

and ended up with rich husbands
that they outlived.

now claire, though nearly blind,
cares for my nearly senile
(once the exemplar of dignity)
uncle jack.

i hail from a houseful of women
with nary a housewife in the lot.

YOU PROBABLY HAVE TO PUT DOWN A DEPOSIT ON THE SILVERWARE

at norm calvin's texas-style barbecue rib factory
in seal beach, california, i am always
served immediately with a jug of ice water.
i usually order an l.b.j. special:
a barbecue chopped beef sandwich with beans and pickles.
with wine or beer my bill comes to six bucks.

a friend of mine works as a waiter
at a french restaurant in an adjoining town.
he says the waiters are instructed
not to serve water or bread or butter
unless the customer asks twice.
the house wine is nine bucks a bottle.
he says he's never seen a couple
get out of the joint
for less than eighty bucks.

A FAD WITH CONSEQUENCES, OR WHO NEEDS WHOM?

a couple of years ago
a lot of wives i knew
were leaving a lot of husbands i knew.
these were pretty good husbands too,
guys with a lot going for them.
that was part of the problem:
the wives seemed to feel
they'd been living in their husband's shadows.

it seemed to give the wives some pleasure
to put their husbands through bad times.
the wives knew that the husbands weren't used to
being in embarrassing situations.

now the husbands have all been snapped up
by women who know that it's harder than ever
to find a good man,

while the wives are discovering
that most of the available men
have learned the hard way
to be on their guards
with the self-asserting woman.

THE LITTLE ATLAS OF MODERN ENGLISH LIT

d. h. lawrence was at the health spa
working out on the weights
alongside many other writers
of all sexes, ages, sizes, and schools.

the other writers lifted their barbells
over their heads. most lifted much more
weight than d. h. lawrence.
a few lifted less. (they were women.)

the other writers started doing their reps.
some did a lot of reps. some did a few.
some added weight. some subtracted weight.
they worked out for different lengths of time
and with different combinations of exercises,
but eventually each decided that he or she
had put in a good day's workout
and went home.

not d. h. lawrence.

d. h. lawrence grasped his one little barbell,
which did not objectively represent a lot of weight
but which was quite a challenge to him,

and he lifted it over his head
and he held it there.

and when all the other lifters
had gone home for the day,

d. h. lawrence was still holding
his barbell stiffly and achingly
over his head

and he still is.

-- Gerald Locklin

Long Beach CA