

A Nude Not Forgetting a Photographer

for Jane Burton

**The photographer is pacing
around her Cyllopean
camera on tripod. She can't
take her eyes off the time. The nude is late.**

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**4pm. The nude in disguise –
t-shirt and jeans –
divests it, emerges
whitely, smooth as a baby.**

**The bench on which
she'll stretch her Venus
perfection is blemished by lichen.**

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**When the camera's positioned and ready,
the nude rolls a cigarette.**

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**In spite of the qualities
that make her a suitable nude
for this particular shoot,
she is an awkward nude.**

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**Torn between mentioning
the discomfort of lichen and the alteration
in the weather, the nude yawns.**

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The photographer raises a finger and shouts, 'Hold it!'

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**This is a nude
with lassitude.**

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**(A nude reclining
on that hard bench would be better cushioned
if she'd been selected by Rubens.)**

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The photographer lifts her eyes
to the darkening sky, impatient,
realises again that time
is her professional element
and in it hopes now
or soon, in the viewfinder,
in the last of the light,
call it Roman,
she'll see,
as will others in some
stylish interior, a co-operative nude.

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Forever out of the picture:
the nude and the photographer
 rapidly
 adapting
 to circumstances.

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**As if to stress
that being naked and being a nude
are not the same,
in reply to her subject's statement,
'It's bloody freezing,'
the photographer, mistress
of illusions, says *sotto voce*,
'Don't worry, darling, it won't
show in the photos.'**