

For Glynis Reaching the Age of 21

The Women's Liberation Movement
stamps its feet
and beats its corporate breast,
while listing, one by one,
each wound, each scar, each dark indignity
that we have known.

Do not misunderstand me.
I too have torn my hair
and shed my tears — hot, dry, uncleansing —
for what from buried time,
through woman's folly, man's assent,
has made him still the source
of our most screaming cry,
while all the while,
providing what we need and want and yearn for.

But.

No one has stopped to think, to say:
Look.
Man. Poor thing. Regard his plight.

He cannot bear a child.

While I,
not beautiful, not great in any single way,
not saintly humble, nor with brilliance marked,
nor wild inspired, nor sober filled with truth,
nor sung, nor heralded, nor carried high,
I,
with my own grown huge most miracle body,
sailing so splendid through nine visionary months,
have joined with God and yes indeed with man
to bear a child.

My God. To bear a child.

And you are she.

Impossible to catch, define or tell
exactly what it means or even feels
to have and know this child through years and years
of knowing, learning, watching
what a child can be.
So special you.
None other half the same.
At one, so laughing;
and at two, already tender and awake to pain.

Open. And moving toward a score of years of naked-hearted
living.

And oh so fragile your skin,
soft, soft your roots,
hoping your eyes,
and such a friend and foe to pain.

But strong.

For yet, at three years old, your pattern was traced,
subtle and deep:
giving and loving, just and considerate, suffering silent,
holding your hate.

And now,
even now,
careful, perceptive to muted vibrations, listening, balancing
anger and love;
living your hundred lives through a thousand books,
pondering, weighing, talking and talking,
weaving your tangled dreams on your highly unusual loom,
hoping for perfect cloth.

Fun, too.
Laughs by the dozen, joke maker, mirth giver,
hungry for joy. Thirsting for love.

And music:
Your opium, lover and friend —
stilling, fulfilling,
ecstatic, orgasmic,
unlocking of spirit and spilling of self,
dancing a passionate exquisite frenzy,
releasing the demons that linger in chains.

So what are you now, and I?
You are my gift from life, from God, from man.
Not mine, not mine.
For you are all your own.
But though I die in unspent middle years and incomplete,
or trembling full of age,
here or far hence or gently or with pain,
regard me now:
I have my prize from life.
You still are that most perfect gift to crown my head.

I bore a child.
And then I waited there,
and wept and loved and feared and watched your life,
and knew that I had borne a marvel child.
All mine, all God's, all yours.
And now I stand,
in tears with love, in love with tears,
my child, my child