

*Wilderness House Literary Review 3/4*

*Robert K. Johnson*

**TO A WOMAN AT A NEW YEAR'S PARTY**

More than once  
my life has been left  
disheveled – worse  
than disheveled –  
so I silently say

yes yes when you,  
finger-checking,  
put three strands  
of your auburn hair

back in place,  
smooth your collar's  
wrinkles, pull  
the ripples in

your sweater flat.  
I understand, too,  
when minutes later,  
you finger-check  
everything again.