

All I needed was a push

poem · March 9, 2006

A sprawling European resort in the South of France, perhaps the Riviera. Befriending members of the mafia who are eating at an outdoor cafe. Jovial, fat, Italian men. Later, with some people on a couch—few familiar faces. Distant, past friendships or maybe not. Perhaps Lance, from Decline of the West. A stripper offers to dance. I decline and hold out my hand to keep her away as she is approaching me. She stumbles forward and vomits into my lap. Shot glasses adorn her breasts. The distant friends laugh. Lance laughs. I think of punching them in their faces, but decide to wait. After all, I have friends in the mafia. The bathroom is uni-sex and the toilet seats are all broken or missing. The stripper pulls back a curtain and steps into a shower there. For some reason, I believe there is a secret passageway inside the shower stall. I follow - and sure enough, the stripper is not there, and the faucet doubles as a door handle. I turn it, and a blast of water hits my face. Someone is behind me. "Go in, if you're going," she says, as the jets of water soak us. I don't know what to do, and my face must have said so. Then I feel her hand, gently pushing me through the door to somewhere. I stumble out of the doorway to the ground beyond, wet with wondering, in a dark place, echoes of voices within.