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REDUCE THE SCENE AND STAGE

by Abigail Zimmer

The other thing to remember about Italian opera
is that your hair should be long and inviting

so that a lover may come or that you may strangle one
who tries to leave. Most of the day not spent singing is

spent in the bathtub. The last time I washed my hair,
it was raining. Outside, it was raining and inside I was

washing my hair. There was water everywhere so I tried
not to think about the ruination of my life as done by me

when I am awkward and talking a lot about allergens
and the endangered honeybee. The Italian opera has also

ruined lives. There is always someone fainting or slurring
syllables in the last aria or generally not having enough sex

because it's time to sing. The pasta man down the street
has never heard opera, but he cuts the most refined

curls of fettuccini that make me want to rub his floured
fingertips across my face. Not everything needs

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saving. Today I lay curled on the cement across
from the place you house your love. The opera is growing

louder and I am trying to tell you something beautiful
with my hands, but your gaze has shifted to another window.

Not even your dog peers out. Not even your dog.