

## MARIA HINDMARCH / On Sharon

Sharon and I met sometime in the mid-sixties through my sister Leni, brother-in-law Neap, Sharon's first husband, Brian Fawcett, and my then husband, Cliff Andstein. I don't recall the moment, but she was suddenly there with those sky blue eyes, sharp wit, and swinging dark hair. She worked as a secretary while Brian went to SFU, but after two or three semesters she enrolled too.

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Sharon and Brian were always on the move—it seemed every six months or so—and Cliff and Neap and others drove out to Port Moody or walked over to their new pad in Kitsilano to paint their walls, white of course. Every rented place was quickly transformed from salmon pink and institutional green (landlords' colours those days) to white.

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Shortly after everyone moved them into a place in Fairview, she and Brian started a Shakespeare reading group. Various of us, including Stan Persky, Brian DeBeck, Tom Grieve, Michael Boughn, Dennis Wheeler, Alban and Julia Goulden took parts in whatever play we were assigned. We read through rainy winter Sunday afternoons to backyard balmy Midsummer's Eves.

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I have known Sharon through her various husbands, cats, dogs, and son Jesse, as she has known me through my various men, dogs, and son Lars. We even managed to escape to Parksville one weekend when the boys were under two; but when we returned Brian and Sharon got in a fight about essays they had both written on Coleridge—who had done the best one.

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In 1974 and in 1975, I and then Sharon joined Capilano College where we both worked into the 2000s. Over the years we've discussed what works in the classroom or how we escaped from a dreadful class—with both of us laughing at our fumbles and foibles.

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Sharon and I participated in a women's group for two years or so and, later on, a New French Feminisms reading group that ended abruptly. We read Simone de Beauvoir, Benoîte Groult, Annie Leclerc, Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray, Marguerite Duras, Julia Kristeva. Other members of the group were Daphne Marlatt and Kathy Mezei, maybe Percilla Groves too, maybe even Betsy Warland. Daphne and Sharon were always at the center of the argument.

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In the mid-70s, when I just couldn't face retyping my *Peter Stories* for bpNichol at Coach House, Sharon did it for me. In 1987, after Coach House published *The Beginning of the Long Dash*, I wrote a review that was published in *Brick* and republished elsewhere, and she wrote a comment on my *Watery Part of the World*. Neither of us read what the other had written until it was in print.

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Until she left for Kelowna, we'd drink tea in each other's kitchens, and eat suppers at each other's tables. Sharon can make a cherry pie or chocolate cake without a recipe and do each faster than anyone else I know. We would talk as she cooked or as I made a salad in my kitchen on Parker where I've lived for 28 years—just a few blocks from her last Vancouver place on Kitchener Street near Commercial Drive.

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Since we both had dogs, we often walked them together. Our walk/talks took in the whole range from Writers and Company to vet visits, from GG and BC Book Awards to breast cancer treatments, from hair dos and good cuts to Charles Olson and Frances Bodereff's relationship.