

Pat: I still think that one of the best things about the women's movement was the kitchen table conversations. To defend public health care, the public needs to know and discuss what's going on. We need to combat fear-mongering along the lines seen in a recent big story in the *The Globe and Mail* about this woman who can't get one particular drug—never bothering to mention there's a major controversy about whether the drug actually works. People can start by reading the eleven-page *Canada Health Act* on the Health Canada webpage, an easy read. It affirms that you shouldn't be prevented by financial or any other barriers from getting medically necessary care. It's not that I think all the answers are simple. It's important to work with unions, community organizations, church organizations. It gets pretty depressing sometimes, but it's better than doing nothing. I have to say I'm more depressed right now than I have ever been. I suppose I have no right to be. If you look at (medicare founder) Tommy Douglas, you realize the odds that *he* fought against....

Pat Armstrong has been a tireless fighter since the 1950s when she convinced the Matheson town fathers to liberate the curling rink. Her work has taught two generations of students to appreciate the needs of working women. For the last two decades she has dispelled myths about the "efficiency" of privatized healthcare. Privatized care holds the lure of billions of dollars of potential profit for private providers, and they wage a relentless campaign to create a two-tier system in which the affluent buy better care and the public system is impoverished. Armstrong's research and writing, and conferences, speeches, interviews, the many miles she has travelled, have helped present the other side of the story. The case is clear: universal public healthcare is one of the most important issues of our time; and it is a key issue for feminists, too.

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## DESI DI NARDO

### Jabberwocky

Beware the Jabberwocky  
 Sprawled on the soil  
 Tilling the earth  
 Without a care in her mind  
 Her visage — dowdy, puffy,  
 Enormous but calm —  
 Hovers vacantly  
 Like the taciturn moon  
 For she is void of ambition  
 Bungling and bland  
 Not full-fledged yet  
 Nor properly female  
 Jabberwocky,  
 Master of disguise  
 Taps the soft gedanite  
 With her jagged, sharp claws  
 Her Goliath head flops to the ground  
 Probing for possibilities  
 Something other than domesticity  
 Jabberwocky is so sick and tired  
 Uncovering mud, bugs, and coal  
 Discarding all that is good and genuine  
 To be a slick, stupid tourist  
 Speaking gibberish in a conjured land

*Desi Di Nardo's poetry appears earlier in this issue.*