

The Confessional

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My heart beat pulses
through my twitching fingers,
the folded paper
gaining more creases
in my sweaty hands.

A shaky inhale and a breath,
my voice mumbles out,
“Forgive me, Father,
for I have sinned.
It has been four months
since my last confession.”

Wood whines beneath
the priest’s shifting shoes.
The walls let out a symphony
of bending and cracking,
closing in on all sides
of the closet-like room.

Paper crinkles hastily
as I open my scrawled list.
My shaking thumb
leads the way,
leaving a trail of indents
as evidence of my faults
and failures.

My quavering voice follows
until my thumb
finishes its descent,
and all that is left is
my heart’s incessant pounding,
and the splintering of the walls.

I give myself one breath. Two.
I finally lift my gaze
to meet his gray eyes,
creased by a gentle smile.

The priest lifts a steady hand
toward the crown of my head,
and absolves me
from all of my sin,
through the Father, the Son,
and the Holy Spirit,
and lets me go in peace.

The walls are silenced
as I slowly begin to stand,
and they do not utter a word
as my hands grip that paper
and tear it into shreds.