

## What I'm Looking For

The cypresses on the limestone ramparts  
of Ellington Parkway are silent sentries  
at roadside memorials as I drive by, my headlights strafing  
makeshift crosses, tattered garlands—

& it's late, and later, & the later it gets  
the more I need Coltrane & Hartman  
caressing Strayhorn—*Then you came along*  
*with your siren song, to tempt me to madness—*

& now around midnight the asphalt's wet, & wetter,  
floodlit signs from the all-night joints  
on Dickerson Road reflected in flooded gutters,  
rippling like ribbons in the wind,

Club Mirage, Private Dancer, the Congress Inn,  
& the Love Doctor, her neon palm  
blinking and beckoning in the window—*I thought for a while*  
*that your poignant smile*

*was tinged with a sadness of a great love for me—*  
*ah, yes, I was wrong . . . again . . .* and the women & men  
standing under streetlamps in pools of light  
turning their eyes as I pass in my car,

straining to see what I'm looking for—  
but what I'm looking for is down this street  
I can't see the end of, in a smoky bar  
where you still sit, smiling back.