

What the Chauffeur Knew

Patricia Brodie

Dona Mariane had a lover
and a husband.
Her lover had a wife
who may have had a lover of her own,
but who can say.

Three days each week
the chauffeur drove her
to her lover's office
for tea,
and brought her home again
in time to dress for dinner.
No one ever talked of this arrangement
(even though it had persisted
countless years).

When her husband
unfortunately retired,
her schedule did not change except
she now contended with
his new-formed crankiness,
depression,
and the fact that he died suddenly
and soon
of a broken heart.

Two hundred people came to his funeral.
Dona Mariane wore black for a year.
Her afternoon schedule
remained inviolate.
No one ever mentioned it.