

STAN SANVEL RUBIN

*Belles-de-nuit*

*Life's a bitch*, they say, but they're only half right, it's a bastard, too, a "product of irregular, inferior, or dubious origin," according to the old *American Heritage*, or at least the things that happen to us are, "illegitimate" to the max, yes—but is there any standard?—all the love I've happened into "not genuine, spurious," as most emotions turn out to be though they leave us breathless, bitchy, and afraid we'll never love again. So who's the prick who pricks us on, the prelate, prefect, potentate of not who keeps tabs on us, the rules? Who says, *Sir/Madame/Ms. your misery is this?* Say what you will, no one answers to that call. *Poor bastards all*, I'd say.