

music therapy

it
was
in may:
off-white
walls, piss-
colored lights.
a room in a ward
in a hospital, where
we held group therapy.

a girl and i claimed our spot
there one morning and refused
to give it up: two seats tucked in
the left corner, pushed together. so
when we had music therapy together
the first time, the last things we ended
up thinking about were music & therapy.

my palm found her leg, illegally—we were not
allowed to touch. but my hand found her leg and
for some reason, stayed. i was totally exhilarated as
i thought, *this is her leg and i'm touching it; this is her
hip bone; this is her stomach.* My fingers giving a prayer
over the temple of her body—her body, such a sacred thing.
the movement stilled, and then it stayed; i could not bring my
hand away. she said nothing, but i felt her reveling in me. when
at last my palm lay still she would not look over, but i felt her soft
fingers in mine. later, the girl who'd sat across from us that morning
smiled as she got me alone—she said that when emily had touched me
back, my cheeks had gone bright red. i called her full of shit, but in truth,
it was an intimacy i had no shame in sharing; when we finally kissed for the
first time, far from those hospital walls, my color was almost exactly the same.