

10/25/79

You gotta Cause,

I gotta Cause,

All God's chill'en gotta Cause.... (tra la la)

Well, a post card to NBC (obverse) would be welcome. Pretend you saw it. I saw it. Ugh.

My neck hurts — a minor business, they assure me — + it's fading, but this will still have to be brief.

I keep your picture in my fire-resistant box, wonder what you're doing, + don't read much or write, which is a bore.

When the Great Crunch comes, there will be a student living free in my 2d floor + driving me mad (+ doing the housekeeping + shopping + chores, you see) but how will I stay sane? ^{clomp clomp} _{clomp clomp}

Meanwhile I ponder: ought I to invest ^{up +} _{down} \$8,000 in diamonds and gold? And stuff it up stairs a sock? I think my money is shrinking.

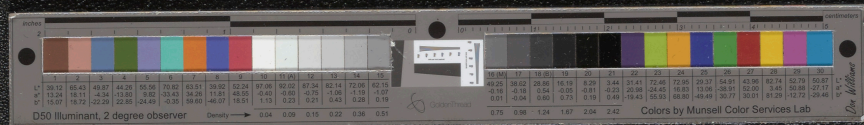
Have you read The Beginning Place? Impressive. But — wishing to write a praise for the cover — my neck went cronk! and now it's too late. But I am mightily pleased.

Things rumble along. You are in a new article Marge Piercy is trying to get printed. She talks about ~~a Black~~ "an ^{battered} ~~coured~~ Black woman becomes God" — yeah. Hey!

Would you autograph Up the Walls of the World for me if I sent it, hey hey?

Love,

Swan



21 October 1979

Hermineo Traviesas
NBC-TV Broadcast Standards
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, N.Y. 10020

Dear Mr. Traviesas,

Saturday Night Live has been my favorite show on NBC for years, but it's turning into "Animal House." I'm not going to watch it any more.

On October 20th one of the skits featured a comedian who began by announcing his belief in women's inferiority and to "prove" this, offered a prize of \$500 to any female volunteer from the audience who could beat him at wrestling. This event followed, and the act ended with the comedian jeering at the swimmer, Diana Nyad, whom he described as the strongest woman in the world, for not accepting his challenge.

If this is satire, I find it indistinguishable from the bigotry it's supposed to satirize. The spectacle of a man trying to physically dominate a woman to the cheers of the men in the audience is one I thought we had all left behind us.

Suppose the comedian had announced that Black people were inferior to Whites because of their physical defects--the ugliness of their hair, skin color, and features--and had offered a prize to any Black volunteer from the audience who could prove equality with his handsome White self by making up with grease paint, putty, and wigs? Then we end with the comedian jeering at Andrew Young for not accepting the "challenge" to disguise his dark skin and flat nose.

In racial terms the joke evaporates.

I don't think it's funny in sexist terms either. Saturday Night Live used to attack targets like atomic holocaust.

Now its targets are women.

I'm going to do all I can to get my friends and various women's groups I work with to stop watching the show. The people who originally made the show a success were people like my friends (five years ago), not the male sophomores whom it seems to want as its audience now.

Sincerely,

Joanna Russ

Joanna Russ

Joanna Russ
3956 2nd Ave. NW
Seattle, WA 98107

P.S. This is a xerox copy because other copies are going out to other places.

