

The pastor's wife and I

by [Nola Garrett](#) in the [April 20, 2004](#) issue

The pastor's wife does not go out to play.
Outside it is Tuesday—merciless and far

from Sunday. She is all righteous carrots
and earnest potatoes. Sometimes she hurts

me with her notions, makes my shoulders droop,
reminds me that Nola's dreams are a troupe

of untrained monkeys. She recycles
my prayers, drags me away from dark angels.

But, when her hair grew prim and gray, I made
her dye it brown. Then, she chose our second husband,

a good man given to chills—him, I seduced.
Now, like a gun, she holds her watch

to my ear, forces me to write these poems.
It was I who fed her those wild greens,

a salad cut from the last of my pagan
garden's rue. Her mouth burns

for benedictions and shooting stars.
Into my mirror she stares, worries

I might disappear—her feral woman—
the woman who met Christ at the well.