[North Center](file:///C:\\Users\\aaron\\Creating\\Writing\\Pieces\\Chicago\\North_Center.docx)

Marcel, my cat, is prowling around and whining and scratching at the sofa. The summer afternoon is on edge in the heat until he settles into the couch, finally quiet again. Giving my nerves a rest at last.

The Procedure

12:34 on clock in car when I am returning from the hospital after my Covid test before the Procedure.

Victor catching me at the elevator bank taking my paperwork and leading me to a sign-in desk that is really just a folding table. Where are we?

Cross shaped bed-- arms out, hands open, sweating through my palms.

The doctor comes to fill out my cahart and let me know that we will be getting going soon and that he has been delayed just a bit because he had to help out with another surgery. The prepping and recovery area has a nurses station that is slowly filling up with student doctors. He assures me that it takes longer to fill out the forms that to do the actual procedure.

Waiting a long time.

Intern coming into the operating room asking if this is Dr. Pagani’s surgery, he asks several times to make sure. This guy is going to be cutting into me and he’s not even sure where he is?

The nurse sort of playfully telling me that this is my chance to back out as she wheels through the door.

What’s your religion. Non-religious.

What kind of work do you do? I’m a programmer. Oh, okay, good, right, you don’t want to do anything too active.

The knives are in you again or more specifically in your squirmy stitched and bruised and bloated scrotum.

What have I done? I have voluntarily let some dude stick a scalpel into my scrotum and render me impotent.

Cousin Annette with her failed IVF. Chrishon with her hysterectomy.

The surgeon’s scalpel, my burning wound, the matter-of-fact block between you and the ever after.

The phantom blade severing your seed slide-- now you are truly self-absorbed.

I not too good at making the best out of a bad situation, but I seem to excel at making the worst out of a good situation.