenade" is absorbed with recounting labour from the bodily centre of what Brandt called unmetaphorical otherness. In this poem man's other, and mother, does not command the "I" easily, the bold letters "I AM" are not hers but those of Biblical generations of sons. We must wait for the last lines of the poem to read the possessive pronoun *"your"* in a phrase which sounds like a kind of meditative thinking out loud of first words for a female centred hermeneutics.

The suite of "Five Poems" in *Day and Night* appears in *Selected Poems* with the first poem excised. This verse -- which begins "In the dream was no kiss" -- is reinstated in *Collected Poems*,[15] after appearing as the retitled poem "Annunciation" in *Selected Poems* (1957). The latter title, helpfully marks this difficult poem as being about a mother's expectancy before birth.[16] In the final version of the poem, the one first published in *Day and Night*, the entwined two begin in the dream slowly moving through silent water in poem three, through night in poem four to the words of the other under the hum of day in poem five. Whereas, as I noted, the use of the first person, singular "I" appears only once in "Serenade for Strings," the birth poem for Peter, "I" is used recurrently in the first three linked lyrics of

"Five Poems" "for Marcia." Where "Serenade for Strings" is clearly about the birth of a child, in "Five Poems" the subject of the poem is never explicit.

The opaque surface of the poem may well have led even feminist critics of Livesay's work such as Hutchison, Thompson, and McInnis to avoid what might seem an obscure, diffuse lyric sequence. For me, the disjointed images of banners, faulty doorway, and drums serve as a kind of highly figurative moon-shot landscape against which the speaker may explore subjectivity not in terms of an embodied female -- as in "Serenade for Strings" in the wilderness of labour -- but rather as an abstract "I," in the night flight of a self-centred poetics open to the transformative process of words. From poem i, and throughout the sequence, highly figurative language is the centre of this speaker's solitude: lyric sequence itself gives the one who speaks imaginative ground. In poem iv, emphasis shifts from "I" to a collective "we" and, finally, in poem v to "Your words."

Although she does not write about "Five Poems," McInnis -- whose focus is on reading Livesay's work as a poetics of desire -- offers a comment which helps to explain why an outward sign of affection, between mother and child, might menace Livesay's female subject as she contemplates motherhood:

> For Livesay, as well as many women writers, physical intimacy (or proximity) calls into service the traditional female rôles that diminish the autonomy a woman writer requires in order to write. (3)

In a similar vein poet Adrienne Rich, the mother of three children, writes "[f]or me, poetry was where I lived as no one's mother, where I existed as myself "(1986:31). In "Five Poems" the speaker contemplates what I read as a symbolic landscape in which the mother-child relationship is imaginatively transformed. The speaker uses the image of two trees, which I read as self and child, conjuring for the meditative space both will need to contemplate the world, and to grow.

The first poem begins with no maternal gesture of welcome, and no clear indication that these two are mother and infant child: this speaker is, it would seem, "no one's mother" (Rich 31). Instead, we are given a textual window into a dream:

> In the dream was no kiss
> No banners were upshaken
> The sure, unsevered bonds of bliss
> Were the hands untaken.
>
> In the dream no faltering
> Grew between your tree and mine
> Wind silenced us and sun embraced
> We seized no outward sign
>
> In the dream all burden fell
> Sheer away; bare breathing left--
> Bare eyes and light-cleft minds were formed
> And found, never to be bereft.
>
> It was the dream I saw again
> Meeting your person in the room
> The dream, electrified. Since, I am free:
> Bird funneling night flight alone. (D&N 33)

This "I" is a force which dreams, not to be eclipsed by a child -- not to be stopped (as mother), from funneling night flight alone. The "I" and "you" of the poem are given neither sexual identity, nor name, in the dream meeting. Where a number of Livesay's poems of the fifties grieve for parents, the person who is new in this poem is to be allowed, with the speaker, to be free, and never to be bereft. One senses an appeal within the repetition of dream, now electrified for a brave new world. This can be read as lifting the burden of traditional motherhood, and as a refusal, on behalf of the daughter to whom the poem is dedicated, to accept traditional female roles.

A brief contrast with an early twentieth century, and mainly traditional, poetic treatment of welcome to a new female child may be useful here. Yeats's "A Prayer For My Daughter" (1919) is a rather traditional prayer for an infant daughter "Under this cradle-hood and

coverlid" who "sleeps on" (211) while her father looks forward to delivering her, as his ideal woman, to her bridegroom's house "[w]here all's accustomed and ceremonious" (214). Livesay's *Five Poems*, by contrast, is not prayer -- informed by male-centred tradition --but revisionary dream. It does not offer a title which foregrounds the daughter but with "Five Poems" simply suggests five lyric approaches to a first reading which the reader is challenged also to dream. Yeats's poem is concerned with the daughter's loyalty to the patriarchal script of dutiful daughter and future wife, while Livesay's *Five Poems* are preoccupied with the child and self as distinct persons.

Whereas the Yeats poem proceeds as one undivided work with eight line stanzas, Livesay's late modernist "Five Poems" is broken up into verse with shifting patterns of rhyme, and in section iv there is a shift out of quatrains to stanzas of varying length (D&N 35). While Yeats's poem closes with an affirmation of female innocence and beauty linked to custom, Livesay's "Five Poems" ends, as we shall see, with an affirmation which is centred on drums, not for marriage and patriarchal custom, but for the spacious, the distant answer of the new (D&N 36).

The focus in the poem is on the "new; strange;/ Yet infinitely known" face of the self-consciously modern persona through the image of the steel bird, the flight imminent:

> Your face is new; strange;
> Yet infinitely known
> Loved in some century
> Grass swept, tree sown.
>
> I memorize
> The lineaments, so lean
> Steel bird prey intent
> Flight imminent
>
> I see you stride (no walk)
> Cleaving the air
> Cloud treading, your hair
> Sickle bent.

O early, early
Before dawn whispers
Before day fingers
The faulty doorway

Early in the late
Moon-tossed night
Your face a flash
Foreruns the light. (D&N 33-34)

The celebration the "new; strange" (D&N 33) one is accompanied in the third verse with an image of the "strid[ing] no walk" (D&N 34) of one who is not grounded as the mother will be in Livesay's much anthologized poem from the mid-fifties entitled "The Three Emily's" (CP 2O2), but instead is earthward bound in poem v. In "The Three Emily's", it is childless female artists -- Emily Dickinson, Emily Bronte, and Emily Carr -- "whose kingdom is the sky." The reference to the faulty doorway echoes that of the disabled door in "Prelude," and continues the motif of the difficulty of transformative vision and moving through the threshold of birth in "Serenade": vision which will bring this new being, and all humanity, to flight. The repetition of the word early in poems iii and iv of "Five Poems" suggests the need to push forward in time, to open new vistas through exploring the imminent (D&N 34) birth of a child.

Whereas Hutchison considers poems such as "Prelude For Spring," "Serenade for Strings," and "Five Poems" as expressions of "a growing detachment and a concomitant withdrawal into the 'private worlds' of the individual" (111), I read these poems as works which explore female subjectivity in the modernist form while conveying a complex mood of ambivalence and disjunction, formally reinforced by these lyric sequence's refusals of simple harmonies in rhyme and meter. These poems are engaged with the "early, early/Before. . ." of rethinking motherhood from the inside of lyric: as such, they refuse patriarchal myths of creation.

Poem IV of "Five Poems" shifts from the quatrains and shorter lines of the preceding three poems to a six-line stanza, and shifts, too, from early morning to night. In this night the speaker is undisturbed and unfettered, able to contemplate a collective "we":

> Night's soft armour welds me into thought
> Pliant and all engaging; warm dark,
> No scintillations to distract
> Nor any restless ray, moon-shot.
> I am still of all but breathing --
> No throbbing eye, no pulse; and a hushed heart. (D&N 35)

Poetry serves as a pliant and engaging meditative space -- its carapace night's soft armour -- with the speaker's "I" a still but breathing centre:

> Then is all sound fled
> Flown from the fluted ear
> Wind in the heavy head
> Can find no corridor
>
> And then is sight so bound
> Lids petrified to earth
> Only one light is found--
> Imagination's going forth!
>
> Only the heaven sent
> Pulse of the universe
> Beats through the buried heart
> Its steady course. (iv, D&N 35))

The omniscient narrator in Woolf's *Jacob's Room* alludes to the maternal "conspiracy of hush and clean bottles" (11). Livesay's "Five Poems" attends, instead, to a pliant and all engaging receptivity in which the quiet self may truly welcome another. It asks for the kind of quiet one associates with the re-creation of both self and the other. Lyric poetry is the chosen site of transformative process in which the speaker within this poem seems able to do what Malcolm Lowry urged Livesay to do, that is, to write, and to "forget the children" (JWS 168). "Five Poems" knits the promise of a receptive listener into a future in which both this 'hungry

listener' and "Marcia," at least, by one possible reading, the new child to whom the sequence is dedicated, may be heard:

> Your words beat out in space--
> Distant drums under the hum of day
> Only the hunter hurries for
> Only the parched heart hears.
>
> Look, it takes long to grow a listener
> To bend his bough, let fall his leaf to earth;
> Upward and on his own words speeding
> Leaps the self to light. (D&N 36)

The hunter like the "Proud Prowler" and a man is given a specific sex. Encapsulated in "Prelude" and "Five Poems" in dream, "He" seems to represent "Man" to the "separate man in woman's form" who seeks a hearing within the distant drums of a new generation.

The last poem in "Five Poems" provides the "strata of flown flowers" a rich ground for the daughter to whom the poem is dedicated:

> Be earthward bound; and here
> In the strata of flown flowers
> And skeleton of leaf, set self down
> Hurry earth to ground.
>
> Not burials; not dust and ashes' crumbs
> But world's own cry resounding!
> The spacious, the distant, army of your answer
> The fast approaching drums. (D&N 38)

In *Signpost*, in the poem "Alienation" -- which, Relke notes, reads "like a feminist inquiry into what really happened when Adam and Eve were expelled from Paradise" (247) -- the speaker is "Blind in a golden garden/where only you could see." Whereas the "I" in "Alienation" is "shivering like a tree," within "Five Poems," published more than a decade later," the "I" is sighted and within the poem one finds assertions of power that is visual, spatial, and cognitive: "I see" (D&N 34), "I am" (D&N 35), "I memorize" (D&N 34). This "I" has moved from the

interrogative stance of recurrent questions found in "Alienation" to an affirmation inside the garden, of "strata of flown flowers/[a]nd skeleton of leaf." The use of imagery from the natural world suggests generations not only of flowers but also of women so often represented in floral imagery in the poetry of past generations.

When we go back in Livesay's work we find memorable references to flowers and trees which knit the human and natural world together, as in "Fireweed" (CPDL 10) "night-scented phlox," (CPDL 27) combined with "wild raspberries," (CPDL 36) "blue delphinium," (CPDL 37) and the "half-green of spring trees." But the female position as mother, her proximity to the fecundity of nature, can lead to trouble in a society where connections between nature and culture are repressed. In "In Green Solariums" this repression is explored with reference to pregnancy out of wedlock:

> . . . A girl alone
> Has cause to remember the green shooting pain,
> The small sick leaves that sprout, the heavy growth
> Inside the belly, suddenly made plain. (CPDL 73)

In the concluding poem of *Feathers to Iron*, dedicated to W.H. Auden, C. Day Lewis uses the images of daffodils and crocus as metaphors for the "pretty debutantes" and "plump boy, the crocus" who, as he addresses the poet, are meant "only [to] lie at your feet" (60). By contrast, in Livesay's work the green world is, as Relke has argued convincingly, much more than decorative although particularly connected with women. In "Livesay's cosmology," writes Relke, "what is required is an expansion of male consciousness to permit the inclusion rather that the 'Alienation' of nature/woman" (247). For Livesay the "strata of flown flowers" (D&N 36) with the "skeleton of a leaf" in "Five Poems" connects with the earlier image of "green ribs" of the "leaf upon the eyes" (D&N 6) in "Seven Poems." This establishes a richly layered poetic ground -- "[n]ot burials; not dust and ashes' crumbs" (D&N 36) -- from which to receive the "drum" messages of those who have not been heard within culture. The speaker

can speak of those "flown" (D&N 36) like the "widow," the "wraiths" and "the farm wife" in Livesay's early poems and the mother in the "Outrider" (D&N 9) all of whom, it seemed, were left with some variation of burials, dust, ashes, and crumbs (D&N 36) The poem closes with fast approaching drums suggesting ceremonial rhythms belonging to birth, as they belong, too, to this female-centred modernist poem sequence.

The two closing poems of *Day and Night* -- "Fantasia" and "West Coast" -- provide a strong finish for a book which moves from the devastation of war in "Seven Poems" through a series of connected lyrics including those discussed above. "Fantasia" remains an oblique poem, closing with an enigmatic statement echoing the first stanza: returning to "Undine and her comb." The poem is full of the "ambiguity" and "uncertainty" which DeKoven associates with modernist texts (23). "Fantasia" seems to play between the "I" who has "learned how diving's done" (D&N 37) in the spirit world and "Undine" who, after falling in love with a human, gives up her status as spirit to become mortal and bear human children (Evans 1135). The figure of Undine -- first spirit, then mother -- and the diving of the speaker between man-made tower and imagination's underworld, lead me to conjecture that the troubled relationship between motherhood and subjectivity may be central here as I argued it was in "Five Poems." Although Undine begins all-spirit she will end her life in mutable flesh. In Livesay's lyric, we meet Undine before this change from water-spirit to mother occurs: but the shadow of her mutable end creates added ambiguity. In this reworking of the role of drawing travellers astray and drowning them, Undine is neither pure spirit nor yet, at least, a self-sacrificing mother whereas the speaker in the poem proclaims, through the diving of poetic process to have learned how to move between worlds:

> And I have learned how diving's done
> How breathing air, cool wafted trees
> Clouds massed above the man-made tower
> How these
> Can live no more in eye and ear:

And mind be dumb
To all save Undine and her comb. (D&N 37)

As I have already noted, the use of negatives within the first and last verse of "Fantasia" sustains an atmosphere of "paradox, ambiguity, uncertainty" which have been recognized as characteristic of modernist form (DeKoven 23). The speaker is bold, and yet Undine is surely a dangerous figure in that she may render the mind of the diver dumb to the mortal world.

The two submerged females in "Fantasia" -- modernist foremother Virginia Woolf and the mythical Undine -- are figures of the underworld. The androcentric world-view of the male child and adult male "lust wanderer" (D&N 37) assume entitlement to all things striding and possessing, stopped only by the courteous and calm Death. Death is presented as the eternal male power that waits in the seventh stanza. The references to the "man-devised" pulley (D&N 39) and the "man-made tower" (D&N 37) in the first and last verse are set against the mysterious deep reached by the speaker:

Death courteous and calm, glass-smooth
A weighted stone.
And death's deliberation, his
Most certain waiting-room
His patience with the patient, who will be
His for infinity. . . (D&N 38)

Death is here as the speaker says. But in this underworld of the self (D&N 38) there is more than "His" will; there is also the will of the diver unmoored from the burden which fell sheer away in "Five Poems" (D&N 33). "Fantasia" is not a poem for surface craft nor does it serve the great world of moving men celebrated in *Day and Night*'s final poem. The undersea is, instead, the territory where no "man-devised" "prayer[s]" or "pulley[s]" reach. For me this is the space of transformative process created within the poem; a space in which neither sex rules:

So no astounded peerers
On the surface craft

> No dragging nets, no cranes
> No gnarled and toughened rope
> Not any prayer nor pulley man-devised
> Will shake the undersea
> Or be
> More than a brief torpedo, children's arrow
> More than a gaudy top outspun
> It's schedule done. . . (D&N 39)

The poem's middle section, on the male lust wanderer attests to the power of "the self unmoored/Ranging and roving -- man alone" (D&N 39). Although the repeated allusion to a male child, and to man seem to universalize "Fantasia" so that -- consistent with the tradition still observed for thirty years after the publication of this poem -- both child and humanity are generically male, the prominent figure of Undine, the female shapeshifter, as well as the drowned modernist writer "Virginia" [Woolf] all disrupt such a reading. They challenge readers to dive deeper, yet, paradoxically, they warn us too.

In the final poem in *Day and Night*, the temporal world is dominated by a great world of moving men and moves back to affirmation of a male-centred order intent on "straddling new day" (D&N 48). The poem speaks of a united "we" who observe the harbour from above. "West Coast" is mobile and interactive, shifting in points of view from "Prelude" to "The Outsider," then on to "Shipyard Voices" to a "Finale." From the perspective of female subjectivity "West Coast" suggests eclipse of the female in favour of what E. J. Pratt called "fine muscular poetry" in which it seemed women have all but disappeared (Hutchison 122).[17] By praising reconstruction of a nation of men, Livesay, herself, could assume an androcentric power as "word-welder," creator of the poem. But with that power came the persona of the male poet: Canadian hero-poet, yet like Auden and Isherwood, as at home on the mountain as with the classics:

> He who knew heaven is coming down the mountain
> Is stirred with wonder; curious even he,

Who sat with Horace at Socrate's heels
Lulled to the murmur of Virgillian bees,
Who bent his eyes bookward in the earliest days
Sucking sunlight from a world of words
Dreaming to be a word-welder, builder of these. (D&N 41)

In *Collected Poems* "West Coast" appeared with some revisions and the addition of a dedication to Earle Birney (14O). "West Coast" is, perhaps, an attempt to prove she could write like the best of the boys. Briscoe Thompson notes:

> The poem's narration concerns a young, farm-born outsider who moves from 'dreaming to be a word :velder' to singing with his comrades the 'song from the hearts of men at labour/welding their words to the ship's side,' which can be seen as Livesay's own agenda." (49)

But like "we common average types" in Waddington's "Poems About War" (SS 4O), the presence of the coupled "we" in both the poem's "Prelude" and "Finale" --"rooted up, set loose to beg/[o]r borrow a new roof, accept a poorer view" (D&N 4O) -- suggests a somewhat ironic distance from the heroic word-welder. For the world of the couple is held back from the grandeur of the male poet's project by the pressing immediacy of begging a familial roof.

Throughout *Day and Night*, there is a tension between a traditional male-centred world -- both a world wiped out at the start of the volume, and later, in "Fantasia," "the man-made tower" -- and the flight to another world. The challenge which poems such as "Prelude to Spring" and "Five Poems" present to the male-centred world would become explicit a decade later as Livesay consolidated her poetic career with *Dorothy Livesay: Selected Poems 1926-1956* a volume which closes with "Other," and "On Looking Into Henry Moore."

If, with its last poem, *Day and Night* gives over to an androcentric vision of the new world, with "Page One" the first poem in *Poems For People*, the emphasis returns to female subjectivity with purpose: the protagonist is finally moved to an awareness of "her feet untried," "her winter thongs unpried" (PFP 3). In "Inheritance," father is the "sad parent" and mother is the parent wiped out (PFP 4). Silence about "Mother" in Western literary tradition

leads Brandt to surmise: "there isn't room for the mother as subject" in the traditional "Western conception of narrative" (6). However, as numerous critics of women's poetry have pointed out, in the first half of the twentieth century women poets began to come forward in numbers to challenge all the old ways of knowing which, to lift a phrase from Livesay's "The Mother" left out the "immediates," "all the sloughs and slips/[o]f day" (PFP 7). When Canadian modernist poets such as Livesay and Waddington wrote about female subjectivity their critics nonetheless took a long while to fully come to terms with the gender-inflected immediacy of their words. When Waddington reviewed *Poems For People* (1947) she alone among reviewers focused on gender as a positive element in the book, noting that the strongest poems in the volume related to female selves (165). She also recognized that:

> Livesay's ability to affirm nativeness, to take into herself her immediate environment, however imperfect it is, and utilize it creatively. . . put her well ahead, in terms of poetic development, of those who were still writing from the citadel of cosmopolitanism. (165)

Part of the nativeness explored in the volume is that of the culturally naturalized situation of the female within a poetic milieu not so much "cosmopolitan" as still both patriarchal and colonial.[18] Reviewers such as Birney praised the volume for its technical advancement. Clearly, reviewers did praise both these volumes, and as noted earlier, like *Day and Night*, *Poems For People* won the Governor General's Award. However, reviewers did not write about the role gendered subjectivity played within these books, or muse in print about the challenge they might represent to their own male-centred tradition.

Whether they represent "a technical advancement" from *Day and Night* is debatable; but, certainly, the poems in this volume are more easily accessible than the birth poems in *Day and Night* (1944). The three part structure -- "Poems of Childhood, Poems For People, and Poems As Pictures" -- foregrounds the significance of the manner in which one is "[r]eared"

(PFP 1) like the "she" and "me" of "Page One" and the "infant, like an invalid" in "Preludium." Waddington alone recognized the significance of what she called "the problems of. . . the many-sided feminine self" within the volume:

> Livesay is preoccupied with the problems of expressing and perhaps reconciling, the many-sided feminine self. This self continually appears in all its varied guises of child, wife, mother, and finally as the socially concerned human being.

Poems For People is grounded in the subjectivity of a female "I" living in a particular time, and bound to a particular marriage and father-dominated past. That fictional subject struggles not to be erased within patriarchal culture while, in large part, erasing her own mother, herself.

The title "Page One" suggests a kind of textual genesis, a myth of origins to which Livesay will return in subsequent books. The "she" at the start of this poem suggests a distance from "I" read as author, reminding its reader not to conflate poet and this textual "she" as the same:

> Reared on snow she was
> Manacled in ice
> In bondage to this Lear
> This blue lipped, fondling father
> Whose hard chains
> Clanked on her feet
> Pinched the poor fingers stiff with pain.
> Play, an ordeal to be endured
> As feathery snow
> Festooned the faces
> Ridiculed the shapes
> A rigid fence
> Lay bundled on the hill
> And snow made ladies out of trees
> Those bare and gangling boys. (PFP1)

In "Page One" the motif of winter associated with the father suggests a natural topography which is charged with chill. In the concluding section of *Poems For People*, landscape fuses

with the subjectivity of both male and female in such a manner that the human and natural world are interwoven as one intricate pattern, a pattern which Relke has linked to Livesay's poetic vision. The "she" of "Page One" is a prisoner of her father's kingdom: "manacled" and "[i]n bondage." Winter is personified as "Lear." Where Cordelia loves "according to [her] bond," the Lear of this poem is "blue lipped" and a "fondling father," one who violates boundaries between self and other in order to claim absolute power himself. The rigid fence suggests the division bundled on the hill, as well as implying the collapse of his order though hard chains still clanked on her feet. The symbolic economy of this microcosmic (lyric) world is one of disorder and chains which will melt with the cold. Nothing rhymes, and lines are uneven, consonants "clank. . ." over a pinched ridiculed female reared on snow.

In the second part of "section i" in "Page One," snow is transformed from a source of mutilation to a feast of imagination "in the corridors of crisp/[a]nd rainbow shafted crystal" (PFP2). The "she" of the poem moves from "play, an ordeal" (PFP1) to the role of wish maker:

> She traced the pattern of a princess' day
> And was her godmother
> And listened to her pray.
>
> O might there always be
> Those wishes three
>
> That dazzling evanescent dress
> Those pearls, those tears
> That slipper made of glass --
>
> But not for me.
>
> But not for me
> Whistled the winter wisdom of the wind:
> The ice that bound her could not be her home
> Native this land, but not
> The boundary of her home. (PFP 2)

Like the dream of the godmother in Livesay's early life writing, this passage echoes the request that there "always be/[t]hose wishes three." The wishes for dress, pearls, and slipper made of glass"are framed in the always of others. But this speaker is separate from those of her sex who seek the traditional ending of the "Princess' day," and the poem underscores her difference with the repeated line "[b]ut not for me."

The wind is presented in its winter wisdom, shifting from "she" to the powerful gusting breath of a "me" which, while it has escaped winter, is now bound to move outside the confining, but seductive, wishes to be beautiful and meet with the man with the slipper. This speaker knows she must go beyond the rigid fence of her past to make her own home. In doing so poetry allows her to step out of one socially-constructed fiction into another of "me" in (poetic) making:

> But not for me
> Whistled the winter wisdom of the wind:
> The ice that bound her could not be her home
> Native this land, but not
> The boundary of her home. (PFP 2)

This female-centred movement binds the "me" and the "her" interwoven throughout this poem with the "whistl[ing]. . . winter wisdom of the wind" bringing the break-up of (father's power) winter. Where the speaker in "Fantasia" had to learn how diving's done to return to imagination's underworld, the girl child of "Page One" finds that "Water" -- Undine's territory in "Fantasia"-- opens up in spring. The "ice" linked in the first part of "Page One" to the old fondling father has to be ground down with shovels. "[T]his Lear, unlike Shakespeare's," relinquishes all his sparkle in seeking, a further term (PFP3). Like the "I" of "Fantasia," the daughter in "Page One" is drawn from underground to sky. Both underground and the unstained sky are territories in which a rigid (PFP1) embedded (PFP3) past power dissolves.

The "Water" seems metonymic of female poetic power to work the "crack and swing" in what is referred to in "Fantasia" as imagination's underworld. If Western tradition found "no space for woman as subject" (Brandt) then she might claim a space in the crack-up of that tradition sibilantly figured -- in the "sigh and sing" -- as both poetic process and "home":

> And in the slush all sparkle gone
> Water began to make its home
> To sigh and sing, to crack and swing
> Its column in the underground. (PFP 3)

In "Page One['s]" last stanza the crack and swing of underworld transformation gives way to an opening of wing and sound, foregrounding the "flight imminent" -- to lift a phrase from "Five Poems" :

> At such a moment, such a day
> Her head was lifted suddenly
> Her ears believed, her heart heard
> The sky's hallooing honking word
> Here in the wasting winter, geese
> Briefly from feeding came to rest
> Here they were transients who knew
> Some other home lay further on
> Some grass upshaken
> A forest to be taken;
> And following their arrowed alphabet
> Straining to see their jet-
> propulsion through the unstained sky
> She felt her feet untried
> Her winter thongs unpried.
> She was a moving miracle of wing and sound
> No one home hers, but all homes to be found. (PFP3)

The singular female possessive pronoun -- "Her" -- moves with persistence to the front of these lines, assuming the power of the arrowed alphabet which her childhood of winters denied. The imagery in the stanza turns upon messages "She" believed and heard. The "hallooing honking word" is not contained in one monologic voice but in many voices. The

arrowed alphabet of transient geese suggest a straining which this lyric poetry makes toward the new world first proclaimed at the start of *Day and Night*.

Poems in *Poems For People* such as "Inheritance" and "Preludium" provide different perspectives on subjectivity set in the parthenogenetic frame in which "Man alone!" (PFP 5) seems to create the child. In the first poem the male has head thorned, he is the fiery father of us with a child who watches him with neither "power to bestow nor bless" (PFP 4). The dynamic between father and adult child in this poem is reminiscent of a passage in *Journey With My Selves* in which father is the one who decides whether those around him have individuality or not. Although I do not wish to conflate author with textual fiction -- Livesay does link this poem with her father's death (JWS 176-82) -- it is obvious that in writing this poetry Livesay drew on her own experience as daughter within a family in which mother was not judged father's equal. In becoming a mother herself Livesay worked fervently to see that her own "I" and "she" would count. "Mother" is not explicitly present in "Inheritance," and yet within the family romance, which this poem evokes, one of the "[t]wo poles" with "agony between" might well describe the division of male and female in marriage as it will be represented in "Wedlock" near the end of *Dorothy Livesay: Selected Poems 1926-56*.[19]

In the memoirs, John Livesay is represented by his daughter in dialogue with her about intelligence and individuality while refusing, when challenged, to "talk about. . . mother":

> "I've no use for a man or woman who hasn't developed any intelligence he or she may have - any individuality."
>
> ". . .when you meet such people - or live with them, like Mother - you put them down."
>
> "We won't talk about your mother."
>
> But, alas, we were a family that did talk about each other, did analyze sometimes quite cruelly. . . . Each parent sought to reign over me. (JWS 55)

Whether drawn directly from life, or a distillation of androcentric "Inheritance," the father in the lyric carries with him the authority of words beneath which the female seems buried: "[a]nd some might wonder why the grass grew green/Where acid words had lately been" (PFP 4). The inheritance of the burdened brood is an internalization of the acid words of the narrative of one parent only. Yet the final verse of the poem suggests a movement toward transformation evoked in "Fantasia" through diving, and in "Page One" in an arrowed alphabet and a movement in lyric form:

> In the rooms of my heart you race
> Fiery father of us, your kind,
> Your burdened brood; who yet will face
> The day, the dark; housed in a quiet mind. (PFP 4)

The father remains an intransigent disturbance encapsulated, as he is here, in the "rooms of my mind" (1st stanza) "rooms of my heart" (final stanza). The ABAB rhyme scheme in the last stanza reinforces the connection between these two aspects of self: the "A" rhyme between race and face reinforces the desire to end the race in facing the father-centred inheritance. The "us, your kind" "quiet mind" rhyme suggests the speaker's appropriation of the father's power of mind to a transformative end which will seek to dissolve past polarities.

In "Inheritance," the lyric speaker faces the old man, but in "Preludium" s/he faces the new male child. The first line is anything but sweetly maternal. As in "Five Poems" the speaker very quickly seeks to prod the new child erect:

> The infant, like an invalid
> Is slow aware of worlds to win.
> At first the lifting of a hand
> Is gasping effort: and the clutch at cloth
> Releases rhythm and delight
> Till day blooms when the body prone
> Is propped by inner urge is prodded vertical
> And balanced on firm flesh. To sit alone

Is an essential bliss we know again
After long illness, close to death. . . . (PFP 5)

Whereas traditional Western art has idealized the bond between mother and male child, "Preludium" demystifies the subject. The infant is not like a cherub, but rather, "like an invalid." The Madonna, who is stereotypically represented as gazing at "Him," is completely absent here. As the poem proceeds, the result is, "upright man," "Hercules ascending" (PFP 5) as a sort of tongue-in-cheek proto-baby who needs no support, thereby reinforcing the old cultural fib of "the towering portent, Man alone!" (PFP 5). Yet, once again, as with the last poem, although the female is carefully removed from our direct vision, she surfaces in the hyperbolic "O" of the poem, and in the exclamation marks closing the two final stanzas. Her making is not celebrated but suppressed so that infancy is proximate not to birth, but to long illness, close to death for the mother (PFP 5).

The trap gender represents for the female within patriarchal culture is nowhere more apparent than in "The Mother," in which Livesay returns to quatrains of a circumscribed order. The female who is "The Mother" is not alone. She can not work her way into the grandiose frame of Man's solitude to sit alone (PFP 5). Instead:

She cannot walk alone. Must set her pace
To the slow count of grasses, butterflies
To puppy's leap, and the new bulldozer's wheeze
To Chinese fisherman, balancing his pole.

She cannot think alone. Words must be
Poised to the smaller scope, immediates
Of wagon's broken wheel, a battered knee,
The sun's high promise for a day of play. (PFP 7)

Hutchison points out the skillful manner in which this poem balances the constriction of motherhood in patriarchal culture with grasses, butterflies and promise for a day of play. The

weight of the simple declarative phrases begins the first two stanzas -- "She cannot walk alone" and "She cannot think alone" (PFP 7). These are just the aspects of life which the speaker in "Five Poems" dreamed of sustaining between self and new child. The knots and nooses and slough and slips of the subsequent verse with the enjambed line moving to the final verse involve the reader in the scraps of a woman's lot rather than life (PFP 7).

Whereas the male poet in "West Coast" dreamed of "being a word welder" (CPDL 141) the mother must "busily bestir herself" with "slough and slips" (PFP 7). Dream is something she leaves her child to at the end of the poem. Though offered a choice in the final stanza -- with choice so important to Auden and Day Lewis and to Livesay, too, in "Day and Night" -- this freedom is now almost illusory because of the pressing immediate needs captured spatially as we leap with "she must":

> And when the active hours are gone, it's still
> Her lot to busily bestir herself
> With knots and nooses, all the slough and slips
> Of day. When evenings seal is set she must
>
> Have chosen here to stay. To sit, to hear
> The day's confessional eased from tired tongue,
> To soothe the small lids down to drowsiness
> Till childhood sleep perfumes the darkened room. (PFP 7)

There are intermittent shifts between poems such as "The Mother" to others such as "Of Mourners" (PFP 17) which seem to elevate the liberal humanist male as subject. Yet they also remind the reader that with the striving of such poems as "Prelude For Spring" (D&N) and "Five Poems," (D&N) as well as "Page One" (PFP 1-3) Livesay is moving toward the androgynous vision she will claim in the fifties.

In the final section of *Poems For People* -- which many critics have found the least successful part of the book -- the natural world becomes emblematic of "imagination's

underworld" just as it was in "Page One" (Briscoe Thompson). In "Okanagan Pictures," we begin with charged images of night and water as a territory in which those within the "Interior towns" ". . . know love's contours, and the roads/Equally by touch" (PFP 33). In this landscape all being is as fluid as the beginning of Woolf's *Jacob's Room* and yet bound by the title to Canada. As in Livesay's early poem "Staccato," the speaker hears the outside night world. At first it is described as "high river flood/[a]nd thunder against my wall" (PFP 34). But the response to the menacing sound is markedly different.

In "Staccato" the speaker keeps to one room and a narrow bed. In this poem, she cannot escape moving with the waterfall of poetic imagination. In the second place, whereas the menacing sound is reduced in "Staccato" to a meaningless and ominous repetition, in this poem the barrier between outside and inner world collapses as we read. In "Prelude For Spring" the door imagery suggested a female (fawn) stopped behind voice's disabled door. Within the sensuous part ii of "Okanagan Pictures," the mobile fluidity of river flood moves self once more to a threshold. But this time the door seems to thunder with the wall to be opened:

> I hear high river flood
> And thunder against my wall
> If I open the door, I become
> The waterfall
> If I escape I fumble and all
> My limbs are foam
> And branches of the source. (D&N)

Moving through these turbulent waters the speaker courses into a world engendered by sound, neither male nor female, but able to range, as the persona will be in Livesay's later poem "Other" (DLSP 74-75):

> My tributary fingers probe
> And lave the land

Water is life; and the thrusting fruit-
Trees suck to my twisted course;
Peach blossom, or flesh in the tigerish skin
Sways hillsides, leans my way
And the ruffled fur of the lakes
Licks my lush
And turbulent gates. (PFP 34)

III

What is the music of this land
Okanagan singing?
Sometimes its a fierce
A shouted sentence meted out
By wind's slurred frenzy, pruning trees;
And fisted water, hammering the shore
Sometimes these,
But otherwise a hush on sage-brush hill
A pine-branch soaring to the high
Blue bowl incessantly re-formed
By foam and froth of cloud--
White against black
Scudding a scoop of sky. (PFP 34)

The "Poems as Pictures" concluding section of *Poems For People* sets the human and non-human together. The shattered world at war reflected in "London Revisited" is knit back together in taking part in a sky "incessantly re-formed." Whereas in a previous verse, water evoked transformation, in this image we have the transition skillfully repeated in foam and froth of cloud. In "Okanagan Pictures," the cloud's arm opens in a beatitude of release both from "London Revisited" after War, and from the tangles binding "Mother":

Let cloud's arm move, distill
Every tangle of the will
And the early whip-poor-will
Set an evening tolling bell

Across the mind's street-circled throng
The milling moods of right and wrong
The swift retort, the plunging tongue
A slave the moment it is stung.

Let wind extend its soothing sound
Brushing the bough with mother hand

And there an untimed moment bend
Arrested in a breathless land. (PFP 37)

The middle verse seems to speak back to the "Fiery father" of "Inheritance," he of the acid words, now part of "the mind's street-circled throng." The suggestion seems to be that argument and swift retort hold few answers. These are held in the elliptical and elusive movement of wind: a power linked in this poem to the natural world as well as the fluid "mother hand" writing back to a world in which women, like the bird "pinioned swift" (PFP 36) in "Pheasant," have been denied poetic flight (PFP 36). In "Poems As Picture" there is no image of a woman -- except for the wind's "mother hand" -- yet female subjectivity is a pervasive force moving toward poetic power through imagery linked to the female.

In numerous poems in *Day and Night* and *Poems For People*, the child in the abstract is male. Perhaps Livesay was thinking about her first child Peter. However, the influence of a patriarchal society is pervasive in both of Livesay's books of the forties. The shifts between poems which critique gendered subjectivity and others which seamlessly accept the liberal humanist male as universal signifier -- such as "West Coast" in *Day and Night* and "Of Mourners" in *Poems For People* -- remind the reader that with the striving of such poems as "Prelude For Spring" and "Five Poems," as well as "Page One," Livesay is moving toward the androgynous vision she will claim in the mid-fifties in poems such as "Other" and "On Looking Into Henry Moore" (SP 82). What we read in the two books of the forties are poems which are engaged in a process of working modern verse toward not only engendering sound for the "other; friend," but also to the dis-engendering of the subservient selves in the course of both books.

Waddington's *The Second Silence*

Waddington's second book *The Second Silence* was published in 1955, after a hiatus of ten years, and following the birth of her two children. Many of the poems were published in Canadian periodicals such as *Canadian Forum* in the late forties years before appearing in book form. This fact is significant because of the gap between Livesay's *Day and Night* (1945) and *Poems For People* (1947) and Waddington's *The Second Silence* (1955). *The Second Silence* suggests an indebtedness to Livesay's *Poems For People* and as I have noted, in her review of *Poems For People*, Waddington found that Livesay's poems about being female were the most successful. Where Livesay had divided *Poems For People* into three sections, the first, "Poems of Childhood," Waddington included "Poems for Children" in a second section. She began with "Poems of Love," and concluded with "Poems of Work" and Poems of Living." One senses in this division an attempt to address all the significant aspects of life made particular within lyric poetry.

Milton Wilson reviewed Waddington's *Second Silence* according to the category in which he states Wordsworth would have placed it as "Poems of Sentiment and Affections," and found "[t]he sentiment often threatens to cloy the reader" (1955:162). In a review of four books of Canadian poetry published in 1955 by Waddington, Layton, Dudek, and Purdy, Wilson gives Waddington the least space, dismissing her work as an inventory of "the 'wear and tear' of our common life and the limitations of happiness" (162). There is no sense in his review that what he calls "our common life," in these poems, is often not "common" or mutually shared between the male and the female represented in these lyrics.

In *The Second Silence*, the female speaker is increasingly aware that her interests are different from those of her mate, her children, and her culture. The book challenged reviewers to think about gender. Wilson was typical in refusing to do so. For the first and only time in

her career, Waddington recorded her objection to Wilson's review in a letter published in the *Canadian Forum*. She writes:

> My quarrel with Mr. Wilson is that he does not bring to my book. . . even the first task of the critic, which is a willingness to read the work with attention. . . . No critic is obliged to like the poetry he reviews; he is obliged to criticize it however. . . [with] appropriate textual illustration. He takes to himself the further unwarranted freedom of dividing my poems into those of Love, Children, and Everyday Life -- which is a departure from the headings in the text. That he left out poems of Work, I can only think of as being significant." (1955:2O8)

Waddington argues that by not even mentioning the section of the book devoted to "Work" outside the domestic sphere, Wilson incorrectly framed *The Second Silence* as conventionally "sentiment[al]." The book's central thematic area of concern is its timely investigation of growing "tensions" between North American men and women.[20]

When Livesay and Waddington became mothers, they both experienced first-hand the then largely culturally ignored struggle of married women to sustain what Waddington's speaker in her poem "You and Me" refers to as "my own pattern" (*SS* 4). If fathers haunt Livesay's *Poems For People* then mothers haunt Waddington's *Second Silence*. Apart from her birth poems, mothers are seen from a distance and they do not speak, they are "indirect, elliptical" in "In the Park" or the mother 'Not there" in "Foundling." The most desirable mother referred to in *The Second Silence* is not a biological mother but a teacher in "Three Poems For My Teacher." Biological mothers have a much harder time as they appear in *The Second Silence*. In Waddington's version of modernism brokeness is related both to the family romance, manifest in what seems a personal history, with mother at the centre, and to what the speaker calls my own pattern. The artist at the dark centre of "You and Me" uses rupture with the mother as a point of departure embedded in the poem to mark the beginning of

becoming a separate being. But the process of creation of the pattern of self is seen as ongoing. Here are the two middle stanzas:

> Capricorn, my golden goat of destiny
> Leaps from the slender curtain
> And butts my tender self
> From its place beside you, then am I
> Lifted to distance, and pain six-pointed
> As David's star, criss-crosses over me,
> I am my own pattern and in the dark
> My artist still creates me,
> Leaf branch and bud.
>
> Who lights this loneliness
> Between you and me, this solitude
> Of me, of me alone?
> Oh darling, nothing lights,
> And no one's kiss restores
> The lasting loss, all that is found
> Is lost, or how could it be found?
> In this life none are faithful
> My mother had four children,
> Love's pledge was broken early,
> And love's later pledge broken late. (SS 4)

The poem reads as a female subject's response to the male in "Interval," who "thought he found in woman a divining rod" (SS 3). This artist speaker asserts an equality based on a shared inheritance of lasting loss and broken faith which "you and me, even me" must accept. The "even me" formulation is colloquial as is the line in stanza one: "Sometimes it is me" (SS 4). With the assertion "I am my own pattern," the speaker claims the authority to grow beyond the circumscribed script of women bound by patriarchal tradition to accept subordinate status (SS 4).

In Waddington's poems "At Midnight," "Lovers," and "Novella," male and female reappear together as a matched pair "[l]ike the one in the story" (SS 6) of heterosexual romance within Western culture. "The Lovers" imputes a magic to the pair and in this beautiful poem we are told "all the world envies/[w]here they go." Rhyme is used skillfully if only

occasionally in *The Second Silence*. As in the opening lines of "The Lovers," "Lovers tread the waters, lovers go/[i]n all the seasons where the waters flow" (SS 8). Repetition of "go" at the end of five lines, including the last one, emphasizes the season in which the lovers flow together as one. The lovers inhabit a world of possibility represented in spring, in rainbows and "the water of the wavering will." But the internal rhyme of sleep and weep, in the last stanza, recalls the suffering with which the first poem in *The Second Silence* concludes.

The Second Silence neither begins, nor concludes, with a homage to romantic love. In Waddington's published life writing, as in her poetry, human energy is both precious and finite. When the woman writer gives too much in the domestic sphere -- as mother and 'wife of' -- she may disappear as a creator of texts. If she chooses an undivided focus on literature as did DeBeauvoir -- a writer Waddington writes about in *Apartment Seven* -- she may, in the end, "feel that she has paid with the wrong coin. . ." (AS 18O). Waddington states:

> As for myself, "I think I might have written more and more freely had I been a man. (Alternatively). . . if I had been content to be only a wife and mother and not to write, I might still have had a husband" (2O9).

Meditation on the cost of moving away from a husband's "saying" of the female "me" is at the centre of "Thou Didst Say Me" in which the female speaker learns she must speak of, and for, herself or disappear. The poem's antiquated use of language in the title is carried into the poem where it subtly underscores the overthrow of the magisterial thou which has, in time past, had the power to define the wife now speaking back. The female has capitulated to the power of this saying with a repetition of love, the central word of seduction:

> Late as last autumn
> thou didst say me, dear
> my doxy, I choose you and
> always you, thou didst pledge
> me love and through the red-
> plumed weeks and soberly
> I danced upon your words

and garlanded these
tender dangers.

year curves to ending now
and thou dost say me, wife
I choose another love, and oh
the delicate del-
icate serpent of your mouth
stings deep, and bitter
iron cuts and shapes
my death, I was so fool. (SS 9-10)

In the work of both Livesay and Waddington modernist technique marks a significant rupture with traditional values. In "Thou Didst Say Me" the use of antiquated language and the modern idiom -- with free verse, lower case for the start of lines, with the splitting "del-/icate" in mid-word -- underscores rupture of the female self within patriarchal marriage. However, the poem does not celebrate a brave new self and/or world. The iron celebrated in this poem is "the bitter/iron [which] cuts and shapes my death." However, death figures in this poem not as a literal ceasing to be but a fundamental shift of be-ing. The last phrase "I was so fool" -- repeated from the first line of the second stanza -- emphasizes the antiquated past, and the past tense. The self of present tense has an ironic stance which is characteristic of Waddington's version of modernism.

"Three Poems For My Teacher" and "Three Poems For a Pupil" utilize short lyrics connected to form a longer poem as in Livesay's *Day and Night*. In *Collected Poems*, Waddington dedicates the former poem to one of two mentors -- both women -- at the Philadelphia School For Social Work where she did a Master's Degree in 1945. In this poem, the emphasis changes from lyric meditation on heterosexual love to a claiming of a spiritual mother. It seems significant that "Three Poems For My Teacher" begins with reference to "your death" here figured as a space of transformation, something like that between life, and the rendering of a life into poetry, in which a woman is claimed as "My Teacher." The "loving

brain" (SS35) of an intellectual and nurturing female presence is at the centre of "Three Poems For My Teacher":

> I wish your death be magic as your life
> As loved and loving, and as full
> As seeded summer in its flurried colour.
> I wish you quiet hush and holy
> As this morning, and I wish
> All voices lost and gone
> And all those voices mourning
> Return to attend your ending.
> You are a fortunate mother to be so loved
> By all your children, our words and thoughts
> Transform you, and we keep
> In this mortal world your spirit
> Young forever, and your name
> By our humanity is hallowed. (SS 11)

If we read death as a metonym for transformation from life into text, the poem suggests a shifting from the domestic world in which the female speaker must struggle to assert "sometimes it is me," to a textual space which turns around not a Philosopher King, but a healing female presence both "Teacher" and "Mother." In "Journey to the clinic" this presence is manifest in "Good fairy true-heart whose sweet skill can ring/These walls with health like some gold glowing/ rope (SS 35). In "Three Poems for My Teacher" the movement into female empowerment is anticipated as both death and a "transform[ation] accomplished with "words and thoughts" (SS 11), not of the "teacher" herself, but rather of those she has nurtured. The "wish" in the above stanza is not for "the wishes three" of the girls in Livesay's "Page One," but the "hush and holy" of new "morning." Here one is reminded of the association of the new morning and a reaching toward transformative vision in Livesay's "Five Poems" where "[e]arly is bearly reachable" (D&N 36).

In the second stanza of "Three Poems for My Teacher" the "married couples" return "walk[ing]" in "double silence." It is the "mother['s]" hand" which "steadily retrieves/Their

glances from the whirlpools" (SS 11). Although "Three Poems for My Teacher" generated no commentary among Waddington's reviewers when it was first published, it can be read today as engaged with the consideration of a maternally based ethics of care which is prominent throughout her social work poems. As Rosemarie Tong notes in *Feminine and Feminist Ethics*:

> Care demands no less in the way of integrity, commitment, and heroism than justice. . . Rather than dismissing the mother-child relationship as a mindless, thoughtless, "natural" symbiosis, proponents of maternal approaches to ethics have argued that this. . .is a more realistic paradigm for human relationships than the kind of legalistic, formalistic contracts that consenting adults enter into deliberately, consciously and presumably equally. (221)

Before "maternal ethics" had been theorized, at a time when maternal feminism seemed dated, Waddington's "Three Poems for My Teacher" celebrates a maternally based ethics: manifest in provision of "the flowering season and moving space" of female-centred nurture through which human beings may continue, past childhood, to grow. "[W]ords" are the source of movement toward a "moving space" in which "her voice" and "[h]er words" are celebrated. The play with "Her" is made particular by the possessive pronoun, "My" in the title, and by the dedication "For Jessie Taft." The third and final lyric sequence of "Three Poems For My Teacher" reads:

> Beyond the white gothic of her smile
> Far pools of stillness lie
> And the summer wind
> Plays the green mandolins of her voice,
> Her words are plain as ballads and they sing
> The flowering season and the moving space
> Between waking and sleeping
> And then the final sleep. (SS 12)

In praising "words plain as ballads," Waddington's "Three Poems For My Teacher" privileges the storied world of popular song, and populist tradition, in which anon -- as Woolf had it, was a woman -- rather than the high modernism of Eliot and Pound. Waddington's emphasis on accessible form, on "words. . . plain as ballad," may have led critics like MacLure to judge her work as less challenging than contemporary male lyric poets such as Dudek. But in this poem there is the suggestion that plain language may, itself, be a strategy linked not to a "mindless, thoughtless" approach to her material but, rather, to what Tong calls the development of an "ethics of caring" (221), an "ethics" which can be read to extend the book's subsequent exploration of the mother-child relationship.

In *Apartment Seven* Waddington notes that "[p]art of the problem of modernism is to accept that not everything can be unified, or even should be" (AS 16O). *The Second Silence* is a work which explores an ethics of caring but, at the same time, refuses both a unified identity for its female subjects, and a unified approach to female subjectivity. The female subject within her poems refuses to be captured in any one essentialist position. "Three Poems For My Teacher" is balanced with "Three Poems to a Pupil" and the latter poem insists on the teacher's confusion at being an authority figure, her desire to be considered by her male pupil as a sexual being. The idealization of the teacher in "Three Poems For My Teacher" balances with the ambiguity and ambivalence of "Three Poems to a Pupil," and the balance established in placing the poems together suggests a refusal, at the centre of *The Second Silence*, to be fixed into any one position as female.

In poems about motherhood, Waddington insists both on division within the individual speaker and upon different ways of seeing the same situation depending on one's role as, for example, mother or child. In the second section of *The Second Silence*, entitled "Poems of Children," one finds a complex constellation of poems moving from the threatening glance of a mother in "In the Park," to the celebration of life with children in "Catalpa Tree" and

"Wonderful Country," to birth poems, ending finally in "Childless." The image of a "haunted oedipus" [sic] in the first stanza of "In the Park" suggests a movement from the male-centred Oedipal drama of father and son to a mother's experience of this drama. Here is the first verse:

> The child follows the sun,
> Dizzy, lost in the circling asters
> And the criss-cross of dripping
> Delicious honeysuckle,
> All the pink and exploding delicacy,
> Oh what a curtain it makes for the myth,
> The haunted oedipus, a modern backdrop,
>   a very
> Innocence of plants and children! (SS 18)

The first stanza foregrounds child following the sun and growing dizzy with the "dripping/[d]elicious" "exploding delicacy" of the plants growing with him in "a very/[i]nnocence." The child free to follow the sun in an idyllic park with circling asters and honeysuckle curtain reminds me of the idealization of the idyllic middle class childhood which occured in the fifties: an idealization which depended on firm gender roles setting vigilant mother down on a park bench and father outside the picture. Behind this myth of idyllic childhood runs Freud's emphasis on the Oedipal drama, or on reading culture as a drama between fathers and sons. "Everybody read Freud in those days," Waddington told me on the phone long distance from Vancouver, "I certainly did. Don't forget, I was a social worker."

"In the Park" focuses on the mothers who sit in the shadows in the parks of the fifties. They are not at the centre of culture, and they offer no overt commentary on their position as caregivers within it. They are not direct and purposeful, but indirect and elliptical and their languor is at the delicious centre of this poem:

> And mothers, indirect, elliptical
> Under their shady hats,
> Nod at sailboats while their smiles
> Pull in stormy adventurers,

And their gestures
Make such graceful patterns
Willy nilly on the sun dial. (SS 18)

The sun, of course, is traditionally associated with male power, while the moon is traditionally associated with the female. The patterns of the children's movements on the sun dial suggest the patterning of postwar culture: Mother's home minding the children, father's out adventuring as their children one day will, in the world. But the mood changes quickly when mother speaks back.

The speaker is not so much part of solar order as a symbol of its interruption, a great eclipse in which the starry light of the heavens is cut off. This un-natural mother will "teach him afternoon as if it were/[r]eligion." The intensity of the image suggests an almost hysterical intensity which is in stark contrast to the voluptuous lassitude of the previous stanza:

But I, like some great eclipse
Cut off the starry light
And teach him afternoon as if it were
Religion, I'm a familiar island
Hard and rock-bitten, though where
The footprint leads he cannot guess.
Unanonymous I sit, the green park benches
Make me a giant, and of course
My glance is threatening. (SS 18)

The intensity of the images in this last verse -- "[c]ut off starry night," "teach him afternoon as if it were/Religion" -- manifest some of the the volatile energy behind the threatening glance. The giant mother is like the one Waddington recalled in an interview when she remembered her own relationship with her mother. In this poem the "I" is "familiar island/[h]ard and rock-bitten," the isolate "I" cut off from the male-centred world. Although indirect, elliptical in its approach, the poem nevertheless challenges its readers to move through the idealization of

maternity to meet the threatening glance of a mother who challenges both her child and the reader to know her.

The poems "Catalpa" and "Worlds" celebrate the interwoven lives of mother and child. These are, with "Wonderful Country," poems which celebrate childhood. In "Worlds," there are three verses which focus on the "I" of a mother. Once again, multiple allusions to death are interwoven with the child, and the female speaker approaches her own subjectivity and its intersection with motherhood obliquely. She begins with the image of the unfolding play, then moves to seasons, with the conventional poetic theme of summer used as a background against which a complex mood can be explored. By the end of first stanza we know that the speaker is a mother contemplating her sleeping child; by the end of the second, with recurrent allusion to death and separation, the troubling experience extends from child and mother to a broader statement which, while it includes others still plays around them. Here is the end of the second stanza:

> We are each fragmented,
> Disguised and not understood
> Like jagged sky and milkwhite silken shroud.

The lyric persona of Waddington's "Worlds" refuses to "unfold. . . like" the heroines of the past. She experiences the self as "fragmented," "disguised," and "not understood" (SS 21). The play she proposes contains both the regenerative "fair flower of me, the child" and the "milkwhite silken shroud" of death. With its colour and "silken" texture the shroud is reminiscent of the crystal chrysalis in the title poem in *Green World* . As such the image suggests both death of an old self and a transitional place in which the new in "each" may be concealed (MWCP 1). But where in "Green World" "walls crack suddenly" in the above passage the allusive process of rebirth is described in terms of a more difficult and less direct

process moving into dream, which we saw in Livesay's "Prelude for Spring," "Five Poems," and "Fantasia":

The plural title "Worlds" seems to allude to many individuals "each fragmented," rather than any one universalized Man, and like Livesay's title word "Selves" in her memoirs, *Journey With My Selves*, foregrounds the many within the one: a many which conveys the fragmentation at the centre of both poets' work in this period. In the middle of *The Second Silence*, Waddington's poem "Worlds" challenges readers to consider the "Interior Castles" of women in the fifties. The reflective stance of this speaker indicates meditative withdrawal from a North American culture in which the Harvard-educated Diana Trilling remembers a Dean's speech "urging women to think about Keats and Shelley as they washed dishes" (Kaledin 141 118).[21] The "many quiets" in "Worlds" suggest both the silences which entomb women within a male-centred canonical tradition and the "second silence" of reverent "hush" in which new possibilities take place. Here is the final stanza of "World":

> It is difficult,
> This cold sun and the lent-out love,
> The spun gold sent and the child's hair
> Screaming, there are so many ways to speak
> And so many quiets too.
> Some like the grave entomb you,
> And some are pale fields of stillness
> Crowded with hush
> Of the unborn.
> Like a scythe this second silence reaps me,
> I enter darkness and with the child become
> The world of dream. (SS 21)

The reference to the "cold sun" and "spun gold spent" (SS 21) conveys an economy of scarcity. As weaver of words the mother has come to accept that the modern world "is difficult" (SS 21). The statement does not preclude the difficulties of men, but the focus is on the "worlds" of mother and child. As Loeffelholz notes, "during the great postwar voyage

home in the late 194Os and early 195Os" (2O9) within North America "issues of gender and sexuality were often not seen as matters of genuine political or intellectual consequence" and, as such, "what women modernists (and men as well, for that matter) had had to say about these burning social issues became invisible or trivialized" (21O). The mother speaking in Waddington's poem "Worlds" speaks from a textual space where her concerns with balancing her own needs with a child's may be heard, if not that summer, then years later within lyric (Waddington AS 2O3).

The poem concludes with a "reap[ing]" of "me," an image which like the grave usually suggests death but in this context announces dream and new possibility. The move to abstraction opens into the "second silence," figured in the "unborn" in self, with the child rather than separate. The ending of "Worlds" conjures lyric to be the transformative space from which to enter "[t]he world of the dream" (SS 21).

"Night in October" and "Fables of Birth" make an interesting contrast with Livesay's two birth poems "Serenade For Strings" and "Five Poems." In these poems, Waddington continues to explore dream as a transformative space. Dream is also central in Livesay's "Five Poems," where I noted the lyric speaker "dream[s]" of not being eclipsed by "you" whom I read as the new child. The speaker in "Five Poems" begins in the negative with "no" repeated twice in the first quatrain: "In the dream was no kiss/No banners were unshaken" where bliss depends on the hands untaken" (CP134). Waddington's "Night in October," written after the birth of her first son, Marcus, in October 1946, begins in a similarly unusal way, not with a negative, but with the indirect approach of parenthesis and using syntactic markers of fervent emphasis as points of interrogation.

The mothers in "In the Park" are "indirect, elliptical" and the poetic approach in Waddington's first birth poem seems to correspond with them in its formal qualities, style, and content. In the first line, the origins of the dream are in question. For me the dream start is

particularly evocative in a poem centred upon the birth experience of the mother since, in western culture, birth has been co-opted to serve patriarchy. In troubling the "begin[ning]" the speaker suggests that she is questioning her own dream seeking a new myth of origins:

> (The dream, the dream, where did it begin?
> In the downpour of the light that flooded through the sky?
> Where was the key that opened up the door
> To a white room with candles burning? (SS 22)

The dream of the prince -- so prominent for girls and women represented in Waddington's early life writing -- does not seem to be "[t]he dream" considered here. The reference to origins in "the downpour of light" and in terms of a lost key suggests traditional symbols used for enlightening the spiritual self. But this speaker finds no simple answer. Poetry is figured in "wind" and in "s[o]ng" which records torment and loss linking physical labour to a poetic process from a midnight of delirious dream:

> At midnight the wind
> Stretched long leathery fingers
> Against the warm night,
> Lifted the roof of torment and sang
> Lullabies from an old book
> Of apples and nutmegs and peacocks that flew
> Ceaselessly circling a golden sea.
> (It was dream, it was dream,
> Light echoed and keys were lost in the sea.) (SS 22)

The first version of the Yiddish folk verse, translated for me by Waddington, relates to the golden peacock asked to remember me to a distant mother.[22] At the centre of the poem, forceps and scissors are tuned as musical instruments against girlhood. The labour is presented as a kind of ritual torture -- or a painful rite of initiation into motherhood; significantly the birth is controlled by doctors, not midwives or the mother herself. This nightmare is not merely that of one isolated female taken over by panic and pain; it is emblematic of the birth experience which

many North American women who gave birth during the fifties recall. Mary O'Brien notes in *The Politics of Reproduction*:

> In Western society we acknowledge this moment as culturally productive by calling it 'labour,' and yet we negate its social importance by refusing to reward it as work and by rendering the mother passive, inert and often unconscious in the birth process, so that it appears that the (well salaried) doctors are delivering the child. (30)

At the centre of Waddington's version of modernism, in her birth poems, we find pain and loss, and a refusal to smooth over female bodily experience with either polite silence, or rhetoric:

> Then pain came in with its symphony
> With its many players
> Who tuned forceps and scissors
> And the sharp cruel dancers
> Who whirled and galloped
> All over my girlhood, shipwrecked and bitter.
> (There was an answer, I heard it through water
> Through coils and columns,
> But it was lost in the weather
> The genesis of snow.) (SS 22)

This verse is both central to Waddington's work transcribing the voice of the twice isolate into Canadian poetry, and evocative, too, of the female-centred poems Livesay wrote in the forties. In Livesay's "Fantasia" the watery world is the world of poetic revelation, as it is in the answer heard through water (in the lines quoted above). The symphony of tuned forceps and scissors, in Waddington's poem "Night in October," plays on the musical motif experienced by the female as a kind of dream hunt from which the female must run, as does Livesay's speaker in "Serenade For Spring." In both poems the speaker is pursued, in Livesay's poem by a "Proud Prowler" and in Waddington's poem by cruel dancers.

In Livesay's "Page One" the speaker is reared on snow "in bondage to this Lear, [t]his blue lipped, fondling father" (SP 55), while in Waddington's the female speaker is "lost in the

weather" as if labour were one more 'naturalized' event within a post-war-still- patriarchal culture, freezing the new mother into place. The many players suggest a polyphonic event rather than the count down to one cry, as in Livesay's "Serenade." But both poems return to female subjectivity in ending in the "me" (SS 22) or the "your" of a woman. In "Night in October," the birth of a new child balances with a searching for self:

> The dream the dream
> That nested like a dove
> In evergreens and eaves
> That fed on angel honey
> And loaves of silky bread,
> The dream still nameless,
> Wandering and restless,
> Searching for me. (SS 22)

This poem, ostensibly about labour, reads as a restless, searching for a subjectivity still nameless in "me." "Night in October" is a work engaged in transformation, documenting the pain of physical birth, while simultaneously, continuing the search for the female self. To use a phrase from Adrienne Rich's *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* -- it is a poem engaged in a puzzling work, putting together as it does "parts of an immense half-buried mosaic in the shape of a woman's face" (17).

In "Fables of Birth," written in 1952 following the birth of a second son, Jonathan, there is a return to the "October" foregrounded in the title of the previous poem, and there is a shift in technique and in imagery as well as of approach. In "Night in October", the beginning of the poem is feverish; in "Fables of Birth," we begin with the careful control of a couplet numbered as part one, the shortest of six parts:

> Where life the lance is death must be the spur
> And through such opposites, events occur. (SS 24)

The reference to lance and spur suggest that the chivalric tradition of heroism applies to "Fables of Birth," whereby through the union of lance and spur -- life and death -- events occur. The first poem uses the forceps and scissors of the delivery room, and contains expicit reference, at the end, to the "new child's crying" (SS 23). "Fables of Birth" is more oblique in its approach to its subject. Having declared that to be "Birth," with the title, the subject seems to come forward under "the star of danger" first like a knight, then like "David" reader of dreams. The poem uses "the star of danger" evoking the "star of David" worn by Jews in Germany under Hitler: reminding the reader of the inherent danger of all forms of cultural otherness. But the poem responds to danger in life through the inspiration of male visionaries -- "David" the dream-reader and "Henri Matisse" artist -- suggesting the cross-fertilization between male and female, dream-reader, painter, and "I" figured after birth within this poem.

The approach to "Birth" seems characteristically high modernist in its obliqueness and its allusiveness. But, as I read it, this poem is fundamentally concerned with the "windows unknown" (SS 24) of female, not male, subjectivity. As such its difficulty can be read as metonymic of the difficulty of accepting the unmetaphorical otherness of motherhood. In this lyric the speaker is acutely aware that possibilities for subjectivity are many rather than one. The poem's plural use of "Fables" underscores the position that there is no one correct story of origins but, rather, many. The speaker allusively describes the transformative experience of giving birth. In her latest book *What Is Found There: Notebooks on Poetry and Politics* Rich suggests:

> A poem. . . [is] not a philosophical or psychological blueprint; its an instrument for embodied experience. But we seek that experience, or recognize it when it is offered to us, because it reminds us of our own need. After that rearousal of desire, the task of acting on that truth, or making love, or meeting other needs, is ours. (1993 13)

The fragmented pieces Waddington's "Fables of Birth" make oblique approaches to what Rich calls "our own need" using the intensity of labour moving "[a]lways forward. . . [o]nly towards" (SS 24). Just as bodily labour proceeds in fits and starts, so the poem proceeds as what Rich calls an instrument for embodied experience, suggesting both the lulls of afterwards and the intensity of the period before giving birth. In the following stanza description of the altered perception which bodily labour can induce renders the 'real' world fluid. Through this altered state of perception the reader is invited to contemplate many rooms and windows unknown:

> 3
> Many little sheep
> Scud the white-lit grass
> And daisies flicker,
> Candles in the room of summer.
> There are many rooms
> Where windows unknown press
> Against all doors.
> See how the weather tapers
> And how its thinness falls
> Always forward, and it moves
> Only towards. (SS 24)

"Fables of Birth" becomes a kind of invitation to contemplate unmetaphorical otherness of a woman in labour, an invitation to move into the "what's next/And unknown"(SS 24) through the vehicle of the modernist lyric. Gilbert and Gubar note in *No Man's Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century* that "on his first reading of *The Waste Land* Joyce noted that T. S. Eliot's masterpiece 'ends [the] idea of poetry for the ladies,' which was, after all, no more than what Hulme had called 'roses, roses all the way' "(156). Waddington's poetry in *The Second Silence* is anything but "roses, roses all the way," and her poems about labour emphasize a transformative process.

In "Fables of Birth" the reader is challenged to consider the way physical birth may change perception. The change is tellingly related not to one message but rather to the bold celebration of process, to mixed colours which Matisse brought -- as modernist painter -- to visual art:

> Afterwards I said
> Matisse must have mixed colours here.
> Only the view from his good eighty year old eyes
> Could put lemon on that plate,
> The green tastes good and the blue
> Filtered through the clever rays of sun
> Laughs quietly, sulks, but sheds no tears.
> See how September strides
> Out of the gray around,
> Decisively it strides into what's next
> And unknown, into what glows red
> And reflects brown
> Straight out of the turquoise of summer
> It tunnels and collides
> With October. (SS 24-25)

Whereas the first four sections of "Fables" read as distinct fragments, "Fable" "5" is thematically connected to poem "4" "[w]ith October" which, in turn, alludes to the previous poem "Night in October." The reference to the month carries with it a return to the intense pain figured in "Night in October," carrying forward the image of all the dying.

In the nineteenth century women who bore children braved a real risk of death in childbirth. Although giving birth was no longer physically life-threatening, as it had been for many generations of women, the 195Os was a time in which "the masks of motherhood" where firmly in place (Rich 1986:25). As such giving birth might well represent a death threat to the subjectivity of the female speaker. As with Livesay's birth poems, the central subjectivity in these birth poems by Waddington is that of the mother who fears motherhood will involve not physical death but death of the self. The references to dying (SS 25) and being born (SS 25) in "Fables of Birth" suggest the mixed blessing of having a child in a culture which understood the role of mother to be one of tireless caregiver and helpmate. While the

following portion of the poem suggests empathy for the child, for me, danger (SS 25) alludes both to the child and to the mother who first likens him to "[a]ny little stone" which suggests the oppressive weight of the stereotype of all-sacrificing maternity. Two beings, not one, are embodied here. And the mother's unmetaphorical otherness, her rushing waters seem to threaten the child, using the breaking waters of birth metaphorically to express that part of her which is murderously angry at the subjection of motherhood and the endless servitude it will involve. This part of her could "drown without a sorrow."

The poem represents an ambiguity and ambivalence of unresolved contradiction, unsynthesized dialectic. The mother both fears for the "little boy" being born and experiences his weight as a stone. Here is verse 5:

> There was crying in October
> All the dying
> And the difficult being born,
> All the loneliness
> Of the way unknown.
> Ah, those rushing waters
> That would drown without a sorrow
> Any little stone
> Or little boy
> Who was lost and alone.
> It was terrible being born
> And churned and driven
> To an outcome unknown. (SS 25)

We saw in Waddington's early life writing the address to the personified "Dear Unknown." In "Fables of Birth," the unknown is instead a "way unknown" (SS 25) and "an outcome unknown" (SS 25) for a subject engaged in becoming "like other women" in giving birth, while, within poetry, struggling for survival as a being separate from both husband and child (Rich OWB 25). The conclusion of "Fables of Birth" offers a moment of release from "no-feeling" to "clear delight" after the birth. The "run" suggests lyric verse as an alternate world,

present here in a lyric space in which the speaker breaks through to a new state of being (SS 24-25).

As Edna Alford recently asked "[w]ho on earth designated the 'field of battle' as a significant site and the 'field of nurturing' as an insignificant site?" (Alford 12). Waddington's "Poems of Work" extend "the field of nurture," they insist that "nurture" is a fitting subject for modernist verse. Waddington shares this thematic emphasis with Livesay since, in the work I have considered in this chapter, both poets challenge their readers to grapple with the field of nurturing in writing poems about the birth of children from the perspective of the mother, and in writing about children, as well, and in Waddington's case, in writing about social work, a "caring" profession dominated by women. The "Poems of Work" in *The Second Silence* are concerned with investigating the subjectivity of a usually female speaker who is actively involved in trying to heal the suffering and poverty in urban North America. Waddington's experiences as a social worker in Toronto and Montreal in the forties and fifties inform these poems. The work on which they focus is that of "the lady from welfare" (SS 30) commuting from the suburbs. This figure appeared in Waddington's *Green World* and recurs in Waddington's next two books, each of which has a section devoted to social work.[23]

In *The Second Silence* the connection between individual social worker and clients is set in the context of immense need and the finite energy of a worker who is "confused by advertisements/ Engrossed by the hurrying faces" (SS 30). Critics have been divided as to the merit of these poems. Maria Jacobs comments "I am sorry she has not written more about the social problems she knew so well. . . ." (32). These poems are not boring as Tom Wayman claims in a review which stridently dismisses Waddington's early work, while patronizingly praising one or two later lyrics.[24] The social worker is a quintessentially modernist figure, a recorder of a rich ambiguity and ambivalence, "no judge of evil/but [one who] hear[s] how it has a singing life. . ." (SL 29). Where in the first two sections of *The Second Silence*,

mothers are responsive (if ambivalent) caregivers, in "Poems of Work" they are seen waiting for charity/[t]heir hands. . . exposed and eager" (SS 37) or else, as in "Foundling," dead and gone (SS 31). One gathers that beneath the "park" world open to middle class mothers and children "In The Park," and the dream kingdom of "May" in "Wonderful Country," there is a world of dispossessed children.

The dismal situation of the child, the "Myra" of the dedication, resonates within a male dominant culture in which girls' dreams -- the concern of Waddington's poem "Girls" in *Green World* (MWCP 12) -- often have had little correspondence with their circumscribed lives as grown women. "Foundling" is charged with images which suggest a return to the mother and daughter relationship touched on briefly in "You & Me" (SS 4). "Foundling" alludes to the suicide of the mother, and a grim awakening of her female child to a world without her which seems more frightening than fairytale.[25] In "Fables of Birth," "[the] rushing waters" of birth threaten the "little boy/[w]ho was lost alone" (SS 25). In "Foundling," the trauma of the "lost alone"(SS 25) child who lacks nurture is amplified in a female-centred "alphabet of pain" (SS 31). Bruno Bettelheim suggests that fairytale exists to warn us of real dangers we may face. "Foundling" alludes to two cautionary tales: "Red Riding Hood," and "Goldilocks & The Three Bears." "Myra" becomes a "Red riding hood [who awakes] in the arms of the wolf" (SS 31) to find she is unprotected since her mother, the figure of nurture, has disappeared.

Reading this poem one is challenged like the Old Testament dream-reader, David, to interpret a dream. The bridge suggests a site of transition and, conversely, disappearing -- from the bridge -- suggests a failure of Myra's mother to bridge the "transformed subjectivity" which motherhood precipitates (Brandt 4). The "inside" "world" in which "Myra" has been held reminds the reader of the womb-like maternal space of "Green World," but her red scarf is like an umbilicus severed:

> The sparkling river, sugary, spins out
> Its bell, bridge bends to banks and dips
> Its steeples, and her red scarf screams
> In pain, her mother's hand held her
> She was held inside a world, inside,
> And bells rang outside in the snow,
> Then three bears roared
> The rutted road was closed. (SS 31)

The repetition of "inside" foregrounds the mother as having protected her child up to the bridge "inside a world, inside" (SS 31). The "three bears roared" reminds me of Goldilocks who is, as Bettelheim notes, an intruder "most severely punished by the bears which (depending on the version) throw her into the fire, drown her, or drop her off a church steeple" (216). In *The Second Silence*, the bears are reminiscent of the dancing doctors in "Night in October" who sing, rather than "roar" "in chorus" "now die again, yes die, yes die" (SS 23). This symbolically charged allusion to fairytale evokes the nasty fate of "Goldilocks," a little like the female attempting to enter cultural discourse of bearish males who have never welcomed intruders. The bears in the poem roar at the female orphan. She has lost her mother and, like patriarchal culture, the bears do not regard little Myra, as she is, without connections, "as intrinsically valuable or interesting enough to be-friend" (Tong 195). Outside the possibility of her mother's return, "Myra" is beckoned to "come close" to a text which "be-friend[s]" her in telling "the story of [her] loss":

> Come close, lost goldilocks, come close
> And drown your loss, let waves of winter swirl
> And know you've turned
> The first leaf toward your death.
> Later grief will teach
> The alphabet of pain, and when you've grown
> You'll read the story of your loss
> In this white morning, Sunday's frosty bells,
> Bridge toppling and your mother's hand
> Not there, your woe, your woe. (SS 31)

The antiquated "your woe, your woe" with the equally antiquated title "Foundling" suggests a continuity with the past in which, whether in childbirth or by design within fiction, mothers disappear.[26] Rich writes of motherhood as the experience "of living. . . in the rhythms of other lives" (1986:33). "Foundling" is a brief but concentrated lament of a female child's loss of the one who protected and nurtured her. The poem's uneven lines emphasize rupture, foregrounding the broken rhythms of a eulogy to an unknown (not soldier but) mother.

Wounded children are at the centre of the "inner world" (SS 34) of "Journey To The Clinic." In seven linked lyrics the speaker travels from "the white hush of quiet suburb" where she is "licked, possessed, identified" (SS 32) by a neighborhood dog to "the sluggish gray/[o]f Saint Antoine's shore -line" (SS 34) in Montreal. On the way to "the clinic," she is one of a number "sway[ing] like mermaids on these leather straps;" the "crane quarries the city/[a]nd steam shovel spreads a naked, garish claw" (SS 32). The "indifferent builders dredge/[t]he soul of my city" without "mercy" (SS 33). Underwater imagery introduced in the second poem continues in the fourth poem.

The speaker in "Journey To The Clinic" takes us on a journey in which subjectivity of both males and females is diminished before the "machinely humour" of an industrial and uncaring technology. Within the trains all are "[a]nonymous" and the "thirst denied" in the second stanza is answered only by the bitter orphanage in which little children seem linked to the sea imagery of tides and the sandpiper:

> Anonymous, we swim these deeps,
> These whales of misery,
> And through the glass
> Drink bitter orphanage.
> On tides of noise the little children rise
> From playground to day nursery,
> (Through the miles of space
> I hear a sandpiper sing.) (SS 33)

The weaving of this alienated urban subject back into a communal life involves return to a commitment to an unglamorous but vitally necessary caring concerned with what Livesay in "The Mother" called "immediates" (PFP 7) of "children's feet and pee" (SS 34). Although it records the "naked, garish claw" (SS 32) of the mechanized modern city, "Journey To The Clinic" challenges its reader to enter the "inner world" (SS 34) of "the loving brain" (SS 35) needed to care for these "little fish" (SS 34). Both Waddington's and Livesay's poetry in the work discussed in this chapter repeatedly returns to accepting the necessity of "immediates" (PFP 7), inspired repeatedly, as in their earlier work, by inward glimpses of green (SS 35):

> This is no harbour.
> It is instead the place
> Where years of make-do, months of minimums
> And all the world of poor at last have brought you.
> Call up the demons, let them scale the tree
> That waves its flags and flickers green to me
> In my most inward glimpses. (SS 35)

"Good fairy true-heart" evokes the poetic power of an other worldly teacher. Like the fortunate mother in "Three Poems for My Teacher", true-heart exhibits maternal caring without being either birth-mother or bound to a family.

True-heart reads like an emblem of nurture, and, while gender is not an explicit concern here, as compared to scarcity, poverty, "months of minimums," following "Foundling (Myra)," it seems committed to an active caring in an industrial world in which nurture has ceased to be valued. True-heart can be seen as a kind of 'little-light-of-mine' stand-in for nurture and renewal within a industrial culture which has lost its sense of purpose and direction: its'heart. The following passage reads like a cross between a Cold-War fairy tale and a prayer to a white witch with a "transform[ing]" power:

> And may her wand transform
> The evil disease.
> And to all the stricken bones

Bring bandages to light.
Beseech her clever touch
(And more, her loving brain)
Against your clouded dreams
Of injury and wreck. (SS 35)

The evil disease not precisely defined is, in "The Bread We Eat" -- a poem in the final section entitled "Poems of Living" -- related to the chill of Cold War with "bitterness [and] destruction" carried in mind at mid-century "[n]ot early and not late" (SS 39). Within this "strange neutral" (SS 39) appearances belie the underlying threat of nuclear war and that is the subject explored in "Poems about War" and the final poem "Inward Look The Trees." Waddington's poems in the final section of *The Second Silence* return to female subjectivity, whether it is that of the old woman on the bus in "Prayer" (SS 48), or of "The Music Teachers" (SS 53), or in the marvelous poem "Getting Older," which focuses on a woman who "become[s] the red/[p]assionate dictionary" (SS 51) as she enters middle age .

Conclusion

Day and Night and *Poems For People* focus on the lyric "I" of a female who, can be confined by "voices shrill with demand" (in "Small Fry" PFP 8), and yet moves at the end of the latter book, to an increasing emphasis on the use of rhythm and words (in "Okanagan Pictures" through "waterfall[s]") (PFP 34). In Livesay's work, there are shifts out of female subjectivity -- noted particularly in *Day and Night* , but also present in the briefer lyrics in *Poems For People* -- toward a poetry of and for the liberal humanist "Man" with his "building heart, his shaping soul" (PFP 17). However, one notes that while male subjectivity commands sympathy in both books, it is often presented in compromised terms of dependence: in early childhood as in "Preludium" and "Carnival," or, as in "Sonnets For A Soldier" in the

recognition of "man's undertakings. . . after a sorry lapse" (PFP 2O) cast into relief after war. The two genders interweave throughout Livesay's two books of the forties and are present, again, in her *Selected Poems*. With poems like "Serenade For Strings," and "The Mother" she moves towards explicit feminism. However, more oblique and difficult poems such as "Fantasia" and "Five Poems" challenge their reader to a more nuanced exploration of subjectivity in which the female is present as equal through application of an ambiguity which, thanks to a skilled adaptation of modernist form, belongs to Livesay as poet as much as it belongs to any Canadian male modernist poet.

Livesay's poems to her two children present a female subjectivity which reaches beyond all the cliches of motherhood to challenge her children and all her readers to reconsider patriarchal myths of origin in "Serenade for Strings" and oppressive gender codes (in "Five Poems"). Although she wrote about motherhood, for Livesay, as for Adrienne Rich, the lyric poem was a space where the "I" of the speaker fights, first of all, for female subjectivity, and through that fight, for the female poet's poem, and her own writing life.

In Waddington's *The Second Silence*, female subjectivity is linked to an exploration and growth of a female-centred poetics. Although maternal care serves as an ideal infused with poetic power in Waddington's work, mothers are not essentialized beings. They include the fallible mother in "You & Me," the gifted and childless teacher in "Three Poems for My Teacher," the mother in labour in "Night in October," the mother who jumps off the bridge in "Foundling," and "Good fairy true-heart" (SS 35).

Both poets wrote about the birth of children and motherhood in a manner which emphasized female ambivalence about motherhood as a socially-constructed role. Waddington's poetry had a more consistent focus on female subjectivity than did Livesay's in *Day and Night* and *Poems For People* and it seems that her reputation may have suffered for this reason. The well known premise that her work lacks intellectual content emphasizes the inability of critics of this period,

and our own, to consider the intellectual challenge of a female-centred ethics of caring which I have argued is explored in *The Second Silence*. I have also noted that from the first poems in The Second Silence it is clear that the speaker within these lyrics is accutely aware of gender as an issue. 'Woman' is no longer available in these poems as divining rod. She is, instead, seen in many different lyric stances, most of which insist on female-centred ambivalence and ambiguity which I, following DeKoven, find in the Canadian modernism of both Livesay and Waddington.

For both poets, maternity represented a water-shed. It was an experience out of which they wrote some of their most compelling and challenging yet, up till now, curiously overlooked work. As mothers and poets during the late modernist period, they were involved in a struggle to juggle motherhood -- as the full time responsibility it was considered to be in most middle class circles during the post-war period -- with part-time paid work, and with continuing to write poetry. I opened this chapter quoting the question addressed to the subject in Waddington's "Night in October," "'Are you there, are you there/Are you there?" As the second wave of modernism drew to a close, the question hung in the air. Women had been "there" as mothers, as poets, as teachers. But would successive generations recognize Livesay's and Waddington's struggle to negotiate female subjectivity within the Canadian modernist lyric? For the female subject to be "there" in the text, the contemporary reader has, ultimately, to reread the question -- directed as it is to a female "you" too often neglected in our recent literary history of modernism -- to answer the "outcome unknown" (SS 35), to say yes.

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[1] Whereas critics such as Gilbert and Gubar have studied the middle class nineteenth century idealization of the maternal 'Angel of the House,' cultural historian Janice Newton is concerned with a duplicitous idealization of maternity in Canada during the twentieth century. Newton writes: The simultaneous idealization and denigration of women's work -- and mothering is often seen as a central component of women's work -- has been a striking and pervasive development in twentieth century culture which we must view with skepticism. From the outset, I reject the notion

that a concern for maternal or domestic issues is inherently nonradical" (10).

[2] Miriam Waddington, Unpublished letter to Laura McLauchlan, 1994.

[3] Royce notes "Post war expectations revealed distinct divergence, even conflict, between the attitudes of men and the intentions of women with respect to employment" (108). Writing in 1957, she notes that "a lingering uncertainty as to the place of the occupational component of women's role creates tensions within both individual women and society as a whole"(108). Kaledin notes the post-war period was dominated by a deceptive idealization of motherhood which Betty Frieden would characterize as "the feminine mystique": "On the surface" there seemed to be a "glorification of motherhood, but in fact mothering was so denigrated that women who gave their serious energies to it for any period of time were considered unfit to do anything else"(48).

[4] David Arnason comments on Florence Randal Livesay's use of "modern forms" for her loosely rendered translations: *Songs of Ukrania with Ruthenian Poems* (1916). He notes she "was a follower of new movements in poetry. . . . She was also a subscriber and a contributor to *Poetry* (Chicago) and knew Harriet Monroe." (8)

[5] In *Journey With My Selves* Livesay states: "My mother was torn between her very traditional, conservative, provincial, Protestant upbringing and her desire to become a person in her own right. . ." while her father "became more and more authoritarian: a traditional father figure to whom his children and staffers were expected to look for guidance." (52)

[6] I am referring to the letter she sent to her mother from Paris suggesting introductory quotations for *Green Pitcher* from Woolf's *Room of One's Own*. However, there is one passage in her girlhood journals which considers Woolf as the same kind of threat as "Mother" does within the play.

[7] Miriam Waddington in a taped interview with Laura McLauchlan. 1992.

[8] The passage is from the third stanza of "In The Park" in which the mother contemplates her son. (SS18).

[9] For example, John Lehmann notes : "I was haunted by the feeling that time was running out for a new world war. 'How to get out of this trap?' I noted in my journal at the time. 'How to find sanity and clear thought again? How to defend oneself, to be active, not to crouch paralysed as the hawk descends? But there must be hundreds, thousands like myself. . .wrestling with this nightmare."*The Whispering Gallery* (139). Quoted by Hynes (176).

[10] The dedication is on the opening page.

[11] Rather than finding Day Lewis objectified her sex, Livesay celebrated his balance of political engagement with a return to subjectivity in verse. She dedicates "The Outrider" to Day Lewis and credits his poetry, with Auden's and Spender's as convincing her in the mid-thirties to return to the lyric "I."

[12] *From Feathers To Iron* repeatedly addresses "my son, my daughter" (47) suggesting the consideration of a child of either sex, yet through pregnancy the female becomes an object perceived as losing her beauty to the child while the male speaker gives birth to the text: this second birth is

celebrated with the last poem, titled "Letter to W.H. Auden": in it women are, with young boys, reduced to floral objects which belong at the male poets' feet. "Daffodils now, the pretty debutantes,/Are curtsying at the first court of the year! Their schoolgirl smell unmans the young lechers. You/Preferred I remember, the plump boy, the crocus/Enough of that. They only lie at your feet. The inference is that, in the end, although "The Mother" makes babies, the real glory goes to male poets, the young of both sexes at their feet: because they make books.

[13] Hutchison quotes this article in her dissertation (111).

[14] C. Day Lewis celebrated flight "in 1934 his 'symphonic' poem, 'A Time To Dance'," published in *The Magnetic Mountain* (Hynes 188). Hynes notes that for poets like C. Day Lewis and others "[t]he first World War had destroyed the traditional British ideal of heroism in battle, but there was still the air, there were still mountains, and these offered metaphors for the challenge and danger of individual action, and the possibility of heroism" (188). Livesay quotes from *The Magnetic Mountain* at the start of "The Outrider."

[15] The poem is not included in *The Self Completing Tree*.

[16] Luke 1:26-38. The angel Gabriel announced to the Virgin Mary that she would be the mother of the Messiah. The fact that this title appears neither in *Day and Night* nor in *Collected Poems* may suggest a dissatisfaction with the expectation of a male child. The dedication "To Marcia" is missing in *Selected Poems* (1972), where the first poem is cut, but present again, with the first poem of four stanzas restored, in *Collected Poems*.

[17] Hutchison refers to the quotation in a letter written by E.J. Pratt to Dorothy Livesay, 26 June, 1944, Dorothy Livesay Correspondence, Douglas Library Archives, Queen's University.

[18] There was a significant debate on the role of the "native" and the "cosmopolitan" in Canadian poetry in the 1940s. See Len Early's "A Public and Private Voice" in *English Studies in Canada*, XIV.1 (Mar 1988, 112-118).

[19] The first stanza of "Wedlock" reads: "Flesh binds us, makes us one/And yet in each alone/I hear the battle of the bone:/A thousand ancestors have won" (DLSP 76).

[20] See Susan A. MacDaniel, "The Changing Canadian Family: Women's Role and the Impact of Feminism," *Changing Patterns : Women in Canada*, "In the post-war period , women returned to housework and motherhood, leaving the jobs in the labour force they had held during the war. . . the efforts of the Parliamentary Sub-committee on the Post-war Problems of Women. . . The propaganda of the day pictured women at home and strong families as hedges against another war or as ballast in the Cold War" (106).

[21] "The image of Saint Teresa of Avila's *Interior Castle* was the one Jean Stafford chose in compiling one of the most distinguished short story collections (about women) of the decade" (Kaledin 141).

[22] "The golden peacock flew & flew/across all the seas/remember me you golden bird/to my beloved loving mother." Miriam Waddington translated three variant versions from the Yiddish, sent to Laura McLauchlan March, 1995.

[23] In *Season's Lovers* this section of poems is entitled "To Be A Healer."
[24] He comments: "It is difficult now not to be bored with the careful encapsulating into rhyme of the passions and anguish of a social worker in the 40's and 50's, and of the lives of those she was in contact with" (85). Past this comment Wayman's article makes no significant effort to engage with Waddington's early work. Far from being boring and irrelevant, these poems deserve a study in themselves raising, as they do, the question of the moral responsibility of the individual within industrial culture.
[25] Waddington told me, in a March 1995 call I made to her in Vancouver, that "Foundling" was written about a child who remembered her mother's death.
[26] See Di Brandt on missing mothers in nineteenth century novels (5).

Conclusion: An Alphabet for a New World

Looking back over Canadian poetry, Earle Birney surmised "that a land which has grown up in conformity can only with great difficulty produce artists able to break with the conventional" (23). Part of the excitement of Canadian modernism is the formal break with "the conventional" in poetry, a break which must have suggested all kinds of new possibilities not only for writing but also, even more broadly, for living one's life. Male and female poets of the period shared the excitement of making poetry "new." Nevertheless the early lyric work of both Livesay and Waddington is also significantly different from that of their male contemporaries. In focusing on the early life writing and poetry of Livesay and Waddington, my aim has been to explore the manner in which their early work grew out of a poetics which was rebellious from its inception in placing female, not male, subjectivity at the centre of both life writing and modernist verse.

As I noted in the introduction, scholarly works like Suzanne Clark's *Sentimental Modernism* and Gilbert's and Gubar's *No Man's Land* establish that male gender bias was present among writers in the United States and England during the first half of the twentieth century. It was also part of the period in Canada. As female poets, both Livesay and Waddington had to contend with a pervasive and yet rarely explicit bias against women as modernist poets. From my perspective, their most significant work in this period explored the gender bias of their own time. Part of the exploration involved coming to terms with the altered sense of the role of the woman as part of a heterosexual couple. Waddington's "Interval;" which begins *The Second Silence* (1955), emphasizes that the female is no longer an eternal other. In "Interval" the familiar markers of a modernist poem are in place: there is reference to fragmentation and dislocation. The poem insists on the brokenness of a unified sense of the world with ". . . self in a thousand pieces/All separate and disjointed" (MWCP

17). But the focus is on the male at the moment that his essentialist notions of woman as "divining rod" break apart (MWCP 17). This disintegration occurs between a "change of trains." Within Waddington's poem, the female's apparent inability to fulfill the male's illusions of her concludes with the cliched "lonely road/That each one travels with his suffering." Yet, something more significant than renewed solitude occurs within the poem: the female is no longer held in place as objectified source "where all the treasure's hidden" (MWCP 17). 'She' becomes a fellow traveller.

The image of the female, as equal and fellow traveller, is significant in the writing of both Livesay and Waddington during the second wave of modernism. In her first two books of modernist poetry, Livesay characteristically pictures the female speaker either held to her room as in "Staccato," or contemplating the male's return as in "City Wife," who states that "even as the tree, I wait" (CPDL 45), or, like a ghost, held to a "House" unable to leave as in "Farewell" (CPDL 5O). However, in *Day and Night* and *Poems For People*, the speaker is a citizen of the world with laments such as "Lorca" (CPDL 125-127) and meditation on the intersection of international politics in the lives of two lovers "In Time of War": "It seemed no time for love, when the hands/Idled in the empty pockets and coffee was five cents a cup" (CPDL 169). The interval between Dorothy Livesay's first two books, in which women wait and meditate, and the second two, where the female is drawn from reclusive postures to engage with a changed world, seems most marked.

In Waddington's first book *Green World* (1945) I noted the repeated emphasis on an "I" linked to motion. Her poems begin "When I step out. . ." and "I travel. . ." (MWCP 1) ". . . I stride," "I send you the message. . ." (MWCP 3). One's sense of a wayfaring "I" is immediate and persistant. But in her second book, *The Second Silence*, the images become more complex, and females, even when figured as "I" in the birth poems, seem less immediately present. "Night in October," written to commemorate the birth of her first son

Marcus in 1946, begins not with a bold statement such as one finds in *Green World* but in parenthesis "(The dream the dream, where did it begin?. . . ." (MWCP 28). There seems, as I reread, an added complexity of thought about subjectivity -- whether male or female -- reflected in the more complex syntax of the *The Second Silence*. In *The Second Silence* female subjectivity is explored with reference to difference: the orphaned daughter in "Foundling" (MWCP 34-35), women commuting to work "sway like mermaids" in "Journey to the Clinic" (MWCP 33-35), and "The Music Teachers" (MWCP 44-45), the lonely woman in "Childless" (MWCP 31), these figures provide an imaginative frame for the central lyric speaker, the "I" in the process of giving birth, the "I in my torment" in "Night in October" (MWCP 28) and the "I" asserting "my own pattern" in "You and Me" (MWCP 18). The reader encounters a blurr of figures on a whirlwind tour of an urban landscape in which the greatest challenge may be to stay put and meet "the new moment" (MWCP 30). The dreamy lyrical voice repeatedly asking "Was she real?" and "(is she real?)" seems to be meditating that even interesting and autonomous women like the music teachers lack reality within their own culture (MWCP 44-46). In "Night in October," the speaker is summoned back to the world by a "far away. . . voice" which asks: "Are you there, are you there/Are you there?" (MWCP 29). The question is not so different to "(is she real?)" in that, in both instances, what is questioned involves not so much the fact of physical existence but the inquiry about the lesser known sense of "you" and "she" as spiritual beings. In "Getting Older," vivid presence is manifest in a metaphor which suggests the speaker's access to "[a] world of undone acts." The "little sparrow space/That is inside and near" suggests Dickinson, but the "[p]lain and homely" of the stereotypically female "inside and near" are altered by the first verse in which the speaker is:

> Full of scattered words and wider meanings
> Hidden synonyms
> A world of undone acts, of tremblings, leanings
> And unassembled limbs. (MWCP 44)

For this speaker, language is the means of spelling a new self "full of scattered words and wider meanings/Hidden synonyms" (MWCP 44). In Livesay's *Day and Night* and *Poems For People*, and in Waddington's *Second Silence*, female speakers are no longer appendages of males. They may speak in "an alphabet of pain," but they spell out their doubt and their ambivalence in texts which give female subjectivity a central place.

In this dissertation I have focused on their early writing principally because I wanted to explore their early focus on female subjectivity in the context of Canadian modernist poetry. Diana Relke's doctoral dissertation dealt with "female identity" in Livesay's early poetry. However Relke was not interested, as I have been, in placing Livesay as a modernist. Although Waddington's poetry has had less recent critical attention, critics such as Peter Stevens and Maria Jacobs have tended to divide "public" from "private" without reflecting that, from a feminist perspective, these two categories create a false binary. The "public" has been considered the masculine domain, and in her poetry up to 1955, Waddington, more than Livesay, tended to stay with a female-centred perspective. And since it is female-centred, much of Waddington's poetry has been categorized as "private." This may, in fact, be one hitherto unrecognized reason that, up till this point, it has had little critical attention.

My purpose has been to consider Livesay's and Waddington's contribution as modernists and after the mid-fifties the energy of that movement diminished while, in the sixties, there was a wave of new publishing of poetry in Canada. I cannot suggest, in concluding, that I have told anything like the whole story about the poetry of Dorothy Livesay and Miriam Waddington. I especially admire the fact that they have had long and accomplished careers as poets. In middle and old age they continued to grow in poetic stature. They perservered in claiming a heritage which was rooted in Canada while responding to a period of unparalleled change.

As was glimpsed in Chapter Three, the sixties was a time of regrouping for both poets. With Livesay's return from Zambia in 1963, she later remarked in an interview "I thought I was done for as a writer" (Stevens 64). Yet much of her best work remained to be written in *The Unquiet Bed* (1967), *Plainsongs* (1969), *Ice Age* (1975), along with collections such as *The Woman I Am* (1977), *Collected Poems: The Two Seasons* (1972), *The Self-Completing Tree* (1986). Waddington, too, produced significant work in later books such as *The Glass Trumpet* (1966), *The Price of Gold* (1972), *Driving Home: Poems New and Selected* (1972), and *The Visitants* (1981).

As noted in the discussion of the correspondence, Livesay urged Waddington to write more criticism, and, as if in eventual response, Waddington's pioneering critical study of Klein, and her editions of Klein's poetry, as well as *John Sutherland: essays, controversies and poems* were published in the seventies. In Waddington's published criticism, gender does not become an explicit issue until the eighties with essays such as "Bias" (1983) and "Women and Writing" (1987) found in *Apartment Seven: Essays Selected and New* (1989). Gender is an evident concern in Livesay's *Right Hand, Left Hand* (1977) as well as in *Journeys With My Selves* (1991). Their early unpublished life writing adds to the feminist analysis which occurs in these later works. It provides readers a more extensive sense of how a feminist critique of self and society emerged from their own lives.

Life writing helped me gain access to what I referred to as the "underneath stories" (Walkerdine) that Livesay and Waddington told in unpublished journals and letters. The dreams they recorded in their journals manifest the compelling attraction of romantic love, though both recognized its dangers to them as aspiring female writers. Ambivalence and ambiguity are, as I have argued, not only general descriptive terms which apply to modernist writing, they also apply specifically to the manner in which female subjectivity is treated in these two writers' early life writing about gender.

This perspective on Canadian modernism arises from an emancipatory feminism at the end of the twentieth century, and, as such, my project is different from the one which preoccupied Livesay and Waddington as they approached mid-century. Livesay and Waddington sought equality with men but their own literary community of critics and poets did not yet tend to recognize the validity of a systematic critique of patriarchy. It is significant to recall that *New Frontiers* -- the magazine Livesay was active in writing for during the mid-thirties -- published early articles on the situation of Canadian women. Lee Briscoe Thompson notes that Livesay repeatedly proposed articles on "women's status in Canada" in the forties, but these articles were repeatedly rejected as "too negative and generalized" (48). What Livesay was ready to write few in her culture were ready to hear. But, as noted above, even as they sought to break with diminishing convention, both Livesay and Waddington were also influenced by the kind of pervasive gender-bias which led critics like John Crowe Ransom to hold forth on the differences between men and women. Livesay's poetry of the thirties and forties is particularly expressive of a kind of doubleness in which "man" and "mankind" are referred to as the repository of universal values, while female subjectivity seems both at various points muted, silenced, and as in "Five Poems" for Marcia, explored in an oblique manner.

This dissertation has represented a reading of these poets which is constructed rather than 'discovered;' though the construction has been based on what I found in close readings of the early life writing and the books of both writers. My own focus has led me to resist readings of the modernist period which seem to have considered women poets as pretty much 'out of the picture.' I believe, with Bronwen Wallace, that poetry can challenge its readers to change, that both as readers and as writers "we are not totally determined by, bespoken by a culture in which we live" (243). I do not believe that either Livesay or Waddington would contest this position. However, they have written of the period in different terms. They have

tended to write of "the modern," rather than modernism, and neither of them, of course, thought of "I" as the female subject, or of letters and journals as 'life writing' before these critical terms came into usage. This critical terminology has come into usage with a new generation.

In finishing this dissertation I am grateful to have explored their movement away from "hegemonic femininity" (Hogue 73) within their journals and letters to each other as well as books of poetry. Central to my argument has been the transformative poetics of an evolving feminism which I found represented in Livesay and Waddington's work in ambivalent and transitional terms. As poets they were never confined, as I have been, to a central argument. Although I do not like to impose a ready-made grid when I read texts, there has, no doubt been, some imposition of argument upon texts for which other readings are certainly possible.

In their work, I found both enigmas I shared with them as well as differences which seemed related to period. I could not write of "man" and "mankind" as they and their generation had. For better and worse my contemporary, Rhea Tregebov, writes of a much different collective "we," at the end of *The Proving Grounds* (1991):

> . . .the architect is
>   vanished,
> the buildings infinitely automatic. Facade, trademark, decor, menu
> maniacally repeated till we don't know where we stand--
> which side are you on? The videologo grin: *What need?*
> Till we lose track of which interchangeable self we have become.
> Our real life always elsewhere. (74)

Livesay's and Waddington's liberal humanist emphasis in writing about "mankind" and "man" belongs to Canada at mid-century during the second wave of modernism. The current period at the end of the twentieth century is one in which few female poets would write unselfconsciously of "mankind" and yet as the above excerpt from Tregebov's poem makes

clear a collective "we," variously constituted, remains at the troubled and troubling centre of many poems.

Livesay's two Governor General award winning books of the forties, *Day and Night* and *Poems For People* were justly praised for their commitment to a larger world. But today with the "architect. . .vanished" (Tregebov 74) their liberal humanist emphasis on "mankind" and "man", seems dated. In their engagement with other social issues both poets struggled to get beyond gender. More than most contemporary Canadian poets, Livesay and Waddington made reference to a spirit of internationalism. Part of their commitment to poetry was a shared commitment to something larger than the individual, whether male or female. One sees this commitment in poems such as Dorothy Livesay's "Day and Night" and "Lorca;" poems which have been written about quite widely and which I chose not to consider because they were not concerned with my own particular line of interest in the dissertation.

When I began writing this dissertation I tended to see life writing and books of poetry as very much distinct. For me the "I" of the life writing referred to a particular life, but the "I" of the lyric was always other. I saw that the post-structuralist emphasis on the separation of what Paul Smith called "the human agent" from "different subject positions" (xxxiv) as useful, and, I wanted to map-out a clear division of autobiographical "I" and lyric "I." That way I hoped I would escape accusations of theoretical unsophistication. As I proceeded with the dissertation, the distinctions between "I" as the self in life writing, and "I" as another in poetry remained but I was increasingly aware that both these "I"'s were linguistic markers of a subjectivity which could represent fiction in life writing, and conversely might well (on occasion) be auto-biographically accurate in poetry.

At the end of this dissertation -- having spent so long reading work from the first half of the twentieth century -- I return to the late twentieth century as if from the past. I realize that the books I have studied are now collector's items long out of print. As these poets and their

generation die, the record of the literary history of English Canadian modernism will inevitably change. I noted David Arnason's call for revision of the period in my introduction. Arnason argues that "[h]istory is always in need of revision as additional facts become available and as different perspectives and visions inform the people who interpret it" (5). My analysis suggests a "different perspective" linked to a feminist rereading of the female Canadian modernists. Arnason does not, to my knowledge, identify himself as a feminist and yet judging from his lists of overlooked modernist poets, he has seen that the work of women writers, most notably Dorothy Livesay, has been neglected, while the significance of early student work of A.J.M. Smith and F.R. Scott has been exaggerated. It is now up to those of us who share this perception to revise the record of English-Canadian poetry during the modernist period.

The works of other modernist women poets such as P.K. Page and Margaret Avison deserve further attention. As I write this, I can hear Waddington's voice over lunch two years ago briskly advising me "don't forget Anne Marriott either, Laura. At the time, everybody knew her long poem 'The Wind Our Enemy.' People used to repeat lines of it" (Taped Interview: Autumn1994). In 1995, this poem of Marriott's was reprinted with poems by Livesay and Waddington and many other writers of the modernist period in *Sealed In Struggle: Canadian Poetry & the Spanish Civil War*. The volume provides a useful introductory essay by Nicola Vulpe which emphasizes the importance of radical political commitment to the development of Canadian modernism. As I have noted, both Livesay and Waddington were involved with the pressing social issues of the thirties and forties. Having focused on their writing with respect to female subjectivity, which is, after all, only one aspect of their work, I am also pleased to find their poetry anthologized by editors approaching Canadian poetry from an entirely different direction.

One of the pleasures in making this study has come from reading unpublished drafts of poems and letters. The letters I was able to include in one chapter of the dissertation, the drafts of poems fall outside the parameters of this work. My focus has been upon poems as they appear in specific books. However, I would like to give one glimpse into the archival drafts of poems I read by Waddington. As already noted, Waddington edited Sutherland's essays and poetry. So close was Sutherland's connection to the making of modernist poetry in Canada that Dudek and Gnarowski dedicated *The Making of Modern Poetry* to him. In her unpublished papers I found a number of drafts of her eulogy for John Sutherland which were more autobiographically based, and, for me, at least, more compelling than the published version. Here is a fragment never before published:

> He'll dream no more of me but pray he sleep
> White as the whale bone furrowed by the sea,
> Sing him a silence which I too will keep
> to grave
> Smooth as the pebble of necessity
> Separate he was, and separate must be. (WPNA, File Notebook: 1955-1959)

There is a wonderful photograph Sutherland took of Waddington in 1945 in the Public Archives. Sutherland is buried in Lockeport, Nova Scotia about fifteen miles from our summer home. He and Waddington exchanged many letters but none have survived (AS 34). The "silence" between friends and lovers of this period in Canadian letters is all but complete, and the loss is ours.

Livesay and Waddington have both left published memoirs which recall the period in female-centred terms. From these works it is clear that both have cared deeply for Canadian poetry. A revised literary history of Canadian modernist poets might well now be written. From my own feminist perspective, such a literary history would emphasize the participation of

women poets with the men while including fresh readings of selected poems which comment in some way on gender and culture. Such a project would surely make the whole modernist period in Canadian poetry more compelling to contemporary readers, and less a matter of an all-male assembly for whom [only] styles seemed to change.

Sutherland's voice is evocative enough when he speaks of a collective "we" which, one assumes -- because he both published and reviewed women -- includes Waddington, Marriott, Livesay, and Page as well as male poets. The "gesture" of which Sutherland speaks in the following quotation is specifically about the role of the little magazine but can also apply to the question of the relevance of Canadian modernist poets, or, of writing about the history of Canadian poetry:

> Someone will say that we will be talking in a vacuum to ourselves alone, and be making gestures that have references to nothing. It does not seem to us an unreasonable criticism. In the present stage of Canadian literature, a gesture would appear to be important. A display of activity may symbolize a future, and plant a suggestion in someone's mind (21).

Sutherland and his contemporaries believed in their own Canadian poetry as an expression of both individual "identity" and cultural connection. If traditional verse had been a matter of male elites, then modernist poetry within Canada might represent a transgressive moment for the female poet to commit herself, as Livesay did, to the premise that within Canada, "literature," and more specifically poetry, could be "the most important thing in the world" (AS 20).

In reading the introductory prefaces drafted for *New Provinces: Poems By Several Authors*, one is struck by the repeated emphasis placed by Scott and Smith on the role of the "modern" poet as leader who is quintessentially male. The traditional Canadian poet is characterized by Smith in terms of stereotypical female attributes, "the victim of his feelings. . ." with "a soft heart and a soft soul; and a soft head" (xxviii). By contrast, the "modern" male poet has moved smartly away from "the bulk of Canadian verse" with its thematics of nature

and love, since "he" is part of a new world, "a man of sense" with "something more important to do than record his private emotions" (A.J.M. Smith xxxi). In "following in the path of the more significant poets in England and the United States," female Canadian poets such as Livesay and Waddington had a mixed inheritance. In their life writing, they began to formulate a female-centred poetics which they brought to bear on Canadian poetry throughout long and significant careers as Canadian poets. What Smith might well have dismissed as "a record of. . . private emotions," I represent as the beginning of a gendered critique of the place of the female subject in the modernist lyric poetry. And in a broader sense, rather than considering Canadian modernism as a kind of remedial provincial movement, a mere copying of the great innovative men from elsewhere -- whether London, Paris, or New York -- I suggest that it is a heterogeneous movement composed of conflicting influences. Livesay, Waddington, and other female poets were active contributors to the renegotiation of female subjectivity which extends to an affirmation of women's agency in claiming their own "alphabet" in a changed world.

Afterword: "the key to ongoing"

As Woolf reflects in *A Room Of One's Own* "we think back through our mothers if we are women" (76). Before finishing this work I want to reflect on the autobiographical aspect of female subjectivity: first of all on Livesay's and Waddington's connection to their prairie childhoods, and their own mothers, and then on my meetings with them in the course of my research. In the second part of this "Afterword," I make a tangible connection between my interest in female subjectivity and my own mother and grandmothers. Because women of my own family initiated my fascination with female subjectivity, I want to make them visible as I finish this dissertation.

Livesay and Waddington wrote of the prairie which I knew growing up in Brandon and Winnipeg. I remember when I first read their poems as a teenager, I felt that their words welcomed me both as a female reader and a Western Canadian, creating a place of origin that seemed vital as the biblical stories of Genesis: but in this case females were the central subjects. So it was that Livesay's *Poems for People* opened with "Reared on snow she was/Manacled in ice/Ten frostbound winters of her life" (PFP 1); and in Waddington's "Saints and Others," I read "I was once proud and/loved myself I lived/five thousand feet/above sea level loved/my prairie city and the wild/windscattered rose/and no one read the sky/so clear as I" (MWCP 77).

For me both poets' work offers vibrant responses to Kroetsch's question in *Seed Catalogue*: "How do you grow a poet?" As the author of a book of poetry (*Lacuna* 198O) I have wondered about the "grow[ing]" of a female poet. Livesay writes in the last stanza of the long poem "From Roots" in *Trace: Prairie Writers on Writing* (1986):

> I walk beside you where I grew
> amongst
> the flowers
> and retain

in the scent of the sweet-pea
my mother's scissors, snipping
in the musk of nasturtium
my father's thumbs, pressing

heart planted then
and never transplanted. (37)

In this dissertation I have frequently noted the affiliation between the poetry loving mother and her daughter "Dorothy." As Pamela Banting's "Daddy's Girl" makes abundantly clear, other readings of the Livesay family romance are certainly possible. While I stressed female connection in this dissertation I knew, at the same time, that Waddington had felt oppressed by her mother's "unfocused rebellion," and was closer to her father, and that Livesay, too, had a close connection with her father for whom she wrote the moving eulogy "Lament" (1957: 59) and "Heritage" (CPDL 348).

In her last volume of poetry, *The Last Landscape* (1992) Waddington's "The Snow Tramp," the first poem in the volume, focuses on a family romance in which the parents play opposed roles: father represents order and obligation, while mother represents personal anarchy and song. In the last verse one finds the mother's "soul" "wrapped like a gift" for the daughter who remembers "her gypsy tunes." The mother has been off alone tramping through the snow in a Northend Winnipeg Park. Her husband upbraids the "Snow Tramp" on her return because she has not attended to her familial duties. Here is the final stanza:

My father scolded,
but my mother's soul
was far away
wrapped like a gift
in stars and snow,
and all night long
her gypsy tunes sang
and danced in the wind
around our house. (2)

At the start of the dissertation, I noted that there is an ancient association of lyric with song. The "Snow Tramp"'s "tunes" surround her family; song is her lasting gift. Although she has written little poetry for her mother, Livesay manifests her memories of her maternal grandmother in "Green Rain." This poem, too, is an expression of what Naomi Lowinsky calls the "mother-line" connecting one generation of women with another: "Mothers who are also daughters, daughters who have become mothers; grandmothers who also remain granddaughters" (Lowinsky 2).

The struggle between father and mother is a recurrent element in Livesay's poetry and life writing. Livesay published a fragment of a letter from her father in her memoirs. Her father wrote Dorothy when she was a student in France in 1930:

> [T]he crown of my achievement is that both Sophie and you can go your ways -- your artistic ways -- without my snout-sniffing in barren lands. . . . Your poor mother never had an aspiration beyond pretty-pretty. (JWMS 37)

The comment about "your poor mother" seems both cruel, and very much of its time. As David Perkins notes in *A History of Modern Poetry: From the 1890's to the High Modernist Mode* many of the leading poets of the period such as Yeats, Pound, and Eliot, "took up arms against unimportant prettiness'" (209). In the Livesay family, the personal and the literary were never far apart.

As numerous feminist writers have commented, the acceptance of denigration of one's own mother is a well entrenched part of patriarchal culture. As Andrea O'Reilly states in her doctoral dissertation on Toni Morrison, "[t]he cultural devaluation and subordination of mothers and mothering gives rise to mother-blame" (26). In her memoirs Livesay records the "mother-blame" in her own family with a marked ambivalence. Her poem "F.R.L." which appears in *Dorothy Livesay Selected Poems: The Self Completing Tree* (1986) is markedly different to the two elegiac poems for her father which both focus on the close relationship

between father and daughter. "F.R.L." is also a eulogy, but its emphasis is not upon lamenting a loss. Although she is not identified as a mother anywhere in the poem, the initials "F.R.L" direct our attention to Livesay's mother Florence Randal Livesay. The aged woman is "[l]ast seen at Vancouver station" (106). With this first line one senses not the certainty of this woman's demise but, rather, the possibility of her escape from ". . being alone/with hyacinths in spring hugging a shaky table"(106). "F.R.L."'s one line in the poem,"*I'm looking forward to this journey*," suggests a forward looking response to life. It is "F.R.L"'s parting gift. The word "journey" reappears in the title of Livesay's memoirs *Journey With My Selves*. In the last stanza of the eulogy to her mother the journey with the self is "key" :

> Nothing ahead,
> but she had mastered the lock,
> in her hooked and freckled fingers
> held the key to ongoing. (106)

Like the mother in Waddington's "The Snow Tramp," the mother in "F.R.L." leaves her daughter a gift of moving alone, a "key to ongoing."

Both Livesay and Waddington had a difficult time in coming to terms with their mothers, and with being mothers themselves. I knew this from my archival research. I also knew from their life writing that the mother-daughter relationship was not the straight-forward positive connection which I had somewhat naively wished to discover. In fact, despite knowing the record of mother-daughter conflict, I still find myself inclined to stress any help which I knew these mother gave their daughters. Both poets seem to recognize their mother's gift to them in the late poems I have mentioned. I hope that "The Snow Tramp" and "F.R.L" help to exemplify the ways in which to paraphrase Waddington in "The Golden Eye," "poem[s] know more than the poet" (1986).

Increased familiarity with birth poems by Livesay and Waddington enriches my own sense of a female-centred writing on motherhood in contemporary Canadian poetry by Libby Scheier, Di Brandt, Bronwen Wallace, Daphne Marlatt, Marlene Nourbese Philip, Rhea Tregebov, Nadine McInnis and others. Livesay and Waddington did not make the familial obligations of women seem like a particularly joyful experience. Livesay's representation of "The Mother" is of a woman who can neither "walk" nor "think alone" (PFP 7). It is, however, important to note that once they became mothers they did not actually write a great deal about the experience of mothering. Instead, their poetry seemed to assert a space for the female speaker to resume her dialogue with herself and the world.

In 199O, I gave birth to my son, Lauchlan and ten months of immersion in motherhood gave me time to "frame" a dissertation proposal. I reread Livesay's and Waddington's avant-garde poems about the birth of their children with sharpened interest. At that point, I decided to stretch the frame of my dissertation to include the second-wave of Canadian modernism up to Waddington's *The Second Silence* (1955). My discussion has considered the dissonant meeting of Livesay's and Waddington's modernist lyrics and the self-consciously situated, lived experience of motherhood. Di Brandt, though a poet herself, chose to focus on maternal narrative in works of prose in *Wild Mother Dancing: Maternal Narrative in Canadian Literature* (1993). She does not mention Canadian poetry. Her *Mother, Not Mother: Poetry* is prefaced with a birth poem by her contemporary Libby Scheier. It would be useful to have a study of "Wild Mother[s]" in English Canadian poetry.

Rather than "Wild Mother[s]" feminist philosopher Mary Daly writes in a recent article that women must be "pirates" in a still-patriarchal culture. In her words:

> . . . we must Smuggle back to other women our Plundered treasures (sic). In order to invent strategies that will be big and bold enough for the next millennium, it is crucial that women share our experiences: the chances we have taken and the choices that have kept us alive. They are my Pirate's battle cry and wake-up call. . . . (76)

For me, "treasures" would have to include the lives and writings of previous generations of women. I do not see myself as "plunder[ing]" from patriarchy, but, rather, recognizing value in work which a patriarchal reading would often enough simply discard.

Meeting each poet was important to me. While taking an evening course in poetry with Patrick Lane at the University of Manitoba in 1979, I regularly walked by Livesay's office at St. John's College, where she was Writer in Residence. I regret that I never encountered her then. When I did meet Livesay in 1992 in Victoria, we spent only an hour together. She was suffering from short-term memory losses and she forbade me to take notes as we spoke. She complained that no one in the nursing home where she was newly arrived seemed to care that she was a poet. The cleaning staff sometimes brushed letters which she received into the trash. It was good of her to see me at all. As I was about to leave, she suddenly leaned forward and put her hands on my head. To an observer it might have seemed a curious action. But I will always be grateful to her for the gesture of blessing.

When I came to York University in the late eighties, Miriam Waddington was still occasionally on campus. She had been a professor of English literature at York University, and had retired from academic life in 1983. Waddington's comment in *Apartment Seven* that "[g]ender has seldom, if ever, been studied or written about in relation to the literary life in Canada during the forties" marked a critical direction which I followed in rereading Canadian modernism (AS34). Given Waddington's interest in the literary history of Canadian modernism, and her participation in this period as a poet, it seemed fitting to study her early writing together with the early writing of her friend Dorothy Livesay, who was so clearly marked in *Apartment Seven* as a fundamental influence on Waddington from the early forties (AS2O).

During the period that I worked on the dissertation a friendship with Waddington developed. She read and commented upon the chapters concerning her work. She has visited with me and my family in Toronto, and in Shelburne County, Nova Scotia. I am particularly grateful to her for encouraging me to return to writing poetry after a hiatus of fifteen years. Waddington explores the reversal of female silence in her poem "Women" (1976) she writes:

> Now the winds blow
> old images off the
> mind's pages and we
> are no more the face
> in the picture but
> the hand making the
> picture, we are no more
> the watery song above
> the wind's waters but
> the source of the waters
> flowing back to the waters. (MWCP 278)

In this poem, to which I will return, the speaker asserts the position of female artists actively "making the picture" rather than posing as objectified 'other' for the male artist.

The women of my own family shadowed me as I have studied Livesay's and Waddington's poems. Linked to the choice to read literature by and about women are the lives of my grandmothers and mother. Each in her own way taught me not to smother my own voice, and to question whether a man's subjectivity should define mine. These are the women I thought about most as I worked on Livesay's and Waddington's journals and poetry. My grandmothers came of age in an era when women were just beginning to be considered as 'persons,' rather than appendages belonging to a father or a husband.

My "Gran," Laura Forsythe, never, at least in my ear-shot, used the word 'feminist.' The books in her living room in Fort Garry, Winnipeg, were leather-bound copies of Kipling, Tennyson, and Shakespeare. There was also a large suede-bound history of Manitoba which included the name of her father described as Manitoba's first architect. As a citizen of

Manitoba, she acquired the right to vote thanks to women like Nellie McClung. But she was more concerned with the immediate vicissitudes of her own children and grandchildren than with women's rights. We were all part of a Queen-centred Great White Anglican World. From my perspective as her grandchild, and namesake, she defined herself as a widow, and as mother. She was "Mrs. Adrian Forsythe" on every envelope she ever sent into the world. Men were the important ones in the outside world, but as the family matriarch she was our Queen. She raised my mother to the kind of "conformity" that held white middle-class women to a life of relative ease in homes from which a daughter was launched into the world wearing a long white gown and carrying peonies from the family garden. Back of mother and daughter there was the whole British Empire of dutiful men.

In her eighties "Gran" told me that what we needed in government were "some good house-cleaning people." It did not matter that she, herself, had never been a good housekeeper, attending, instead, to the web of intricate connection of family. She meant we needed, if not women, then men with the practical ability of the "housekeeping people" she knew: women with the ability to work. She had power within her own family, managing to command both daughter and sons. Livesay's poem "Green Rain" clearly recalls the power of a female-centred memory of place. For me it is like a compass point, first of all because I knew such a place in my own maternal grandmother's home.

The other grandmother, Violet McLauchlan, described herself to me as a child as "your modern grandmother." She believed, among other things, that teenage girls should be given birth-control pills with their milk. She championed all forms of revolt. The daughter of a lay-minister she was, herself, an adamant atheist, a working-class Scot whose first pregnancy caused her whole family to quit Scotland to conceal her disgrace. Her mother raised Violet's first child as her own, and Violet was quietly married to a newly-emigrated Scot, who was told

nothing of her "past." My father discovered Violet's secret only when his half-brother introduced himself at their mother's funeral.

Violet could certainly read and write, but I do not remember books in her home. I remember that she loved colour. She knit elaborate colourful sweaters for her grandchildren without needing a pattern. She loved to give gifts and the wool she chose was as exotic and colourful as she could find in the department stores of Winnipeg. Her life had been a hard, full of ill health in mid-life and medical bills which her hard-working husband barely managed to pay. Although her ill health was legendary, she rarely talked about her own hardships. Instead, she loved to gossip about others. I never heard her say a good word about a woman outside of her immediate family. Although she enjoyed attending her husband's business parties, beautifully dressed, it seemed the couple had few friends. Today I see that she fought as best she could against all the respectable ladies, including my maternal grandmother, who she believed would have condemned her had they 'known.' She rejected them and their secure sense of the world; she had been 'caught' and knew more. She used to tell me that my other grandmother was dowdy and old-fashioned. But she wept when this long-taunted symbol of large-hearted propriety died before her.

A few years after the Second World War my mother married the Winnipeg boy who had fallen in love with her before he left for overseas th the Royal Canadian Air Force at barely eighteen. When they became engaged he was a returning prisoner of war: he had nearly starved as a prisoner, and was chased by the Gestapo when he fell behind on a forced march at the end of the war. He had seen enough of the world and he wanted to marry his sweetheart and live down the trauma of having survived most of the young men he had flown with. By contrast, my mother had led a comparatively sheltered life. She explained to me that she had wanted to see Europe after war ended but that, in her day, girls rarely went to Europe alone, and the friend with whom she planned to travel decided to put the money into a trousseau. My

mother also considered going to university before getting married, but that seemed selfishly expensive, given her father's financial concerns after he had returned from the war.

In time, my mother had three daughters and stayed home to raise us. But her conformity as housewife was not unquestioning. She tended to be candid with each of her daughters about the frustration which she felt with her role as dutiful mother and wife. In Brandon, Manitoba, where we lived until the early seventies, there were few painters or poets or conspicuous nonconformists. I did not excel at school and was judged to be lazy by most of my teachers. After she read Henry David Thoreau, my mother told me that I would always march to my own drummer and that whatever others might think, that this was a strength.

Since then my mother and I have discovered many writers and painters together. Her enthusiasm for literature by Canadian women gave me an early example of the way that reading books could enrich one's inner life. Canadian writers provided us both with "a map, a geography of the mind" (Atwood, 1972, 18-19). I learned as a teenager that Margaret Laurence, Dorothy Livesay, and Miriam Waddington gave cultural expression to the longings of women of my mother's and grandmother's generations. These writers gave me a sense that fictional and poetic representations drawn from Canadian lives might be as compelling as the Greek "Fates" whom I found in our family encyclopedia.

As I finish this dissertation, I realize how much this particular work of criticism has to do with the "treasur[ing]" of a break with "conformity" both in literature and in life. As Waddington surmised "[f]or a thousand years/in a thousand cities" "Women" had been dutiful to others, and not, first of all, to themselves (MWCP 278-279). The dutiful women in my family led me to look back to the literary history of my own sex. The lives of these women provided my sense of cultural backdrop when I read Livesay's and Waddington's work on female subjectivity. Their explorations of subjectivity came out of a particular set of social relationships and expectations sometimes explicit in their life writing. Towards the end of her

life, Bronwen Wallace wrote "I can't separate my personal poetics from the life I am leading or the events that have brought me to this point in it" (237). It was through thinking about the interconnection of my life with the struggles of my own mother and grandmothers that I realized that transformative poetics applied as much to my own research and writing, as to the early work of Dorothy Livesay and Miriam Waddington.

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