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# Three Poems

*by Kelley White*

## Definitely Purple

I tried 'feminist' but it sounded pastel and pale-  
-d down as in  
"feminine products"

I knew big women who stood  
with heavy wide legs  
on the bare earth

my grandmother, her sisters, my mother, hers  
anyway you break it down I grew up  
in a poor town and  
I live in a poor town now

## Democratic Katie

Don't you love New Hampshire  
Politics—it's Live Free or Die  
so my daughter slaps a Kerry  
bumpersticker on the car even  
though I know we hate people  
from Massachusetts and I'm not  
sure if it's good or bad Kerry  
that it's next to my "no war  
for oil" sticker, and she grabs  
a sign to march in the Old Home  
Day Parade for any candidate  
so long as he's not republican.

## Derailed

Please, not another trainwreck this morning. My morning coffee's  
in my ear. It buzzes like cream, it sizzles like a snake on melting  
tar. You can taste that boiling sunrise on the windshield of your  
car. Humbert used to ride the rails, from Omaha to Santa Fe. I  
forgot to make my coffee. Left it home on the shelf. You keep it  
in the refrigerator. I keep it a can marked "Stealth." We were  
supposed to split the bills but you never have a dime in your  
pants. You used to have a wad of twenties. I think you hid them  
in a drawer. Give me nuttin' but a case quarter. You know you  
owe me more. And take that ink pen off the floor. Ink's an awful  
thing to fight with, but its better than a sword. She dipped her nib  
at the Holy Fountain, the Red Ink Fountain of Righteousness.  
She used her blood as invisible ink. Hold her up to a match and  
you'd read the bruises. She wore a dozen bracelets spiked with

barbed wire and carpet tacks. Baby Doc, you'd better stop lecturing the choir. Next week they'll go to Disney World and leave you holding the door. It's that melting door of bees wax. We've both been there before. I knew the barfly at Bellevue. I don't go there anymore. I go to Buena Vista. The breezes there sing Wundabar. You can take the train from China. Drink steamed milk with tea in the dining car.

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Inner-city Philadelphia pediatrician **Kelley White** has returned New Hampshire to work at a rural health center. Her poems have been widely published, in journals including *Exquisite Corpse*, *Rattle* and the *Journal of the American Medical Association* and in chapbooks and books, most recently *Toxic Environment* (Boston Poet Press) and *Two Birds in Flame*, poems related to the Shakers in New Hampshire (Beech River Books). She received a 2008 Pennsylvania Council on the Arts grant and is a member of Germantown Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends.

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