



Image from Mother Earth News.

Ronald F. Sauer

From a Houseguest to a Hostess (A Venetian Aside),  
Or: To Our Lady of the Little Mosquitoes

“No! Don’t kill them! No!  
... That’s why they bite you....”  
Poor little vampiric bugs ...  
Will poor Mother Nature ever get  
A fair shake from the likes of men?

... And coming home  
After a long and hateful day  
Of martyric work as a teacher,  
She cuts into the meat she loves,  
Pointedly, with determined knife.  
She needs her meat to make her strong,  
The better to hold the fort,  
And retain the job she hates.  
And she likes to argue: it's her right to be right.  
She cuts into the meat with edgy resolve.  
The same way her mother cut her off from her father,  
To make sure she would never enjoy sex.  
Because little saints and holy virgins  
Should abide in contempt of such lowly things.  
And the better to stay by mother's side,  
And be there for her when she rots,  
And make sure that she rots comfortably,  
But unalone in her early sexless dotage ...  
Poor little vampiric mosquitoes,  
So light-footed in their malarial mandate.  
Responsible for more deaths  
Than all the wars in human history combined.  
And two-thirds of these  
Little girls and boys under the age of seven.  
Poor little innocent bugs: all they want  
Is a sanguine little sip, just a bloody little bellyful,  
And somewhere to excrete their busy little microbes ...  
Poor, winged, tender manifestations  
Of selfless Mother Nature,  
Just doing her damndest  
In her dog-eat-dog way, in her early-bird-  
Catches-the-little-worm-way, in her big-fish-  
Eats-the-little-fish-way, in her bubonic plague,  
Diphtherial, red/yellow feverish, smallpox, humpy,  
Mumps, flea-bitten, rat-ridden, measly, malarial way  
To get around those mean, patriarchal,  
Swamp-draining men, so hell-bent on depriving  
Poor little malaria  
Of a sweet little filthy swamp to breed in ...  
And if you attempt to wash the after-dinner dishes,  
She lets you know in no uncertain terms  
That there is a right way and a wrong way  
To do the dishes, boy, an *in control* and *knowing* way,

Like slicing diamonds or precious emeralds.  
There is a *correct way* and a just way and a cutting way  
To get to the meat of the matter, man ...  
Poor little innocent loving living vampiric bugs ...  
And a little tenderly later,  
Reflectively poisoning herself with cigarettes,  
She thinks a little and admits that is now too late,  
That perhaps she should have had children after all.—  
No! No!—not to love them,  
Not to make them feel free in joy and the perishable mystery  
Of their bodies; not to tickle, charm or amaze them  
With the incredible pageant and irrepressible drama  
That is life, no!—But regretting  
That she let slip through her fingers the chance to mold  
Their formative and innocent little minds into those  
Of puritanical and properly vengeful revolutionaries,  
Who would cut, hate and redress all the wrongs  
Of this bug-murdering, unfeeling, patriarchal world....

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