



Once Harold Town was a cautious young man in Toronto. "My days at art college were preceded by a night at the Ramona Grill. . . . Hair greased, wearing white socks and other nostalgic gear and the required look of swinging boredom affected by big band sidemen, I managed a toehold on the interest of an older woman (she must have been all of twenty-two) and walked her home. She let me know that no one in the house was up and asked me in. Mentally rolling up my sexual sleeves, I started forward, then stopped as if held by a throat chain and blurted out . . . that I must go, tomorrow was my first day at art college and I had to get up early." Later, Harold learned that punctuality is the politeness of squares and decided to march to the tick of his own clock. The mixed media drawing above is called *Vale Variation No. 75*, a title that shows that Mr. Town calls his work anything he pleases.

several stereotypes, calling her a number of things clearly intended to hurt: "The No. 1 spinster in Canada," "an odd bod," "a drill sergeant in jack-boots." The Canada Pension Plan involved her in endless political pushing and shoving. In an extraordinary interview with Heather Robertson, she described the ordeal: "It took the shine off politics, and in the minds of many stamped me as a quarrelsome, stubborn, heavy-handed fighter."

At the peak of power she quit politics. "I got so tired of fighting. There's no one to talk to about things and, when you come right down to facts, nobody really cares if you live or die. It warped my personality. I was really bitchy and always tired and short tempered."

Once out, she found she was very far out indeed. "Most ministers who leave government go on to half-a-dozen boards and their friends rally

around. That certainly didn't happen to me."

So first she wrote her autobiography: *Memoirs Of A Bird In A Gilded Cage*. That established her as an articulate critic, and she got her own TV shows in Ottawa and a radio hotline program in Vancouver. In 1974 she came back east to teach law at Osgoode Hall. She took another television show and started writing a weekly column for *The Toronto Star*. In 1975 she was appointed chairman of Ontario's Royal Commission on Violence in the Communications Industry. A lot of the old bitterness faded away. "The speeches and kinds of things I'm being asked to do are more establishment now," she says. "I'm much more respectable."

Though not, of course, as she was, once upon a time, in Niagara Falls.