

Joi Weston

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## *Thursday on the Couch – for Julie*

This couch has held

a broken neck screwed in an aluminum cage  
a heroin-racked body growing clean  
poker games/backgammon/Trivial Pursuit Baby  
Boomers edition

beer drunks asleep/Valium dreams

a woman cherishing her new lover/lovers  
screaming across the room

holiday festivities/terse, tense business meetings  
student essays spilling onto the floor while tutor  
and tutee grapple for words.

But above all, two woman exploring life, drinking Dr.  
Pepper  
while the smoke rises between them.

They talk of rape and abortion;

of finding love and losing it;

of finding life and hating it;

of teenage lives: first love, first sex, first drugs;

of screaming mothers and silent fathers

(yet hers still breathes).

“Every man benefits from rape,” we quote, we believe,  
we *know*

“So I said ‘Fuck off.’ They laughed.”

“He said ‘I can arm wrestle any woman in this  
room. So what?’”

“He can’t communicate . . . an emotional cripple.”

“I told him no more silence.”

“Have you read . . . ? Because she had three abortions  
they said she was a bad woman.”

“The doctor said, ‘It says here you’re a twenty-five year old woman, two abortions” — my label:  
twenty-five & 2 TAB.

“They didn’t get it all the first time.”

“Fuck them all.”

While around them the girls squabble.

The dog begs, eats, barfs.

Sizzling onion-stuffed chicken sends salivation.

The cleanser-scented engine artist enters, collapses with his beer.

The afternoon is over. We’ll begin again next Thursday.