

# When I Last Saw Gina

*by* Kitty Boots

When I was 16, I stole a tube of clear lip gloss and a pair of peace symbol earrings from Drug Fair. I didn't get caught. I had to have them because I was broke. I'd already spent my weekly allowance on a James Taylor album.

My friend, Gina, was really good at it. We'd go into the 7-11 and she'd come out with a bottle of Boone's Farm in each inner coat pocket. Before they locked up cigarettes, she'd get those, too. Whenever she'd spend the night with a guy, she'd roll him. I know she stole my silver Navajo sandcast bracelet. She eventually got caught shoplifting and spent a day in lock-up as a juvenile. I parked outside the jail waiting for her to be released and could hear her screaming and raising hell the whole time. My mother deemed her a bad influence.

I flew home from Houston years later to see my parents and reconnected with Gina. We shared a joint on the way to Buck's, a topless bar outside of Fort Eustis. I'd wanted to see an old flame working as a bouncer there, she was going to spend the night at my parent's house and take me to the airport in the morning. She'd married at 30, (by then I was on my second marriage). Her husband looked like Kris Kristofferson, was renovating their circa 1910 house and I couldn't imagine why she kept talking about some asshole she was seeing named "Flip."

Dennis was happy to see me and I learned he had entered into his fifth (?) marriage. The atmosphere was not as charged as I'd remembered. He said things had changed. None of the bikers were packing. No one snorted crank in the kitchen anymore. Little Mona, a petite thing in thigh-high boots, with a tattoo of a wolf's head on her shoulder had retired from dancing and now had three kids.

Gina kept going to the restroom to snort coke and I got pissed off. We had an argument. She said I drank too much, I told her she did too many drugs. She told me to "get my ritzy ass back to Houston." I caught a ride home and set her suitcase on the steps of the porch. My cancer-riddled father, after pouring whiskey into his coffee, drove me to the airport.

