

## **Ann Marie Gamble – Three Poems**

### **Ode to the New Sign in the Ladies**

A new, euphemistic sign in the restroom at work.  
Ordinarily I disapprove,  
but I'm warming to the idea  
that blood-soaked rags are feminine.

My teeth tearing open these corset laces  
My breast feeding this someday man  
My hand stirring goddess knows what into your soup  
that I always make in the iron pot  
seasoned and cracked  
I call the Strega Nonna pot.  
“Grandmother Witch” in a language  
that understands  
we swing  
both ways.

So yes, I will dispose of  
my feminine products  
with great care  
so as not to disrupt  
your plumbing.

### **Epilogue**

The wedding and a baby  
and curtain—happily ever after.

But then there's preschool  
and the kid who throws sand  
who turns out to be your kid.  
Grade school, keeping track of  
birthdays, which blocks have dogs  
too close to the sidewalk.  
Chipped tooth, grandmother's funeral,  
which high school, and tests  
—always tests—  
the antagonist in this story  
more inexorable than dogs or mean girls,  
steering the plot out of the Ivies  
with none of the answers we're looking for.

Studying in the library,  
our hero makes eye contact.  
Meet cute, complications, resolution,  
and another epilogue  
that's just the launchpad  
of the next part  
of the story.

## **Naptime/Nighttime**

1.  
He sleeps so hard he looks dead.  
Then he sighs,  
slides his hand  
a little farther down his chest,  
unaware of the  
seizure of love and fear  
he has aroused.

I go back  
to folding  
the laundry.

2.  
I was dreaming  
about how comfortable my bed was  
    or maybe I was awake  
    I'm not sure  
when the baby started to cough and cry  
    or cry and cough  
and even in this state  
    wondering whether my bed was real  
I knew he could not stop  
and I leapt up to go to him  
in the dark.

**Ann Marie Gamble** edits long works for university presses and short pieces at an advertising agency, and has previously published at *Nanoism.net*, *the Tower Journal*, and other venues. Poetry gives her a chance to take a close look at moments, put processes and connections in the foreground.