

# UC Berkeley

## Places

### Title

H My Name is Henrietta

### Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/0551h7q7>

### Journal

Places, 1(3)

### ISSN

0731-0455

### Author

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### Publication Date

1984-01-15

Peer reviewed

## H My Name is Henrietta

### Karen A. Franck

We always meant to add a real lavatory  
but something always came up  
And now I wouldn't add it just for me alone  
Even if I had the money.

F my name is Francie and my husband's name is Fred  
We bought a mobile home in Florida  
when he retired.  
There's always something to do,  
and someone to do it with,  
So I don't spend much time thinking  
about what a hurricane  
could do to these little tiny toy houses  
When I do think about it, though, I hope we go together,  
Fred and I.

G my name is Garnet  
My mother named all us girls after precious stones.  
I think of her sometimes, when I'm out in the fields  
and I see an old woman  
bending and stooping and picking  
But I'm too busy myself,  
bending and stooping and picking  
to think much about her  
And when I'm home I'm too tired to think  
of anything at all.  
Seems I've always got someone to be yelling at.  
Too many of us in this leaky place.  
At night the four oldest are in the next room  
and the littlest one is in our room  
That's the way I grew up, hearing things I shouldn't hear,  
and wondering what my parents  
were always fighting about.  
I remember wanting it to be different for my children  
but I'm almost too tired now to remember exactly  
how.  
I wonder if my mother ever got this tired.  
I wonder if she ever kept pictures in her head  
of the house she'd like to live in some day.

#### Editor's note:

Ellen Perry Berkeley's article includes an open invitation to others to complete the cycle, so we forwarded the article to three authors and seconded the invitation. Their letters follow.

H My name is Henrietta  
This here is my home,  
This is where I live and where I dream.  
Some people call it an SRO but I dunno  
if they rightly should  
Cause when they do, they try to put me down.  
They dunno many of us is clean  
And careful  
And lives by all the rules  
And don't bother no one  
And don't be no druggies and no winos.  
Where we gonna go  
If they tears down this SRO?

I My name is Irene  
I moved to Manhattan after I graduated  
From Harvard Law School.  
I'm now an associate in a Wall Street firm  
You may have heard of  
Or maybe not.  
I live in a loft on Green Street,  
In Soho, that is.  
It was written up in the *New York Times*  
*Sunday Magazine* a few weeks back  
The loft, that is.  
I live there with my husband.  
He works on Wall Street, too.  
When we bought the loft, there were mostly painters and  
sculptors living there.  
Now it's mostly lawyers and stockbrokers  
And other professional people  
Like us.  
Sometimes I wonder where all the artists went.  
When I have time, that is.

J My name is Jeanine  
I'll just sit here a while  
And get the feeling of being home.  
I have to go back to the shelter and see my children  
Before I go to work.  
I got their assignments from the teacher  
I don't want them to get behind.  
At least I have a place to come to.  
The lease is in my name  
And I have a job to go to and people I can talk to.  
The other women at the shelter don't have anything.

I'll just sit here a while  
And get the feeling of being home.

K My name is Kathleen  
I live at 16 Breeze Court, Bricktown.  
That's the address I always give.  
That way you might just think it was a house  
on a regular street.  
But of course if you thought about it,  
You'd realize they never call regular streets "court."  
It's very quiet here  
And everyone looks the same and acts the same.  
That's the whole point  
I suppose.  
I bought the house when Joe died.  
My kids said it was a good price,  
That I couldn't go wrong.  
It wasn't what I wanted.  
It still isn't.  
But I couldn't tell you what I want instead  
Maybe just to live on a regular street  
With regular people.

L My name is Lydia  
You must come see my house sometime.  
I just finished building it.  
It's what I always wanted,  
A place that I designed  
Just for me  
And the way I like to live  
And the way I like to feel.  
There's lots of wood and textured surfaces,  
The views are good from every room.  
You never feel confined.  
If anything, you might feel too free.  
It's what I always wanted.  
But why is it just for me?  
I can't believe I'm really saying this  
But where is he?

M My name is Miranda, Mirabel  
And sometimes Mary Sue.  
I change my name to fit my mood  
Or where I live or what I do.  
As you might guess, I like to move around a lot  
And see a lot of places.

I'm glad that I can do this,  
That there are  
Motels and trailer parks, guest houses and rooms for rent  
Or even the YWCA  
Where any girl can stay.  
Sometimes people don't understand  
Or get the wrong idea  
But mostly I don't have much trouble  
In the places where I go.  
Of course I haven't tried the big cities yet  
New York, Chicago or LA.

N My name is Natalie  
I'm an account executive with Jay Walter Thompson.  
I love my job  
Or career, I guess I should say.  
My husband's name is Jim  
He's a lawyer and has his own firm.  
Together we make a good income,  
Enough anyway to have a house in Westchester  
And a housekeeper  
And other things that make life pleasant.  
What I really want  
I feel I just can't have.  
That's to be at home all day  
And take care of our new baby  
Myself.  
After all,  
I have a career.

O My name is Olive  
I just moved in  
With my two sons.  
I love my apartment  
There's no roaches and no rats  
Everything's so clean and new.  
The place we lived before  
You wouldn't believe.  
Well, there is one thing that bothers me.  
You see, I get a rent subsidy based on my income  
And that I'm a single parent  
But my boyfriend stays here nights.  
If they find out,  
Do you think they'll  
Throw me out?

P My name is Pat  
I live with my lover  
Her name is Marie.  
We have a two-bedroom apartment  
With a beautiful view of the Bay.  
My parents are coming for a short stay.  
It's their first trip West.  
I can put them in the guest room that we use for a study,  
That's no trouble.  
The question is:  
Shall I sleep on the couch  
In the living room?

Q My name is Queenie  
My husband used to call me that  
And then other people  
Kind of picked it up.  
I used to be the Queen,  
That's why he called me that.  
But now everything is all mixed up  
My husband's been laid off.  
I go to work now  
And he stays home,  
This makes him mad.  
It makes me mad too,  
I go to work and then I come home  
And shop and cook and clean and do the wash.  
That's not what a queen does.

R My name is Roseann  
And I live in Fort Lee.  
I live alone with two cats  
Heathcliff and BVD.  
Sometimes I sit on the couch  
With one cat beside me and one on my lap  
And look at my photographs  
And all of my things  
And think how nice it is  
To have my own place and be my own self.  
Before, all those years when I was married,  
It was more his house and his things  
And his wife.

S My name is Saralee  
But that's just a joke.  
My real name is Laura, M.D., Ph.D.  
I've given my self this nickname  
Cause I've turned into such a hostess.  
I love to cook, to clean, to cut fresh flowers,  
To greet my guests and serve drinks on the deck,  
To sit at the head of the table  
And serve my latest creation.  
It feels like playing house.  
But this is just the summer  
And my vacation  
Will soon  
Be over.

T My name is Tara  
My mother named me after the house and the land,  
Not the woman.  
That's lucky.  
I'm a potter and I've been living in Vermont  
for the past six years.  
Now I've come to stay with my parents in Portchester  
To try to make some money  
And figure out what to do.  
Dad says I can stay here three months rent free  
And then I have to pay.

U My name is Undine  
That means water sprite or nymph  
In Greek.  
It's kind of a fancy name for someone like me,  
I'm very down to earth.  
I'm a stage manager  
When I'm employed anyway.  
Let me tell you what's really important to me.  
Last year I met someone, an actor,  
Who is the first man I've ever loved and I'm 28.  
It's hard, we get jobs in different places  
But when we are together,  
It's so good.

## W Our Name is Women

### Susana Torre

V My name is Vera  
And I go to Vassar.  
You know it's coed now.  
I think that's fine.  
It's no big deal for me  
Either way.  
But sometimes I pretend  
That it's all women again.  
I try to imagine what that's like  
To be all together,  
Just us.

W our name is Women, aliens, outsiders,  
displaced from the places of culture  
misplaced within the places of power  
ill at ease at the places of public appearance  
deafened by the whispers of fear  
blinded by the thrill of the challenge  
to feel as safe and wanted in the world  
as we are at Home.