

Harold in Love

Lummox in a crooked collar,
 he lopes in like a moose on fire,
 the red fuzz of his hair aglow
 in the bar's neon signage,
 and the Necco wafers of his eyes
 are so round and blank he fails
 to notice our stares.
 Harold's in love.

He gulps. He glows. An odor
 of pomegranate trails behind him
 as he gropes his way to the girl
 in the corner, knocks over
 a chair, surrenders. She could
 wrap his whole life up in brown paper,
 send it anywhere. He wouldn't care.
 Harold's in love.

She's pale as a candle. Her purse
 embroidered with spirals and planets
 is bigger than she is. But her sharp
 little chin points toward him, her hair
 spills over his arm. When their hands
 entwine, green tendrils reach out like ivy
 toward the rest of us. Imagine
 Sully's Pub held fast in kudzu vines.

The lights are buzzing strangely.
 Marty swipes at a spot on the counter
 that's already clean, polishing,
 polishing. Harold and that girl
 lean toward each other as the rest of us
 roll our eyes, but conversations
 falter. We know we've slept our lives away
 and will you look at those two?

A Book, A Bird, A Question

Your eyes change daily, blue to green
 and back, like a pebble I once held, entirely made of sea.
 What's constant – our foolishness, its warp and weft,
 its dalliness. If you'd weave from it a blanket,
 it would become my only comfort. Instead
 you leave your book of numbers open near my chair

and whistle yourself away. A traveler lifts his hand
 to knock. Home, he says, is what you must leave
 in order to feel its currents, its unrelenting draw.
 And then he sighs, drops his scuffed leather case.

The valise opens and a bird rides out on the wind
 through a door that bangs open again and again.

The curve of its flight unfurls like sail or memory,
 circles back and hangs in the air for one

long moment as it wonders at fire in the window.
 Everything leaves us, even the sun. And dusk

is an animal with dark, moist eyes. It comes this close,
 but is never quite tamed. The whiteness of a single tree,

unreeling its bark at twilight, is it a reflection? You shrug.
 It hardly matters. The number of atoms in the universe
 does not alter. But I want to know, if you look for me
 a thousand years from now, where will I be?