

Exile

Volume 43 | Number 2

Article 4

1996

Party in December

Paul Durica
Denison University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.denison.edu/exile>



Part of the Creative Writing Commons

Recommended Citation

Durica, Paul (1996) "Party in December," *Exile*: Vol. 43 : No. 2 , Article 4.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.denison.edu/exile/vol43/iss2/4>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the English at Denison Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Exile by an authorized editor of Denison Digital Commons.

Party in December

After two shots of Jim Beam and three glasses of champagne, everything is clear. I've made a mistake. Coming in a sports coat and tie as instructed. To a party of strangers. With an ulterior motive attached to me – see the Girl in the Black Velvet Dress. Morticia Adams of my philosophy class. She's beautiful. She's intelligent. I have a "crush." I read a poem of hers posted on the wall.

After two shots of Jim Beam and three glasses of champagne, the tongue inflates and floats. I'm on my knees by Emily. Chewing a Swisher Sweet. "No," she says, "Don't bite the end. Just lick the rim. Pucker you lips and just suck it in." I eat my cigar. Emily wipes my lips with a white towel placed beneath the vanishing liquor table (at least my hand and glass can't find it). She also insists on wiping one of my hands. Emily, by the way, is also in philosophy. A great girl really. She had me pegged for a stiff until the Jim Beam. Emily holds an emerald green chalice from Ireland in her hand. Filled with cheap wine. She pours me a glass. "If you like her, you should just tell her. What's the worst that could happen? She could say no. If she likes you, she'll say yes." Girl in Black Velvet. "I hate crushes," I reply, "fitting someone into some image. No emotional attachment to images. I just want to know her." Girl in Black Velvet behind Emily. Drinking. Engaged in conversation. "That's why you should ask her now. No emotional attachments. Nobody's hurt."

After two shots of Jim Beam and three glasses of champagne and three glasses of cheap wine, the host dressed like Orson Welles is amazingly cinematic as he croons "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" under a string of red lights. Roland is a great guy; so is his roommate Barry. I'm grateful to them for inviting me. Roland holds Barry in his arms, swings him like a bride. They sing "I'll be Home for Christmas" or "White Christmas" or some schmoozy song. Roland is style; he flattens each crescendo with his artist's hand. Roland is unbelievably kind, gregarious, good. He knows Girl in Black Velvet. He'll help me. A group of suited men form a chorus line, spill ash and champagne over their striped ties and polished, leather shoes. I join in, tell Barry to time his leg kicks with mine. I see Emily talking to Girl in Black Velvet. "Eewww, eeww," looking my way. I fucked up.

After two shots Jim Beam, three glasses champagne, three glasses wine, and a gin and tonic, I see Girl in Black Velvet run off to ladies' room with some blonde, bird-like girl. "She's been in love forever," says Emily, "with this one guy. He's in Columbus." I nod. "She's going through a lot of problems." "I just want to know her," I reply. I see Girl in Black Velvet return. Sits herself in a corner. "Let me talk to her," says Emily wiping my hand with the white towel again. She goes over to her. I turn to a guy from my geology class and strike-up conversation. "What do you think of the final?" He's in a pinstripe suit with shoes with spats. As I speak, the gin and tonic glides across my ivory shirt. I walk over to the two girls. Girl in Black Velvet places her hand over her face. I tell Emily that liquor is better than beer. Emily disagrees. I tell her not to get defensive. Girl in Black Velvet groans and runs out of the room. I tell Emily that I'll go after her; she's my responsibility.

After two shots Jim Beam, three glasses champagne, three wine, gin and tonic,

and a splash of vodka, I walk, stumble, fall, crawl down to Girl in Black Velvet's room. She opens the door just as I reach . . . "I can't talk to you right now. I just can't." She slams the door. The lock clicks. "Dammit, don't be so emotionally . . . caustic," I mumble. "Just want to be pals." I try the handle. I see Emily. "She's my friend I'll talk to her. You go back to the room and wait." I'm not a child, dammit.

After two shots Jim Beam, three glasses champagne, three wine, gin and tonic, vodka, and a manhattan, and a martini, I stumble towards the bathroom. Roland's there already.

-paul durica '00