

Too Much Information

by John Wentworth Chapin

Hot summer night, heat steaming off the asphalt and crushed beer bottles outside the bar. A buzzing crowd of men cluttered the sidewalk in front of the bar entrance; he expected as much. The guys liked to wind down with some cheap drinks on Sunday night before starting back to the grind the next morning. He affixed a sociable smile to his face as he maneuvered through the tight knot which reeked of cheap warm beer and fresh cigarettes and unwashed sweaty ass. One of the guys called his name, and he looked up: a familiar face. They'd slept together once. He'd do him again, but probably not. Chris—that was his name. They exclaimed and bear-hugged, hot, sweaty, and nearing drunk but not sloppy. He pulled back from the hug and made for the door; a hand tapped his shoulder and he looked to see Todd, a former hookup. “Hey you!” he said as he smiled and positioned for another hug. He happened to glimpse Chris's face and saw there the dawning recognition of his relationship with Todd. It was disarming, recognizing that whatever signal he was giving off just told everyone that he'd slept with both of these guys, and now they both knew it. He couldn't dredge up a single memory about the sex. He made for the dark doorway to the bar when another hand tapped his shoulder. He turned to see a familiar face.

The bar door was dark and inviting and a long way off.

