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STEPHANIE BOLSTER

PORTRAIT OF ALICE WITH ELVIS

Queen and King, they rule side by side
in golden thrones above the clouds.
Her giggle and wide eyes remind him
of his first young wife, and his twang
never ceases to thrill her, so different
from the prim accents of men she's known.
She sings for him, "Hound Dog"
and "Heartbreak Hotel," and he turns
the Mock Turtle's song of beautiful soup
campier with each performance, hip-twists
till her eyes stream and she melts with laughter.
Sometimes they leave their airy realm
to share a strawberry shake at Burger King
in Memphis, visit the Tate Gallery in London
solemnly to ponder the Lady of Shalott
alone and adrift in her rowboat.
In rare arguments over fame, he cites
the Churches of Elvis, the Vegas tributes,
while she mentions the Alice shop in Oxford,
the Alice ride at Disneyland. He says more books
have been written about him, but she insists hers
are of higher calibre, her words are quoted
much more often than his. He calls up wax figures,
she teapots and tarot cards. Both delight
in their limited edition collector's plates.
For dinner they fry chicken, make tea and scones,
tarts filled with peanut butter.
He runs her a lavender bubble bath,
washes her hair, greases his own.
She lays her head against his chest
during late night TV, murmurs of the man
who gave her fame, and he of the woman for whom
he won his. She wants to sway
to the beat of his heart in her ear, slow
as "Are You Lonesome Tonight." In sleep
their tear-blotched faces could be anyone's.