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Lavatory

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Schossler: Lavatory

LAVATORY

Jason Schossler

Sister Irene pressed her finger against her lips
as she led them down the hall,
nine boys in slacks and navy blue button-downs,
marching single file, the girls waiting their turn
back in what the old nun called the *Homeroom*.

For one boy, the promise to see it—
the network of electrical wires,
crackling transformers,
the globes and dials and switches—
was what got him through the first hour
of that first day,
kept his eyes on the chalkboard
and off the summer wrens singing
in the copse of trees
outside the schoolhouse window.

He dreamt of a human body stitched together
from parts of different corpses stolen from graves,
a platform rising toward an open skylight.
Instead he got a pair of toilets and three urinals.

"What kind of experiments go on *here*?" he asked.
To which the nun could only shake her head.

"Next," she continued, "is where you'll eat lunch,"
and as they climbed the stairs and turned left,
he made his own promise: if they didn't cook food
at this so-called *cafeteria*, he'd light out for the woods.