

Claire, not Olympia then. He looks at her in this new light as he scrubs her back. How could he not have noticed those pimples on her shoulders? Perhaps that is why he was unable to stomach her. But no, no, the mystery is more than skin deep.

"Scrub harder, Manuelo."

He does, marveling at the dead skin which peels off, flake by flake. How many layers are there? He stares into the skin, lost in ponderings beneath the surface and then, with a wild cry of exultation, realizes that he has found his calling. Dermatology will teach him the topography of the flesh. Through that mundane profession he will explore the twin mysteries of desire and disgust.

"You're breaking the skin again!" shouts Claire. "Enough!"

YOU

"You have helped me to find myself," they admit simultaneously and, with a tender embrace, part forever.

ZOON

Shining in the sunlight which is shining too, she runs to the park. Abigale is asleep; a caterpillar is making a moustache on her upper lip. Claire picks it off and tosses it carelessly into the grass. It slithers away as Abigale wakes.

"Where have you been?" drowsy A asks. Claire hesitates. What words could convey the absurdity, the enormity of her adventure? An attempt is necessary. She begins to stammer a reply but her stomach, miraculously to the rescue, speaks first: loudly it rumbles, fiercely it growls. Both women laugh. The noise suffices for response.

Claire stretches out her hands to Abigale and, with a little tug, pulls her to her feet.

"It's time for another beginning," Claire says.

"It always was," Abigale grins.

And off they go, old friends hand in hand, in search of apples.

Susan Yankowitz's first novel, *Silent Witness*, was published by Knopf in May. Her play, *Still Life*, will be produced in January at the Women's Interarts Theatre, and her published plays include *Slaughterhouse Play*, *Terminal*, *Boxes*, and *The Prison Game*, among others.

Do You Think

Jayne Cortez

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Do you think this is a sad day
a sad night
full of tequila full of el dorado
full of banana solitudes

And my chorizo face a holiday for knives
and my arching lips a savannah for cuchifritos
and my spit curls a symbol for you
to overcharge overbill oversell me
these saints these candles
these dented cars loud pipes
no insurance and no place to park
because my last name is Cortez

Do you think this is a sad night
a sad day

And on this elevator
between my rubber shoes
in the creme de menthe of my youth
the silver tooth of my age
the gullah speech of my one trembling tit
full of tequila full of el dorado
full of banana solitudes you tell me
i use more lights more gas
more telephones more sequins more feathers
more iridescent head-stones
you think i accept this pentecostal church
in exchange for the lands you stole

And because my name is Cortez
do you think this is a revision
of flesh studded with rivets
my wardrobe clean
the pick in my hair
the pomegranate in my hand
14th street delancey street 103rd street
reservation where i lay my skull
the barrio of need
the police state in ashes
drums full of tequila full of el dorado
full of banana solitudes say:
Do you really think time speaks english
in the mens room

Jayne Cortez was born in Arizona and grew up in the Watts Community of Los Angeles. She is the author of three books of poetry—*Pissstained Stairs and the Monkey Man's Wares* (1969), *Festivals and Funerals* (1971), *Scarifications* (1973), from which this poem is reprinted, and a recording—*Celebrations and Solitudes* (Strata East Records, 1975).