

A Year Sober

They tempt you, even now, those college-town pretties,
sitting across the bus aisle in short skirts,
and some with no panties, multiplied by their reflections
in the window, like bottles lining a mirrored bar.
Once you took the bait, moved her to a club
and watched her pour down sticky cocktails
while you picked at the napkin beneath the glass.
Back at her apartment, she tried to open a bottle of wine
while you unhooked her bra and let it slip down her arms
and swing from her elbows. You left when she passed out,
the lace cups still hammocked across her stomach.

And there are other mementos of anniversary:
the occasional urgency of exit,
the tattooed man at the pool hall urinal
finally conceding that he has nothing to offer you.
Sympathy for a brassy, coin-shaped moon.
There is so much to turn away from
no wonder you still question what it all has to do with you,
the dark regularity of Mass,
the wet cigarette you try to light in the rain.