

# Vices

## Georgia Ryan

Laughter churns the last bit of air  
underground into something hot and thick  
in throats and bellies.

Lights hide behind buzzing strangers  
on their last dim legs.

Glasses sweat in heat, spilling  
excess with no regard  
from the hands that hold them.

They slither round each other, rapping on  
shoulders—*wanna dance? —come  
on sweetheart—let me take you home*—as if  
their words are a sign of peace.

As they stumble through lines,  
tangled in noisy communion,  
they shake each other's hands and drink  
from each other's cups.

Bodies, begging like Jesus  
in the garden that this next might pass,  
whine and will their masters to rest  
but mouths like hands have no regard  
for fullness.

I can remember  
those sinners turned saints  
in the churches made from bathroom  
stalls. Fires bubbling over,  
spilling into their porcelain fonts,  
foreheads christened with sweat.

Look at her, on her knees for false idols  
promising the thing they wish to take.  
How naïve she must be to believe

in this folie à deux. Shepherded by an empty promise  
of flowing gold or settled hunger, she swore  
she was fulfilled.

I held her hair  
and prayed.