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Rotunda

Madeleine Church
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Rotunda Madeleine Church

I pass under ancient arches, leaving a boundless night behind me.
I hear the echoes of secrets quickly forgotten.
It was such sounds as Sister whistling like she still had the teeth of a six-year-old,
 or my dog barking, even though he's been dead now for years,
 or Grandpa chuckling in his whimsical way.
 He's been gone the longest.
Gone too are the old smells, sounds, and colors.
Cicadas don't click the same anymore,
 brownies don't stick to my tongue like they used to,
 the red velvet couch isn't as soft as when we first got it;

But I now enter a rotunda.
Spiraling a round table, my family is gathered.
Grandma, the last matriarch, sits at the helm, shining proudly.
She welcomes me in her wise and warm way.
I take a seat.
My spot has already been prepared.
Everyone opens their arms to me, and I open mine to them.

But this ceremony is not limited to welcome.
Even as I arrived, there was one leaving.
As I sat down, Aunt stood up, and walked through the far Northern door
 closing it
 loosely behind her.
Grandma told me not to mind it.
Aunt doesn't mean to leave in a bad way, Grandma says, she's just gone to the
 other room for now.
Even the pitless stomach we came from is only another room.
We all take turns passing through.