

A Man Walks into a Bar

How do they always know we'll be
in the bar?

But—

Some of us never go to the bar anymore.
We are in our sweatpants watching
Transparent and wondering why
just because they're dating does Eileen Myles
have to be in every goddamned thing—Jill,
there ARE other butches.

These we's might have a cat in our lap—
Okay, okay—two cats.

We might be texting the poop emoji
to our wife,
who might send back the grumpy squinty emoji

But—?

we might have just learned how to replace complex
emotional responses in the form of small yellow
face balls, which might be sort of a relief in that it has
irrevocably changed the nature of lesbian
processing, as I can communicate many things
to my spouse through tiny cute representations of feelings
that spare me (us) having to spend a lot of time parsing
the meaning behind the meaning behind the feeling.
It's cute! It's poop! See the eyes? They're so wide!
I can never stay angry when a smiling poop is involved—
That's just silly. Of course I'm not mad. Thanks, emojis—
(I don't miss all the talking.)

But—

at any rate, the grumpy squinty emoji signifies that
the wife in question does NOT like my favorite poop friend—

And why?

It's too jaunty!

That's right, that's what she said (texted).

It's too jaunty!

What have I done? Ten years and I'm just being
made aware of this deal-breaker now.
Thanks, emojis, for finally bringing our true issues to light.
Then again, I am married to a woman who uses the word jaunty
unselfconsciously so maybe everything will be all right.

But—

Not at the bar.

On the couch.

Sometimes grading papers, writing poems,
arguing about budgets or whether to make the cat food
from scratch or buy it,

taking turns on the “good chair,”
arguing about which goddamned drawer
the citrus reamer really goes in—(I’m right),

But—
What would happen if I went out?
Would they find me?
Would they find us we’s if we put on
Our red lipstick
Our pomade
And short skirts
And high heels
And button-downs
And bow-ties
And high butched
And high femmed
And made out in the club
Like we did ten years ago
Like when we met
Like when we used to fuck everywhere—
parks and bathrooms and kitchen tables—
And took all the chances there were to take.
And were never afraid.
And—
I don’t wanna know
So I don’t go.

But—
Still they find us.
Some of us-es.
The ones we don’t want to lose,
the alive ones with their
fearlessness

and their glitter sweat.
And their gaudy mouths.
And their hollow legs for cosmos.
And their refusal to go home
And hide.
That’s who they find.