

Senior Division, Poetry

Maggie Burton, St. John's

Radio Bingo is the Greatest Opera of Our Time (an excerpt)

Radio bingo is the greatest opera of our time,

a weekly *tragedia lirica*

where no one gets out alive.

I sprawl on Nan's bed, paint

my nails red, listen to VOWR's

Hymns of the Quiet Hour, a prelude

to the mayhem of tonight's Greatest Hits.

I am the wardrobe supervisor. The star,

I dress in slack-pants, blouse, pastel

cardigan, compression socks, perm, knitted

slippers, billowy, high waisted dress, perfect

for hide and seek. The station is changed

to the Voice of the Common Man

as the Bingo overture, the top of the hour news,

begins. Nan straightens her wig,

enters stage left.

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For Act 1 Don Giovanni hides, double-timing

whiskey and homebrew as Donna Elvira flies

around asking "who will ever tell me where

that scoundrel is? *Ah, chi mi dice mai,*

I will rip his heart out!" She takes

her seat at the kitchen table, stabs

free spaces with her dabber as arpeggios

wail down like shrapnel.