

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 *tragidia lyrica*  
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.

. . .

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.