

Drinking With Dad

You want me to drink Tequila with you
in the living room beside the built-in wet bar.
You want to listen to music, and it's 1978
so we put on the O-Jays or maybe the Spinners.

And we drink. I drink well by this time,
the middle of my fifteenth year,
and you are proud as I keep talking,
keep my cool.

You challenge me
to a thigh test—who can stand longest
with butt against the wall, legs perpendicular,
sitting in an invisible chair?
I am wearing girl khakis—I remember
the shape of my legs underneath, drunken muscles
holding tight. You wear Levis.
Drink still in hand, I win as you slide to the floor.
“You’re gonna be all right, urchin.”

We go out to the balcony, look down
at the river below. You light a cigar,
and I say, “yuck.” You say, “cigars are good,
you’ll have to get used to this smell from men.”
I think of smoking pot, its sweet smell
inside a stoned boy’s mouth when I kiss him.
And I want, more than anything, to know that my life
is sweeter than yours and will grow
sweeter still.

—*Faulkner Fox*