**Irish Bar**

Kathy Bailey

A man with a long beard, and short top hair, is smiling at you.

He is from Santa Cruz, and his mother just died. You are

Touching his leg, and wondering if this is the next man you will marry.

He starts to play the piano. It is a piano that is out of tune

And echoes its brokenness into your bones.

He likes the blues, and he lets you rub his face, as he talks

About his epilepsy, as if it is his voice. It is a voice that is deep and bluesy,

A voice that you listen to while

Drinking scotch and hoping not to fall. You stare at his fuzzy face,

And you wonder if you should kiss him—If he should be the next man,

In the string of men,

That will make you feel whole on the inside.

He is not. He kisses you, and you know, that he is not.

Yet, you kiss his voice anyway. You kiss in the front seat of a car,

And in front of a juke box, and in front of a lonely

Bartender as she washes dishes, and pretends you are not there.

The man places his hand around your neck,

And you hope he squeezes life into you while slowly squeezing it out.

You kiss him while he runs his other hand up the back of your

Skull, through your web of hair, and into your mind.

He is looking for something to pull out of you. He is looking to pull out your thoughts.

And you realize that this is fantastical, this dream.

It is another world. This tugging. His tugging you is pulling you into him further.

You are falling. It is you falling into wonder. It is you drunk, in a car—

You, looking for rabbits and wands, waiting for hearts.

You stop him and say, I am looking for red hearts.

*I am looking for hearts*. Give it to me. Give me your heart, now.