

When the Music Stops

TONY LEUZZI

The sequined queen of sass says *not on your life*
to the comb over from Hub Lange Heat and Gas.
Her voice is brutal, like a light turned up
at closing time. It's closing time, and the sweet
ache of Al Green plays upon the faces
of those shuffling out. They have just their dreams
to grip them in the hinge of armless sleep.
And I, a thin man bent before his double,
see my face float in a still pool of scotch.
Here's to this glass, lipped by countless losers!
Time to go, the barmaid sings. I grunt and swig.
It could be worse. I could be Al, trapped
in a hulking juke, stopped, like life, mid-sentence.