

credit card. so we sit and talk awhile, be-
moaning the early onslaught of winter weather.
z talks about his parents having just recently
moved to arizona, where they live in an expensive
old-age retirement community. he claims his
father now swims 100 laps a day in the pool there.
says his father is completely crazy about swimming
and because of this he is the picture of health.
somehow this seems to make z feel more secure
about his own well-being. i don't fully
understand the connection here between z
and his father, but i accept it, for his sake
and mine.

— Ronald Baatz

Woodstock NY

SUE'S PAST & MINE

I really enjoy it
when Sue talks about
her ex-husband
 and lovers
rummaging through the past
going over it all
 it's cosy
talking over a beer
in a pub
 or lying together
in her bed smoking
and staring at the ceiling
or the romantic painting
of a Scottish loch
 or Italian lake
in smokey blues and greens
on the wall beside the bed
we know the rough outline
of each other's pasts
almost as well as
we know our own
it's cosy and gentle
lying there
 reminiscing
and though I've heard
most of the stories before
just as she's heard mine
there's always some new
twist or slant that adds
to the picture in my head
it's like an old fiction

continually re-told
from a different slant
or another perspective
none of it ever bores me
and though at times
there are small twinges
of jealousy

 minor barbs
they only add spice
to our lovemaking.

MISSING BETS

of course it's always
the money you might have won
that galls like last week
for though I ended up
a hundred quid better off
I might have won much more

I fancied Lady-Ever-So-Sure
Fire Bay and North Briton
 in the first
decided to bet on the last two
in my reverse-forecast
and Lady-Ever-So-Sure came in
with Fire Bay second

and in another race
in which there were thirty runners
and no clear-cut favourite
 nor form
I did something I rarely do
chose two horses for their names
Nobody's Perfect and Game for a Laugh
and bet each for a one-pound win

outsiders they came in
first and second

 I won 15 pounds
but had I bet them in a forecast
I'd have cleared a hundred
and so I walked home that day
'if onlys' running through my head
faster than any of the horses

— David Tipton

Bradford England