

The Chair

The chair next to the desk
is for bad kids
is uncomfortable
in more ways than one

she always wears perfume
and smells like Rexall Drug's
sample counter
her dry chapping pointer
always, always finding the error
before it can escape
her eye

you can't imagine
from the chair
what lunch will be like
or what game you'll be playing
at recess
you can never quite remember
what you told your friends
you'd be doing after school
and that's why
you're there
so you can't think of anything
but work and her sharp fingernail
stopping on your mistakes
all the time
her perfume burning
your nose

it settles into the creases
of your shirt
and your skin will still smell
like hers even when you leave
the chair
and you'll think you're sure
to become her
your breath will go sour
like coffee
and your hands will dry up like
books and worksheets
and you'll live on the sft sft sft
of fingers among papers
full of cursive loops
battling the clumsy block letters

you used to form your name

and then, you'll begin
to lick your dead thumb
to leave a smudge on the corner
of every page
you've frowned over

the chair is a wound
no bandage can cover
no iodine can heal

you are nestled up under the wing
of her sickness today
as she removes all signs
of the person you recognized
in the mirror over the sink

her thumb licked and planted smeared
across your forehead
as she moves on to the next
page