

Rattlesnake Pancakes

by Bill Yarrow

I don't usually take bets,
but I took this one. Gobbo
bet me a melamite ring I
wouldn't eat a rattlesnake
pancake. Normally, I am
cautious but I needed a
gift for Emily Beth and her
father, being a miner, she
had a thing for melamite.
The thing on my plate was,
pardon me, the color of vile
cheese, and it tasted like it
looked, but I got one swallow
down and then twenty followed
in slow succession. I felt queasy
but Gobbo never guessed. When
five hours later I was still alive,
he handed over the ring. I ran
to Emily Beth's mom's place on
Arapahoe. I found her sitting
on a two-person glider on the
wrap-around porch. "Emily Beth,
I got a ring for you." Oh, Blister,
how ever did you afford a ring
of melamite? That just heats
my heart. "Maybe so, Emily Beth,
but are you tepid enough to wed?"
A gift is not a liberty, Blister.
I'll not marry you until Father
Life has sucked the selfish
out your soul. "Selfish? Selfish!
I ate snake poison for you!"

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Yeah, but you didn't die, did
you, so what's the good of that?

