

Aquis Submersus

by Christian Bell

O'Neill is at a party, gentle harp strokes and an ice sculpture of Hirst's tiger shark, and a blonde-haired woman asks, who are you chasing? The nights as they do spin and swirl and next there's a flame-haired woman standing next to a primal, clawed de Kooning, her drink like a split brain displayed in formaldehyde, and her voice in velvet says, who is it? The night ends on the other side of town and the woman this time has jet black hair like thick impasto strokes. Maybe she's one of the other women. Maybe they're all the same. He's lost, too much the case lately, and can't say. Drinks become *Aquis Submersus*, the women become Guerilla Girls. Who, she whispers. In his mind, the city becomes lights through running water as the night grinds the world's art into shredded colors. In a dream, he's covered in masticated bits of paint and canvas and metal shavings and it keeps raining down until he's buried and he wakes up with a yell. Val's next to him and grabs his arm. What, she says. What he doesn't say is, there is no name.

