Hanging at the Loop Lounge

Editha Ann Wilberton*
Amstel Light and Rolling Rock, a buck fifty till one.
Everybody’s dancing.
Remember that dyke bar in Davenport, Iowa?
Women moving together.
Billy Holliday in the background.
You called every couple
“farmers in love,”
as their boots shuffled to the Blues.
Here, in this straight bar,
if I squint, blur the scene into a painting,
the whole thing slows down,
as if it were in slow motion.
The music fades and bodies glide,
each movement emphasized,
each hip rolling in.
Breathing overlaps.
Anywhere else it would be obscene.
When I unsquint
this orgiastic scene- -
Everything becomes frantic again.
Familiar.
Bodies convulse, shake, crash together.

The bathroom walls are covered with headlines
from *The Star, The Sun, The National Enquirer*
Some woman is pregnant
with Satan’s baby.
And some man lost his artificial arm
while bowling. It stuck to the ball
and they both rolled toward the pins.
He got a strike, but his wife
said it couldn’t count.
You learn different things
depending on your height.
There is a woman at the sink,
splashing water on her face.
She has combat boots and a buzz cut.
She smiles at me,
Wilberton

asks me if I’ve been dancing,
if I saw Gut Bank last Thursday
at the Dirt Club, over in Hoboken.
I try to imagine her married
to a stockbroker. She probably is.

A man and woman are kissing
on a couch at the edge of the dance floor.
Their black clothes and slow movements
blend into the red leather background.
In my mind I put the scene on canvas.
I would use big blocks of color
and large brush strokes, an arms length.
It would take up the east wall in our bedroom.
At night we could lie, legs entwined,
trying to understand the blurry forms.
I move onto the dance floor, flail
to a song about fucking
and think of you.