

The Rapture at Mount Berry Mall

That's where all of Rome, Georgia would be
Walking over the beige floors,
Glassy bright, the smell of hot pretzels
New sneakers, and Great American Cookie
Warm in the fluorescent air
Either already there, eyeing
Ourselves and each other
In the mutable mirrors of storefronts
Or summoned there, like and unlike
What was promised on the inside
Flap of the ocean and ember
Luxury and satin jacket of the
Left Behind books, proudly displayed
In the center of Walden Books
Front cover out, right at the door
To stall the less devout on the way
Back to the newest Animorphs or
Beach read, to let us know that
The kingdom of heaven always
Threatened to be at hand
And I know, with the certainty
Of absolute screwtape faith
The line to heaven would wind
Through the food court
All god's angels in their wisdom
Using the red carpet and turfgrass
Of the santa display, all good baptists
And maybe even the pope, in line
In between the brassy gold posts
And velvet rope, worn to cloth
But still soft, suspended in air
Heavy with fried rice, overlaid
With waffle fries and peanut oil
The line to Chickfila, for once empty,
And half the employees in red and white
Crowded up front, the ones who knew
The hotter the chicken the closer to god,
And the other half, well groomed queers
Not unlike myself, neck deep in college plans
And a layered closet of lust
Transported away, or maybe
It's already happened and that's why
The mall is dying now, stores walled away
So we won't remember why
There's too much room without them,
God's own beloved people,
Whisked away without harbinger

Not like my library's copy of the series,
Glossy plastic covers crinkling like leaves,
Had promised, in fire and despair,
But in one long pause of reality
For all the good to be processed through
The pasteboard and plywood throne
And I hope by them we are remembered
In these after days, with tender love in absence,
as the god of abraham, protestant, will not.