Last Year at Betty and Bob's: An Adventure
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Following the lively reunion meal The Bettys hugged, high-fived, and mentally prepared for their departure with one minute of huddled silent concentration. This custom had been Blue Betty’s initiative, an impulsive semi-terrified gesture concluding their first celebratory TAP meal many years past. The surviving Bettys continued the tradition, partially in Blue’s honor, partially because it was a damn good idea to take a deep breath before committing one’s body to the task. Team sport had got this ritual right.

As any seasoned sailor will tell you, rope descents can be deceptively difficult, especially on cargo net constructions that flex on every foot and handhold. Gravity’s insistence, an obstacle on the way up, is just as hostile on the way down. Many opt to rappel at TAP as it’s a quick descent and the pelvic harness has its unquestionably kinky allure. Single rope journeys require another type of skill. Legs wrapped around a wobbly strand of hemp or a swath of aerial silk, one foot threaded to support the body’s ascent and slow its descent, this procedure is popular with firemen, pole dancers, acrobats, and young boys.

Negotiating the knotted, fluctuating instability of the communal, Netting is more dangerous in its unpredict-
ability. It requires a certain spidery, athletic finesse but, more importantly, it demands a versatile response-ability to contingent conditions. The Netting is always otherwise, like the Nasdaq or the weather on K2. Networking techniques are often hard won. Trust functions instrumentally. Red, Violet, Yellow, Orange, Black Betty, and the in-betweens have always preferred this, some would say, more challenging, collaborative route.

In their farewell huddle, Ob broke the solemn mood with a hearty, horribly clichéd “You go grrls!” They groaned then whooped in unison as they began their return to ground level, butt-skimming the waist high railing, one leg secured on the safe side, the other dangling the void. Carefully finding toeholds on the unstable rope, they hoisted their aging bodies over the barrier. Affable Red Betty was, as always, wearing her rat mask and infectiously pos attitude. In one enthusiastic move, following a bravada wave to Yellow Betty carefully descending to her right, her left foot missed a notch in the netting. Having elected to wear her new stilettos, thinking the heel would hook securely around the hemp thongs like a boot in a stirrup, she had neglected to factor in the slick danger of her stylish footwear’s polished soles.

She slipped one meter, then twenty.