

Kirsten, age 21

Kirsten lives in Tofino, on the west coast of Vancouver Island, in the heart of Clayoquot Sound. Clayoquot Sound is a 200,000 hectare area, the largest expanse of ancient rainforest left on the island. It is the centre of a controversy over logging—multinationals' short term profit versus the loss of a stable community, biodiversity, and long-term jobs in forestry.

Kirsten is a witch. It was trips to the wilderness before the age of seventeen that intensified Kirsten's need to protect the Earth. She lives in a one room cabin with a wood stove and no plumbing, across the highway from a clearcut. "This vantage point allows me to relate to both the 'hippie' and 'redneck' points of view." This evening, she will perform a ritual. It will be a vision for the future and a prayer for friends facing sentencing for protecting Clayoquot Sound. For Kirsten, rituals are "a weaving of consciousness; changing my inner world and watching the world outside me change. This way of living is ancient and its history seems to have been forgotten in modern times."

Kirsten describes her mother as a strong feminist who brought her to her first protest at the age of twelve. It was a protest against pornography. For Kirsten, her mother was her mentor; "My mother is a courageous woman who chose to break the stereotypes for women in her time."

Kirsten says, "It is a challenge to remember your instincts as a human being when the mainstream media dictate the scripts and decide on the good guys and the bad guys. In the eyes of the media I'm an eco-terrorist, but I'm not an eco-terrorist. I am a woman who cares about my life and the survival on the planet."

In the summer of 1992, she was arrested for lying in the path of logging trucks in Clayoquot Sound. Kirsten describes her evolution towards action:

I watched for four days as people got arrested (for blockading a logging road), and all day long we'd watch as trucks loaded with huge trees drove out on that road. After a while that image got in pretty deep. My decision to get arrested came about one evening when it was suggested to do a youth action. The next morning a bridge was blockaded with logs, and I lay down in front of those logs to stop the trucks. I cried when the policeman carried me off the road and into the paddy wagon, and I noticed one of the loggers with watering eyes.

Women of action are being born each day. They can be found in rape relief centres, at protests, at negotiating tables—everywhere. Always, they are creating new ways to express the need to love each other and Earth.

Heather Benson is twenty one and has been politically active since the age of sixteen. Her work in the past two years has concentrated on direct action and public knowledge campaigning with Greenpeace and the Western Canada Wilderness Committee. Currently she is involved in the Commission on Resources and Environment, negotiating land-use on Vancouver Island with the Youth sector.

VALERIE FREE

the poet

the poet's standing on her bathmat
the sun's a shining fist
drawing the first blow,
the moon sinking,
sinking as deep as dreams
the poet's standing on her bathmat
the sun's just risen
while the moon's gone down

Valerie Free teaches ESL and Literacy at a college in Kelowna.

SISTERING

Sisters Pick You Up: Sistering's Outreach Program

A booklet about the development of a community support program for women who live on low incomes in isolation from their families and friends. The booklet includes details on how Sistering's Outreach Program was developed, how it operates, a list of potential funding sources, and an annotated list of resources. As well, stories about the women who come to the programs are included. A limited number of copies are available in English. There is a fee of \$10 to cover production and mailing costs.

Full of Hope and Power— Sistering's Women and Poverty Action Kit

An information and action tool for groups to confront the issue of women's poverty and to advocate for much needed change. The kit has five sections dealing with poverty, women's work, violence against women, health, and housing. Kits are \$15, including postage and handling.

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