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 monotonous 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.