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 housewife 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.

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-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.