She Has Her Own Reason for Participating

This past spring, I met Daniela Molnar at the corner of SW Park and Clay, in the South Park Blocks near the Portland State University campus in downtown Portland. She asked me to select a place in Portland, and so I selected the route of the 1978 map of the Women’s Nightwatch Flashlight March in downtown Portland.

I was working in a shared residency with Garrick Imatani at the City of Portland Archives and Records Center, commissioned by the Regional Arts and Culture Center. We were combing through surveillance files the Portland Police kept on activist groups in the late 1960s, throughout the 1970s, and into the early 1980s. A number of the surveilled groups were fighting for the rights of women. If the editorial logic of these investigators was one of fear—a sense that such people posed a danger, meriting surveillance—then I wanted to see what they feared about these women. My poetic method was to gather language through repetition, creating the poem from sentences I find in the surveillance files that begin with the word “She.”

One of the earliest files I had looked at was titled “Women’s Night Watch,” which hosted flashlight marches in the late 1970s to shine a light on violence against women in Portland. A 1977 march took place in Tryon State Park, where the Rape Hotline had reported a spate of ten rapes. (A sex crimes detective told The Oregonian that they couldn’t “devote resources to chasing ghosts” because nine of the ten rapes hadn’t been reported to the police, so women and allies took to the streets). The march then moved downtown in 1978, a nighttime protest to take back the streets. In an Oregonian article, Kathleen Mantia briefly interviews a 10-year-old girl at the march, adding, “She has her own reason for participating.”
So when Daniela asked me to meet, I thought about the map of the 1978 march. As Garrick Imatani and I came across the records of these protest marches, we would discuss a wish to uncover many, many maps, so we could somehow map our city through its dissent, layer upon layer of protest maps. But we also began to appreciate the maps as particular instances to put in high relief. As people try and try and try, sometimes putting boots to the pavement, one hopes that it all adds up. So the singular maps mattered as the particulars of protest.

Daniela and I ended our walk where that 1978 marched ended, at O’Bryant Square. We parted ways, and then I passed along my poem to her in long-form—this is a poem that I lengthen and shorten like an accordion, always resequencing. Daniela began to paint lines onto signs, handing the signs to friends and then curious passersby, moving the poem back into the route of the walk—and into the night. The 1978 march began at 8:30 pm., curving around downtown and culminating at O’Bryant Square where, according to the Intelligence Report issued by the main police-spy, Officer Winfield Falk, there would “be karate and self-defense demonstrations for the parade participants.” When Daniela and I walked that midday April afternoon, the park was filled with people, some struggling to rest out of conditions of homelessness, many eating lunches purchased from the food carts a block away. It was in this space that Daniela returned at night to photograph most of her images, recontextualizing the surveillance reports in present-day public space.

photos Daniela Molnar, text Kaia Sand
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She always gets kidded about being a female mechanic at auto parts shops
She also went to night school
She couldn’t imagine sitting behind a desk all day
She described her personal revelation and internal revolution—her struggle to come to grips with God, a male God
She discussed why this project was abandoned after only six months in operation
She can be violent
She advised that after attending two of these meetings, that she discovered it wasn’t for her
She decided lesbian rights was a feminist issue
She embraced the traditional role of the American wife
She emerged as a major figure in the feminist movement when she was excommunicated from the Mormon church for supporting the Equal Rights Amendment, an experience she wrote about in a best-selling book, “From Housewife to Heretic”
She emphasized what she considers “a hoax and a ruse” that high levels of military spending are necessary to protect workers’ jobs
She enjoyed her various writing and editing jobs
She attempted to free David
She feels that revenge toward the establishment is imperative
She had gone to pick up her mail when her husband forced her way into her car.

She advised that the meeting began at 5:00 P.M.

She finds herself drawn to concerns ranging from family law and consumer protection to environmental issues.

She flatly refused to accept a compromise with Jimmy Carter that promised somewhat less than the 50 per cent representation at future conventions.

She further advised that the only reason that she attended these meetings was because they were showing movies on the riots and take over of the U.S. Embassy in Iran and the taking of the hostages.

She had her own reason for participating.

She had served as president of the station’s board of directors.

She has found her niche.

She has not seen the man whom she divorced in 1977 since she became entangled in the criminal justice system.

She has two children.

She ignited a bleacherful of men and women with her message about women, the Mormon Church, and Equal Rights Amendment.

She is still learning.

She is believed to be a Lesbian.

She is drafting legal papers to that end.

She is involved with the AIM movement.

She is just sorry other women haven’t show more interest in automotive work.

She is now awaiting sentencing.
She is puzzled that there are no memos from the period of May 1974 through April 1977 when she was national president of NOW. She is the one you consider the real revolutionary right? She is a lively little cookie alright? She is under the thumb now of Old Bonnie Colton. She is incapable of rational compromise or anything rational. She knows of no New York political figures to whom she would have been writing at the age of 17. She talked back. She maintained that, “We are under attack…The situation calls for bold action and new alliances…” She moved where her husband’s jobs took them and did most of the housework. She now had her journey-man’s card. She nurtures her children by trying to save the world from nuclear extinction. She needs a support group to develop her ideas. She was beaten regularly for at least four years. She pleaded guilty to the charge strictly on the advice of her court-appointed attorney. She pointed out that she’s being “being paid to inform and influence lawmakers and not for wining and dining”. She provided copies of the files to a reporter. She received terrorizing telephone calls and saw his truck drive by several times.
She shot and killed him

She regarded these days as something of a radical in NOW

She said she couldn’t see why an amendment with such a beautiful name and simplicity could be so strongly opposed by her church

She said she did not agree to hire them

She said she had a one-hour meeting with the president and “he’s frankly deluded”

She said she supported WARN because it will be an important instrument in the survival struggle of Indian children and the Indian people

She said studies have indicated that a billion dollars spent on domestic activities such as construction or transportation provides many more jobs than buying military hardware

She said that because camping out at the Trojan site after nightfall is prohibited, there is a “definite possibility” that protesters would be arrested Saturday

She said the demonstrations will be significant as an international show of ‘solidarity’ among women

She says, I think I was socialized into a more traditional job

She serves as a full-time Vista Supervisor

She suffered a concussion

She thought it was just a friendly visit

She thought she had something better

She took a part-time job as a domestic relations aid with Marion-Polk Legal Aid
She took her children to live with relatives in another state
She used to be married and a dutiful housewife—twice
She used to be resorts editor for Golf Digest magazine
She was a co-founder of Portland Women Strike for Peace
She was active in the state Democratic Party
She was also a member of the Revolutionary Union, which evolved out of the Venceremos Brigade
She was always hunched over the machine
She was an unsuccessful candidate for mayor of Syracuse
She was arrested last January as a result of a situation of fear, panic, and confusion, which occurred when four FBI agents entered her parents’ Albina home
She was denied a polygraph test
She was disappointed in the fact that she helped them form their structure, and then they wouldn’t allow her to become a member
She became shop chairman of her union
She was editor of “The Pregnant Teenager” and author of “The Young Woman’s Guide to Liberation” and “Sexual Justice.”
She was pregnant at the time
She was one of 13 women who fasted 37 days in behalf of the ERA in Springfield, Ill
She was once a ‘totally non-political teen-ager interested mostly in clothes and boys,’ but the FBI kept a file on her
She was one of four North American women to visit North Vietnam at the invitation of the North Vietnam Women’s Union
She was feeling so damned tired

She was president of NOW, the National Organization for Women

She was repeatedly the victim of wife abuse and shot her husband when he was about to kill her 17-year-old daughter

She was subsequently released on bail, pending her charges, in Portland

She went around asking questions

She worked as a writer

She works as a bartender

She would never be convinced

She’s had a few humorous incidents

She’s only as rich as the poorest of the poor

She’s studying art history, painting, self defense and Aikido
She talked back.

She had her own reasons for participating.

She talked back.
She went around asking questions.

She has found her niche.
She went around asking questions.