

women, moving away from Soviet-style, protectionist legislation toward what is considered by reformers a "westernized" approach. For the time being, the old Constitution remains in effect, guaranteeing full equality regardless of sex. However, the new Constitution may not contain explicit prohibitions against sex discrimination. The concern is that, is the absence of a strong women's movement and fully articulated civil society—both are still in their embryonic forms—there will be no accountability by government for violation of women's rights in employment and other spheres.

*This article has been partially extracted from a larger survey on women in Ukraine undertaken by the Ukrainian Center for Women's Studies in collaboration with the Social Monitoring Center of the Ukrainian Institute for Strategic Studies and funded by the Canadian Embassy in Kyiv. It represents the first survey of its kind done by an independent research center and we hope it will become part of a systematic assessment of various indicators of women's status.*

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#### References

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## CHARLENE D. JONES

### housewife

This woman, in polyester slacks, flowered blouse,  
a string of ugly beads at her neck

smokes cigarettes, watches soap operas  
screams at the kids to "shut the door, will ya?"  
pours another cup of coffee  
into a mug grabbed from the dishes  
which stack, cold and greasy  
next to the clutter of ashtrays, unpaid bills, plastic jewelry  
old newspapers, safety pins, rubber bands, pennies, scotch  
tape,  
and yesterday's lunch  
which lie on the kitchen counter.

She is thirty-five.  
Some nights, when she can sleep  
she dreams she is walking on a beach  
in Barbados, in a bikini  
carelessly caressing the sand  
with a delicate toe whose nail is smooth and polished  
like the tiny seashells she gathers.

Then the camera pans,  
and the announcer's voice says "only a few hours away."

She turns in her sleep.

In the morning the kitchen sink is clogged  
her last child loses her first tooth  
welfare informs her of a decrease in her payments  
the electric company sends a nasty demand for money  
her ex-husband calls  
he won't be able to take the kids this weekend he's going  
hunting.

She turns on her t.v.

*Charlene D. Jones has had poems published in Atlantis, Prairie Schooner, The Muse Journal, and Canadian Woman Studies. She has also performed, with her partners as Uncritical Mass, at several events in Toronto.*