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The Holy Grail...

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Anne Sexton

how will I know it's you
 if you fail to light a cigarette
 between sneer and cackle,
 a poet's pause, and your heels on the wood?
 how will you alert the others,
 the prick of a spindle
 or a shadowed wall, a postcard
 from Boston and a vacant couch?

oh god, anne, your color is fading
 why did you not fight them off,
 see them as tumor and tooth
 and time for drink, tickets
 yellowed in their hands?
 they jaded you like words
 meaning nothing to you
 anne, all perfume and performance.

how did you know
 sauntering off stage at the end
 to skip the curtsy, clapping hands
 strangling you—no more, no more
 madness on the critic's couch.
 you were that kind: too lanky
 and long for proneness; for
 posterity, then, a kiss to the palm.

-Allison Lemieux '96

The Holy Grail Ain't Nothin' But a Battered Tin Cup

This morning my beard became an animal that
 tore into my chin. I had to kill it with
 A razor dipped in an ointment of honey and
 bile.

A foggy-eyed drunk asks me, "Have you seen my
 mind, I seemed to have lost it." He searches
 the ground on hands and knees.

The street lamps drone in An insect language.
 The sky divides like a cell and lightning id
 silver on the backs of my hands.

When I die, Mozart's "Requiem" will stroke
 my ears with raven wings and thunderheads.
 The skull will rocket from my head into a
 bleeding nova.

-Ed Shim '95