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White Dresses and Combat Boots: The Birthmark of a Twentieth Century Rebel

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White Dresses and Combat Boots: The Birthmark of a Twentieth Century Rebel

I.

My nose stuck in a book,
I stepped on a lot of cracks
On the way home from
Barnes and Noble,
But my mom is a chiropractor
So I figured,
What the hell?
She'll live,
And kept reading,

Until I stumbled over a curb
And my recent purchases
Fell inches away
From a looming yellowish puddle
Encircling the nearby fire hydrant;
I decided to pay attention.

II.

I thought I once found love,
Through the novel idea of fiction,
But Cinderella
Never shopped at *Payless*,
Or had the urge
To trade her ball-gown
For a pawn shop guitar,
And a pair of leather pants.

So I let my mind
Run wild each night
Across the time zones
And every inch of my soul
To the place just before

Happily-ever-after
Where Prince Charming resembles
The grinning kid I had a crush on,
Once upon a time,
Who kept *Colgate* and a brush
Stuffed in the back pocket
Of a worn pair of jeans
Brushing teeth in the bathroom
Five times a day,
"Just in case."

I never learned my lesson,
Taking my dose of newspaper articles,
And letters to the editor
Of *People Magazine*
Like a daily vitamin, not to be missed.
And each night
I turn to the worn envelopes
Postmarked 1979,
An adult bedtime story to be savored
More than milk and cookies
Or lazy summer days spent
Chattering on the phone with old friends,
From high school.

III.

I have a vision of standing in front of
A billion electrical impulses,
Sympathetic to my cause,
A modern-day confessional booth,
Or AA meeting--
Me,
A Virtual Virgin
With an addiction to writing,
Drowning her sorrows
In the pleasure of alphabet soup.

Noodles that spell out
My marriage license--

IV.

So my heart can be won with words;
It is my greatest weakness.
I live with it.
I know it might kill me,
Someday.

Yet a damn good letter
And a glass of red wine
Can surpass any drunken Romeo
Making cat-calls outside my window--
A product of the witching hour.
And a signature of "In love,"
Catches my gasp
Of anticipation
In a sticky net of imagery,
Like seaweed on the floor
Of a shrimper's boat.

And if a sigh escapes--
Trembles on the edge,
Can you blame me for wanting to read
The last page
First?

Heather Schmidt