

**In which, terrified, she nonetheless
introduces herself to the important people**

Nice, polite, they have no idea, can't possibly know about the knot tying itself tight inside; but perhaps they see my fingers shake and sweat as I hand over the stupid "business" card (name & address), \$1.98 from iPrint.com. When I emerge at last, gulping wet air which smells of ruined apricots, crushed underfoot and tasting maybe of wine or mice, so relieved (if still nibbled by the feeling that maybe they think I was hitting them up for something), rain washes down outside in icy, brilliant sunlight, the devil is beating me, yet underachieved I stand teetering on the edge of the curb and have to laugh to see the 4X4s crash madly down Paseo, lifting up sheets of spray which, aerosolized, then mist in the crossfire of sun, and, crazed, shine an instant, spectrums rainbowed over my cold sandalled feet.