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An experiment with  
Susan Brown Miller

by Cathleen Miller

MOVE NOW

He greets her with a paternal shove and a slap  
designed to suggest that women have no need  
to control their own movements or bodies.

Their feminine training suggests that they  
bear this assault. Fear of being sliced open  
has become, for many women, a powerful tranquilizer.

She will reconstruct, in polite compliance, the many ways  
that her female body has been restricted.  
Indeed, the delicate artifice of her smile  
is constructed on artful deception.

She sits mute and unmoving while he  
checks that she has not become  
a dyke, remains gracious, romantic, and fragile.

Her lovely masked feathers do not betray the core  
of the functioning, provocative woman she has become

She possesses no manners, is true, but she is tired of  
putting on a show for those who wish to be deceived.

she rejects the refinements of the ladies  
who long to be cared for, cat-like and reclining.  
In the rarefied plane above the sofa bed,  
she finds her feminist instinct—hidden  
in the simple act of physical autonomy.

Conscious of attention from men, her gestures are  
a synonym for manly action stifled under thick plastic.

This lady demonstrates her despair  
while she adjusts to the reality  
that "feeling lady-like" will never bring  
pleasure, but by incorporating  
Freudian behavioral models into her suffocation,  
each action takes on value.

She reports exhaustively on the subject  
in each session. Research into this phenomenon  
is notably inconclusive!