

tient has a different support network and until they learn how to manage their osteoporosis, it manages them making them feel very discouraged. Each person should try to learn the basic coping skill of working at the level of their ability to do as much as they can for themselves, which results in a heightened sense of both their self-esteem and self-worth. Also co-ordination, muscle tone, bone density and mobility are increased.

The quality of life for an osteoporotic can be greatly diminished. Socializing can be difficult because of the lack of ability to participate in physical activities. Safety becomes a real issue because of winter snow and ice conditions; you can be knocked over in a crowd; you must be aware of uneven surfaces on sidewalks, road and floors; even stairs can be a problem. If a new fracture occurs, you know that the isolation of confinement will set in along with feelings of despair, depression and helplessness, not to mention the pain.

Three years ago at the age of 36, I was diagnosed as an osteoporotic and I understand all too well the problems osteoporotics face. At that time, I also had two small children to care for. My osteoporosis was idiopathic (no known cause) and was diagnosed because of a spinal fracture. Because I wanted to learn more about osteoporosis and needed support to cope with it, I became involved with a group called Women Against Osteoporosis in Toronto. In 1990, I took on the job of Co-ordinator for their Patient Support Group which meets in downtown Toronto. If you would like more information about this Patient Support Group or other aspects of osteoporosis, please call me at (416) 833-0473 or write to me: Mrs. Debbie Howe, P.O. Box 1139, King City, Ontario L0G 1K0.

WOMEN AND AGING: A Selected, Annotated Bibliography

Jean M. Coyle, compiler. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1989.

WOMEN AS THEY AGE: Challenge, Opportunity, and Triumph

J. Dianne Garner & Susan O. Mercer, eds. Binghamton, New York: The Haworth Press, 1989.

WOMEN AS THEY AGE: Challenge, Opportunity, and Triumph. Instructor's Manual

J. Dianne Garner & Susan O. Mercer. Binghamton, New York: The Haworth Press, 1989.

HEALTH NEEDS OF WOMEN AS THEY AGE

Sharon Golub & Rita Jackaway Freedman, eds. New York: The Haworth Press, 1985.

WOMEN IN THEIR LATER YEARS: Health, Social, and Cultural Perspectives

Lois Grau & Ida Susser. Binghamton, New York: The Haworth Press, 1989.

By Judith L. Fraser

"The world of the aged is increasingly a society of old women," remarked B. B. Hess in 1980. Ten years later this fact is becoming increasingly apparent, not only to health care specialists but also to the millions of women world wide who are experiencing the effects of increased longevity. These effects are physical, emotional, psychological, political and financial, and they vary by country, cohort group, ethnic group, marital status and sexual preference. Women comprise the majority of aging populations in developing and developed countries. Women are the main caregivers, both professional and non-professional, to their families, friends, and Selves. Women are oft times unprepared for what the new longevity will require of them.

Coyle's *Women and Aging* is an impressive compilation of 622 annotated bibliographies on a variety of subjects which range from economics to sexuality. Cross-referenced and up-to-date, the author's organizational efforts have made the researcher's obligatory literature search for articles, books, dissertations, and films extremely easy. There is one glaring inadequacy in this text, however—it has few references to Canadian contributions to the topic of women and aging. Despite this, the 135-page hard cover text is a solid research aid.

Health Needs of Women as They Age also addresses the topic of women and aging from an academic perspective, us-

ing an applied research approach. In academic journal style, women's health topics such as longevity, respite care, Alzheimer's disease, reproductive cancer and osteoporosis are addressed. Chapters such as Porcino's "Psychological Aspects of Aging in Women" and Bajart's "Common Eye Problems in the Older Woman" are written in a manner accessible to the lay reader, whereas chapters such as Mann's "Reproductive Cancer" and Krakoff's "Hypertension in Women: Progress and Unsolved Problems" require a technical knowledge of the subject matter. Though there are many references to American statistics, the information conveyed about these important topics remains true to the needs of the Canadian reader, conveyed in comfortably written prose.

Broadening the themes of older women to include social and cultural conditions as well as health, Grau and Susser's 272-page text examines the repercussions which race, friendship, health, ethnicity, family, cohort group, and dependence have on older women in developing and developed countries. The importance of culture, community, and the individual's personal context is underlined for those who advocate for, and provide services to, older women. *Women in Their Later Years* informs the reader that while we are all aging women, our cultural circumstances influence whether our senior years will be ones of prestige and pride, or poverty and pain.

Ideally Garner and Mercer's *Women As They Age* should be read as a companion to texts dealing with older women. Its 415 pages provide an academic, economic, and political context to research. Context dereifies and makes the reader aware of the research's/er's origins. As McDaniel comments in "Women and Aging: A Sociological Perspective," for example, sociology approaches women and aging from two different perspectives. Framed issues, research techniques and the level of focus on either a micro- or macro-level approach alter the interpretation of subject matter. Gaylord continues this argument as she discusses psychology's perspective, Hubbs-Tait elaborates on developmental theories of women, and Kerson focuses on social work's approach. Sexuality is addressed in its own chapter, which is unusual and is a positive change as it is a topic that usually receives only a cursory mention in most texts. Garner and Mer-

cer's book is a relaxed read despite its tomelike dimensions. The accompanying instructor's manual invites the educator to use the text as classroom material.

It is gratifying to read books which specifically address the needs of older women. The reader is made aware of the work that has been done on behalf of older women and by older women themselves. We should not be complacent however. Several of the authors make reference to increasing world-wide political, economic, and religious conservatism which will threaten women's social, political and economic gains. Women must become more aware of their social needs and needs of the Self, and must express these needs through further research as well as community and international networking.

¹B. B. Hess, "Old Women: Problems, political and policy implications," in E. W. Markson and G. R. Batra (eds.), *Public Policies for an Aging Population* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1980), pp. 30-59.

WOMEN AS ELDER: The Feminist Politics of Aging

Marilyn J. Bell, editor. New York: Haworth Press, 1986.

WOMEN, AGING AND AGEISM

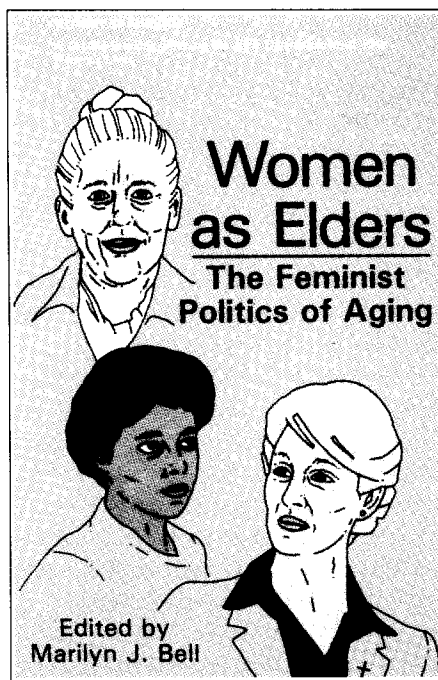
Evelyn Rosenthal, editor. New York: Harrington Park Press, 1990.

By *Judith L. Fraser*

Virginia Woolf wrote that women need a room of their own in which to have Self and to create. Woolf referred to both a physical and spiritual space. Both Bell and Rosenthal's books comment on the modern woman's search for that metaphysical/metaphorical expanse within herself which will make her whole.

Women as Elders aptly begins its commentary on that search with a preface by seventy year-old feminist poet Gert Beadle. "The Nature of Crones" explores the negative constructs of women in society and reclaims them as women's territory. Her vigorous verse exhorts other women to act as the Crone who

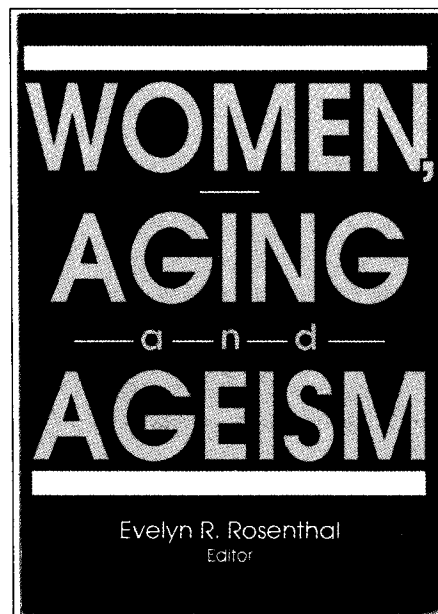
is distinguished by her ability to dream dreams... [and by refusing] to take se-



riously the small mind, loaded with self-righteous hyperbole...

A following chapter, "Crones Nest: The Vision" by Nancy Breeze, in conjunction with the Crones Nest Committee, outlines the dream of a group of women to create an older women's residential space. Their trials advise us that dreams are accompanied by hard work but remain attainable.

"Remembering Our Foremothers: Older Black Women, Politics of Age, Politics of Survival as Embodied in the Novels of Toni Morrison," examines the shared emotional space of a Black and of a White female's interpretation of this novelist's work. Morrison explores the transforma-



tion of women from their naive youth to wise age, drawing upon the tradition of African culture. The authors' discussion of Morrison's work comments not only on her skill but also on the American political culture which she implicitly critiques. In their own ways Holloway and Demetrakopoulos draw emotional sustenance from these stories.

Women, Aging and Ageism, like the writers in Bell's book, focuses on the concept of space. Both books contain personal and subjective explorations of being female. Rosenthal has chosen writers who record women's emotional experiences of aging. Interspersed amongst the chapters are poems by older women such as Ingrid Reti's "At Sixty One":

*Like a panther
age crept up on me*

*but I refuse
to conform to its stereotype*

*instead will plunge forward
in my endeavors*

*nourish and stretch my mind
with new concepts,
thoughts, ideas*

*share knowledge
with my students,
neighbors, friends.*

The panther gives me strength.

In Bell's book Margraff discussed the varying means by which religious sisters face their own retirement. In Rosenthal's book Reeves discusses the retirement preparations of women in dual career families. Despite their surface differences, these two groups of women face the same problems in retirement. Both have to deal with a less active lifestyle, both experience role changes, both identified their work as part of their self-definitions; both groups may face pressure to retire early, and both may face an uncertain financial future. In comparing these two groups, the reader will realize that though women may be separated by physical and intellectual spaces in youth, the spaces we inhabit in old age are very similar.

Hale's "Being Old: Seven Women, Seven Views" and Siegal's "We Are Not Your Mothers: Report on Two Groups for Women Over Sixty," in *Women, Aging*