h. prescott
'74

EXILES

2 The Jew

Bartender: pink just under the ears from the
  drone of the disease-free;
spartan, you are not interested. You pretend
  to listen.
Your gloved neck opens like a newly discovered pit
to those you see before you, in sawdust,

awake and coming through the door.
Your feet alone remain on the floor meant for
  coffins
or the walls' deepening shadows before dawn.
They return, you can see,

for glass after glass of pity
hard-sworn, wrested from the rich,
the sleep owners
cracked nails blunt as love.

Adored spoons, daily washed for these frantic
  members,
are soaked in green soaped sponges brown with
  grease.
Snake lipped the drinkers speak to you
of the fat hen you have slaughtered.

They have held that flesh as their own, and now
rotting through their hair
harsh glints of darkness, laughter
grizzley as the bloody nests of abandoned birds.