

Junior Division, Poetry
Kaylee Clarke, Bell Island

The Shower

Never has a shower felt dirtier than stepping into my own clean, white one.
Knowing my heart would continue beating when I had finished.
The coldness of the tile floor sends a shiver through my spinal cord.
The water I swear I caught dripping from these masked taps.
The humidity circulating the bodies standing inside.

Never has a shower felt dirtier than breathing in the scent of my lavender conditioning,
Without the worry of fatal fumes soon filling my lungs as I bathed.
The familiarity felt much too familiar.
And the fact that it did not phase you was the most unnerving part of all.

Never has a shower felt dirtier than my fragile feet hitting the cold tiles,
As I knew theirs never again would.
This was not a frightening place.
First, it does not make you shudder.
It felt almost normal.

The muscle memory of removing my clothes,
Turning the faucet, and doing as we have all our lives.
Shower.
Simple.

I realize that this was exactly how they had felt too.
Now the hairs on my arms do rise.
The wind seems to, only just begun, blowing through.
This room no longer feels like a normal place.
But as if these four walls had transformed into graveyard,
Closing me in-between.

The guilt.
I feel it pressing my exhale back into my lungs as if to say,
Why should you deserve to breathe, more than they did?
The drains seeming to echo their voices,
Screaming "who decides that?"

Never has a shower felt dirtier than when I was clean.
Yet, still so filthy.
Knowing they were never given that chance.
Knowing I would get to leave, as they did not.
I would return home.

And shower.
Take a real shower.
The longest shower of my life.
Savoring every moment, every drop of water.

And attempt to cleanse the filth that has lifted from those walls
And seemed to have soaked into my skin.