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

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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.

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 divorcée. 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](http://www.megjohnson.org).