

The Keratin Experience

by Ann Bogle

In a message dated 2/9/2013 8:20:26 A.M. Central Standard Time, ljt@com writes:

A Message for You from LJT:

Ann, I think this coat is totally you! It's so cute, wish they had my size!

Check out the following NORDSTROM.com selection hand-picked by LJT:

Item: Fleurette Duffle Coat with Genuine Fox Fur Collar

Dear Lena (first reference at *Ana Verse*) or Lana (second reference about a year later), not her real name, LJT:

I tried on a Fleurette coat in Aubergine at home and even called the company in New York, regarding size, before ordering from Nordstrom online, and the woman who works there (or owns the company?) said the coats run "true to size." I was between a size 8 and 10. I ordered both (\$795 full price, no fur or leather trim) and returned them to MOA. The wool is nice, but the cut ran short at my waist and felt a little baggy at the small of the back, regardless of size. I am surprised by the prices of wool coats (suddenly, this year?), quite high. My Nina Ricci pretty brown Merino wool trapeze coat with sheared beaver collar cost \$450 on sale from \$900 at Lord & Taylor in Houston in 1995. My L&T charge card survived with a zero balance the b'cy in 1997 but expired without a L&T store here. Lisa Pottratz's mother illustrated fashion for L&T from home in the 1970s. There is more to say about fertility, naming, and diabetes. I am so glad I kept the charcoal wool UGG coat (shearling collar), \$385 on sale in November, with its great quality and fit. I guess manufacturers want a lot for fox fur trim suddenly, too? I bought two thick cotton knit hats last year at Hoigaard's with little fox tufts at the tips: \$48 each.

How is it going? I got a new haircut at Metropolis. Here's a pic I took of myself (in the middle of some night, after two dozen attempts to capture a nice photo):

Available online at «<http://fictionaut.com/stories/ann-bogle/the-keratin-experience>»

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That was before I cut my hair further myself, in the front on both sides, a widow's bang. I left the back almost entirely alone.

Keith had detangled a quarter of my hair before I said let's cut it off. I knew the matrix of snarls would recur by morning. My eyes smarted as he tugged. He removed the chemically-mysterious-yet-I-believe-related-to-the-Keratin-treatment TRIPLE BIRD'S NEST that formed on January 4-6. Twice I arrived one hour late for a consultation with Kelly prior to a cut with Keith. I did not ask her for a whole or partial refund for the treatment she applied November 21. She had told me on the phone that she had not heard of a bird's nest forming from Keratin. She said a change in medication might cause hair to knot. I ran out of coffee early in January and didn't drink coffee for several weeks.

Only I, and to a lesser extent, Ned, knew the exact details of what I did with my hair, shampoo, conditioner, water, diet, geographical locations, social circumstances, medications, coffee, beer, glass or two of wine at Christmas, etc., going in to the New Year. Medical records kept by the psychiatrist (M.D. by definition) and pharmacist could establish a detail or two as well. Let's assume that my long-term regimen did not go to my hair *at the exact moment* a bird's nest started to form. If someone said that I had not washed my hair

in seven weeks, it was untrue. I washed it every week and a half to twelve days and brushed it every day.

I may try to write an essay about the Keratin experience including a passage about the white woman (prostitute, Jeff said) whom he and I saw at Red Dragon in Minneapolis in 2011, whose blond "bun" stood about sixteen inches or so above her head. I would not have known then how she might have achieved "that look," but I was impressed. A physical fight ensued indoors and escalated outside, Jeff said, after another woman tried to snag the bun. I have no photo of my bird's nest alongside other women's, ethnically-defined. Mine was six inches at its tallest, measured from the top of my head. I felt there was no way to get a photo of what my bun *felt* like to the touch—a permanent bun I could neaten with clips. Worn "down," it looked ragged, damaged in texture and color, like a blond Janie's at the end of the TV version of *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. The rabies shooting. Then Janie floats off on a meadow. In the book, she was trapped in a flood.

Fully written, it might be a 3,000-word story of hair sacrifice.

I also lost weight in January, not dieting, after itemizing in emails my long-distance service companionship. Ten years is enough, I said. That wall of iron rose to the East along the CST line.

I tried but could not get a good snapshot of my hair as it looks today, February 9. I look fine in the mirror and window reflection and haggard in digital Blackberry shots. "The camera doesn't lie," I read in *The New Yorker*, alongside a photo of Richard Avedon some year before he died, but evidence of it seems hidden at Google. My photogeneity is uneven in digital and film photography.

More a little later, hope the ice cap is melting slowly.

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5/05/2014:

My post-birthday note to photographer David Sherman, "My hair is unideally short again due to a salon episode last year (or it was tattered, turned to a triple bird's nest by the deep glance of my loved one). Ergo, a further portrait session with you will be delayed by the regrowth of my short hair. The piece I wrote about the hair

event as possibly salon-related is posted on *Ana Verse* and Fictionaut, 'The Keratin Experience.' I feel delighted that the (my) hair, though short, is my color at 52, not dyed."

