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Bachelorhood

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BACHELORHOOD

Mine began the year I divided all female living beings on earth into two types: those that lay tiny eggs in food, and those with better manners. At the Taxonomy Awards Ceremony I was given a suit of children's cheeks and babies' butts all stitched together like a pink quilt. But the children's squeals and the babies' farts hadn't been tanned out of their hides, and I made a hell of an undisciplined racket whenever I stood up and sat down or simply shifted in my seat. *Wah-wah-wah! Poot-poot-poot!* All day long and into the night. I smacked them as best I could, these children's cheeks and babies' butts, first with the palm of my hand and later with a penitent's scourge. But they only howled the louder, farted with greater acrimony. Finally one weary day in the middle of my life I stopped dead still in my tracks. And listened. And patted my suit soothingly. I wanted to understand. Still they yowled and still they spat bowel wind. But not like children or babies anymore. Rather, geriatrically, to be precise. My suit had grown wrinkled and threadbare from so much standing up, so much sitting down, so much smacking and scourging. Old already! Had I only married when I was young and had the chance—a broad-beamed maternal Brunhilda with a clothes wringer in one hand and a flatiron in the other. Someone who really understood her way around the pink suit of innocent flesh a man must bear.