

## The Bar

Tom Raath's the red-haired bloke lurching off for a pee.  
Craft welder. Makes wrought-iron burglar-bars and things.  
His leather gloves, his visored black helmet's on the bar.

Muscleman over there's his cousin. Sells tractors and pumps.  
His leg's in plaster. Got hammered in a scrum on Saturday.  
Typical Drikus, head back, glass up, braying with laughter.

Chappie Swart's the bald bloke swaying up to the dart-board.  
Trains horses. The mermaid on his forearm's from navy days.  
There's a Fender guitar, a red-spangled tux in his cupboard.

Barry Riekert chalking up the score's his biggest mate.  
Shift-boss at the abattoir. Trains Dobermans with the missus.  
That's him, wiping his snout, giving the barmaid a stare.

Down-down Lurie, belching out the gents, owns the place.  
One hell of a chuckling, bustling, cursing bliksem that one.  
Lonely old gasbag, scooping his belly back into his shorts.

Outside, the rain's left puddles on the tar of the car-park.  
Wetly the hotel's neon glistens its yellow on the bonnets.  
A cat ghosts by the matt-black bumper of a tow-away truck.

Sudden in the silence, a raw burst of laughter from the bar.  
*Shoo!* It bursts up like a rocket's showering tail of light.  
Then silence again. The dark tall immensity of a rural sky.