

# At Sevens

*by Amy Guth*

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He walked out of the hotel lobby into the pre-dawn night and thought about another woman, a pretty Spanish woman, not the woman he'd just kissed in a hotel, and a night he'd spent with her in Portugal, wanting each other desperately, each aching and needing to be a haphazard nothing-love for the moment. That night in Portugal, they brushed hands, and studied each others' eyelashes and pressed into one another and intertwined and nothing about it was underhanded like some one-night stands were, no, it was genuine, just temporary. He'd no intention of loving her for more than that night, but in that night he'd loved her entirely and she, the pretty Spanish woman with girlish freckles and ideas, saw only the deliberate love before losing herself in him that night, never seeing an end to it, never seeing the temporaryness of him and he thought of her and her pretty skin in the half-darkness and how her kiss was too forced and her hands held him with desperation. He thought about the woman at the hotel again and how only minutes before he'd pressed his hands steadily but openly against her, then thought again of how he'd pressed his hands so unsteadily against the Spanish woman, pushing her hips away from him in order to pull her near to him and the stark differences between the women settled upon him. He thought a while about this and how his hands inadvertantly spoke for him and said all the things he wasn't sure he could or should and wondered if the woman back in the hotel thought anything of his hands, firmly against the small of her back yet open, not tethering her, not pleading, just presenting things openly and plainly. Almost approaching on equal footing, almost posing a question of what to do next, almost leaving the moment to follow entirely untouched, only sure she herself understood moments like the one in Portugal without judgement and he liked that about her, the woman in the hotel.

