

MINNEAPOLIS HOTEL

By the end of my third week I join
the night crew's 2 a.m. ritual.
The three of us form a loose circle
around the hot plate. Coffee grounds
soak in the garbage. A scroll of orange
peel unwinds on the tile.

While someone on a fourth floor balcony plays
a saxophone, the security guard arranges
the cups into a fragile pyramid and watches
the janitor stare into his coffee. He
reports the discovery we'll mark the night
by. "Found a shoe in the stairwell," he says.

— Thomas Heise

Tallahassee FL

JAMES JOYCE GOES TO A BIKER BAR

whereupon the patrons
break his glasses,
scrape off that little
wormy mustache
with a buck knife,
cram his hat into his mouth,
stomp his head
and throw his ass out into the street,
where he lands in a fluttering heap
resembling nothing so much
as a gnarly bird.

I FINALLY GAVE IN AND CALLED HER TONIGHT

to see how Asshole was doing,
not that I care
not that I will lose any sleep
over his heart attack,
or the fact that he might die.
But, her feelings. I don't know.

he's a dumbass to the end,
refusing to go to the hospital,
his fat ass sinking into the bed,
the clogged heart draining
blood from his Jackie Gleason face,
unwilling to call his kids,
or his mother, or sister.

I've wished his death many times before,
and laughed at the prospect
of pissing on his grave,
but hell, contact drains that energy
and I say, "tell him,
to get his ass in the hospital"
as I'm hanging up
the phone.

RATTLETRAP

Stopped behind a '66 Buick
that has what looks like
a mother and daughter inside
arguing over some
timeless shit.
The girl opens her door
and jumps out slamming it shut.
The mother says something loud,
and the girl bends over
and leans in the window,
talking low, and shifting
her weight from foot to foot.
She has these brown legs,
the muscles making shadows
on her thighs and calves.
When the car in front of
them moves and they don't
I blow my horn.
The mother looks back at me
and the girl yells, "fuck you."
I put my hand over my heart
and pretend to swoon.
She gets back in the car
and they pull up to the speaker.
Nothing brings people together
like a common enemy.

— Daryl Rogers

Lexington KY

CHRISTMAS EVE '92

as long as it's women who give birth
their wit at parties will be sharper