

i knew she hadn't been feeling well, but
a lot of people haven't been well. some
people haven't felt well for years. how do
i know that she wouldn't keep feeling ill
and touchy long into the indefinite future?
maybe there's something about me makes
women feel not well at all. some of them,
at least. maybe, eventually, all of them.

PARADISE REMEMBERED

when we leave the patio door ajar
on a hot summer night
the toad invariably hops into our family room.

i wrap my hand in a towel,
like a wart-prophylactic,
before picking him up.

as i carry him outside and lower him gently
into the bushes, he expresses his emotions
in a very high pitch. my wife says, "you're
squeezing him," but i know i haven't
been. "no," i say, "what he doesn't like
is that i momentarily tipped him upside-down."

to be on one's back: that is the nightmare
of toads and tortoises.

a man's is to be on his knees; a woman's,
on her belly.

ELECTION '92: FAMILY VALUES

early in this century mikhail bakhtin was
already pointing out that communal values were
indeed necessary for social discourse, but
that as long as they were assumed in common
they were never verbalized: they were tacitly
accepted by all. it was only, he went on to
observe, when those values were breaking down,
deteriorating, being challenged, undermined,
and replaced, that they began to be prominently,
if not in fact ubiquitously, debated.

— Gerald Locklin

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