

Pamela Hobart Carter of Seattle

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MS.HENDERSON

(the very beautiful and very caring female teacher, to an adult responsible for a frightened girl)
from Blood Princess

She didn't understand that she had joined the ranks of women, so familiar with this process yet so silent about it that poor children, like this girl, feared their own deaths for lack of information. Isn't it worse for this child—because we are still children when it happens-- to suffer this terror and mystery, than for an adult, known to her, to say, *Let me tell you what's going to show up one day?* To say, *Let me tell you a part of your life that I know now. I don't know much about your future, but I know this. I don't know how tall you'll be. I don't know if you will live alone, have 100 cats, or live to be 110. But I know you will have a period. I know your body is a clock. Your body is a clock. Each runs on its own time and there are some things it will tell you and not wait for you to tell it. One day, your body will start this process and one day, your body will stop it too. And some day, after that, we can hope, you will die.*

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LULIE

(a superficially bookish female person, 55, to strangers at a café)
from Maybe I Did Change My Mind

You're wrong about the fat books that take forever to read. I love when a book overwhelms me, when it becomes part of my living for so long I remember where I was in my life and it has time to seep into me. Can I tell you where I was when I read Sula or The Turn of the Screw? No. But the fat books you have to haul around! They have actual heft. Those I remember reading. Not just what the story was, but what I was doing too. Like Anna Karenina—!—I read mostly in bed, in grad school. I managed about five pages a night before I dropped off. The experience of turning all those hundreds of pages, the slightly rough texture of the paper, even the smell—and sitting in various places. Or lying. That long, long stretch of my own life it took for me to plough through! Oh, I love a long, long novel; a saga. Give me a fat book.

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PAULA

(a 20-something, female PhD candidate, to an Art History 101 class at a US university)

from Paula 101

This is about more than art history. It's about me and my teaching and the department. It's about teachers and teaching and departments ... and universities and education and institutions in this state and in this country and in this world.

It's about our historical context.

It's about you.

It's about the chance for change.

My version—vision—of Art History 101 will begin with a German artist you've never heard of, dismissed during her lifetime, labelled degenerate by the Nazis, who died young yet had a large output—although badly diminished by the Nazis. (They may have destroyed seventy of her paintings.)

This artist was a close friend of Rainer Maria Rilke. Rilke wrote his "Requiem for a Friend" to this artist. I bet you've heard of Rilke—but not his friend.

This artist dies from an embolism a couple of weeks after giving birth for the first time.

Many museums in her own country have her works in storage rather than in their galleries.

She was the first western woman known to have painted herself nude, first to have painted herself nude and pregnant, first to have painted herself clothed and pregnant, first to have painted nursing mothers and their infants nude, first to show something so very every-day in our lives—something so very foreign in museums—this beautiful, human intimacy, so much of the female experience, uncelebrated, until this artist.

This artist made the act of nourishing the next generation into paint. Into a representation of the act.

This is the making of art.

The artist? Paula Modersohn Becker.

Welcome to Art History 101, Paula 101.

Have a good weekend. See you Monday.