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## Out of My Element

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## OUT OF MY ELEMENT

I once took a class in Abnormal Psych  
The subject intrigued me — a thing I might like,  
My classmates were weird and the prof a bit odd  
He wore pink pajamas and his feet were unshod.  
His lectures were filled with terms that were phrightful  
Like psycho and phobic — he found them delightful  
He spoke of his colleagues, people even more hairy,  
like Freud and Gestalt and Madame Du Barry.

There was talk of Charcot, and other such doozies  
Names tripped off his tongue like summertime floozies  
Why even that “Doc” who was mispronounced Jung  
Well, I didn’t much care if old Jung was hung.  
There was Rorschach with blots, Binet and Geisell  
There Rogers and Hart and Digby O’Dell  
No, I guess that was wrong about Hart — he’s a singer  
or maybe a writer or a bell ring-a-dinger.

He was making me ill and the subject got fuzzy  
And he looked at me strange saying, “Is he or, was he?”  
Then he talked about syndromes — for he gave me a few  
Mine matched all the classical signs of “me too.”  
It got worse by the hour and I wasn’t kidding  
When my ego was damaged and my psyche got hidden  
I just couldn’t stand it and I reached for my id  
and wouldn’t you know it — I flipped my own lid.

With the straight jacket coming I ducked out the door  
‘Cause the men in the white coats they all knew the score  
They would take me to Bedlam or maybe to Bellview  
I could look out my window and picture my Hell-view  
They shouted and jabbered while I climbed a tree  
“You’ll not take me alive,” I shouted with glee  
“I’ll go down with the ship. You just wait and see.”  
But I knew I was beaten by Psy-chol-o-gy.

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OUT OF MY ELEMENT

They put me away in a room that was padded  
For the shrinks knew the score and the way it was added  
Now they frequently test me — as if I'm getting badder  
But I'm mad as a wet hen and still getting madder  
I'm mad thinking of the choices that I could have taken  
I could have chose English with Old Frances Bacon  
Or maybe a short course in basketry weaving  
Or Poetry, or Spanish or Deep Sea Retrieving.

Epilogue

Well, it's all academic, you silly galoot.  
When they run up the flag just watch me salute  
I'll be out in a year if they give me a break  
And I'll call it my thesis in a major mistake.

— Robert L. Gockman

CONFESSION

“Yes Father, I ate it,  
I tasted earth's  
forbidden nectar.”  
*(love, lush  
and thick  
still  
clinging  
to my smiling lips  
as I confess  
my innocence)*

— Elizabeth Lane