

What does women's lib have to do with lesbianism?

by Sarah Koehl

Toothpick House, by Lee Lynch, Naiad Press, \$7.95.

Did you ever wonder what lesbianism and women's liberation have in common? Did you ever think of how these two subjects came together or didn't come together in the sixties? Without picking up a history of gay herstory or feminist theory, readers can read a fictional love story which takes place during this movement and learn how it changed traditional lesbian lifestyle forever. It's humorous, it's sensual, it's political and yet it's personal and light.

Annie Heaphy, a cab driver who lives a life absorbed in lesbian bars, meets Victoria Locke, a devoted Yale student totally inept in lesbian lifestyle as it is "supposed to be." Toothpick House is owned by Annie. It's a small shack on the Connecticut Coast, held

together by unknown elements. Victoria likens it to Annie, but in a much larger sense it is wilderness herself. Toothpick House expands and grows stronger as each of its characters learns to be her own woman.

Lee Lynch, the author, offers an insightful look into lesbian life and love. Done in a somewhat "harlequin" style of romance to a backdrop of the blossoming women's movement. All readers must read the outrageous introduction about the author to be prepared for the story.



Fly Away Home, by Marge Piercy (Summit Books, \$16.95) is about a subject all too familiar in feminist novels; a suburban housewife who finds herself after being left by her husband. But Piercy does not disappoint her readers. She uses this theme via a detective drama.

Daria, the main character, wife and mother, feels she is nothing without her husband and her lovely suburban home. Daria's safe world falls around her as her mother dies; her husband asks for a divorce after twenty-two, supposedly happy, years of wedded bliss;

and mysterious notes appear in the mail for her husband, which lead her to uncover her husband's hidden dealings with arson and murder. As Daria strives to understand the marriage partner she thought she knew, she finds her own life transformed, her values sharpened and altered, her strong sense of family broadened and reshaped. For Daria, "the truth of her life, the truth of her marriage," no matter how brutal, "is the only medicine that can save her." Daria's insistence on learning the truth, no matter how painful, leads her to take action that turns out to be her only salvation. She joins forces with her husband's enemies, and as her husband's life starts to fall apart, as he had meant for her life to do, Daria lands firmly on her own two feet.

Piercy presents all of Daria's transformations with a series of powerful images. Despite the somber subject matter of her novel, the plot is superb, and asks the age old question, "What can any of us really know about the people we love and trust?" The novel's only weakness lies in that it's representation of Ross, Daria's husband, seems one-dimensional and shallow. Next to her, he is an odd characterization of the "nasty" husband.

Daria chooses finally a new life, with a new love, with a much simpler and less conven-

tional lifestyle, than she is used to. This may be a scaled down "utopia" but for that very reason it should have very broad appeal.

Fly Away Home may prove to be even more revolutionary than her previous more radical novels as it will touch many more lives and lifestyles.

Marge Piercy is the author of seven previous novels, including *Small Changes*, *Woman on the Edge of Time*, *Vida*, and *Braided Lives*. She has written nine books of poetry, including *The Moon Is Always Female*, *Stone, Paper, Knife*, and *Circles on the Waer*. Ira Wood, her husband, coauthored a play with her, *The Last White Class*, and her only book of essays is called *Particolored Blocks of a Quilt*.

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