

Down the Local

By Charley Genever

She texts: wanna go out?
and before I know it I'm down the local
where pints are beacons:
liquid flames flickering from hand to hand
like the passing of an Olympic torch.

Here, we're all chasing something:
lulled lights, a spot on the open mic, a night soaked
in hope. She asks what I'm having and I laugh
babe, I'm a Genever, my surname is literally Dutch for gin.

Here, we're slices of the same lemon:
where little monkeys hang from mum's glass of pop,
where let's get a round in means one for the gent
sat at the bar, his black dog sleeping at his feet.

Here, the walls don't talk because they're listening.
We get to the pith of a person so easily,
all segment smiles and pip-like teeth
spilling stories into brickwork seams.

We spend our weekend here, sitting cosy 'til closing time.
Safe, warm, watching a stag do dance with the WI
while we squeeze in another round.

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