

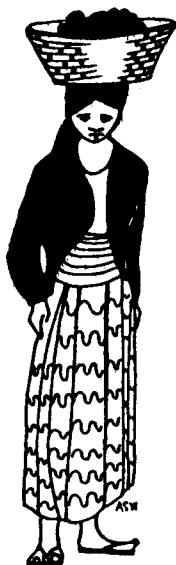
my nails. When he lets everyone off in a village, he throws me a pair of sandals somebody left behind.

When I reach the city, the pink house by the plaza, locks have been changed but I know how to pry a window. My papers, photographs, books are gone. Perhaps to the militia's archives? My mattress to the dump? But among scraps of posters swept under the wardrobe, I find my harmonica, hurry outside, relock the door.

The mottled cur limps over, lays his mangy jaw in my lap, offers his fleas. This time, though, he goes with me back to the street, the only dog not to howl when I play my harmonica, and in this old cracked voice I sing my new songs.

Portions of Wild Garlic: The Journal of Maria S. have been published in Canadian Woman Studies, Her Wits About Her, and Confrontation, and a version will appear in Iris.

Elizavietta Ritchie's Flying Time: Stories & Half-Stories includes four PEN Syndicated Fiction winners. A Wound-Up Cat and Other Bedtime Stories (Palmerston Press, Toronto) is the newest of her nine poetry collections. The Arc of the Storm (Signal Books, Chapel Hill, NC) is due in 1994. She edited The Dolphin's Arc: Poems on Endangered Creatures of the Sea.



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Artist Anne S. Walker*

RUTH MANDEL

For me writing is kicking. I am a child of a Holocaust Survivor and I write poetry about the Holocaust from the perspective of those who are raised among its ashes. I write to kick out at the silence imposed on the Survivors, our parents; and to kick against the expectations placed on us as their silence becomes our silence and our responsibility. I write to kick back at the noise created by mean-wellers who want to 'move on from the past'; and to kick back at the noise created by the deniers who want to obliterate it. I see this kicking as relevant to women's struggles with trauma and our efforts to write for comfort, connection and change.

Skin

Let me tell you a story about loss.

Once upon a time there was a loss so complete it peeled the skin off the hearts of an entire people. It was a loss so deep that for years everyone was afraid to use their blood.

Time passed impotently as no one dared ask nor utter nor evoke. Many years were spent living from the head up, hiding and protecting furiously pulsing hearts. Many years were spent fearfully pretending that many years could go on this way.

But everyone knew that one day children would be born—children who would not want to live without their flesh.

Eventually these children were conceived—the unions of two skinned histories, carried with joy and hope, held in wombs churning with suspense.

And one day these children were born. Born kicking, born frightened, born into the plot of stories untold—stories hanging heavy in their minds like mysterious pelts on a shuddering wall.

As these children grew up they didn't dare ask or utter or evoke. But their dreams were full of soulful shadows and their days were full of thin tears.

The children would soon refuse to live any longer with skinless hearts and blood stilled in their veins.

They began to kick again as when they were born.

Ruth Mandel is a writer and feminist activist in Toronto. She is the child of a Holocaust survivor and is currently writing poetry about the Holocaust.