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## SELF-PORTRAIT # 3: A DREAM

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wanted him to. When I'd called Lois, months before, and told her I was pregnant, she asked if I was crazy.

"Didn't the doctors say you might not be able to have kids?" she'd reminded me. I hated her for being so practical and reasonable. Now, I felt glorious and triumphant. Nothing I had done in my life to that point compared with the experience. I know that's 1950's housewifery of me to say, but I really felt that. I wondered how Joe felt. I wanted to call Lois and gloat. When I woke up, I asked Joe, "Do you think you'll love the baby better than your novel?" He didn't answer. I thought it was because he couldn't decide. Later, I realized that it was because he was recording it. I was helping him write his next novel. I would be in it. My character, wearing her halter tops and building igloos out of ice cubes, would come off as a little crazy. When Lois called and asked if any of that were true, I totally lied.

"This one's a little less autobiographical," I told her. She sounded doubtful. I could tell that even over the phone. But I didn't care. Joe's new novel was a bestseller. He had stopped speaking in bad Shakespearean English, and I was hugely pregnant again. This time, I was having a girl. Joe would write about it, I knew, but it wouldn't bother me because I was happy. Joe was happy too. You could tell that, despite the male character's cynicism, if you read his last book carefully.

### SELF-PORTRAIT # 3: A DREAM

-Don Adams

It's like this:

I was in the store one day,  
poking around, as it were,  
when I grabbed a package of panty hose  
and walked smack out the door,  
only to be nabbed by the establishment's  
crack security, who turned me over  
(naturally) to the state.

So that I was in prison, then,  
along with all of my old friends  
(acquaintances, really)  
from school. *So this  
is where you were all those years.*

They did not seem at all surprised to see me,  
but were rather amused (mildly)  
that I — the great one — should end up,  
after all, like them.

I thought, "When I stole the panty hose,  
it was as in a dream,  
and dream-logic demanded  
that I be landed here,  
with Clay Copeland, Pat O'Brien,  
Gary McCarver and the rest,  
where I am to be made to feel a bit awkward,  
it would seem, at first."

Later it was brought home to me  
that my mother's son is in the clink;  
my throat clenched as I stared at the bars.  
Then I concocted a plea for mercy,  
like a threat, or poem,  
addressed, dear  
reader, to you.