Hogging the Lady

by Ann Bogle

This is the hardest of the stories. This is the story that belongs in its place. This is the story that takes second place. It is the story that follows its master. It is the story that grows old. It is the story for a season, for fall.

Which door did she slip in, in her torn fishnet stockings and faux leather skirt, brown, her mascara falsely applied, her vacant blouse in need of hitching. She was not the usual member of the band, not the girl nextdoor, not next to any door, not a regular housekeeper or woman. She was a ditch digger, a pied, circular piper, a mouse hugger.

I took her to be the last of her generation. She seemed drunk without eating. She seemed ashamed without sin. She seemed cursed without a family. She seemed as though she had planned a porkchop for the boys and girls of Tallahassee. She seemed to believe that she had roped a strong pony. In the first movement her dance looked lonely and lame. Then she got up on the stage and tried to kiss the front man. He didn't want to kiss her at first, but when he did, something magical happened, something tender.

She got down off the stage and put down her riding crop. She started loving the air. She started singing in her voices. She started dancing. She whistled a bar of Dixie then she sallied north. She swiveled her legs and her arms, looking much like a 44-year-old rodeo worker on the floor at Christopher's, but she was at the Turfside. Everyone wanted to dance with her, a face she well knew, but that did not seem to be the reason to dance for her. She danced, it seemed, so that others would dance, too, and they did.

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