MARY KATHRYN ARNOLD

RATTLING JOHN'S CAGE

He is "Breaking Philip's Glass"
in front of the movie screen
sitting at that piano

'Isn't it grand — to be here with you all, tonight'

The piano bench shifting back and forth
on the sloped floor of the theatre
'shcrreeesh shhhh schrreech'

The package from Annie arriving in her
box two days ago, the fold-up book
from the print shop on Broad St.

A: My girlfriend is so old-fashioned I
can't get her to suck face with me.

B: She's still probably tied to her
mother's apron strings.

In these too-close seats of the old Vogue theatre
they listen to him rattling John's cage and
as far as she can hear it's like he's
Pulling Somebody Else's Teeth.

Tonight, in the cold theatre with the
makeshift stage and the temperamental heater
the rain is settling down in her wet sneakers

'Jonny, I bet you're home tonight running
off blueprints in your basement cause don't
you know better than to go out in the pouring
rain and suffer for this some kind of silliness'

And seven fat ones, yes, that's right

We're better off like this;

You at home adding to those pages stapled
and pasted together and you swear this time out
this issue will make so much more sense

(*please, pretty please, baby*, anything but that)

Me across town in the bar watching the rain
hit the grate — adding maraschino cherries
to this Manhattan to soften so many blows