Frog Loses Sleep Puzzling Over Parallel Universes

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for Brandon Brown

It was not the fear of nightmares or starchy sheets
That pulled Frog from his bed and into night's exhaling.
He lay down on the grass in front of his house
And fixed his attention on everything that was not this earth.

The heavens ratcheted up, click by click.
Every puncture of brightness looked to Frog
Like stickpins on the inside of a black balloon.

Frog wondered which of the stars God might live on.
This idea made him think of a giant Frog
With a long silver beard. Maybe a cane or a robe.

The space between the sky and the grass
Was dark and deep. There was no wind.
Cricket under the porch was at it again,
And Toad, fuzzy in his blanket, slept as only Toads sleep.

The sky notched again and snapped into place.
It had never looked bigger.
Frog thought of each star as a lily pad
Bobbing along in the cosmos.
Frog wondered if there might be more frogs
Beyond the starlight, hidden in the dark pools
Of sky, like tadpoles beneath the surface of the lake.

He imagined a crazy land of
Frogs with six legs and pointy ears.
Frogs with beards and sideburns who drove around
In green bumpy cars. Frogs with two tongues who hated water.
Frogs with wings and hairy backs.

Heisenberg and Schrödinger made his head throb.
Frog knows electrons can be in two places concurrently.
But did that explain why
He wanted sleep and fly pudding at the same time?
Frog knows if he accepts cosmic inflation and
The holographic bound that parallel universes
Are a hop away. It does not help that he is hungry or
That an identical copy of this world
Might only be $10^{100}$ meters from his still-warm bed.
But that was not what kept him awake.
It was the different worlds that made sleep stony.
He imagined a planet where Toad was a ballet dancer,
And one where Toad brought Frog tea with lemon every morning.
He thought about the world in which Toad wears silly hats and capes
And another where Toad was 27 feet tall.
He loved the one where Toad only spoke Spanish
And the universe where Toad agreed
With everything Frog said.
Toad, it's spring. Wouldn't you like to go for a walk?
Si, Señor Frog. Este es un idea más excellente.

The night sky ticks on down.
Vast as it is, thinks Frog, somewhere the balloon is tied off.
With the holographic bound, the matter and energy
Inside the sphere are limited to finite configurations.

This gives Frog hope that there is not a world
Where Toad never goes for swims
Or one in which Toad tells no stories when Frog is sick.
Frog says out loud to no one that
He does not want to live in a universe
Where Toad is not his best friend.
Nothing moves, not the water, not the leaves, nothing.

The silence is broken by Badger and
Field Mouse who nod their heads toward Frog
As they shuffle off into the heavy dark.
In one of the worlds, the trees or the reeds
Would respond to Frog
But in this one, the blackness above is hushed.
The stars' lids never close.
They are as bright as they are silent.

This is what we have, says Frog.
Even if the wave function collapses.
We still have this.
Siempre, tenemos este
y verdad el otro.
verdad el otro.

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