

Iowa State University

From the Selected Works of Meg Johnson

Summer 2013

American Woman; Or, If the Three Original American Girl Heroines Were Grown-Ass Women in 2013

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Available at: https://works.bepress.com/meg_johnson/3/

American Woman; Or, If the Three Original American Girl Heroines Were Grown-Ass Women in 2013¹

by Meg Johnson

1. Kirsten

She wasn't suicidal, but
she didn't mind thinking about death.

When she was a child
it seemed everyone was dying,
even children her age.

She wasn't ungrateful.

She knew she should
treasure her three healthy sons,
her loyal husband.

There was just always so much
work to do. At the office
she did her own work
and often stayed late,
fixing co-workers' projects.

At home there were mountains
of socks that needed to be washed.

When she would mix up
the boys' underwear,
putting the Batman boxers
in the wrong dresser, her sons
were greatly offended. Even
as a small girl, chore after chore.

She liked to think of herself
one day nestled in the ground,
unable to awake, unable to work.

¹ Published in *The Puritan: Frontiers of New English* 22 (2013): <http://puritan-magazine.com/american-woman-or-if-the-three-original-american-girl-heroines-were-grown-ass-women-in-2013/>.

2. Samantha

She should have remembered
what her grandmother taught her:
actions speak louder than words.
Maybe then she wouldn't have married
the wrong man. Twice. Oh, Ms.
Parkington. People often forget
she's a double divorcee. Her girlish
looks and bandage dresses distract
from what didn't go as planned.
She's not just gorgeous, married
friends say to bachelors when trying
to set her up on dates. *She's smart
and talented and does a ton
of charity work*. Sam's best friend
Nellie gives it to her straight
over martinis. *The clock is ticking*.

3. Molly

She knew when she was a little girl.
She wanted to cradle Emily Bennett
when Emily was afraid of the war. Kiss
her under her desk. She wanted
to be the perfect military daughter,
her father's love her proudest possession.
She has reconciled with her father
after years of estrangement.
Mr. McIntire wanted to meet
his grandchild. He was kind
to Molly's wife when he finally met her,
years after the rest of the family.
I will always love you, Molly, he said.
Molly knew he was telling the truth.
She also knew he would continue to vote
conservative, remain in awe of his motorized

tie rack, and refer to his sickly pet puggle
as *the lady seducer*.

Meg Johnson's first full-length poetry collection is forthcoming from The National Poetry Review Press. Her poems have appeared in Hobart, Midwestern Gothic, Slipstream Magazine, Stone Highway Review, Word Riot, and others. Meg started dancing at a young age and worked professionally in the performing arts for many years. She currently lives in Akron, Ohio and is the editor of Dressing Room Poetry Journal. Her website is: www.megjohnson.org.