Imagining the Reading as Effacement

by Gary Hardaway

The ear and eye combine
to give the tongue and larynx
their sound
                in the small room
with many empty chairs.

What the spaces say

can be heard in the short
and longer silences
and throaty inspirations

that voice the soft vowels
and brushed or chiseled consonants.

There ought to be a screen

to show the scatter patterns
light and dark
                on the wall

with the voice and face
at the back of the room

heard only
as the words burn themselves
                or not
across assembled retinas

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with the mouth itself
a heard but unseen servant

offstage.