

LEANNE AVERBACH

Unsexy

A genuine surprise in bed
last night while reading a poem
by Frank O'Hara, something about
destroying another's idea of himself
in order to seduce him, reminded me how
unsexy sex can be. Like in '69 I was selling
flowers in night clubs, having dropped
out, university seemed so pointless, and
I remember this one bar where the floors
were sticky everything was sticky and nothing
stuck to the women on the platforms in cages and
it was welfare check day and one guy with a sort of
rotting face looked at me wistfully, said "Here" and handed
me twenty dollars for a rose. But then later at a very happening
venue a guy with a manicure waited for the nickel back
on a ninety-five-cent flower and afterwards, in the company van, we
dropout flowerchicks got high on the boss's smoke to
laugh off the feel of all the men and the world
of men, and the boss whipped out his
dick. Memorable too was
a man when I was ten
he invited me into
the bushes to see his

underpants. I remember how nice he seemed so much sadder than my crazy Aunt Rose who got married at fifteen with a brown suitcase and rules for spits at the evil eye and she spat when I tried to tell her about the underpants you see she was watching me while my parents were in Vegas watching showgirls, probably in cages, and I think it must have been even earlier my friend and I were torturing my little cousin in the basement took off all her clothes and wrote on her, perhaps my first lines, with all the lipstick from our mothers' vanities when the phone rang it was my Aunt Dora calling little cousin home for dinner and my poetry was published, and to this day I never feel anything I write is ready. Much later I remember friends visiting, and my ex-husband's large balls, when he was still my husband, sort of peeking from his summer shorts like kiwis growing in Canada when he crossed those great legs, and my feeling disgust and pride both. like a full-blown argument for later therapy court, why I had stuck it out so long. And then that hypno-therapist in '86 who wanted me to act it all out with feeling, proponent of the Lee Strasberg School of Behavioral Psychology that he was, twice a week for a month or two just the two of us, on his lush and he thought irresistible Persian rug.

