

THE CASHIER SCREAMS “VOID”

We need to undo what's been recorded,
to wipe out the evidence—of error, the computation
that doesn't add up, the mind that's changed,
the desired item discarded. “VOID!”
she screams again, waiting for the manager to arrive
like God in his swirl of white apron to turn a key
and restore order with a nod to me,
but he hasn't arrived, he is nowhere.
Frustration is the currency we exchange,
waiting as the line grows and presses in,
then something else enters, permeates
the ShopRite air like fruit about to turn—angst,

has he left us, could he really do that? no—
it's the effluvium of anguish, was he ever here?
“VOID!” more strident now, maybe
this sweet teenager's last attempt ever,

three the strikeout number, endgame,
but still I wait, absorbing the glowers and growls
of those massing behind me, beginning
for the first time to understand Beckett.