I Join the Women of Churchill College

Robin S. Chapman

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I Join The Women of Churchill College

Beside me, the barebreasted girl with braids, a warrior’s stance, gazes stonily across the hall; her older sister, firm-bellied blue-marbled nude, waits at the Fellows’ back door, beside the statts of office. On the wall, a woman sleepwalks through her charcoal portrait. In the Senior Commons Room, another nude, small, curls up in languorous bronzed sleep by the stationery and blotting pad. At dinner, the girl in the tartan skirt bangs the dishes and snaps her oversize rubber gloves, impatient to do the washing up while I’m still eating my visitor’s pudding. The Fellows linger, talking The Critique of Pure Reason, quantum tunneling. Outside the Hall, opposite Churchill’s bust glowering in black depression, the last of the beautiful nudes, life-size, sits and weeps, her face in her hands.