



I PANSY

PANSY WARNER FINISHES emptying the middle drawer of Frank's bureau, placing the last of his boxer shorts on the clutter of socks and stacks of dress shirts in the laundry basket. About to turn her attention to the bottom drawer, she sees the time on the little plastic alarm clock on the bedside table. Nearly noon. Although it's been six months since she stopped going into the office, she still hasn't gotten the hang of organizing her time. She decided at breakfast that Frank's clothes needed laundering—even though he hasn't worn them in months. The idea of them just lying there didn't seem right somehow.

Giving the basket a push aside with her foot and gathering up the suits, sport jackets, and slacks that she removed from the closet, she starts down the stairs, pausing at the window on the landing

to admire the forsythia bushes in the back yard. They escaped Frank's clipping last summer and are waving exultant neon yellow arms in the breeze.

In the kitchen, she stands in the light of the open refrigerator door and tries to decide what to eat for lunch. She's feeling a familiar, unpleasant emptiness, as though her stomach is both demanding to be filled and threatening to ache. The shelves are crammed with items from yesterday's shopping trip at Stop and Shop, all very tempting, but she knows something bland is called for. She considers a glass dish of tuna salad covered with Saran Wrap. She made the salad yesterday, slicing green olives and celery, breaking up the thick chunks of white tuna and spooning in a great glob of Hellman's mayonnaise. She ate the tuna on thin slices of white bread, accompanied by a mug of black coffee, the last of the morning brew warmed in the microwave. It was delicious, but she doesn't want to chance the discomfort it caused and reaches instead for a container of plain yogurt that has an expiration date not too long past.

Through the open window over the sink, the grinding start of a neighbor's lawn mower drowns out Frank Sinatra on the radio. Just as well, she thinks, turning it off. She's sick of Frank Sinatra. She fishes a spoon out of the cutlery tray, peels off the foil lid on the yogurt cup, and shakes it, watching the swirl of the whey on top of