

Devon Miller-Duggan

Dispeptic

The prospect of a whole inch of rain
leaves the café awash in coffee-seekers
as well as study-groupers, chatterers, chess players,
tourists, grubby townies.

At the table behind me, a boy (somewhere
between 20 and a Ph.D.) bounces his chair repeatedly
against mine, and quarter inch by quarter inch,
jams my diaphragm against the table's edge.

I shove back. One increment to his seven, eight,
and now he's turned
to lounge sideways with his newspaper.
He thinks he looks urbane.

Just like a man—he owns geography
for feet in each direction. They all believe
their right to sprawl is absolute. And I conclude that
absolutely he's an ass—pretentious,
inconsiderate, rude, a dolt, a bore, a brat,
ill-bred, unfit, and un-housebroken.

So I curse him: may he fail exams, lose the girl,
get writer's block, flatulate in church. May he
leave this place, and soon, while I'm
too absorbed in what I'm reading
to lose my place again, or see his face,
and still secure in
my expansive geography of judgement.

Devon Miller-Duggan has published poems in *Rattle*, *Shenandoah*, *Margie*, *Christianity and Literature*, *Gargoyle*. She teaches Creative Writing at the University of Delaware. Her books include *Pinning the Bird to the Wall* (*Tres Chicas Books*, 2008) and a chapbook, *Neither Prayer, Nor Bird* (*Finishing Line Press*, 2013).