

Katrina

By

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We hunch in the darkness over a grand piano in the back room of the oldest pub in New Orleans, where pirate Jean Lafitte once held court, or so they say. It is dark beyond dark, like we cannot see to see, like we are drinking in Grendel’s basement or Plato’s cave. The piano is dotted with Pizza-Inn type candles, covered in red fishnet stocking like the thick legs of Duval Street whores. It is long before Katrina has come to dance in the Big Easy, and we are not waiting for her. We are not waiting for that whore. *What have we to do with the levees?*, the fictional character Alcee said before taking his lover in the rain-drenched Acadian dreamland. We have nothing to do with the levees, but instead sit unknowingly waiting, drinking and listening to the piano, because listening is all you can do in this darkness. There is no seeing. We are the last piano bar in the world, just before the final candlelight on God’s nightstand is extinguished and the universe ceases to exist, but we smile and laugh like all drinkers on such occasions, because we always know the light will soon be extinguished anyway. And the water will come, in torrents and walls, to break down the levees and flood the streets, not cleansing or washing away, just absorbing, encircling and suffocating like a jealous lover reclaiming what was once hers.