"Bitter" Revision

by Ann Bogle

I guess let's just talk about it: hope. I guess let's just think about it: money. I guess let's just cut up for an hour or two: nine laughs. Let's agonize about church issues.

I was so steadfastly there, not charging, not nagging, not expecting, not asking, never needing to beg (paid by work), charitably giving out thoughts and words and listening to one at a time for two decades. Now I'm old. Men are just starting out on the path of the parasite, the manly collection plate, to increase them, to buy them, to get one, to buy one and take one home, a divorce nuptial, their gaining a girl (again) or this time a hen with a little purse on a little strap or an industrial doctor's bag or a clicky set of equals, King Care.

Ah so, I look better than I aged. I'm not a cheap date, as I once made proud of being. I need steak or a doctor's drug to keep my weight from shredding. The Jews eat cattle but not pig; the Catholics eat a bone slice of Him. I try to talk with Him, but he's crowded by insiders. I was a loser. I mention it. I mention liking meals at chain diners as much as meals at good Italian restaurants. The sign of the prostitute is her diamond engagement ring. Gays' "marriage is love" intrigues Greek men upstairs.

I loved without marriage and the men loved without divorce and we loved a twenty-four-year-old eating and how gracious she shone over a tame bottle of beer. Yours is yours, mine is mine.

What did they want the favored ones for? Good mothers. What did the favored ones pay? I was thinking that the feminists pounding the city pavement had increased rent with every footstep, not that I was not one, but we had not earned our money at it or put our money together: "Women" was too broad a category. The favored were

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coming to buy our men from us, without our sad work we put into it, without the love we showered on them, without the lost decisions we left up to them, as we were practicing, always practicing.