Punk Rock Sestina

Joseph Warner

A group of people
come close enough to fall
off the stage they're paid to play
on. They look out and see the crowd swirl
a sea of limbs, arms and heads
churning. Feet pounding on the ground.

I find myself in them. Grounding
myself by holding on to the people
beside me. Our heads
bobbing in sync, rising and falling
as guitar notes swiftly swirl
as he cranks out the beat, the bass player

amps it up. We begin to play
our own game. Moshing. Pushing friends to the ground
everyone running into each other, strangers swirl
around me. A mass of people
sprinting towards one another at full speed falling
down, picking themselves up and heading

right back into it. This is the head
liner, and we're all here to see them play
these dismal chords, to slowly fall
into this trance. Eyes drift from stage to the ground
carefully trying not to step on the people
lying on the floor. The room swirls

into oblivion. Reminiscent of swirlies
administered by high school bullies, head
in a toilet, these are experiences shared by the people
in the crowd tonight. The music plays
to remind them of how they've grown, ground
pain into art and flourished. Falling

like a phoenix to rise again. Falling
in love with the way past and present swirl
around each other intertwined like roots
poking up from the ground.
It's enough to make me light-headed.
I came all the way here to see them play
and so did each and every one of these people.

I find myself falling again; my head
is clear. The thoughts have ceased to swirl; the music continues to play
in the background. I am at home with my people.