have poor or no credit rating because they have never borrowed or saved a substantial amount of money. This does not mean that they are any more likely to default on their monthly housing charge. Most of the young families with whom Jessie’s works are sure that their rent is paid on time, even if it means that there is little money left over at the end of the month.

References from past landlords are another common requirement. Sixteen- and 17-year olds in need of housing, however, are often leaving an overcrowded, violent or abusive situation. They are often unable to provide a reference from a past landlord. Again, this is no reason to think that they will not be responsible tenants.

In trying to ensure equal representation from teenage heads of household, one of the difficult problems confronting housing providers is the length of waiting lists, especially for subsidized units. There is a rationale for co-ops for instance, to maintain a waiting list based rigorously on a first-come, first-served basis. However, where a waiting list period is over two years, the effect of allocating units solely on this basis is to exclude 16- and 17-year-olds living independently. Unlike older applicants, this age group did not have the opportunity to apply several years earlier. Thus simply changing the age eligibility for applicants does not accomplish equal’ access for this age group.

When a rule or policy has the unintended effect of excluding a group protected by the Human Rights Code, this does not mean necessarily that the rule has to be changed. It does mean however, that the needs of the group must be accommodated where it would not involve undue hardship. In this case, housing providers should allocate a certain number of units to accommodate the needs of the excluded age group. Housing providers should not view such a policy as “jumping the waiting list,” but rather as a legal requirement to ensure fair access to a group protected by the Human Rights Code and the Canadian Charter of Rights.

The time has come to take seriously the housing needs of young people. Strategies must be developed to address the barriers that keep youth from securing suitable and affordable housing.

Maureen Callaghan has a degree in Social Work from Ryerson Polytechnical Institute and has been Housing Coordinator at Jessie’s for four years.

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**Retrograde**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>He could not help his bias, constriction.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>His momma fell off the sidewalk when he was tender two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Femme fatale ever after, she would travel the mid-road traffic refusing the curb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His Dadda early converted the basement to electric trains. Fantasy stops till one day he took to sail, Momma said, the world with a whore, infant witch, sea paramour.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Victorian Lace**

I’ve stepped back into Victorian lace, shadows, garden teas, searching winding dialogue, where no-one dares say directly “Let’s fuck”, I’ve moved to an age of long afternoons, days, nights — an eternity. My pulse erratic leaping to the suspense of slow solutions.

**Choice**

He did say that she could choose to leave him after he had left.

She did say that he could choose to leave her after she had left.

Vacant room to let.