THE LAST NOTE by Jill Solnicki *

When the First Movement finishes,

the tuba huffing,
the violin trembling,
the clarinet clearing its nose,

where does that last note go?

It hovers above the orchestra's
damp collars,
creased skirts,
their wilted black bowties,

then flies up,
out,
brushing a cheek,
skimming an ear,
sailing the hall on currents
of sighs

then slowly drifts back
down
down

to perch on the bow's arm,
the oboe's long black toe;

when the rustling stops,
the papers settle
and the players find their place,

it throws back its head,
opens its mouth,
its throat,

eyes the baton

rising.

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