

# Womenslands

by Finola Moorhead

there are three “amazon acres” properties now, none of them called that, and they’re still there; upper reaches of the hastings river, or catchment; the mountain was bought in 1974, the valley 1980, also herland (co-op), which is the only statedly separatist land/collective, and the one that j. and i are in. my last novel, darkness more visible, should be referenced if the tarantella is, it is darker but possibly truer, certainly to the nineties. the trouble is women confuse “politics” with seventies’ especially those who were there. The womenslands boomed in the eighties, but many were there in the seventies, nineties and now and all have different experience, so there’s tendency for those there in the eighties to think they were it, and that was then, been there and done that sort of thing, but we’re still struggling and our politics, herland, is certainly turning towards bush regeneration and restoration of native environment and not to fulltime residency. Everything that has been written about them has been crap by academics trying to make us an anthropological specimen and getting everything wrong, because it is not like that at all. other things written for popular press: women’s weekly, daily telegraph etc., are romantic silly wild women stuff that some of the characters enjoyed making up. the “amazon acres” (never called that because it was the original name of the mountain), womenslands, are very alive and fine; it’s the world that’s changed for the worse. every woman you ask will tell you a different story because they were a certain age when they were there and that is influenced by the exact time they were there as well. only, in my opinion, good fiction can get it right, but no one reads my books and that is the taste of these times, amazons are not popular, and they were more once. both the mountain and herland have the co-operative structure answerable to the dept of fair trading, audited and everything. open to membership etc. i know i’m reacting savagely to the past tense, but that’s because i hear it too often and it’s nothing more than intellectual laziness: making up the past (for that’s what it is) is easier than analysing the present. for all, though, whenever they

lived on the lands it was/is an amazonian experience; you have to build shelters, fix trucks, move logs, carry heavy weights, live with other women of powerful individuality and emotional power play, experience rampant lesbian sexuality in all its political, antipolitical colourings, deal with a lot of madness, both certifiable and a result of csa and general male world misuse, develop morally, physically, emotionally, and philosophically more (in some ways) than those equivalent who live in manslands. in the scheme of things idealistically we are a feminist utopia. ... those who live on the lands are the most sincere admirers of darkness more visible, because they understand the world that fiction comes from.