

Mining

I'm under the street inside a nightclub because I followed friends, though I lost contact with them almost immediately in the dark. I traced someone's back closely from behind as I descended the stairs, shoulders going down. There's an inverted logic here, after 2AM no cover charge, and so an ocean of bodies now surges and crashes, dividing us up. On the street people were queuing in front of a series of entrances, like rope strands waiting to be braided together.

Inside the floor is sticky and littered with plastic cups, and I kick them, I trip and see ankles and sloppy shoelaces. I'll have to scrub the soles of my shoes later, they're becoming sticky and brown. My moving limbs make the same noise as the plastic objects that break but don't shatter, they scrape and split. Fragments of light from phones and cigarettes cast the sweaty faces in an orange light. I start to move my body, absent of thought; I shake my shoulders from the torso and then the waist. I stay in place, I tilt forward, I look down at my knees, grab onto them. I bend down and shake my ass. I'm in all black but I'm not glamorous, I smell stale and wet at once. The music is fast, piercing my ears because it sounds like a minor key, like a car revving up in reverse. It's all new and dark, stranger silhouettes are bouncing. A microsecond of silence opens up before the beat drops, and the people lining the wall, nuzzling one another, smoking, come into relief.

I'd paged through a book of poetry earlier by an army reservist horse trainer, turned Miami crime novelist. The poems were messy and unsentimental, they had a detached finality: maybe this is the last thing I'll write before I die. The dust jacket photo featured a comically long cigarette, unlit, extending from under the author's moustache. Light your damn cigarette. "This is my favorite one," said my friend, pointing out an ode to a yellow gingham dress that gets caught in lawn mower. I think I know what the difference between noir and pulp is: the former is apparently aware of its own creations, while the latter goes to town, drunk. Images of taut bellies and reused coffee grounds are tumbling around in my mind, in the dark as my head rises and falls underground.

Maybe I should coast to the bar and get fucked up. No that's not for me, for someone else. The music gets louder, but slows down to a pitched drone. People stream to the edges of this hull, making it precarious and heavy, some cover their ears, some shout to be heard. I stay where I am. Sparks take a dive, the crescent moon has gone dark, fire in the hole, *how might I get you, you'd love me so much more*. I bore down, kick a plastic cup, feel the vinegar cold of beer on my sleeve. This club is dim and shadowy and all the light bulbs are red. As I move around my little orbit I create chutes of motion between my body parts, ass to thigh, thigh to foot, foot drawing the floor open, making openings around the shatterproof garbage.

Midnight is a distant past time.

Sweat begins to chill my neck. Someone is shouting into my ear, his name, or asking for mine. I turn my gaze upwards, I'm suddenly aware I've let my head slump and sway. The lights flash powerfully on. The music is cut and replaced by the nonchalant beat of a synthesizer and drum machine. The light is ill and smoky atop the broken plastic cups, atop my sneakers. I try to summon and then maintain composure, I don't walk backwards because I don't want someone, surprised, to touch me. To surprise me with their touch. You said that when I dance I stretch my arms out on either side, chiseling out a space with room to breathe, that you have to ask permission to get close. Now I'm spinning around as the floor empties, kicking sticky trash from side to side, waiting for someone to join me.