

FROM THE EDITORS

April 15, 2009. That picture on the cover of this issue awakens a longing in me, especially on a beautiful Wisconsin afternoon such as this, when I'm scrambling to get *FC* and another of our periodicals to press before a trip, figuring out the logistics of photocopying and mailing tax returns before midnight, realizing what a mess my house is, knowing a massive grocery run must be done very soon, and wondering whether my partner and I can manage to install new window blinds and bathe the dog before I leave town.

That woman in the picture...You can tell she's not even thinking about taxes, work deadlines, or home improvement projects. She is totally at ease and at rest. Look at her! Curled up in a cozy nest of cushions, dressed for the balmy weather, chin in hand, brow unwrinkled, in a state of real relaxation, she is deeply engrossed in a book. And you *know* it's not a technical manual, a reference text, or a feminist theory tome. She's reading for pleasure, for quiet inspiration, for the joy of entering into another world on the page.

Speaking of other worlds, perhaps this woman — inspired by Helen Merrick's invitation in our lead article, "What's a Bright Feminist Like You Doing in a Genre Like This?" — is

reading science fiction. Maybe it's one of the first times she's ventured into such literature, and she's glad she's done it.

I think I'll follow her example and pack the short-story collection *Daughters of Earth: Feminist Science Fiction in the Twentieth Century* (one of the volumes Helen reviews on pages 1–6) in my luggage for my upcoming journey. This will be a working trip in many ways rather than a vacation, but I'll have some time to sit around in an overstuffed chair now and then and just read. I might skip the critical essays for now and simply enjoy the stories, seeing for myself whether, as Helen suggests, "there is...more to it after all than geeky boys with ray guns." Want to join me?

The other reviewers in this issue also offer compelling invitations to contemplate fascinating topics, even if what they're reviewing isn't fiction or pleasure reading/viewing by any stretch. Alycia Sellie and her friend and colleague Jannelle Ruswick, for instance, try out a collaborative reviewing approach in "I Promise I Won't Say 'Herstory': New Conversations among Feminists," which delves into recent offerings from "next wave" feminists Jessica Valenti, Deborah Siegel, and Anita Harris. Their piece is fun to read: Jannelle and Alycia's conversational tone and format are accessible, and their insights worth pondering.

Beginning on page 12, special librarian Anne Moser takes up a topic I have felt drawn to ever since I heard Vandana Shiva speak at an NWSA conference a few years back: how a need so basic and universal as access to water can be intertwined with enormous political power struggles and the unequal treatment of women. Hmmmm. It might not be a *relaxing* read, but maybe I should take a look at Maude Barlow's *Blue Covenant* sometime soon. If I take it to the beach this summer, at least there will be that water connection.

Medical and public health historian Karen Walloch, in our "Feminist Visions" column, reviews seven videos about women and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. I'd like to point out that five of the seven films she discusses are available online for free, and are short enough to fit easily into class sessions. This is a serendipitous follow-up to Phyllis Holman Weisbard's article in our last issue on finding good online videos for use in women's studies.

Don't miss our regular columns, including reviews of new reference works about everything from abortion to theater, transgender issues, Native American women's studies, and philosophy. And, say: after you look at "Magazines for Tween Girls" (in "Periodical Notes"), will you let me know if you have any good tips for getting a ten-year-old to reflect on *why* she likes what she likes to read?

Or maybe I should just leave her alone and let her read for pleasure, for inspiration, for the joy of entering into another world on the page. Now there's a thought.

○ J.L.

