

From *The Mourning After the Night Before* by Chloe Whitehorn

Pippa: A beat, a pulse, my veins vibrating with the bass. Seeping into my soul through the soles of my feet. The rhythm bouncing me forward, toward the bar. Eyes scanning the crowd as I gaze from afar. Seeking, I'm a predator disguised as prey. Gazelle in a tight dress, legs long and bare, top down to there, they're intended to stare. It's only fair. Their eyes linger caressing each curve, feeding my need for attention, spandex blessed invention. My self-esteem boosted with the wink of an eye, the lick of a lip. A smoldering look tossed like bread crumbs leading them closer. The flock circling around me, begging for whispers of hope with the toss of my hair, a shoulder pushed back, chest thrust up defying gravity as we float up toward the heavens. The sun hidden under the waves, replaced by a fire, hormones ablaze. Flicks of light beckoning me too close where danger licks at my skin as I pass by wandering hands. Waves of heat pushing me back into the darkness where the shadows consume your inhibitions. Smoke masking my insecurities. Bottles glowing with varying shades of molten confidence, gleaming vials, vile liquids made delicious with sweet syrups and saucy names, taunting and tempting you, nectar of the heavens, liquid to float you up with the certainty you are a god. Buoyancy in a glass. Boys antsy en mass, eager to act out their Herculean illusions. Day dreams, scandalous scenes, fusions of bodies, slick sweat and sweet scents. Possibilities are endless, until they approach. Spaghetti western high noon leaving a trail of rejection across the scene. It's too early to settle for anything less than a prince. Wait, wait until the siren sings last call and the options get small. Until the illusion of perfection has withered, drenched in perspiration and degradation, and a filter of loneliness prevails.