

Purses I Have Known and Loathed

by Nancy Martz

Too many pockets can spoil a purse
Too few leave essentials at home
I've never found one that I didn't curse
When rummaging through for a comb

Small or large, they're all the same
I'm never satisfied
They waste my time as I search in vain
Things are either not there, or they hide.

Whenever I dig in to find a dollar
Or five or ten or twenty,
I stick in my thumb and pull out some gum
And odds and ends a plenty

Like tissues and lipstick and glasses case
And charge cards and aspirin and nail file
Calculator, car keys, flashlight and mace
Behind me in line? Stay awhile.

I dare not leave my cell phone behind
Or calendar, ink pen and paper
Or cards from restaurants where lately I
dined
Perfume to address a rude vapor.

Eyeliner, Altoids, and envelopes
Nail clippers, tweezers, and checkbook
License and eye drops and small packaged
soaps
Safety pins, powder, and book Nook

Business cards, nail polish, emery board
Small package of crackers and cheese
Lip liner, stamps, phone recharging cord
And duplicate house and car keys

Receipts and cough drops and compact mirror
Mascara and bottle of water
Coins for the meters and rain hat gear
Address book and facial shine blotter

By now my purse is as heavy as lead
I heave it over my shoulder
My purse side bends as I stagger ahead
And I now feel 15 years older.

The strap cuts into my flesh and bone
I grit my teeth and bear it.
I smile and stifle an audible groan
My bag bumps my hip as I wear it

I straighten my back and carry my load
As if it's as light as a feather
As if it's just fashion where nothing is stowed
No hint that it's literally crushed leather

Whether leather or cloth or plastic or straw
All the bags I have bought disillusion
In the store on the shelf they may fill me with
awe
But they fail to hold up when I use them.

Are you kidding me with these chains for
straps?
As if bra straps weren't torture sufficient
Do women in chains have allure, perhaps?
Or the makers just morally deficient?

Now what if your outfit is aquamarine
But your fully packed purse is chartreuse?
Dump everything out in one thundering scene
Or you'll suffer from fashion abuse.

Choose black or gray or navy or tan
But be careful your shoes don't clash
Shoulder your bag as refined as you can
Regardless how heavy your stash

A word about purses the size of a mouse
I can't find much reason to wear
Unless all I need is a key to my house
And if so, my pocket will fare

And finally I wish you all a good bag
And I hope it fits all of your load
And allows you to find things without any lag
While you look like the cover of Vogue.