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The Politics of the Dance Floor

We are walking Dublin,
optimistic—
3 freshly showered American girls
looking for the nearest dyke bar,
bats flying over our heads,
lit up cathedrals,
two hours
we walk the river.

Shangrila, Narnia, rabbit-holes and looking-glasses—
are those women holding hands?

But even straight women hold hands.

Why are all the dyke bars from New York to Dublin buried beneath bridges?

We endure, we endure,
3 not-so-freshly showered American girls.

And the bar rises out of Dublin's financial district,
bastion of glass and steel,
Emerald City—
disco lights on the second floor.

Inside— sleek décor,
Garbo, South Beach, Josephine Baker's fan dance, The Great Gatsby—
where the furniture thinks it's better than you.

But the women are like us, same haircuts,
same movements of hand and wrist,
same drama—look, Fiona didn't mean to sleep with Siobhan—
and not like us,
because they're Irish,
another history inside of them, another way of dancing to music,
another way of listening,
leaning close.

We stare at ourselves in the mirror,
no one is dancing.

We want to dance.
We want to be sociable.

But these Irish women turn their backs on us when we sit down next to them, we can tell they're doing this on purpose— we move around the room several times to test our theory— it's true— they're turning their backs on us.

Two hours, we searched Dublin—we demand to see the Wizard, we don't care if he's a disembodied head behind a curtain, give us something for the journey—we're entitled to this, we feel entitled—

Then the DJ breaks out Beyonce,
and it's every dyke for herself
on the dance floor,

except for us

we don't have to fight for a place

we are getting down

3 American girls

we own this
we own everything.

Groceries for Roethke

1.

I dream of food I can't eat:
Food that practically digests itself,
uses very little stomach acid,
comes in a pill
or better yet an IV
rooted inside the intestines,
kicking through the blood
an odorless, tasteless magma
at light speed,
every vein opens up, says: *ab.*

2.

I dream of food I can't eat
and this is the supermarket of my dreams,
but it's not a dream,
great automatic mother,
her hyper-sensitive doors
know when to swallow and close;
she keeps her linoleum distance,
her traveled, speckled tiles— green, black and white,
splattered with spaghetti sauce, blood for the bloodless,
crevices crusted with curdled milk,
slick with salmonella from a crushed carton of eggs,
covered in microscopic slivers of broken glass,
shoeprints;
endless silver mouth of shelves,
tin can smile,
bright reds, yellows,
inducing hunger in the well-fed,
she watches from the ceiling,
florescent, humming.

Caves inside of her—
soft, mealy plum skins,
anxious tomatoes,
over-eager bananas, still green,
impenetrable husk of imported avocados,
but nothing grows here;
smudge of fingerprints,
ripeness-test,
one learned of decisions.

I wander frozen foods,
realm of the unspoiled,
nothing alive, nothing dead.

Thinking:
So that's how it is,
life, a spinach leaf—
it wilts, pre-packaged, in a plastic bag,
or turns to icicles.

Believing:
My life is not a spinach leaf.

3.

I feel the urgency of carts around me,
near collisions,
substance, matter, equations—

Where are all the mathematicians?

What do they eat?

They grow numbers
or levitate.

Other people grow children, satellites,
protection
outside their own bodies—
screams of *I want, I want*
easier (or more difficult?) to refuse.

Plastic, cardboard—
cereal boxes, artichoke hearts in a jar,
bottled water,
100% pure.

I want to eat the insides of inside.

I want to be more than chemicals.

The body is chemicals.

I want these carts to collide.

4.

This is my body
rising.

No ripeness, nothing frozen
at its peak—
no hunger,
real or manufactured.

This is my body,
I eat through the ceiling.

I am full.