

but you know how to make me womanly  
I smiled back

I will make you womanly if it kills me  
he looked over at our whispering  
neither of you is paying attention  
I was struck by disbelief  
the tears washed down his cheeks  
if you lose interest in the argument  
then have I won a hollow victory indeed!

wait I said to her

let him be happy  
we can take care of the other later  
after he's grown lazy in his eloquence  
and relaxes into sleep  
leave the door unlocked  
I'll come back after dark  
and wait in the hall  
come down as soon as you can  
she smiled in appreciation  
his happiness  
at capturing our attention again  
revitalized his voice

I learned  
how deeply he had dug into his science  
up to now he said we all thought  
that particles travelled at a constant speed  
but the truth of the matter is ....

I stopped listening  
became engrossed in the contemplation  
of how I would fit the arch of her back  
to the curvature of the earth

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#### Where Do You Get Your Information?

No spires of any church can touch the feet of angels;  
angels are a race apart.  
Yet, they forget Sunday mass quite ordinarily.  
Who can criticize dancing  
around the sceptre of God?  
You told me heaven was a sober place  
where souls spent all their energy  
basking in goodness,

but I find instead  
a realm of laughter, of swinging  
to a tune that waltzes through eternity.  
Remember how you barely whispered  
when you told me about your Christmas  
and the Trinity and all those other things?  
But here there is no subterfuge;  
God's a gay old Bacchus  
who enjoys the same fast jokes  
we laughed at long ago  
and raises many glasses  
to lips quite red with wine  
and can easily whistle along  
with the song the angels' wings  
fan into sound. Oh, no, this place  
is not what your priests predicted.  
And I can't thank you quite enough  
for having me converted.

— Ottone M. Riccio

Belmont, Mass.

#### A Worry Of Sam Snake

Coiling on barstools,  
Slithering in bookstores,  
Creeping across library dust,  
And sliding along  
The belly of a wriggling wench  
Is the life for me.  
But though rummaging  
Through bookstores, bars  
And whores is pleasant,  
From which can one learn more?

— Arthur Kistner

Newark, Delaware