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Choir

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CHOIR

Rae Northcraft

this stark white room
has become much
too familiar.
kurt snaps time
and waves his hands.
every second
or so
the silver pen tucked cozily in his
plaid pocket
is concealed.
his movements are gracefully jerky.
they start.
and stop.
like puppets, we follow.
knocking the outrageously mediocre
gold-rimmed spectacles
down his old-aged nose.
pages are turning.
mine are perfectly aligned
at eye-level
with his diet mountain of dew.
he thinks that it is cleverly hidden.
that we can't see it.
his "diet" weakness.
i laugh,
because i can.
it is so cold.
so plain.
the only windows
rest on the north wall like vertical eye slits,
a mere six inches of width.
even so, the world is blocked
by ivy vines.
bastards.

the only color
offends from scarlet exit letters
above the door.
disguised as a warning,
or hope.
i swear that it must be warmer outside
than in this room.
it's funny.
i know the opposite.
i have no choice
but to soak up the fluorescent rays.
and write helplessly.
we are all writing,
some on homework pages.
others on cell phone screens.
whiteboard reads:
SECTIONAL TONIGHT.
perhaps,
i will be absent.
yes.
the black phone on the wall
never rings.
i consider
the hope it must bring—
always expecting a call.
a shrill of squeaky sopranos
bring me to wally,
the accompanist,
who plays their parts.
i don't believe i have
ever
heard him speak.
possibly he is mute.
speaking through his piano.
what a gargantuan display of vocal chords.
i envy his eight octaves.
tenors are behind me.
they remind me of this constantly.
the altos are also present,

presently oppressed by their
nazi leader.
flat.
that girl is in front of me.
the one who cheerfully exclaims,
"hi rachel!"
but she never means me.
so many
are unused.
forgotten.
in this room.
the organ in the balcony.
and the file cabinets.
the balcony.
the overhead.
sharp.
i, like others, twist my hair
and my nothing thoughts
around my finger.
natural.
i write that the glass is both half-empty
and half-full.
i may fail choir today,
but i ace poetry.