



6-15-2007

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### Recommended Citation

Hardy, Nicole (2007) "One of the Five Wise Virgins on a Date with the Prodigal Son," *Westview*: Vol. 26 : Iss. 1 , Article 24.  
Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/westview/vol26/iss1/24>

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# One of the Five Wise Virgins on a Date with the Prodigal Son

by Nicole Hardy

At dinner, you picture me a woman:  
V-neck on the verge of revelation,  
heels too high for church.  
If I can make myself a mystery,  
pretty inside these lines, why do I  
crave your vacation days, picture  
a flight to man-made paradise,  
cutting courses in consequence,  
modesty, foresight, and virtue?  
I'd atone like you did, arrive home  
in time for the party.

But we can both predict  
my predictability. I'd show you  
a daring tan line, every entry  
stamp in my passport, and I'd still be  
wearing this snow-white V,  
reverse doppelganger  
to Hester P., both of us foolish,  
and first one home is a virgin still.  
Was there ever a time you craved  
a week of my nights? What would you give  
for seven days of simple, sweet,  
sorrowful only as every joy  
is sample-sized, individually wrapped,  
not meant for retail sale.

