

Cage Match

One time at a bar I overheard a group of stubble-faced men discussing a hypothetical cage match between Marilyn Monroe and Jackie Onassis.

And as pitcher after pitcher emptied and their skin reddened and they spoke louder and their spittle flew across the table like cannons in the dim light, they leaned into the problem and its intricacies, because when you're drunk, the intricacies matter, they're worth investigating, they're no longer something scary.

And then the men pulled out their cellphones and scoured Wikipedia entries. They took into consideration the ladies' heights and weights, athletic backgrounds, the professions of their fathers.

And in their faces bathed in blue light I saw a sort of buoyancy I didn't think a regular trudging life could contain. But they had it. Every last one of them did.

And when, maybe before deciding on the victor, they got up and left without clearing their round table of glasses and wrappers and napkins, I watched them go, wondering what it would take to get up and join them.

But hell. Whatever it was, I didn't have it.

And whatever they had, I didn't think
I ever would.