

“Rum Runner”

the banquet winds down
one glass at a time:

the other servers have cleared the floor,
but I move from table to table,
making linen tarantulas
with a metal carafe—
a worthless education
wrapped around my cortex
like a soiled condom.

there's a middle-age woman onstage—
with mist blue eyes
and curly white hair,
like a family of doves
tangled in a rose bush—
who talks about Hemingway
and the Lost Generation:
electric wine glasses sparkling
with Parisian lights,
belching corpses
on a Montague promenade.

Hemingway's grimace
is impaled on a stick—
she holds it up at choice moments
and makes a husky imitation
of his voice

and the room laughs:

a laugh that's oblivious to poverty,
suffering,
and illness.

a laugh that tastes of
chocolate truffles,
mimosa glasses,
and ice cubes dripping
with vodka petals.

a laugh that fucks
like intersecting forks.

I leave the banquet hall—
the way a retired serial killer

might leave a parole hearing—
and watch the vendors pack sundresses,
makeup mirrors, waterlily rainbows,
designer gallbladders, and signposts
leading to the ocean's black tongue.

and here we are
the fresh young thousands:
rolling white turds
with aluminum bones—
setting them in lidless caskets.

the spoils of heaven
falling like pearls
on a headstone.