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Untitled

Eric Colbath

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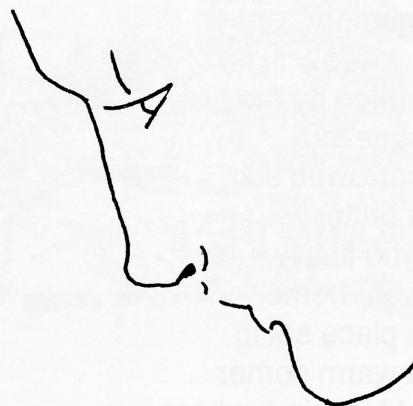
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Eric Colbath

drunken piano staggers
through the dirty red
lounge, and collapses.
a drink disappears
like the rest of the
room in a
long stare at
the row of dying
bottles behind
the bar.
the tender slips
into the back
with the rattling
cash drawer,
and the player
shoulders his
coat, pockets
his tips, and
fades into
the shadow of
the door.
his ears ring
in harmony with
the neon signs
hum, and the
ticking of the
whiskey clock.
alone, he sinks
in the warmth
of this faded
dive, thirsting
for one
more swallow,
as everything
goes abstract.
stepping out
into the spinning
stars, his
breath rises
white in the
cool glow of the
empty gravel-lots'



overhead lamp.
fumbles for the
keys of a car
that is not there,
and turns, buttoning
up his thin jacket.
he heads toward
the river, down
a path that leads
to a bridge. in the
early pre-dawn
hours, the rhythm
of a diesel barge motor
whispers, and he settles
down. never comfortable
in a home he never had,
he drifts, thinking only
of the past; no present,
no future. he closes his
eyes under the silent
steel spans, and
brings up a long
satisfying grin.
frozen in time,
the grin was still
there when he
was found a
week later. it was
the typically cold
weather, and the
alcohol that saved
the expression
of his fondest
memory.
he was
buried by the
state in a
borrowed suit,
a drifter
who finally
went home.
a place set in
a warm corner
of his mind, where
he visited in smiling silence.

