

to make the most of it. Well, thought Sylvie, pouring what was left of the wine, seems like a sin that life is so complicated a person has trouble telling which way is up. People should be born with a set of directions to keep them from getting lost along the way. There should be a central registry where clues about how to proceed in difficult situations could be made available to everyone. Life should be more like it was for the three musketeers, all for one and one for all and never mind the pioneer stuff. If being alone in the wilderness was so great, people wouldn't get cabin fever and go crazy as often as they do, right?

Sylvie stood up and wrapped herself in her favourite towel. It was a gift from Tillie, who knew how purple flattered her mother's olive skin. She went into the bedroom and dropped onto the quilt. A copy of *A Good Man is Hard to Find* was on the pillow. Sylvie opened the book to a story called "A Temple of the Holy Ghost." It was about twin girls visiting their cousin for the weekend. The girls went to a convent school and irreverently referred to each other as Temple One and Temple Two, which made Sylvie laugh. What would Sister Agnes say, she wondered. She didn't seem to have a sense of humour, certainly not about religion, but who knows what she did behind closed doors. Maybe she was a real wild woman. People are such sad mysteries. Whoever said you can't take it with you was seriously off base. You have to be Sherlock Holmes to figure anybody out. Even then you don't know the half of it, and before you can blink they're history, untold tales, secret selves and all. Nobody can believe they're gone for good, like soldiers missing in action. There's so much unfinished business.

In the dark, thought Sylvie, is the last place I want to leave Tillie. In the dark, the t.v. droning doom, is not the way I want to go. We can do better, Tillie and me. We've got brains, whatever their origin, and big hearts. When the past comes back to Tillie, I want her to be in charge. Life is too short for guesswork. We'll talk, Tillie and me. I'll make sure of that. We'll pop the cork on our feelings and get maudlin if we're so inclined. Mothers and daughters are allowed certain liberties, after all, even if one of them is a doctor living miles away in Michigan. Maybe, with a little luck, the future won't be as slippery as it was on my mother's soaps. It's worth a try. No question.

Sarah Louise has an Honours B.A. in Philosophy, an M.F.A. in Creative Writing and a law degree. Her work has appeared in The Canadian Forum, The Fiddlehead, Quarry, Prism International, and Descant and has been anthologized in Tide Lines (Gynergy Press) and Dykeywords (the Woman's Press). Temporarily living in New Mexico, she is working on a collection of stories.

ANNE INNIS DAGG

By Train Across Canada

At twenty
I was the centre
of my universe
When I spoke
young men listened
old men smiled
women responded
I felt strong

At forty
I was almost
a spectator
Men liked me
but only if I
wore high heels
used mascara
and listened
Women liked me if I
wore sensible shoes
no lipstick
and listened

By sixty
I had become invisible
When I spoke
no one listened
In the diner
I was ignored
My best dress
impressed no one

Now I'm eighty
I stamp my cane
and trainmen jump
I shout out questions
and conductors stammer a reply
I lose my ticket
and fellow passengers panic

I am again the centre of the universe

Anne Innis Dagg is a feminist writer who works part-time at the University of Waterloo.