**A Vacant Gallery**

William Doreski

It’s tempting to hide behind angles

and pretend that the lack of art

is actually the essence of art.

The gallery appears empty,

but if I shift my line of sight

this way or that the shadow

cast by the cloudy ceiling

thickens to blur the distinction

between art and its absence.

This shadow drains from a slot

in time and space concealed by

a moveable wall intended

for paintings still unpainted.

The institutional oak floor

looks freshly varnished, unscuffed

by people eager for pastel

moments to take home and cuddle

in bed when the lights go out.

I could shift my position,

but the geometry’s insistent.

Soon the dark creeping from the left

will meet the grainy shade falling

from that grim aesthetic distance

I’m not tall enough to reach.