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## Eavesdropping

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## *Eavesdropping*

They sit at the next booth,  
four women sipping soft drinks  
and talking. Actually, three  
talk—about the fourth,  
who, I suppose, smiles, to be so much  
the center of their conversation.  
“What a face you have,” one exclaims.  
All I can see is the black haired  
back of her head, but fantasize  
features off a painter’s canvas,  
a Botticelli or Titian,  
or a movie star’s photo at the least.  
“I know women who would kill  
for your cheek bones,” another says,  
having to stop her hand from tracing  
the outline, so taken by bone structure.  
“There’s no substitute,” the third chimes in,  
“for your personality, dear.”  
I imagine her beaming by now  
as if it were Christmas.

Then they rise, say good-bye, and leave,  
their heads high as if they were meeting  
the kind of men women dream about  
in old movies on rainy afternoons.  
I watch the fourth rise  
with a clumsiness born of pain  
endured over a lifetime.  
She limps back to the counter,  
one side of her body jerks  
with every step she plunges forward.  
I poise at the edge of my seat,  
hoping I won’t have to lunge at her  
if she loses her balance and tumbles  
like a wind-up doll staggering  
over a floor littered with toys.