San Antonio Review

Reunion

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"United We Stand," June 2019, Ferris, Texas, Nikon, Michelle Brooks

The night we decided
to meet, no matter what,
on Winter solstice, 2018
Artie got so wasted
he couldn't figure out
how to get out of the stall
in Shadows — our local bar
and tiny Alice,
lithe as a gymnast
had to climb over and free him.

We carried him home
to a fourth-floor walk-up
on Calder Alley.
I kept dropping his right leg
which left glyphs
In the fresh snow
to be interpreted
by those who'd later pass.

Those were glorious days,
the future — left unsaid —
was on everyone's lips
and seemed somehow undimmed

when Ray's F-4 Phantom
belly flopped into the South China Sea
and Barbara lost her life
to a mole gone rogue.

I never made much of my future —
never left this College Town —
worked every odd job
you might imagine.
How I loved the calls and cards
from New York, LA,
Paris, Singapore —
mates, careers and kids
though they dwindled through the years
to the occasional surprise.

How I longed for our reunion
though I should have been forewarned
when Shadows closed last year.
I stood beside the raw construction site
that frigid solstice night
stamping my feet
and blowing on my aching hands
as the whole gang arrived
just before midnight —
youthful, apple-cheeked and
full of the future.

Steve Deutsch lives in State College, Penn. His recent publications have or will appear in a variety of outlets, including Mojave River Review, The Broadkill Review and Linden Avenue Literary Journal. His chapbook, Perhaps You Can, was published in 2019 by Kelsay Press.

Michelle Brooks' work has been published or is forthcoming in Threepenny Review, Alaska Quarterly Review, Iowa Review, Hayden's Ferry Review, Natural Bridge and elsewhere. Her poetry collection, Make Yourself Small, was published by Backwaters Press, and her novella, Dead Girl, Live Boy, was published by Storylandia Press.