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Below Average Jack

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Cover Page Footnote

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STEPHEN C. MCINTYRE

BELOW AVERAGE JACK

An empty bottle lies
tipped –
clear gin spills on the coat of the bitch who left the barstool beside me
and her tongue in my mouth – cigarettes and wine.
She's a beauty or I'm too drunk
and can't remember her name –
so I call her baby.
Blue eyes, brown hair –
a disposition that could get me in trouble.
I'm thinking backwards – straight to the bedroom.
Another instance of being myself.
another bottle
another baptism
another cheap fuck –
bending thoughts away from
the cold streets.
The bartender leans over and tells me stories about the woman –
she's bad news,
he says.
Beat it while you can.
But it's too late for the back door –
she emerges from shadows –
pool tables –
drunks in booths who barely move their eyes as she passes.
Maybe we had another drink –
maybe my hand went up her skirt –
finding nothing –
no silk or lace –
no happy ending tonight.
No number to call back,
no warm embrace to replace the bottle,
no words of comfort like –
I love you,
I miss you when you're gone,
just harder,
faster,
until we finish.
She's the same as the rest –
beautiful,
easy,
ugly before and after –
but those few moments when the liquid
drains reality and I still
haven't cleaned these sheets.