

rates of sexual and physical abuse, live with psychological abuse, and generally are mistreated by society. Some women with disabilities advocate for better education, safety, and employment while others work for better personal assistance, transportation, and housing. Regardless of the status of women with disabilities in general, a woman with a disability can personally make a choice to die. The issue of birth and death is also tied in with the issue of choice—thousands of women have taken their own lives because of inaccessible abortions. Thousands of women have died because of illegal and unsafe abortions. Choice is a matter of life and death for all women. But even if the situation for all women with disabilities was horrible and painful, each woman would still have to make the personal choice. There is no general rule or procedure because it is a matter of choice. If everything in this complicated world was perfect and accessible to women with all disabilities, some women as individuals would still need the right to make the choice to live or die. It is my life, and my choice to make.

Tanis Doe is a deaf advocate (with other disabilities) who works independently and in collaboration with organizations and other researchers to effect social change. Tanis has an adopted deaf daughter who is now eleven years old.

Barb Ladouceur has an M.A. in Women's Studies and is a feminist writer working in the areas of women and poverty and women and disability. She particularly believes in the educational value of publishing women's stories. She has a hearing impairment and has been a single parent of two children for several years.

**DAWN Canada
Suicide and Abuse in the Lives of Women
With Disabilities**

Although DAWN Canada has been working for five years toward making support services accessible to women who are victims of violence, it is still very difficult for a woman to access those services, especially when she is depressed to the point of being suicidal.

DAWN Canada is committed to helping women with disabilities who are feeling suicidal. We are presently doing a survey of women with disabilities on Suicide and Abuse. We want to determine why women are feeling suicidal and whether or not it is linked to abuse in their lives. We also want to know what they feel would be the biggest help to them in overcoming these feelings. We are mailing questionnaires to women with disabilities across Canada asking them to participate in this survey. We are also doing a survey of the accessibility of crisis counselling centres. Our goal is to make counselling services more accessible to women with disabilities. If any woman with a disability is interested in participating in the survey please contact Shirley Masuda at (604) 273-7239 to receive a copy of the questionnaire, or for an interview by phone or in person.

Shirley Masuda is Senior Researcher on issues of violence against women with disabilities for DAWN Canada: DisAbled Women's Network Canada.

KATHY FRETWELL

Marilyn

Your magazine photo lingers:
checked shirt & denims,
brown-haired Norma Jean at home,
a dream

The negative is
that superimposed MM
shaped like a cleavage,
an ass

Lee Strasburg
blessed your acting
The Hollywood machine
cemented you, a star
walked on by every
restless sole

I dreamt me
as you,
Marilyn: scarlet lips
ammonia-blonde waves,
the pencilled beauty mark,
and chanted to my sisters:

I'm really Norma Jean
Moguls pulled the strings
in my valley of the dolls
Madonna sang about
my drugged seed
I arched to flower
but semen slicked me down

I/con for males,
wombdeep I tunnelled anger,
thrust under the president's men,
hoping to bear
fruit in my field

call me unwilling martyr,
bad example,
still I visit
your dreams

Marilyn, you spook us
to be natural

Kathy Fretwell lives in Parry Sound, Ontario. She has had poetry published in magazines and journals across Canada and the United States.