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PRISONERS

by Amy Wilson

For Betty Shipley

From the Broadway Sonic Doris & Diane
saw six men in orange jumpsuits
pacing the Carter County Courthouse roof.

I thought at first glance they were weather balloons
then I see legs,
Someone's making jailers asphalt
that leaky old roof, finally.

Doris & Diane thought no more about it,
went back to their sugar-free malts.

Wendy, watering begonias,
looked up at a Honda-shaped cloud
and a man in an orange jumpsuit blows kisses
from the roof.

I had on a pink halter, he must've noticed!
Those inmate uniforms don't
do much for the male physique
All the same I was flattered.
That fellow, the others
let out for fresh July air or something.

Joe was driving to Oklahoma Baptist
where he teaches Tuesday night poetry class.

The way you do at a cakewalk six of them
pacing in a circle. I figured a guard up there
just beyond my sight with a rifle.

Sixteen people saw the prisoners
none thinking the obvious:
Six men locked in a basement cell
escaping the confines of the Carter County Jail.
Each slid down a gutter pipe
ducked into a waiting Suburban.

Lord, how'd we not know what we were seeing!
Joe went for counseling.

Wendy & Meg
organized a Keep Shawnee Safe Volunteer Patrol Force.
Volunteers drive a designated route
extending twenty-two miles of city streets.
So far the roof has been empty
although Doris & Diane spotted
an unidentified teen throwing a beer bottle
at a cat.

Other than that
no one sees anything out of the ordinary
but everyone deadbolts
and no one goes to the grocery after dark.