

### College Reunions by Anonymous

"AA is soooo American," quipped her old college roommate, an X-pat, married to a corporate "Mad Man," fingers wrapped around her wineglass like a gun pointed to her clavicle.

"So is jazz, baby, so's jazz. And look how that changed the world," she replied.

"Touché ... but ... you'll be back."

They laughed, thick as old thieves reunited.

"What goes on in AA meetings anyway?"

"We run around naked on hot coals."

More laughter.

But to herself she says: "I pray I never go back. And call me if that loaded wine gun ever goes off on you."

—Eileen Driscoll

### All the Fashionable Girls

The air was soft, gently brushing her bare skin. She waited, grateful for the husband who drove home for a sundress and, unprompted, her pocket angel of hope, her lip balm. "If I'm ever in a coma," she would half-joke, "make sure someone applies it every hour."

A carload of teenagers stared at her. Or possibly at the catheter hose that looped below her dress, a new temporary reality. Oh, boy, she breathed, then called to them: "It's what all the fashionable girls are wearing these days." And turned so they couldn't see her smile.

—Darlynn Vrechek

### Untitled

She was climbing my neighbor's door. That encounter would not go well, so to collect her—

Quart jar, said some inner voice.

A jar? I asked.

And that folded newspaper.

She ducked her head and prayed. I held the jar, brushed the paper toward her side, and she ... climbed right in. She pressed her spines against the glass, looking at me with wide eyes.

I carried her outside to the stars and crickets, listening to her clinking steps inside the glass. Delivered safe, she turned her long body, squaring up to me. Pray tell, mantoptera.

—Jenny Pickerell

### The Package Deal

Why did it always go like this?

She wanting more ... so much more ... and sooner. And the guy just coolly offering his services to the next in line like she didn't even matter.

It hurt that she didn't matter. Oh, but she would matter.

He'd look at her and see her like he'd never seen her before: NOT all sweet, and so ready to receive his hand—some half smile and rehearsed comments, like he really cared about her day ... and her life?

She swore right then that she would never, ever patronize this P.O. branch again.

—Sharon Colley

### Roughin' It

My aunt got bilked out of all her credit cards and life savings by a con man who told her she inherited a bunch of money from Sweden. So it got me thinking when I'm really old I'm going to bilk myself out of a fortune by staying in posh hotels and getting daily room service and massages and tattoos. I'm saving the best part, though. I'm finding a really big RV parked at a scenic overlook, getting in and driving the piggish monstrosity off the edge. Because that's not camping and everyone knows it.

—Jane Addington

### How to Hold the Rope

She had to show the old man how to hold the rope, hard when you won't speak, but he understood and she smiled. Before she turned back to the chair at the center of the crowd, she made sure, with a shake of her forefinger and a playful look of warning that he knew to hold on.

She climbed the chair and mocked putting the rope around her neck, tightening it until an involuntary choke escaped. The man felt the imaginary rope shift in his hand and before anyone could argue, the mime stepped off.

—Bill W. Morgan

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