

"VISION" by Janine DeBaise

Women will sweat. Men will dream. Grandmothers will celebrate their age.
The sky will belong to the stars and the moon. Wolves will roam the Adirondack Mountains.

Boys will play with dolls. Football stadiums will be turned into greenhouses.

We will celebrate the mosquito. Cows will be allowed to nurse their calves.
Children will play without fences. Families will sing together. Disney will go under.

Women will feel safe walking alone at night.

We will eat milkweed and dandelions and cattail punks.
We will drive slower, drive less, stop building highways.
We will take the time to watch sunflowers turn their heads.

When we talk about growth, we will think of the rainforest and not the economy.
We will remember that snowflakes make the world cozy.

We will learn to love water snakes and earthworms and eels. Children will swim barefoot.
Rivers will be allowed to overflow their banks. The bald eagle will rule the sky.

We will admire butterflies without touching them, without cutting them apart,
without making plans to sell their wings.

Women will feel safe.

We will take down billboards and make them into picnic tables.
The militia will grow potatoes and rice. The navy will record the songs of whales.

The airforce will write legends about falling stars.
The army, after studying a colony of ants, will take over recycling.
The papers on which corporations exist will catch fire.

During winter storms, families will stay home by the fire listening to the old people tell legends.
During August heat waves, families will gather near streams and rivers
and lie naked on the banks.

Golf courses will become sanctuaries for deer and skunk and teen-agers.
Vacant city lots will become community gardens.

Men will know what it is like to give birth.
Women with grey hair will grow it long and teach children how to weave it into braids.
We will plant trees instead of buying air conditioners.

We will gather around the kitchen table instead of the television set.
We will relearn how to tell stories. Our leaders will write their own speeches.

Women will feel safe.

Our homes will be places of death and birth. We will listen to birds singing.
Women who reach the age of eighty will wear headdresses woven of scarlet and purple.

We will play the piano and the harp
and make quilts out the designer clothes we no longer need.
We will celebrate color. We will put clusters of poison ivy in vases.

We will break mirrors and use the shards for holiday ornaments.
Anyone who wants to know what she looks like will have to look
for a reflection in the eyes of someone who loves her.

We will make zoos into daycare centers, so children can swing from ropes and play in moats.
Men will love men without fear. Women will love women without ridicule.

Gunther and Bruce and Meg will grow our food and deliver it to us in big bins on Thursdays.
We will learn to eat mustard greens and swiss chard.

Children will learn about sex not from the television screen, but from the old people
who will teach them that it is sacred.

Women will take all the high heels in the world and use them as tools for planting corn.
Men will take all the pantyhose in the world and use it to stuff rag dolls
for their sons to play with.

Communities will gather to watch sunsets instead of reality television.
We will no longer have a separate word for nature.
We will no longer have a separate word for mother.
Men will bake bread.

Women will give birth at home in dimlit rooms
with partners massaging them and mothers feeding them soup.
Men will cry in front of their friends.

Women will feel safe.

We will celebrate the energy of teen-agers.
Communities will dance together - old people and young people and toddlers.

All drive-through windows will close. No one will ever eat alone in a car on a highway.
Strangers will share picnic tables and lentil stew.

The old people will teach children how to make necklaces from dandelions.
Women will have time to breastfeed their babies.
Nuclear power plants will become museums.

Men will have mood swings. Women will be proud of their stretch marks.

There will be no such thing as climate control.
We will listen to darkness and crickets singing.
We will build rocking chairs. We will dry our hair in the sun or by the fire.

When an old person is ready to die,
we will bathe him and sing to him and read him poetry until he stops breathing.

We will worship in the forest and in the kitchen,
with our bodies and with wildflowers and with each other.

read by Ms. DeBaise at Monday Night Poetry on 9/12/2005
an Art of Caring event to benefit Vera House