

power wheelchairs buzzing, they circle the perimeter—hesitating, watching, deciding—until every woman, each in her own time, claims her splintered prize.

Many of us have difficulty fixing a meal, or tying our shoes. Yet with skill and concentration, we each summon the strength to break our boards—more than twice the power it takes to break the biggest bone in an attacker's body.

"Makes me wonder," someone says, "what else can I do, that I didn't think I could?" I push my two pieces of board together, snap them apart...together, apart.... *We've learned to bust far more than boards and bones.*

We pull into a tight circle for the last time. We close our eyes, our instructor speaks. "Visualize your broken boards. Recall the strength you felt when you shattered them. But this is not about pieces of wood. What you see is the shattering of the myth that women can't fight back."

Against assault...against fear...against silence and helplessness. *All women. This woman. Me.*

*As a young woman, my world had no boundaries. I travelled freely from one country to the next. I worked hard, writing and directing children's theatre in California. Shortly after settling in Canada, an accident turned my life on end and rearranged the pieces. Home is my world now, paper my stage. I enjoy resurrecting old skills in new forms—freelance writing, cartoons, and illustrations. With creativity and humour I can still jump the fences!*

## ALICE AISGILL

### Full Circle Deli

A root breaks—one is born.  
Blood flows a while, then  
body floats back to ground and home  
to roots of clean good clay.

What is proven in between?  
What is this we laud as life?  
A sigh, grunt, groan, work  
lurk come go come work work.

A sentient sandwich,  
with dirt and soil as bread,  
breathing as the meat so briefly sweet.

But who what where CHEWS?  
What being or grand game  
actually eats the meal?  
Shall meat, aping thought (or theology)

discover? No, the riddle does tread  
much closer to root and sweet dirt of bread.  
In before and afters' bakery is the key to We.

*Alice Aisgill is a freelance poet/artiste from Vancouver, B.C. She prefers cats and other animals to most people.*



Winsom, *The Game*. Dye on silk, 145 cm x 85 cm.