

**K. HENDERSON**

**The Host**

The brochure tries to brag, “Best service in the state,  
best cocktails on the block.” In the hotel restaurant  
sleek pencil dresses hover just above their guests, bend  
over the waste, clear it away. Further above, rooms nest  
men and women sheathed by wealth, siphoned excess,  
and enough time to regret their purchase in my life.  
Each night I smile, demurely lead my guests  
the way they like, pour the drinks they pay me to  
forget. We are set pieces in a script that won’t unwrite  
itself. Without me, who would play this permeable role,  
but anyone? I serve to live. Behind my every line, a toll.