

Alison Pelegrin

## ODE TO BOOZE

At least  
you give me things  
to write about.  
I am the tooth fairy,  
and I am drunk,  
my lawn chair aimed  
in the wrong direction  
on the night  
of the red eclipse.  
At sixteen, missing you,  
I stole or talked up guys  
in painter's clothes  
outside the liquor store.  
They'd have bought  
anything; I asked for  
Mad Dog 20/20.  
Grape. It's you  
and me, booze.  
Vino, vodka breath,  
little beers for when I fish,  
backwash in the bottle  
and we two awake  
watching reruns  
of *Three's Company*.  
O how I love  
to revisit the décor  
of my childhood.  
Macramé! and mirrors!  
I'm past the age  
of my father  
when he dried out  
for good, what they call  
a "high bottom." All  
it took was handcuffs  
and a scuffle  
at the gas station.  
One night in jail  
and voilà—he's walking



the walk. Serenity this  
serenity that. Disloyal  
me shrugs it off.  
My heart's needle  
pulls south. Misfits  
I have known—  
addicts, and broads,  
roughneck brothers  
hogging the floor  
in AA meetings,  
and me a re-tread  
before I was twenty.  
I never understood  
their two weeks  
on two off until I was  
sober seven years,  
with the tattoos  
to prove it. No  
troubles, no reason  
but money in my pocket,  
and (oh no  
here we go  
again), I let  
the counter tick  
back to zero.

