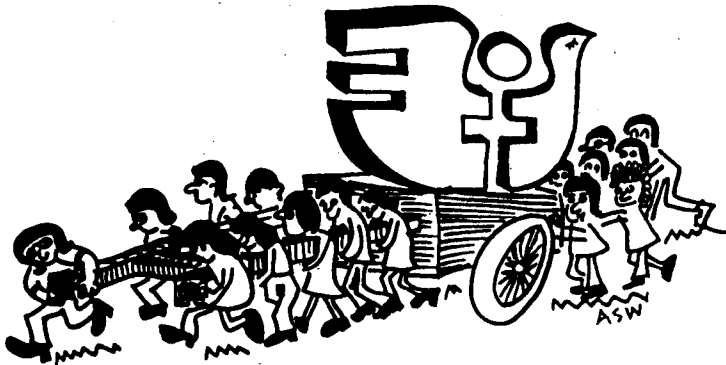


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Artist: Anne S. Walker

ALISON NEWALL

Ode to my Stretch Marks

On a beach in Mexico I lie,
a bikini clad cipher.
I am no longer picture
perfect.
Not for me the swim suit edition:
I'll never now be
food for fantasy
cause an airbrushed
hush from the
pages of a magazine, be
subject to a hungry
gaze.

But
my thighs can tell a story:
fine tracers of faded lines
embroider breasts
embellish hips
spell out my adventures
in the wars of birth.

I am borne into a new generation,
become one with those who know,
by their blood's baptism,
another code.

I do not envy those
perfect girls:
their bodies tell no tales
they become images
for other people's stories.

Alison Newall is currently a Ph.D. student at McGill University writing her thesis on Lucy Maud Montgomery. Her short story "Loons" has been published in Hejira.