

FURTHER DOWN THE BAR ●

Merridawn Duckler

First you have a darling little baby boy
and the next thing you know he's in a full beard
shredding a guitar on stage. And someone else
has a sweet little baby girl and before they can turn
around, she's six feet of talent,
standing in front of everyone in a red dress.
Further down the bar the skinny
kid in a black and dirty muscle tee, sucks at a glass of beer
so hard you understand why they call it "nursing
a drink." And maybe he's wanted
or unwanted
as he rushes angrily into the August night
meant to be warm and enfolding,
but now awash in starlessness
and all that keeps him upright
on his bike (lost his license)
is the ballast of loneliness.
And if you say this will not stand you are right
as feedback roams the bodies,
trying to give everyone either a hug or a concussion,
and the girl is in flames
the lines between her and the music so slurred,
she's a lion's paw maraca.
Parents, single and together, stand
behind the video players with their luckless faces
and hold their own hands,
the feel of that baby
never leaves the skin, out in the world, crying:
what, you are closed?
I have more of this world to drink
to the bottom of this glass.