

Escape

by Daniel Harris

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Eleanor put the TV and all her clothes in the back of the station wagon. She added three of her paintings. On the way out of the parking lot, she told the super that she was leaving and that the apartment was free to rent. Her husband Jake was in Amsterdam, probably enjoying dope and women.

She had stopped the gas and electric service. She returned the phone to AT&T.

She didn't know where she was going, but it was away from Jake, marriage and responsibilities.

She spent the first night sleeping in the car in a rest stop outside of Pittsburg.

Four days later she was in Santa Fe, New Mexico. She needed money. She parked the car outside of the city near a busy intersection. She displayed her three paintings. She sold one for \$400. The young man who bought the painting offered her a room in a rental property. Rent was conjugal privileges. She was not skilled, but she could tolerate loveless penetration.

She found a glass blower who was attractive and had money. She left the conjugal pad and moved in with the glass blower. He was a little wild. When he was drunk he demanded she sodomize him with a strap-on. It bored her, but she didn't have to work for money.

She painted a portrait of a drunk Indian. It sold for several thousand dollars at an exhibit of New Mexican art. She received a grant to paint Indians on reservations in New Mexico. She fucked a lot of Indians and painted a lot of pictures, which were bought for high prices. She started to drink. She was drunk with whiskey and success.

She screamed when they put the straight jacket on her. She eventually joined the community of crazy alcoholics on the fifth floor. They stared at each other and publicly masturbated.

When she left the hospital, she had no money, no car, and no future. She took a bus back to New York City. The year in the hospital had been good for her looks, but not her mind. She found her husband living in SoHo. She wanted to suicide.

—Why can't you live on the fifth floor?

His loft was on the third floor of an industrial building.

—Why do you ask?

—I want to kill myself and this is too low. Can't you do anything right?

