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Nude Woman, Charcoal

The reclining nude is absent.
Diego claims she stepped off the canvas
while he napped. I told him
how a woman needs to be treated.
He's as daft as a bowl of apples.
I left him for good reason.

Diego screams into the receiver.
He'll run another classified,
find a more suitable girl,
tether her to his easel so he can smoke,
sleep, and stretch his yellow bones.
I hang up the phone without speaking.

At night, I leave my house on foot,
browse alleys and pubs, the Fan District.
Always I wear white and carry gardenias.
I rub against the curved bodies of women,
hoping to find one who smudges when we touch.

Jayne Pupek

Jayne Pupek holds an MA in Psychology and lives near Richmond, VA. Her fiction and poetry have appeared in several online and print publications. *Primitive*, her chapbook of poetry, is available from Pudding House Press. Her first novel is scheduled for release Spring, 2006 by Algonquin at Chapel Hill. She can be contacted at JaynePupek@aol.com