

# Ugly People

by Brett Garcia Rose

The pick-up artists forage and roam the dark corners, hovering and clashing like fluorescent dragonflies. They gang-rush the well traveled paths, pulsing and bunching, crabbing sideways and bouncing off walls with phones and cigarettes extended forward, trapping suburban sluts in their grapplers and fighting over the scraps until every shred of flesh is tagged and mapped.

In the back behind the ropes, drunk, beautiful models whisper seductively in hairy grey ears, methodically rubbing dormant crotches for answers. Cocktail waitresses glide by on memorized paths, dressed in translucent black and slinging leaden trays of drinks tinkling with glow-in-the-dark ice cubes. They stumble and curse prettily, their thin arms traversed with colored lines of drainage from the swooping trays, snakes of pricey liquor tinkling down their armpits and disappearing into unwashed bras packed with soggy filler.

I hover in the bathroom, watching unzipped elephants shuffle listlessly into unisex stalls and blast out minutes later on electrified rails. The attendant hands out Dentyne for oral fixations and Q-Tips for bloody noses.

The soundtrack is mucous and despair. The last act, a dismal merger of exhaustion and desperation and hope. Ugly, used up people turning like dirty snow, terrified of facing the sunlight alone, of the hour long commuter train back to wherever, everyone looking for a few hours of dreamless sleep-sex.

Somewhere in the mass of sweat Miranda wiggles and glimmers like bait, licking her lips and dancing with half-naked gays, both of us remembering better days.

