

Unfinished Poem

go-go boys coated in black light glitter *shuttered* the Hothead Paisan
lookalike dyke moshing to pop music *shuttered* the aging bait who wore
the same spandex shorts for a decade *shuttered* the inflatable sex doll
that always and inexplicably ended up on the dance floor *shuttered*
ex sex in the cold storage *shuttered* Manic Panic tinged neck sweat
shuttered a queen named Shelly Frankenstein *shuttered* everyone
who knew the moves to Michael Jackson's "Thriller" on Halloween
shuttered snapping hand fans *shuttered* electric tape x nipple covers
shuttered The Castle *shuttered* Shaggy Horse *shuttered* the fae who made
you eat his candy necklace *shuttered* "Closer" by Nine Inch Nails *shuttered*
"Spin Spin Sugar" by Sneaker Pimps *shuttered* looping *Liquid Sky* projected
on the wall *shuttered* looping *Paris Is Burning* *shuttered* Misty's Cabaret
shuttered Tino's Turkish Baths *shuttered* Pretty Faces *shuttered* Manhole
shuttered the disco ball *shuttered* rainbow ballon drop *shuttered* bubble machine
shuttered the green glass billiard lamp above the pool table *shuttered* the old
cis leather dyke and her transfemme wife who ran the place *shuttered* one burnt-
out tile on the illuminated dance floor *shuttered* Casablanca *shuttered*
The Beaver *shuttered* The Bull Pen *shuttered* Candlelight Room *shuttered*
Art & Pep's *shuttered* Madonna impersonators *shuttered* free condoms
shuttered STI testing site stickers on the washroom mirror *shuttered* "I am
lonely" written in black Sharpie on the stall wall *shuttered* LGBTQ2S+ crisis
line flyers spread around the tallboy tables *shuttered* *Hustler White* theme nights
shuttered the rough and dapper king who ran the place *shuttered* a windowless
basement with a smoke machine *shuttered* the bartender's silver skull ring
with a missing ruby glass eye *shuttered* the karaoke microphone's dented grill
shuttered naked vampires at the Hookers Ball *shuttered* a drink special called Ass
Juice *shuttered* all the Dollys on country night *shuttered* tipping Beyoncé's
shuttered the bartender's leather Kangol hat *shuttered* the bartender's

tarot card tattoos, the Empress, the Hermit and the Tower *shuttered*
“Gooba Gabba Gooba Gobble” scratched into the back door *shuttered*
the rainbow choir singing “That’s What Friends Are For” *shuttered*
kissing booth fundraisers *shuttered* the anarcha-queer collective that ran
the place *shuttered* service bottom auctions *shuttered* cruising the smoke pit
in the alley *shuttered* the unsmoked cigarette tucked behind the bartender’s
left ear *shuttered* gold link chains and diamond studs *shuttered* Drag Bingo
every Sunday *shuttered* Imperial Court pageantry *shuttered* busboys
in jockstraps *shuttered* pass the hat to fix the smashed window *shuttered*
daddies who walked baby dykes to the bus stop at 3 a.m. *shuttered* the svelte
peddler who swept through at last call to sell dollar-a-stem roses *shuttered*
everyone who knew the words to “Auld Lang Syne” on New Year’s Eve
shuttered pink marabou feathers in beer puddles *shuttered* girls
who made you promise to text when you got home *shuttered*
lost wigs *shuttered* phone numbers written in matchbooks
shuttered lipstick prints *shuttered* the slow dances
when we held each other after the music stopped

I wanted to write about the shuttering
of queer bodies or maybe something about how our doors
remain open as a collective metaphor, but really,
I have no idea how this poem ends.