

It's a Wonderful Life

After the national fanfare died down, the quintuplets grew up protected from further exploitation in the safety and privacy that state funds and public donations insured. But, inevitably, they had to enter the real world. On their eighteenth birthday they went to work as tellers in the same bank, my bank, the National Bank of Westchester. The first time I walked in and saw them behind the counter my heart skipped a beat: Veronica, Vanessa, Vivian, Next Teller Please, Valerie, Vicki. With their dark complexions, ruffled white blouses and full red lips—like petals from a mythical flower, like the tens they plucked from their tills, they were identical down to the last detail. All I could think was that it would take a lifetime to explain this moment, an eternity to explain a lifetime. All I could say was, "Marvelous, fucking marvelous," words echoed down the line as people from all walks of life couldn't help but agree. Behind his desk smiled B. Yourgrau, Manager, assured that another customer had found the answer to all his banking needs.

—Paul Violi

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