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Moonshot

by Richard Wilding

1 When I got home that night, I could hear laughter coming from the bedroom. I headed for the kitchen. She'd bought one of those magnetic kids' letter sets and spelt out *d i v a r i c a t e* on the fridge, knowing that the first thing I'd do was grab a Fosters. I called up, what does that mean? Look it up, she answered. I heard her coming down the stairs, wearing lipstick and perfume, phone in hand. She told me don't wait up. Divaricate means to spread apart, like when a single river divides on its way down the mountain to the sea.

2 When I was in school, my maths teacher told me – well, the whole class, not just me! – that it was important you get your measurements spot on when it came to angles and such like because, he said, imagine if you make your calculation and it's only one degree out. Makes no difference, you might think (he said). But now imagine you're flying to the moon. By the time you've done your 250,000 miles that single tiny degree error means your space rocket misses your moonshot by a wide mile.

3 I was doing really well at the bank. She told me she was happy when they gave me the deputy manager's role that she'd thought was hers.

4 She had a headful of words – I used to call her The Oxford English – but she could choose simple, pointed ones like *selfish* and *arrogant* when she wanted to, when she thought it would hurt more.

5 One of Mother's favourite songs was Hall and Oates' 'She's Gone'. She'd change it to 'He's Gone. ('Everybody's high on consolation') Daryl Hall – the one without the moustache – claims he co-wrote "When did you stop loving me?" with Marvin Gaye. Is there an actual moment when someone stops loving someone else? We're all so busy, I suppose.

6 She'd asked for a transfer from the bank. I only found out because my boss asked me, where's the leaving party?

7 Whatever her divorce lawyer said at the hearing, I still say it was drink that drove her away. She was drinking during the afternoons before she took the other role in Manchester, I know that for certain because they started whispering about her. I was never going to take to her lawyer given the circs but even not given the circs I wouldn't have taken to her. She was way too cocky and sure of herself and by the look at what she wore on her size sevens, she wasn't short of a bob or two. It hurt that that the money for the next pair was coming from the pocket of yours truly. It didn't help, of course, that her lawyer had actually studied law whereas mine seemed to have learned whatever he knew off Google on the way in. Plus he came by bus and that's never a good sign in a lawyer.