

## Closing Club 9:30 / *Christel Reges*

The doorway's bleak and barred, not black:  
Lacking black's glossiness. Ice-green streetlight  
Soaks into it. Outside, upon the stairs  
Monique is sick; she combs her hair, plays  
With the broken zipper on her coat. Night  
Blanches out her pasty skin, her dyed

Hair. "Jared said go home. Where's that cab? I'll die  
If it don't come soon." In the hallways, black  
Descends a shade, a denser darkness in the web of night.  
Above the kitchen door, an exit light  
Has lost its "E." The air is hot. A band plays,  
Mounting notes black snakes, ascending aural stairs.

At the back bar, the regulars all stare  
You down, disparate in their satin, leather and tie-dye  
But unified, one wary beast, in distrust that plays  
Across their faces; however thick, however black  
The air, strangers rankle. This place is their delight,  
Their orphanage. "Drink up. Enough. Good night."

What happens to these when the club shuts down tonight?  
Pale urban foundlings: Drucilla, Bitsy, Alistair?  
Rootless, dreamless, feckless, can they stand the light?  
Or wean themselves to playgrounds of brighter dye  
Who were surfeited for so long on black,  
The monotonal rule of this imploded place?

One more night, now, Jared wipes the bar, and Billy plays  
Crafts dissonance into a steed he rides into the night.  
A goddess tips the chairs up: Ali, tall, straight, and black--  
Not as night, but as caramel--and drunks fall down the stairs  
With full bladders, ecstatic, profane, too blissful-limp to die,  
They sprawl before the swinging restroom doors in fly-  
specked puddles of fluorescent light.

Cast out, fatigue and Bourbon make the fainting streetlight  
Reel; feet that danced now tread unsteady. Dawn plays  
Pale footlights on a city that burns, but will not die.  
Again it rises haggard from the shroud of night.  
Again it spits, and wipes its mouth and climbs the stairs,  
Resumes its business, brusque, sober, and clad in decent  
and funereal black.

To dance, to die, is proper business for the night;  
Light's rebirth recalls us to more temperate play.  
This, too, is fit: the stairs of heaven are bright as well as black.