

## Pottery Class

Thursday, 27 October 2005

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One by one each student spoke; Bettye, acrophobic, Mark, sinistrophobia &ndash; nobody sit to his left! Janie, misophobic, does clay harbor bacteria?

"Nancy?"

"I'm afraid of biscuits."

"Biscuits?" Celeste repeated as the class turned its attention to Nancy.

"Well, not the biscuits really, you know, it's the cans. The kind that you have to peel and then they POP!" The class jumped at Nancy's exclamation.

"Yes, Yes," crooned Celeste. "This exercise is sure to smooth the jagged nerve." Celeste invited her students to remove the wet cloth covering the mound on each table. Celeste coaxed them to condition the clay. "Conditioning," explained Celeste "frees us to release our carnal desires! Visualize! The clay is your fear! Squeeze it! Feel it succumb to your command. It will yield to you now. Transfer your warmth to it. You are one with the Earth, create!"

Nancy stared at the lump. "Boo!" she whispered; the lump did not respond. She stuck her finger into the mound, it was firm and cold.

"Well?" startled, Nancy turned but nobody was paying attention to her.

"Aren't you going to condition me?" Nancy slowly looked down at her lump and poked it again.

"That's right. Now, pick me up."

Nancy lifted the lump.

"What are you going to do to me?" asked the clay, mocking her fear. Nancy began to squeeze, push her fist deep into the lump and knead. "It's OK! I'm flexible! Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's the way! Ooooooh that feels good! Aaaahhh so warm! Hey, Nancy, have you met my friend slip? He became fluid because being flexible was too rigid! Ha, ha, ha! Omph! Easy! Easy! Ooooooh, yes, that's it &ndash; stay on that spot! Yeah!"

"You know, Nancy, I once sat upon the pinnacle of the highest mountain! My life's been one seismic disruption after another! Your life's too short to be afraid of silly old biscuit cans. From now on, just make 'em from scratch! Yeeooooow!"