

10.

this november  
city is up  
tight. in midtown  
the ibm selectrics  
have been bolted  
to the desks  
of secretaries  
who are afraid, now  
to change jobs.  
the druggists refuse  
to fill medicaid  
prescriptions.  
a man has been shot  
for going  
over the turnstiles.

we slept overnight  
on long island,  
all the way out.  
i saw each grain  
of sand a different  
color, stuffed shells  
in my coat. i walked  
as before toward rain  
down a beach shining  
white through the storm,  
watched the tide  
turn once.

locked into the city,  
i plan to quit my job.  
i must get a jacket  
with a working  
zipper, call  
the exterminator,  
have a gate installed  
on the fire escape  
access window.

(Thanksgiving, 1975)

Jan Clausen writes poetry, fiction, and critical prose. She is the author of a book of poems, *After Touch* (Out and Out Books, 1975) and "The Politics of Publishing and the Lesbian Community" (*Sinister Wisdom*, no. 2, 1977). With friends, she edits *Conditions*, a magazine of women's writing with emphasis on work by lesbians.

## Dead in Bloody Snow

Meridel LeSueur

61

I am an Indian woman  
Witness to my earth  
Witness for my people.  
I am the nocturnal door,  
The hidden cave of your sorrow,  
Like you hidden deep in furrow  
and dung  
of the charnel mound,  
I heard the craven passing of the  
white soldiers  
And saw them shoot at Wounded Knee  
upon the sleeping village,  
And ran with the guns at my back  
Until we froze in our blood on the snow

I speak from old portages  
Where they pursued and shot into the river crossing  
All the grandmothers of Black Hawk.  
I speak from the smoke of grief,  
from the broken stone,  
And cry with the women crying from the marsh  
Trail and tears of drouthed women,  
O bitter barren!  
O barren bitter!

I run, homeless,  
I arrive  
in the gun sight,  
beside the white square houses  
of abundance.

My people starve  
In the time of the bitter moon.  
I hear my ghostly people crying  
A hey a hey a hey.

Rising from our dusty dead the sweet grass,  
The skull marking the place of loss and flight.  
I sing holding my severed head,  
to my dismembered child,  
A people's dream that died in bloody snow.

Meridel LeSueur defines herself as "a 76-year-old Mid-western writer," something of an understatement since she has published 12 books and innumerable stories, articles and poems. "Dead in Bloody Snow" is reprinted from *Rites of Ancient Ripening* (Vanilla Press, Minneapolis, 1975) in which she says, "Slogan for 76: Survival is a form of resistance."