

Zoe Reay-Ellers

Age: 16, Grade: 11

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Category: Poetry

Flocking Patterns

We danced like swans
when we were younger: feathers
and rum dripping down our thighs,
spines curving towards flickering
lights. We were the shadows
of every skeezy bar from here
to nowhere, all moonlight and
bootleg: sirens commanding
every man that so-much-as-glanced
at us to drown
in the confines of their pocket
change. Heels higher
than steeples, dresses
shorter than tempers (which
we didn't have much of, I can
tell you that), nights
always half-gone the second
we came up for air, lungs filling
with smoke
and oxygen snatched
off the tongues of men
we'd only see past twelve;
we were their night
shift, but we didn't mind.