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Abstract

I can't imagine a bar of soap singing opera, but now I'm imagining daytime television about the soap's lament—lavender professing his love to lemon, lemon caught cheating by pine, all while exaggerating face for imaginary nosebleed seats...

Cover Page Footnote

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Bar of Soap

by Rachel Janis

I can't imagine a bar of soap singing opera, but now I'm imagining daytime television about the soap's lament—lavender professing his love to lemon, lemon caught cheating by pine, all while exaggerating face for imaginary nosebleed seats. Then again, in this world, Kleenex has become recognized as a word deserving a capital K, leaving tissue behind as the thing we remove from gifts to pack away in the basement closet till we again need something to articulate full. When I tell my scientist brother this, he says, thank god for that, thank god for the organs we pack away for later. I don't know why I'm suddenly crying, suddenly in need of Kleenex when imagining an alternate universe where the tumor in his head wins, where the portions of brain left over skip the icebox, tossed in toxic waste: a process everything like an employer separating resumes and nothing like an employer separating resumes, and suddenly the factoids my brother sang by the hour are gone: I can't, for the life of him, gather them. Was it the chicken or the egg, was it Freud or Adler who said we roadtrip toward death, how many times can our blood vessels, unraveled, bag the Earth, and how fast can a sneeze tie its own noose? This all connects, I promise. My scientist brother is still here, our great aunt has been buying him bars of soap every holiday season, and he will smell like lavender and rosemary during Christmas dinner this year. He will ask me in between salad and meat did I know that the average American spends five years of her life waiting in line? Try making a poem speak that.

Rachel Janis holds a BA from Knox College and lives above a coffee shop in Galesburg, Illinois. This is her first publication.