

support of other women working in similar areas may be more important than the emotional support of family and friends. Aspiring women inventors may feel less alone or deviant and, more importantly, may be validated as inventors.

The need for research about the experiences of women inventors seems clear, if for no reason other than to set the record right. Women involved in technical work and contributing to technological progress should be given due credit. The challenges and constraints women inventors experience must be better understood to encourage innovation and the development of new ideas.

In future, the challenge may be less of encouraging individual creativity, but overcoming societal shortsightedness about inventors and innovation. The woman inventor is an economic and intellectual resource, one not to be overlooked or underestimated.

Masks

They watch me
as we laugh, compare
a 'stars' bare whiteness to mine.
Word-sounds separate
me from them, my sons.
They look at me —
wonder, disapproval, fear —
search for the way back in
not sure how the separation
happened in the first place;
feeling different, mothered less perhaps.

Bluish light flickers T.V.
patterns onto supper evening
walls. Faces distort,
turn away,
edges of eyes never quite
attend. Masks we only
slightly recognize. Bits of
memory pasted over distance,
unfamiliar colours. Half exposed
pain taped up with smiles
and small talk. Who is she?

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