

Strawberry Daiquiris

by Ed Higgins

A hot summer night walks into a bar and orders a drink. A frozen strawberry daiquiri with lots of crushed ice, she says. She brings with her a slight fragrant scent of roses from outside, and a dusky, green hint of the ripening cornfield across the hiway. A large neglected rose bush outside in a half whiskey barrel sits to the left of the green padded-vinyl door. Its leaves brittle, desiccated petals falling from wilted blooms, stark thorns you could make a halo for Jesus with. Sitting at the bar with her strawberry daiquiri, the hot summer night's hair is limp and disheveled from the evening's muggy air. The bartender knows her kind. She's hot but likely poor material for a pick-up. She may be good for a couple of drinks. Another strawberry daiquiri, he asks, picking up the twenty she has left on the bar. His interest is piqued and the place isn't particularly busy since the air conditioning broke down a couple of days ago. He's played hell trying to get a service technician out here to fix the damn thing with all the heat-wave breakdowns apparently going around. The hot summer night is plain vanilla but not unattractive. She has a slight bead of sweat along her upper lip and the dark hair at her temples is clearly damp. Warm night out there, he says, trying a subtle approach. Sorry about the air conditioning, been out for a couple of days now. But she doesn't care about the lost air conditioning. The hot summer night knows that even in the midst of a long stultifying summer, rain earlier in the day leaving its mugginess, the corn harvest beginning soon-- we are all nonetheless ineluctably approaching death's long winter. She smiles, letting the bartender continue hitting on her. The hot summer night is serious enough without ever yielding to it. She orders a second strawberry daiquiri.