

homeopathic so that less is more
flattering? The vagina does not wear out
like brake lining. In fact, it keeps
its comfy, Shriner grip pretty much forever.

Still, she's so pretty there by the window
leaning forward to let her bra fall clear
in a tender bombing raid on Pantyland
with its sprawling suburbs of polyester
Georgette.

"Close the blinds, Hon. The whole world
is looking at your sweet ass."

"JUST IMAGINE THAT JESUS WERE WITH YOU"

-- my Sunday School teacher

What would you think today, Jesus, sitting with me
in the Adults Only Arcade? Could you be comfortable
breaking the 2-in-a-booth rule? What about those
leading men longer than Russian novels, those
starlets never alone, always a handyman popping
into the shower, and those phone numbers on
the tiny screen, each promising what we all desire
more fervently every day: A Good Time.

I know it says in your favorite book not to spill
one's seed on the ground, but how about on the door
and walls? No one knows your secret life -- what
you did on weekends and between miracles -- but
everyone knows you understand how the heart
can topple from loneliness and desire.

I believe if you were with me today, what a sensation,
what a huge light in this place darker and smellier
than Hitler's socks. Your sweetness would seep next
door to Booth 26, bleaching the happy bathers off
the screen, sending an angry patron storming out,
the dew still on his brow, but happy somehow satisfied
and -- like me -- feeling curiously blessed.

MISSING PERSONS

When Bill and Betty and I began to talk about
them, we meant the fresh-faced choir directors
and assistant pastors caught having affairs
who vanished into some Protestant Siberia,

the moving van rumbling in at midnight
and next morning the house was empty
except for some sheet music and a shattered lamp.

Where did they go? Downhill, no doubt,
to the deeper South, to churches smaller and smaller,
further and further into the strip-mined hills.

These young men who still worried about their
complexions were simply not prepared for
the beauty in those choir robes, or the plight
of young women married forever whose husbands treated
them like dirt, or if they were lucky, like dust.

It must have been so exciting, those lips
that pronounced the o in God like the one in woe
whispering into the rectory carpet that they
loved her and everything about her and knowing
the both of them always knowing that somewhere
a van was idling ready to swoop down and take him away.

We began to joke about sin and how if all of it
in every church was brought to light it wouldn't
be safe to cross the street, so dense would be
the trucks. We laughed about men who got out
of the God-business but could never forget the thrill
and had to turn to strange practices, perched
in the cab saying, "Now step on the gas, Sweetheart.
That's what I really like."

Catholics, we reasoned, were the lucky ones: they
understood the near occasion of sin. They confessed
constantly and were forgiven. But we were not
Catholics and are not now anything at all, something
for which I am sometimes heartily sorry.

GIRL TALK

During "The Desires of Monique"
my friend and I were chatting about
the alarming number of men
who tore off Monique's flimsy panties
with their teeth.

The theatre was shrine-like --
vast, smoky and dim -- so we confessed
that neither of us had ever
chewed away any underwear.

We agreed, though, that perhaps age
and experience had a lot to do