

JÉMEZ

This French guy I used to like wants to take
us to the hot springs at Jémez, and I'm not
stupid; I know it's at least partly to see
me, maybe, in very little clothes. My bright
green bathing suit, hardly worn—my husband
hasn't ever seen me in it. Okay, so; so I'm
married, okay? I'm not *dead*, I tell my tired
students in composition class. They stare,
pass notes written in pastel-gel inks.
The printmaking instructor leers swarthily
at me as I trip down the corridors, self-
conscious in a long tight chocolate satin skirt.
You look good today, he murmurs just
under earshot. I blush, lose ten years' age—
*I don't just want you to be good
writers so you can earn a decent salary,*
I tell them, desperate; *I want you to learn
to write so that you can listen to your souls.*
They yawn. The tin roof of the building burns
in the sun, workmen above laugh loud
and step with heavy boots over our heads.
I still haven't decided if I should go to Jémez.