

Tarantella

Siren Hand

The bartender swings the bottle over two glasses
set on the altar of Friday night.

Don't worry, you'll need this:

this week has bitten you.

Poison in, poison out, love

The communion rolls down my throat
to a choke point—
I brace for better against polished wood,
ask for another,
sweet lemon shot turning my mouth.
Shove a ten in the tip jar to a turned back,
sway to crusted velvet couch that's probably
cradled too many lovers—
set seasick glasses on the low table.

We punch this week in the face:

to your health! One for the soul!

I slam one glass, hold my second;
sweet lemon shot turns my mouth again
as I pass the liquor through a loose-lipped kiss
to someone who hasn't legally seen God.

We don't dance,

we pulse

we free-form flow

into hours when

only the Divine

would be awake,

strobing:

our shadows play on a gridded confessional wall,
stained glass chandeliers paint us holy.

Brick grit and decay fills our lungs,
The Spirit reminding us of our dusty return.
Driving bass smothers creaking floorboards
still saturated with Tampa tobacco
hand-rolled through the years

into Gulf salt and sweat, sour carpets,
stained shame of a thousand weekend escapes.

We pulse:

Hear our prayer.

Hear our prayer.

*Hear our prayer—
have mercy on me.*