

MEGAN ERICKSON

For Hours in an Airtight Room

I thought it was a one-time deal: the kind of humiliation you forget
so you can tie your shoelaces and eat something besides Froot Loops

for dinner. But then the technician took the bottle of Windex
and the roll of paper towels from a drawer, tearing off three more

than he actually needed, and said *Again?* and she, instead of asking him
if he'd lift her up from her chair and wipe her clean, instead of extending

her unwholesome arms and letting him touch her like a child would
touch a piece of bone in a museum, as if his hand might be withered

by this chance encounter with the imperfect corruption of age,
screamed in the direction of the ceiling fan *Don't touch me*

and wandered out of the waiting room with her handbag hanging open at
her side.

Roast a chicken for 125 hours and you'll get what her skin looked like.

Comrade from the land of the ailing contaminated confined
unwell, we are all moving this way and we are moving forever.