

That's Not the Way it Feels
Parker Menzimer

You walk into a bar and take a stool. To your left, a man wearing a pizza-print button-down and a Bernie Sanders hat converses with his bespectacled confidant. The song “One Less Set of Footsteps” by Jim Croce rambles from a jukebox. Hard sunlight invades the room via small windows, which are ajar, as the weather is warm. Pizza-print raises his voice. Spectacles nods vigorously. You reach for your phone, but your phone is gone. You panic. You’re in bed, remembering a dream about a bar. You walked into the bar. Or were you seated at the bar from the jump? There was a man in a Bernie Sanders hat. To his right, another man, unusually tall and dressed in black. He had an ecumenical air, and wore about his face a sickly pallor. The bartender was polishing glasses. You were joined by a raven-haired woman; the two of you attempted to get the bartender’s attention. It was night. Streetlight partly illuminated the goings-on; it invaded the room via small windows, which were ajar, as the weather was warm. Bernie hat and his ghoulish friend were discussing something... a good deal on a two-bedroom apartment in Brooklyn? It was a bad dream, anyhow. It was a nightmare.

You enter the kitchen and fix yourself a bowl of granola. Your roommate, alerted to your presence by the percussive clamor of the cereal box, emerges from his bedroom. I had a weird dream, you tell him. I was in a bar. I was with this scary guy. Our friend was wearing a Bernie hat. Your roommate begins combing the contents of the refrigerator. It was a bar in Brooklyn, you tell him, but also a bar in Albany — Your home town, your roommate interjects, for the edification of you, the reader. I was with a woman, you continue. She had curly, black hair. And the song “Operator [That’s Not the Way it Feels]” by Jim Croce was playing — A song that you associate with a raven-haired woman, your roommate offers, for the edification of you, the reader. But not the woman who joined you at the bar, he concludes; a second raven-haired woman, about whom the author is now reminiscing. Your roommate pours himself a glass of kefir and settles next to the the stove, phone in hand. The windows are ajar, as the weather is warm.