

selves, have clamoured and lobbied and have prevailed.

The organization of women in political interest groups has brought about the breakthrough we are celebrating today. There is a new awareness — and it is shared by men — of how women have been moulded by our culture into shapes that don't always fit them and assigned to roles they did not themselves choose. Awareness leads to action, and women organizing have forced society to a new understanding and have helped it to amend old laws and even to write new ones. We now have courses in women's

studies, we have women's presses, we have hundreds of women writers. Women's lives are no longer so anonymous but we are still mysterious, especially to ourselves. And there is still no agreement among us as to how and in what way our art is women's art. Or indeed how a feminist ideology can be the source of an art that is different from the art which is the product of a masculine ideology. How is it really feminine — biologically, linguistically, psychologically, or culturally? Do we write differently about the same subjects or only about different subjects, or both?

I have no answer to these questions and I don't even think it's important to have an answer. It's only important that the question has been articulated and that we are all aware of it. Such awareness may not immediately change what we do or what we write or what we make, but it will certainly give us new energy with which to examine the past and a larger framework upon which to build the future. And the more knowledge we have, the more questions we ask, the more choices will be open to us. And choice, after all, is the essence and the epitome of freedom.

MIRIAM WADDINGTON

Ulysses Embroidered

You've come
at last from
all your journeying
to the old blind woman
in the tower
Ulysses

After all adventurings
through seas and
mountains through
giant battles
storms and death
from pinnacles
to valleys,

Past sirens
naked on rocks
between Charybdis

and Scilla from
dragons' teeth
and sleep in
stables choking
on red flowers
walking through
weeds and shipwreck.

And now you are
climbing the stairs
taking shape
a figure in shining
thread rising from
a golden shield,

A medallion
emblazoned in
tapestry you grew

from the blind hands
of Penelope.

Her tapestry
saw everything
her stitches
embroidered the
painful colours
of her breath the
long sighing touch
of her hands.

She made
many journeys.

Coffee Break

Her teeth are
too heavy for her
mouth her tongue
tangles them her
bones are too wide
for her uniform
she is on her coffee
break and tells the
girls around the

coffee urn the exact
state of her life:
on Thursday her cold
was worse but her
daughter has learned
to cook her husband
came home yesterday
and fixed the TV
her son left school

now he works for
a painter she doesn't
know how long this
time yes today her
cold is better but
she can feel winter
in the air.