

Freezer Theater. 1981

On Cass, I think. Maybe 2nd
beside a boarded-up liquor store.
Underage us stoned half-blind, nuzzling
each a bottle of fizzy alcoholic something
from brown bags clutched to our chests.

We're suburban kids gone down to Detroit--*The City*
we call it, like it's the only one that counts. Come to test
our spit and bluster among real punk rockers
squashed into this out-of-commission meat freezer,
to punch life-sized holes

in the smoke—Marlboro and Kool and enough ganja
to skunk the space to high heaven. I bum one clove Djarum
after the next from be-leathered strangers, suck
that sweet burn deep. Never mind
the fishnets carving checker boards into my thighs,

pulling tight through the crotch as I hunker
on the floor with a nameless boy—but this comes
later, long after Larissa completes her magnificent croak
into the microphone, after the rest of L-7
has abandoned their guitars to party in the alley.

For the moment there's just this—the band raging
at the audience. Larissa yowling along, her voice
like static, cacophonous and alien. Her Catholic
schoolgirl skirt shortened to handkerchief
so everyone sees her skinny ass swathed in pink.

Larissa of the broomstick legs and crabapple knees,
Larissa resplendent, roaring on speed,
Arm flinging over arm, her dance half pogo, half stomp
kick, keeping the double-time beat better
than the drummer. Angel

she is, dry as winter beneath flickering
stage lights. Rice paper insect furious in her frenzy
while I'm damp across my whole skin, my chest molten,
aching with something like longing,
something breathless. Because I'm smashed now

between thumping gnashing Mohawked boys.
A belt buckle digs into my back—it's sure to leave
a mark—someone's hip hard against mine, a palm
cupping my ass swathed in who the hell remembers
what color at this point? I don't take any of it

personally, because the band's nearing the climax
of *Clear Vision*, Larissa still scoring her silhouette
into the electric air, her buzz crescendoing
with the last crush-notes when she topples
backwards, all of us so close that everyone feels her

hit, feels the bob of her against our upraised palms
until she disappears towards the back
where I spend the rest of the night thirsty, on my knees
searching for her shadow across this strange geography
of crumpled flyers and ashes trampled underfoot.

The small lakes of silence.