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## **The Arc of Oops**

Pairs of people have accidents, catch fevers, and get married. Later, the illness cures itself, the injury heals, and there is either divorce or braces-for-two for life.

Whole lives fly head over heels in domestic slips. A hermit wonders why people aren't more careful about falling or why they don't wear surgical masks when meeting in nightclubs.

No schools have been established to train teenagers to stay away from high places or tricky topography or how to wash hands after touching anyone. People preparing for graduate study believe

that everybody knows from birth how to walk and breathe with no mistakes, so they study the sex of all the other animals on earth and play each night that they are correct. Couples

who put themselves in harms way for the thrill of ambulances of physical pleasure understand nothing from experience ever. The Bunglers and Clutses carry headstones for their hearts.

## **Family Business**

Family business begins with clergy cashing checks by investors after they all have read someone's fortune in a diamond. A man and a woman

hit the wresting mats on an island

landscaped for the purpose, where  
cupid's bankruptcy is admitted  
into their ledger: Whoever gets pinned

gets pregnant. Mom and pop enter  
the picture where the deals have  
been made. As the product line ages  
and ferments enough to be sold

or given away, the divesting of shares  
though looting occurs slowly.  
Siblings pluck the hairs from  
the heads of the bosses. Neighbors

only notice the mirror in the store  
window, so the police are never called.  
By the time owners are boarded up, good  
buyers fall in love with family business.

## **Coat-Tail Living**

With a shovel and apologetic smile,  
each personal secretary travels through  
a life behind a man. Along the highways  
and byways, the two-legged horse

fills a suit with matching pockets  
for bringing home, while the silent life coach  
offers the requisite blushes and scoops  
the refuse of the grab and nab. Ever since

shoulder mass won the attention of the public,  
breasts and hips pulled up the rear and used  
beauty as far as it goes. When the accessory  
becomes collaborator, innocence acts

its scene for the audience. Over perks  
and benefits the one-person clean-up crew  
salivates, and the work horse or thoroughbred  
in shoes distributes the bonus of his return.

## **Love Story**

In a bedroom, a wallet unfolds and a purse  
opens to the game of hide and silk. When  
young, a bolt dreamed someone else's  
career plan and a bull used office furniture

to masturbate, ole. From opposite suburban  
towns the two tongs of a money clip  
traveled meeting as luck couldn't avoid  
in the financial district around a cashed

pay check. The smooth finger and calloused

thumb work their magnetism into pockets  
of least resistance and then lie back  
holding cigarettes. Eventually pregnant

as a house, the Wells Fargo money sack  
gushes a home's unlimited accessories,  
the lust for oil wells giving birth  
to Cornucopias' orgasms along the streets.

## **The Guise**

Sitting with their feet up on  
kitchen tables, women spit  
emotions into little jars that  
are taken for slaps on the back.

The genesis of women's words  
scurries from under their chairs  
across the floor through the crack  
in the door. Any children that may

have fallen out of them hang  
stuffed on their arms at stores,  
Gucci, and teeth of the flies in  
their pants were fashioned from

solid testosterone. Mary Jane,  
sling-back, pumps, stiletto heels,  
yet men enter and exit houses:  
Everyone gets boots out of it.

## **Ravishing**

Alarmed and kidnapped, a tall, dark, and handsome morning gawks, entranced by the young naked woman splashing and spraying waters and flowers among porcelains. She turned the day on to her with brushes, and blushes and shadows and her. Stepping out from among tubs and sinks and soaps to the room of curtains and dress, her glistening body's heat and the air joined forces to dry her.

With her wardrobe hanging pressed in recesses or folded in bureau she snatches the black panties from their drawer and with each foot arched like dolphin entering water, plunged them into the French cuts. Pulling the lace of satin mesh until the bikini caressed the muff of her vulva and Lycra bottom held her cheeks as though it was two hands, she then let the elastic waist band snap against her flesh she wore stretched over her hips. Odysseus' Circe of the work day snapped up the loops of a matching brassiere, threaded her arms, and caught the two pad-less B-cups beneath her breasts and with arms akimbo behind her back wrestled with herself using elastic material and hooks and eyes in a game of expectation. When arms fell to her side satisfied and the peaks of perky bosoms threatened to pierce the thin shields of satin, she turned sideways and with a sigh looked at herself in the wall's reflecting pool. From the closet in fever, the impassioned pursuer of suits slipped into a silk blouse and pushed each bone nipple through its slit, top to bottom and with her own hands caressed the worm's work that gave up at the kisses of hidden flesh that pecked and dropped creases to her waist. Her giving body to the color of her short-sleeved bodice demanded the colored pattern of the skirt. The Joan of abs stepped

into the fray of linings, seams, hems and pulled to meet, mate, and overlap her top at the tight pannier's waist. Again, akimbo she pinned herself over hook, eye, and zipper until she had her way with them. A park's lunchtime tan was all the nylon hosiery or sheer netting her legs needed today to flash their dominion over men. At the bottom of the tiny room of her hangers that hold ghost of her past and future, her high heels stood ready to stand between her confident feet and the hard day ahead. One by one she kicked them on. A last look in the now magic mirror revealed the cutlass curves of desire. She strode to the door fresh but sassy.

After the nuisance elbows and groping of public transportation, the dominatrix entered the long erected building. She rose to the upper floors. From the first step into the punch clock coliseum to the last stride of the workday from her control center she sacked. The *Have a good day* of the many male sirens tore at their own clothes and molested their daydreams in men's rooms, cold bare apartments.

**Rich Murphy's** poems have appeared in numerous journals in Canada, English, Ireland, and Australia, and in national periodicals such as *Poetry*, *Grand Street*, and *Rolling Stone*, and in recent issues of *Inertia*, *Confrontation*, *ForPoetry*, *Barrelhouse*, *Voltaire's Inkwell*, and *New Delta Review*. His essay, "McLuhan's Warning, Frye's Strategy, Emerson's Dream," will be published in the *Journal of the Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning*.

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