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*The Annals of Crime*

This is where people come to be somewhere  
other than anywhere other than here.

The bearded man pulls the ember of his cigarette  
into a nugget of glowing gold  
and pushes a rolling billow around the syllables  
that tap a path toward the forehead of his quiet friend,  
who presses his leather shoulder against the wainscoting.

At a table across the room, a man scratches the back of his head  
and looks away from the woman beside him.  
He keeps turning his face away from her.  
She has large breasts for a woman her size.  
She thinks her thighs are too wide for the crisp jeans she has on.  
She has a thin pale face, a delicate narrow nose, blond hair in a bun.  
She runs one fingertip along her clavicle  
over the neck of her hot-pink sweater. He is a building contractor,  
a man with a teakwood god in a tall pointed hat  
on the mantel across from the kingsize bed  
where he will take the woman and try to make love to her  
without touching his lips to her clavicle,  
then fall immediately asleep while she stares at the shadows.  
Her sweater will have the shape of a severed doll on the ottoman,  
her jeans will slump in a heap beside it.

The bearded man's syllables drift like tiny parachutes  
beyond his conversation with his quiet friend. You can see  
the thoughts bursting in his quiet friend's mind under his canvas cap.  
His mind is contained entirely where he is, not known to the bearded man.

The air around the woman is fooling with some blond strands  
under her bun. The man beside her lights a cigarette  
and makes a blue tornado over his head.

The bearded man's friend begins a story  
about the time he had sex with a woman in a cemetery  
in Indianapolis, in the bushes beside Dillinger's tomb.