

Uncertainty Principle

by Jordan Eash

Aleister Crowley walks in and all of a sudden the bar's filled with angels and demons and pagan things. Wood nymphs and stuff like that. Wittgenstein, to his credit, keeps cool. He just stands over there next to the dart machine, pointing at things and naming them. Like a toddler. Like Adam.

"Stool," he says. "Bottle."

Now Crowley stands on the bar. He waves his hands around and shouts at us. At Jersey, at the bartender. At Sal.

Sal—he's the aging boomer over there in the navy blue track suit. Sal who just about lives here, who gets too close when he talks to the well-scarved college girls who come here and sit in corner booths and drink alone because they want to be alone. Because shit got real for them pretty early on in life, as it does.

Only recently did shit get real for Jersey. And he's still on shaky feet.

Crowley yells and Jersey knows what's coming out of his mouth are words. But they're words like the ones you read in books when you dream.

This is the night after he drove June to the clinic.

They caught it early, she said, so it wasn't a big deal really. Less trauma than a root canal. A molar had more cells than this thing.

But Jersey wasn't thinking about that just then. He was thinking about fractals and the sexy spiral of Everything. And we humans—crazy pinballs.

And he was thinking about the night that got them there. How they snuck out onto the course and how everything fit—not just their bodies, though there was that—and how the grass felt cold on his knees and how nobody was golfing at all.

Later:

Wittgenstein goes home. He takes one of the college girls with him. Sal chases out the rest and goes home to his wife.

Jersey sits through last call, nursing whatever it is he's drinking. A beer with two green olives rolling around the bottom of the glass. Did he order this? He can't remember.

Crowley walks over. He's wearing this pyramid hat with the Eye of Providence sewn on it. He leans in close and Jersey can smell him. Tea and nag champa.

"Do you know," Crowley asks, "that there's a whole universe inside you?"

"I think," Jersey says, "that's the problem."

