

M. ANN PHILLIPS

Waiting for the Popsicle Man  
[Reflections on Incest]

*This poem is dedicated to the many, many girls and women over the millennia who have survived.*

The day she died  
my sister told me  
"Beware of the popsicle man,  
he'll get you when you're older!"

Then she killed herself.

I was four  
my sister nine.

After that I would not eat popsicles.  
I hid when I heard the popsicle truck  
coming  
the bell ringing.

Afraid  
the popsicle man would find me,  
kill me,  
like he had my sister.

For years I hid  
hoping to avoid the fate  
my sister foretold.

Then  
I turned seven.  
That summer Uncle Joe came to visit,  
like he had every summer  
every holiday.

But this summer was different,  
my brother Mike had gone to camp.  
He was lucky.  
He was a boy.

My parents said girls should not go to camp.  
It wasn't safe.  
So I was to spend the summer  
with Sue-Sue and Raggedy Anne.

Uncle Joe felt sorry for me  
alone, with my babies  
so he let me go with him when he went into town.

And on the long ride  
he would tell me stories,  
fantastic stories.  
I liked Uncle Joe,  
then.

He would sometimes buy me a lollipop  
sometimes an ice cream cone  
I liked Uncle Joe,  
then.

Sometimes on the way back  
we would stop to see the ducks  
on Mr Mosey's pond  
and sometimes the horses in Fender's Field.  
I liked Uncle Joe,  
then.

One day Uncle Joe said  
"You're getting to be a big girl Angie,  
I think it's time I got you a popsicle"  
"But I don't like popsicles" I said  
"All big girls like popsicles" said Uncle Joe  
He bought me an ice cream that day.  
I liked Uncle Joe,  
then.

After that  
Uncle Joe always wanted to buy popsicles.  
"I don't like popsicles"  
I would tell him  
and every time he would say  
all big girls liked popsicles.  
I did not like Uncle Joe so much,  
then.

One day  
after Uncle Joe bought me an ice cream,  
be bought a popsicle.

On the way back  
we stopped at Fender's Field  
As the car stopped  
Uncle Joe's melting popsicle dropped.  
It fell on his lap.  
He told me to eat the popsicle.

"I don't like popsicles" I told him.  
 He forced me to eat the popsicle  
 sitting on his lap.  
 I did not like Uncle Joe,  
 then.

The next time we went to town  
 Uncle Joe bought a popsicle  
 I wanted to walk back  
 but it was too far.  
 Uncle Joe wouldn't let me.  
 Again we stopped at Fender's Field.  
 I did not like Uncle Joe,  
 then.

Uncle Joe warned me  
 that if I told my mother about the popsicles  
 the popsicle man would get me  
 like he got Janie.

The popsicle man.  
 I hate you Uncle Joe.  
 You are the popsicle man.

Every year, every summer, every Christmas,  
 the popsicle man came  
 to take me to Fender's Field.

Every year I asked my parents  
 to let me go to camp,  
 and every year my parents said  
 it wasn't safe for girls to go to camp.

I hated my parents,  
 then.  
 I hated Uncle Joe,  
 then.  
 I hated myself,  
 then.

I hoped the popsicle man would kill me  
 as he killed Janie.  
 But that popsicle man never came.

I haven't eaten a popsicle  
 in fifteen years  
 nor seen Uncle Joe  
 nor visited my parents.  
 But I still wait  
 for the other  
 popsicle man.

*Ann Phillips is a Caribbean-Canadian feminist and  
 activist, working in the area of race, class, gender  
 and women's reproductive options, who is surviving.*



## WHERE ONCE OUR MOTHERS STOOD WE STAND

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE IN  
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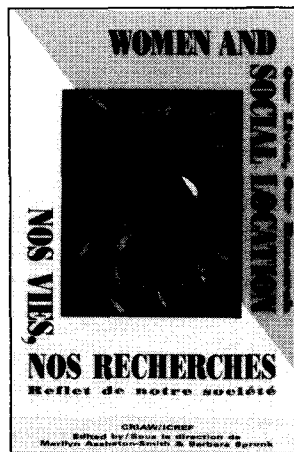
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