

Bar tramps

there are the big
buck queers
that hang around
the jukebox
with peckers
like ball-peen
hammers

and the regulars
that sit along the bar
like ravens on a
telephone wire

then there
are the Jews in the corner
playing cards
discussing the delivery
of diamonds
to the jewelry store
next door

and finally
there are the bar tramps
that have missing teeth
and gums like spoiled
apple cores
you can smell
when they open
their mouths

these are not the kind
of women you should
hold the rest of the gender
next to

they are a gender of
great compassion

but you wouldn't know it
from these woman

their throats are scabbed over
from too much whiskey
and cigarette smoke

crow's feet
on their eyes
from wincing
at too many
ugly sights

laugh lines
around their mouths
from one million
phony jokes

I look at them
and try to imagine
who their fathers were

probably drunks
and winos

most all of them dead,
I'm sure

and I feel a great sorrow
for them,
the women

for no matter who
you talk to
bars are not
lovely places

a lot of literature
likes to glamorize
the bar crowd

but after experiencing
it first hand

playing the role of
the writer who drinks

I've realized
they are places
that contain the sadness of the world

because
to go is to
escape
somewhere
else

and there
is always
a sad truth
in that.