**Among the Furies**

Rupert Fike

 *They who take vengeance on men whosoever hath sworn a false oath —The Iliad*

If you’re early for your pizza pick-up,

and there’s only one seat at the bar,

you might find yourself sitting next to

three got-up women trashing their exes

like they don’t care who hears.

Like they don’t care period.

And though you wish to be invisible

you're not, you're left to stare at the TVs,

their various male-centric contests,

while the women continue to loud-voice failings

you know you share with the whole of men.

You. The man at a bar. Now with a beer.

You hear, "He'd find any excuse to go drink.

Even pick up a pizza." This you try to ignore.

You hear, "And he'd always talk up the waitress."

This reminds you to talk up the waitress, to check

on your pizza because now you'd like to leave.

"Almost done, sweetheart,” she says. *Sweetheart -*

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the endearment you did not solicit, hanging.

You imagine their eye-rolls but dare not look.

No matter, they're on to the next thing, quizzing

each other on humankind's oldest transgression,

the one Hera deemed worthy of her worst vengeance.

"Sam?" You hear. "He’d fuck anything that moved.”

This comes with a slug of pale ale halfway

through esophagus-land so it produces a noise

perhaps sounding like the start of a comment

regarding men and their ways, the Furies turning

as one to entertain your hard-won perspective,

but the Fates, blessedly, are intervening,

your pizza box is being presented, opened.

And even though there's a missing topping

you say, "Perfect," push forward a twenty,

the big tip not so much for the *Sweetheart,*

but so you can just slide off the stool, escape

out into the winter night, its inverted bowl

of sidereal stars always with season tickets,

nose-bleed seats in that same wine-dark sky

under which so little ever seems to change.