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At Ames Library: A Ghazal

By Madeline Tyner

Whispers float down an empty row. You peek through crowded shelves in PR
and PS—it's just Dickinson and Woolf, come out to chatter at the library.

We could make the world's longest book-domino chain. Tip the first book
and wait—the stone stairwell will echo the clatter throughout the library.

The hum and distant *ding* of the elevator's slow pull blend like a mantra
with your steady typing. Real life's frenzy ceases to matter at the library.

You search pages for faded, handwritten notes—fragmented clues about
past students like you—in volumes decades old and tattered at the library.

Half-delirious by early morning, you've lived off Milton and lukewarm tea
for eight hours. Sometimes you feel like the Mad Hatter at the library.

Fingertips slide carefully along the smooth topmost shelf. You climb
for poetry on the *Beauty & the Beast* ladder—found only at Ames Library.