

Parallel Structures

by Ann Bogle

His thoughts went astray when she wanted to. She wanted to surmount his parameters. It was a figment of her imagination, not his. His imagination was at the driving range. Methods of obligation glided by. He wept to see her misunderstand his duties. The hurry up call for midnight was always late. "Chime in!" she hollered from her side of the bedroom. Her bedroom was in the kitchen as they agreed. He watched her prop her leg on a stool to examine her toilette. His mood swings were difficult despite lavish elbow room. She put copies of Lydia Davis' *Collected Stories* in every room of the apartment. Petunia notwithstanding. He was in the habit. He gave her his driving range and she gave it back. She didn't know what a bogey was. Arms akimbo he smiled and licked the China cat by the window. The cat had no name, not like Lydia. Therefore, the boomerang ideal made sense for a change. She asked him to cower in the living room. Although he was a Luddite, he persevered. She placed a cushion near the loveseat to give him the position. But then stargazing became lackluster like lukewarm soup. "That would be a good name for a male porn star," he said, "Luke Warm." His name was Lucas, and he was shy and obedient. Her name was Hattie, a gendarme's muse.

Filibustering was fun but insincere so they went north. She set a mile marker outside the cottage. That made him think of sex and think three times. Hang the chandelier in the kitchen, she counseled.

Altruism was not a noun but a verb, and they kissed. She bit his lower lip and he tapped her jaw. The origami in his head was approaching maniacal, but he remained subdued and willing. She fingered the laces of his plaid flannel knickers. Her on again, off again approach was threatening, but after further analysis, he complied. It was like licking butter on an ear of maize. Suddenly the phone rang; it was his ex-lawyer calling from Lithuania. "Get me

a bucket," Lucas said to Hattie. The focus was not a metaphor; it was dyspepsia. "He's jelly," Hattie offered him the phone.

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April 28, 2010

