

1991

## Slumming

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### Recommended Citation

Engesser, Stewart (1991) "Slumming," *Exile*: Vol. 37 : No. 2 , Article 9.  
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.denison.edu/exile/vol37/iss2/9>

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## Slumming

The table was too small  
to hold the empties  
and the place was filled with  
twenty-year-olds in flannel shirts  
waiting for something cool to happen,  
it was 9:30 on a Thursday night  
and under the blue light of  
the neon sign outside  
a man with his spine ripped out and  
no shoes  
slept on the sidewalk in  
the razor wind of ninth street.  
Somebody in a hunting jacket  
with a blond vestal virgin on his arm  
stepped over him and  
swung open the door;  
he imagined everyone turning  
to look at him  
as he walked up to the bar and  
ordered two beers, glancing  
left and right  
slowly  
like a Bogart B-movie private detective,  
he thought he looked real damn smooth  
and under the table John's knees  
rubbed against Sharon's and I  
called for another round  
as the jukebox seemed to scream.

*Stewart Engesser*