

Mark Belair

Fashion Statement

After trilling good bye
in her best party voice while
waving back, she confidently model-steps
down from what seems a glamorous restaurant gathering,

strides with strict savoir-faire
around the reflective-glass corner, immediately
stops, evicts whatever kept her hair stacked high and shakes
it all out,
tucks her black, gauzy, bejeweled scarf into her stylish purse
from which she pulls

two flip-flops
she drops to the sidewalk
then—laying a hand on her companion’s shoulder—
she bends one leg up behind her and, off-balance, blindly

tugs a wicked high heel
off, stubs her foot into a flip-flop, then
repeats the awkward maneuver for the other foot
and stuffs both shoes into the purse, her companion, all this
time,

jabbering on
about some guy at work—
was it a company party?—trying to muscle him
out, but she can’t seem to focus on him, her face revealing
no goal

but one: to return—her fashion

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performance done—to her preferred state of
fashion disaster, which is fortunate for him, for as she
flip-flops
away she casually takes his arm and, restored, tilts her
head to listen.

Autumn

Far too chilly
an October night to sit
at this sidewalk café, yet
there the wooden tables stand,
water glasses and wine goblets crowding
turquoise plates holding napkins tucked with cutlery,
the rustic indoors busy, the windows steamed with the
 warmth
of bodies and food and talk, the empty outside tables—
set for a summer now past—recast as a rueful
still life of a receding
remembrance.

The Summer Night

The calm summer night
out the open window seems

another room of the house,
an adjoining interior, a stroll

past the screen door offering
no transition, no contrast,

the deep night domesticated,
the full moon a reading lamp

left on to illuminate
the sacred, enigmatic

text
of home.