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*A choir is a beautiful thing*

Yesterday afternoon was my school's choir performance. In my posh neighborhood school, there is a choir; nobody thinks it's square and everyone competes to join but it's very exclusive: Monsieur Trianon, the music teacher, hand picks his choristers. The reason the choir is so successful is because of Monsieur Trianon himself. He is young and handsome and he has the choir sing not only the old jazz standards but also the latest hits, with very classy orchestration. Everyone gets all dressed up and the choir performs for the other students. Only the choir members' parents are invited because otherwise there'd be too many people. The gymnasium is always packed fit to burst as it is and there's an incredible atmosphere.

So yesterday off I headed to the gymnasium at a trot, led by Madame Fine because as usual on Tuesday afternoon first period we have French class. "Led by" is saying a lot; she did what she could to keep up the pace, wheezing like an old whale. Eventually we got to the gym, everybody found a place as best they could. I was forced to listen to the most asinine conversations coming at me from below, behind, every side, all around (in the bleachers), and in stereo (cell phone, fashion, cell, who's going out with who, cell, dumb-ass teachers, cell, Cannelle's party) and then finally the choir arrived to thundering applause, dressed in red and white with bow ties for the boys and long dresses with shoulder straps for the girls. Monsieur Trianon sat down on a high stool, his back to the audience, then raised a

sort of baton with a little flashing red light at the end, silence fell and the performance began.

Every time, it's a miracle. Here are all these people, full of heartache or hatred or desire, and we all have our troubles and the school year is filled with vulgarity and triviality and consequence, and there are all these teachers and kids of every shape and size, and there's this life we're struggling through full of shouting and tears and laughter and fights and break-ups and dashed hopes and unexpected luck—it all disappears, just like that, when the choir begins to sing. Everyday life vanishes into song, you are suddenly overcome with a feeling of brotherhood, of deep solidarity, even love, and it diffuses the ugliness of everyday life into a spirit of perfect communion. Even the singers' faces are transformed: it's no longer Achille Grand-Fernet that I'm looking at (he is a very fine tenor), or Déborah Lemeur or Ségolène Rachet or Charles Saint-Sauveur. I see human beings, surrendering to music.

Every time, it's the same thing, I feel like crying, my throat goes all tight and I do the best I can to control myself but sometimes it gets close: I can hardly keep myself from sobbing. So when they sing a canon I look down at the ground because it's just too much emotion at once: it's too beautiful, and everyone singing together, this marvelous sharing. I'm no longer myself, I am just one part of a sublime whole, to which the others also belong, and I always wonder at such moments why this cannot be the rule of everyday life, instead of being an exceptional moment, during a choir.

When the music stops, everyone applauds, their faces all lit up, the choir radiant. It is so beautiful.

In the end, I wonder if the true movement of the world might not be a voice raised in song.