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Mnemonics

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Mnemonics

She is smiling, glint-toothed, and her breath
is sour with the taste of our last drink
that someone calls *The Water of the Lethe*,
which we embrace. Engulf. We hope to sink.
The sweat thickens walls, a heavy condensation
of air, smoke-slicked with lust and spilt malt's fumes
along her hips, my hands, and condemnation
in the base notes of hours-applied perfume,
salted and bittered, on my tongue. Beside the door,
I see you, black-lit, straight-mouthed, shining eyes
fluoresced and flicking from me to the floor
as something in me balks, rebels, denies—
a faltered word, remembering, comes to lips
but, like my hands, be-Lethed, falls to her hips.

Matthew Miller, 2010