



CHAPTER 1

MY DEAR LADY READER, as you begin to read this text, 0° , you may be...

- lying on your tummy fantasizing about your wedding.
- writing a poem or a letter.
- puzzling in front of the typewriter over the impenetrable notes your boss has dictated.
- traveling by bus, train, or car.
- quarrelling with your husband over the telephone.
- walking across hot wet tar, wearing gunny sacks as socks on your feet, to fill the potholes in the road with rubble.
- sitting at the edge of a pond in which the water is warm on top but cool lower down, with your skirt tucked around your knees, flapping your feet in the water.
- working at a granite quarry.
- yawning in a biology lecture.
- lying in a deep coma in the hospital.

- picking at your wounds in a lunatic asylum corridor.
- swallowing sleeping pills.
- fretting, alone, after a divorce, refusing to sacrifice any more of your life for a man.
- sitting amidst ninety sewing machines, pedaling, and sighing when your thighs rub hard against each other.
- skipping rope to give yourself an abortion.
- dropping a stone on the head of your son who dared to spy on you and your lover.
- branding your daughter's thighs with a red-hot iron rod.
- plotting your dishonest husband's murder.
- demonstrating the dance steps choreographed by the dance master to the irritated heroine, for the ninth time, at an outdoor location, in the hot sun.
- wondering whether the whiskey breath of the hero kissing you is left over from last night or is from this morning's shot.
- at your office desk, chewing your lips because of menstrual cramps.
- milking a cow.
- trekking with a group.
- copulating with your best friend.
- laying your baby on a sheet at the street corner and begging.
- drinking beer with your boyfriend.
- manicuring your nails.

- removing hair from your armpits with **Anne French***.
- dreaming about having sex with your brother, or God.
- planning on offering only your clenched thighs, instead of your hole, to the ninth customer of the day.
- burning a literary journal.
- berating the eunuch who refuses to give you your cut of the money, using forbidden swear words relating to the genitals.
- smoking ganja.
- rolling a beedi.
- filling matchboxes with matchsticks.
- breastfeeding your baby.
- knocking on a stranger's door to sell a new soap product.
- discussing Hélène Cisoux with your friend.
- rehearsing for the part of Claire in ***Maids***.
- reading the paragraph on **CUNT** in ***Madwoman's Underclothes***.
- blacking out the breasts visible on the dirty poster.
- kneading cow dung with your feet to make dung cakes.
- listening to Kenny G on your walkman.
- carefully carving out the yolk from your fried egg.

* Translator's Note: Throughout the text, boldface type is used to indicate English printed in Roman letters in the original.

- screaming because your husband's mother is holding you down while your husband douses you in kerosene and throws a lit match onto you.
- swallowing oleander seeds because you failed in your exams.
- suddenly happening upon your mother fucking a stranger in the living room.
- eloping with your lover.
- cowering in a corner as your customer disrobes in front of you.
- thinking about space, while the hero spins a top on your navel and the camera records a tight close-up.
- training to be a terrorist.
- groaning because a prick as large as a wild banana is being shoved down your throat for a porno film shoot.
- disgusted with the hero who is groping at the exposed part of your breast, just above your skimpy blouse.
- chanting "Sriramajayam."
- buying tickets on the black market for your favorite film.
- losing consciousness because nine policemen have stripped you in front of your husband and are now raping you continuously.
- screaming in labor pain.
- sticking a vibrator up your pussy.
- clenching your butt cheeks around the prick being rubbed in your crack on a crowded bus.