

DES PETERSEN

NIGHT AT THE SUVA HOTEL

I'm sorry sir, there's no apple pie.
Would you like your coffee now?" Oh hell;
the air is stuffed with the smell of stale ashtrays.
Last night's beer stains the red floral carpet like gossip.
Talk is full of the day's bargains at the tourists' table
across the room. Tomorrow's a new day.

So I fold the red paper napkin
on the side of my gravied plate, happen
to catch the waitress's eye, sign the crested
account with her broken ballpoint, and go up
to my room to sleep in a bed
somebody else's hair still decorates.

Outside, across the car-park, crude
under the tungsten streetlights, young toughs
and their girls hang about the disco. I
decide to leave the night to them and settle back;
hear the last drunks stumbling out of the lobby,
the young black dancers coming out everywhere
from the shadows, free in this huge September night.