

Siobhan (pronounced Shiv-on) peeked out from under lady-touchable fabric. She liked her name. But whenever someone saw the spelling, they would mangle the pronunciation, prompting her to correct them—a constant point of irritation. She fancied herself a night owl, especially when erotic fun carried well into the following morning. That was the best thing about sleeping late, she felt in harmony with mello.

She yawned mightily, tapping into depleted reserve energy, kicking away the final covers. She revealed herself, lean and fit, wearing a sports bra—one that finally got comfortable after washing it in a ton of softener, with similar colored panties and socks. The few men who had seen them complained about the socks, saying, they weren't sexy. Prompting her to think, “like you are”.

She had that rare combination of a tight, prettier than normal face and a prizefighter's ready-for-anything body—couple all that with a street-smart brain. Since

childhood, she had never lacked determination, that indomitable lion's spirit to win.

Years ago, the bird had been left on her doorstep by an unknown admirer. Its cage used to be next to her bed until it started repeating erotic words heard during sexual trysts. That prompted its relocation by the window.

She winced, pinched by a pendant when she rolled over on it. The necklace was a mailed gift from a father whom she never knew. She blamed it on missionary work, in countries with names she couldn't remember; she was unable to understand why he was there to begin with. Growing up, it was always sad not having him around. Then when she was old enough, her mother said that he had gone missing in a jungle somewhere.

After a failed, exhaustive search, her mother came to grips with the fact that he was dead. There was nothing disrespectful or unloving about trying to collect what little life insurance he'd had. It hit the fan when the insurance company didn't want to pay. Her mom went to

the office with gun; that was when they reconsidered all payment options.

The bird's squawking stirred her to open eyelids that weighed like welded shut, wrought iron manhole covers. Finally, she opened her eyes, looking into a ceiling mirror; with last night's lover she imagined there should be an inscription "objects in mirror are larger than they appear." She shuffled to the kitchen in a laborious manner befitting a torturous Mt. Everest climb. She stubbed her toe, holding back a boiling scream. When she got close enough to the open window the bird stopped chirping, upset that its exit route was cut off.

"Go to the airport," the bird said. "Now!"

The words could've been leftover pillow talk from Minute Man the night before. However mundane was their sex, she preferred that he had stayed. She had trouble with post-sex loneliness following a lover's

departure. She was caught between not wanting a husband and not wanting to spend forever with no one.

Leaving so soon wasn't his idea. He wanted another round of Escaped Convict and the Warden's Wife with Siobhan. Then she reassessed; maybe the bird was a set-up by Minute for a secret rendezvous with Siobhan to a place where only jets go, hence, the need for the airport. Why then, couldn't he have awakened her for them to go there together? Hmm. Having a steady lover would be nice. Bedfellows can be strange, indeed.

With nature reading havoc with ground swelling peril, she moaned, "How'm I getting to the airport?"

Interrupting its own multidirectional chirping, the bird sounded, "Do it!"