

“Emboldened by Women in High Heels” (excerpt) From the collection *Whose Panties Are These?*

by Anne Calcagno



“I didn’t want to go to the Great Wall. In Beijing, I had contracted the Mongolian Revenge and had spent the previous two days dashing from bed to bathroom, in a wildly fevered state. I had come to appreciate that the Beijing Palace Hotel has lovely bathrooms with peach-red marble, and plenty of toilet paper. I had also staggered downstairs and found a front desk assistant who was a French intern-in-training. She hoped to represent Guerlain cosmetics at a later date, in China. For now, she perfected her Chinese on my behalf, leafing enthusiastically through the dictionary, unable to solve my request. It wasn’t until she located the restaurant manager who, with dignity and concern, wrote “broth” in ideograms on a hotel card for me that I had hope. For breakfast, lunch, and supper, all that next week, I pulled out my magic card, something I have saved in my scrap-book, life-saver that it was.”

From “Emboldened by Women in High Heels,” Anne Calcagno