

ameter. I like them to learn to love literature and to improve their writing skills. I love it when they take off on a literary or theoretical problem. But I don't see my job as telling them how to think about texts, or teaching them act and scene numbers and characters' names. I want them to learn from the classroom dynamics and from the literature about society, about power and authority, about humanity, about tolerance, about gender imbalance, and of course about good writing too.

I want to empower them to choose their domestic spaces according to their own needs and desires, and I want them to witness the de-authorization of the larger space—the classroom, the university, the world as a possibility for them and for others. I also want my students to pass on the message about the dangers and dilemmas of domestic space, to those who cannot be there, cannot be here.

The university is an elitist institution. Jane Austen, Virginia Woolf, and Margaret Atwood are elitist writers. It is my hope that in a small way, one text at a time, one classroom at a time, I can work towards spreading the idea of refiguring power in the domestic space, speculating on domestic space in ways which empower individuals to empower others to make domestic spaces safe spaces, not confining spaces, for everyone.

An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Annual General Meeting of The Women's Centre (Grey and Bruce) Inc. in June 1997. Barbara McLean teaches English at the University of Guelph. She is on the executive committee of the board of her local Women's Centre.

References

- Atwood, M. *The Handmaid's Tale*. Toronto: McClelland, 1986.
Austen, J. *Persuasion*. Toronto: Bantam, 1984.
Austen, J. *Pride and Prejudice*. NY: Washington Square Press, 1960.
Woolf, V. *A Room of One's Own*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963.

LORETTE C. THIESSEN

The Disintegration

Our bodies dissolved,
as if in water,
melting into the heat of reckless creation.
We fucked as if to make and
wake all the children,

our private, frenzied homage to life.
Both of us were fragile.
We brought shiny ribbons
to tie up the bits and pieces with the other.
Both of us saw home,
and perhaps,
for each of us,
it was the first time we had ever seen it.

I had fled other lovers,
the crazy hands of innocence and her jesters.
But you took me to the place
where the tears were,
suckling me hungrily as if my dark fluids
would give life to you.

We ate the food we'd scrounged
with beggar's hands,
and fed each other.
I came to you naked in the same manner;
I came starved, and wild.

I will always recollect
the image of my reflection
in the Greyhound window
as I sped away from your arms.
It seemed the first time in ages
that I saw myself
instead of you.

Lorette C. Thiessen's poetry has been published in Venue Magazine, Grain, Fiddlehead, Rattle, the White Wall Review, and many others. When she is not busy writing, she can be found in downtown Toronto selling other people's books or at home reading other people's poetry out loud to her cats.