

BOURBON & EVENTIDE

MIKE SPRY



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Mike Spry



SNARE

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The cat had been dead for three months, and they were still opening cans in the bathroom with the water running. And in the penultimate light of the summer, she was happy it was gone.



They spent the night at a motel outside Rochester. Against his better judgment, he got a room with two beds. She couldn't sleep; he couldn't tell her.

The thing is, they disagreed
about timing, Roman Polanski,
and the Designated Hitter.



At a failing bar with a faux leather banquet and untouched pickled eggs,
she met a musician who now writes songs for a prominent children's show.
For a moment, she loved him. Or maybe not.

They spent the afternoon getting high on dead horses,
then caught a matinee in a theatre that has since closed.
“Let’s sit through the credits,” she said, “and then fall in love
with other people.”



At a friend’s Halloween party, where an obstetrician
was dressed as a pediatrician, she declared:
“Sex shouldn’t be ironic,” and was dressed as a girl he loved.

His father had been a margarine bootlegger by trade,
but was often out of work. He did not aspire to the family business.
He liked butter and whiskey and error.



She was a big fan of his sterility.
Every time she got her period,
she called to say how much she loved him.

Everybody told her to move to Brooklyn, so she didn't.
Instead, she went west like Alger, dreaming of the Pacific,
but only made it to Toronto, slowed by the false promise of hope.



She had served time for attempted robbery of a suburban
windows and doors outlet. She was able to clean
out the register, but could not find a true exit.

She once rented a room from a bass player who was about to have a child but didn't know who the mother was. He often made her soup, and told stories of his late father, who had shot a Kennedy.



She thought she was a manic depressive,
but it turns out she just ate too much cheese
and was a manic depressive.

She didn't wear lipstick, but cherry red marked much of their glassware.
He found his resolve to love her was threadbare.
"I was selfish," she said, "I only loved you for your poverty."



Turns out it was infection, not religion, that led
to his circumcision, leading her to believe
he was not Jesus, and perhaps not even Jewish.

She romanticized infidelity and second chances.
Sundays, she liked to cheat at the crossword
and perfect loneliness.



They shut out friends and family. They became contextual.
They had their own language. “Cocktails” were “adult beverages,”
“hangovers” were known as “daytime,” and “having sex” was “apologizing.”

It was late, and the bottles were empty.
He stole her last smoke, looked at her,
and whispered: "It's all Veronicas, man. No Betties."



His mother went out for eggnog once and never came back.
She would on occasion send a birthday card to the wrong address,
and when he thought of children he knew he would name one after her.

Their friends couldn't understand why they hadn't yet married.
Years later they would discover that she had suffered
from fanatical monogamy.



She detested ice cream. Hated its smug celebratory entitlement,
its conceited indifference toward its bovine mothers,
the way it so effortlessly socialized.