

How to cheat death in a nightclub bathroom

By Jordan Hamel

Stumble past the bouncer, find the door marked *royalty*,
find an empty throne, straddle the toilet backwards
like a mechanical bull, draw a confused lipstick face
on the cistern, study the graffiti on gloss tiles,
fuck cops, punch nazis, call Charlie for a good time xoxo,
consider calling, watch the dividers sway like palm trees
in a hurricane, hear your stall neighbour crying or vomiting
or saying *I love you*, think about how you need to do all three,
think about that Kim Addonizio poem about a stall neighbour crying,
how you always imagined yourself the speaker, never the subject,
spot the gum stuck misshapen to the mirror, like a lost seahorse, watch
the porcelain grin yellow, drain clogging like a popular gloryhole, blow
the runoff out your nose, find that breath mint you were saving,
drown yourself in eyedrops, wait for your mates, most-glamorous
search party of tight fabrics, milk-carton angels under strip lighting,
take selfies with them, ask them if they've ever considered an orgy,
tell them you're joking, tell them they are your new home,
drag yourself to your old home, wait a week, remind yourself
dopamine can exist in abundance in one part of the brain
and be scarce in another, think about the scientists who trained
cocaine-addicted rats to associate happiness with a lever,
which, releases loud noises and pulsing lights, start again,
drink more water, less gin, no shots, some shots, curse
the shoddy movement sensor refusing your hand, tongue
the faucet like an asshole, savour the drip, look for last week's
breath mint, lipstick, eyedrops, stall-neighbour, friends, everything
a thing disappeared, think about last week, no, this is the last week,
remember next week, walk out into the snow, thank the bouncer
for no reason, look up at the moonless sky, see satellites harvesting
your stupor, say *I love you*, wait for joy to come. Keep waiting.