

# THE WORK OF A COMMON WOMAN

JUDY · GRAHN

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY  
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I have come to claim  
 Marilyn Monroe's body  
 for the sake of my own.  
 dig it up, hand it over,  
 cram it in this paper sack.  
 hubba. hubba. hubba.  
 look at those luscious  
 long brown bones, that wide and crusty  
 pelvis. ha HA, oh she wanted so much to be serious

but she never stops smiling now.  
 Has she lost her mind?

Marilyn, be serious – they're taking  
 your picture, and they're taking the pictures  
 of eight young women in New York City  
 who murdered themselves for being pretty  
 by the same method as you, the very  
 next day, after you!  
 I have claimed their bodies too,  
 they smile up out of my paper sack  
 like brainless cinderellas.

the reporters are furious, they're asking  
 me questions  
 what right does a woman have  
 to Marilyn Monroe's body? and what  
 am I doing for lunch? They think I  
 mean to eat you. Their teeth are lurid  
 and they want to pose me, leaning  
 on the shovel, nude. Dont squint.

But when one of the reporters comes too close  
I beat him, bust his camera  
with your long, smooth thigh  
and with your lovely knucklebone  
I break his eye.

Long ago you wanted to write poems;  
Be serious, Marilyn  
I am going to take you in this paper sack  
around the world, and  
write on it: – the poems of Marilyn Monroe –  
Dedicated to all princes,  
the male poets who were so sorry to see you go,  
before they had a crack at you.  
They wept for you, and also  
they wanted to stuff you  
while you still had a little meat left  
in useful places;  
but they were too slow.

Now I shall take them my paper sack  
and we shall act out a poem together:  
“How would you like to see Marilyn Monroe,  
in action, smiling, and without her clothes?”  
We shall wait long enough to see them make familiar faces  
and then I shall beat them with your skull.  
hubba. hubba. hubba. hubba. hubba.  
Marilyn, be serious  
Today I have come to claim your body for my own.