

## women on the fire

we ended up throwing women on the fire.

it was nearly chilly. there was little other way of keeping warm.

our wallets were emptied of receipts, business cards from forgotten people, american currency of every denomination and pencil written names next to numbers on Keno cards we meant to dial someday but never will now. piled together. lit with the last match in a book of bar matches that was added to the small flame.

all the kindling was used to get the fire going. little to begin with--- only what we could find: the white picket fence around us, the neighbor's shutters and the adamant hammer-dismantled gazebo four generations of my family were married under.

and the logs burned as the night burned but there was more night than there were trees we could fall in this city block; so we ended up throwing our women on the fire.

we were drunk - wine bottles littered the lawn: emerald abortions of a good night bleeding their last bits of life into the ground - maybe that is our excuse--- maybe we were too drunk to be cold and we have no excuses. but we were not warm so we ended up throwing our women on the fire.

you went first with what was at hand: that heavy blonde, the one who disliked feta cheese and had an uncanny ability for asking the time when it was exactly 8:43, morning or night. maybe it was because she was the first or maybe it was because she was the fattest or maybe it was because she flailed around the most or maybe it was because i hated her. whichever, she burned blue and the flames were higher than the house.

and you. maybe it was the fight to get her into the fire but you were sweating. you looked warm.

she did not burn long - always knew there was little to her - so i went next with the brunette who would only undress with the lights out in her red-lit bedroom from the five digital clocks she set every night and still slept thru their alarming sounds in mid-afternoon. she did not fight much; only screamed like stars when they fall--- but she warmed the night in a brief glow.

so we opened more bottles and alternated: you followed with a chianti and the short, well-built girl who read Hegel in coffee shops to meet men; the one who almost understood the books but never the men.

i opened a malbec and threw in the girl we called the "cut-me, beat-me, rape-me girl" behind her back because - in the bedroom - she liked to be cut, she liked to be beat and she liked to be raped. she did not put up a damned bit of fight.

on and on until the sky blueed - until the dew started to settle on us and we knew no woman could keep us warm - then we went inside where it was heated to sleep until work called wondering where we were.