

Woman at the Bar

by Robert James Russell

I saw a woman
at the bar tonight
sitting by herself
drinking light beer and
trying to talk to the bartender
when he walked by
but he wasn't impressed
no one was
her hair was dirty
thin and cracked
and her face
looked haunted
and her makeup
was shoddy
and there were
deepset wrinkles
that went on for days
around her mouth and eyes
she took shots of Patron
like candy
and was wearing something
like what you'd find
at the Salvation Army
but not in a trendy way
I avoided eye contact
we all did
and eventually she left
shuffled out and looked back
only once
then it was quiet
and everyone
regained their composure

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but I realized that
with her gone
the light had suddenly
gone out of the place

