

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.

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MARGITA GAILITIS

Retrograde

He could not
help his bias,
constriction.

His momma
fell off the sidewalk
when he was tender two
Femme fatale
ever after,
she would travel
the mid-road traffic
refusing
the curb.

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.

The boy grew up
on postcards,
mailed love,
distant care
and the hysterics
of Momma, dodging
trucks, now and then,
failed accidents.

He could not
help his bias,
constriction.

He drips occasional
love like a slow
leaking faucet
exploding sometimes
impassioned for a witch
retrograde sea whore.

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.