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Godly Woman Go-Go

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Godly Woman Go-Go

Her name was Joy and she spoke as if bleached white corn silks shuttled from her ankles to the corners of the stage. I was fifteen when I saw that, and knew it was Jesus in her. And she didn't like to cry, she said, in front of people, but some days she couldn't help it, did we know what she meant. I didn't, but the floral-skirted women around me nodded and murmured, so I smiled with the rest when she stood helpless in front of a demon-possessed overhead projector, weeping over a seminar pamphlet that said "Godly Woman Go" instead of "Godly Women Go," knocking her grammar off course. Even Christians are subject to typos, she laughed finally, and off we went, mapping out stores we could buy clothes in—those with underwear, not lingerie—making lists of restaurants where no liquor was served, and then the intangible travels, a clever transition, I thought, all the places where God wanted and did not want our hearts. Do go to the fortress of modesty, the small dark closet of prayer, the well-lighted brick house of marital love. Do not go to the alley of cigarette smoking, the smoky, dingy, neon-lined, rapist-filled bar of alcoholism, and no matter how tempted Godly women are to drive too fast, they never go cruising on the soul-killing freeway of free love. A good Baptist girl, I took her advice like a communion cracker, placed it carefully on my tongue without thinking saltine, sucked until it was

chewable, and I swear on a gym of Bibles I came close to swallowing, but when she raised her voice one last time it was the fluorescent office cubicles of lesbianism she warned us about, and the marijuana-filled libraries and dorms of communist girls' schools on the East Coast, and finally it was authority Godly women never went to, deferring always decisions on meals and wallpaper and baby names and car purchases and every goddam everything. Godly women go to any adult male before they make up their biologically, spiritually, but gracefully inferior goddam Godly minds, she said, it's God's way to be Godly, and although I could not muster what I can now, "Godly woman go to hell," I did stand and swagger out, "This Godly woman go home."