

An electron injected into liquid helium pushes helium atoms apart and forms a small cavity, or “electron bubble”. Close to absolute zero, the electron bubble displaces more than 700 atoms, creating a cavity with radius of about  $R = 2$  nm.

- a) Consider the wave functions of the trapped electron, assuming that the boundary of the spherical bubble acts as an infinite potential. Show that *spherically symmetric wave functions* have the form  $\psi(r) = u(r)/r$ , where  $u(r)$  obeys a particularly simple differential equation.
- b) Determine the functional form of  $\psi(r)$  for the ground state and first excited state, and calculate the energies (in eV) for these two states.
- c) The probability of finding the electron between  $r$  and  $r + \Delta r$  is given by  $P(r)\Delta r$ . Determine  $P(r)$  and sketch it for the ground state and first excited state on separate graphs, indicating any zeroes or infinities in these functions.
- d) Derive an expression for the equilibrium radius of the bubble,  $R$ , in terms of the pressure  $p$  on the liquid and fundamental constants, and evaluate  $R$  for  $p = 1$  atm. Neglect the surface tension of the liquid, and assume that the temperature is low enough that only the electron ground state is significantly occupied.
- e) Derive an approximate formula for the bubble radius using the Heisenberg uncertainty principle.

Useful constants:  $1 \text{ atm} = 10^5 \text{ Pa} = 10^5 \text{ N/m}^2$ .  $\hbar^2/2m_e = 1.505 \text{ eV}\cdot\text{nm}^2$