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## The little building in which I find the ancient cloister store-room of St. Severin, which is going to disappear; The Night's Big Ball

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*Camille T. Dungy*

*The little building in which I find the  
ancient cloister store-room of St. Severin,  
which is going to disappear.*

*—Eugène Atget, Printing Out Paper (1903)*

All that will be lost has been set already into stone  
from which the Madonna and her child emerged,  
Mary already weeping, or perhaps not yet begun.

Centuries have torn the human features  
from her face. The store-room she protects,  
centuries dismantled even those good intentions.

The city turns away and concentrates  
on swallows. Puddles pond the patio, reflecting  
the three beams that buttress one remaining wall.

The burred trees' veneration, another unseen.  
The leafing will dormant? Or finally done? The city  
turns away and concentrates on mortar. In faith,

this view is but a portion of all a soul might apprehend  
who wandered through the past's unkept cloister  
some early hour, before the warming spring. But here,

if by here is meant now, this is all the negative, developed,  
revealed. The city turns away and concentrates on all  
it must desire. One gothic archway framing a window,

light crowding the left corner, overexposing the print—  
gelatin silver emulsion, paper toned with broken down gold.  
Mary already weeping, or perhaps not yet begun.

*Camille T. Dungy*

## The Night's Big Ball

The moon bounces in the limbs of the locust, frogs  
rib each other and coyotes join in on the laugh.

The crickets will pack their fiddles at daybreak,  
but Mary's caught by night and falls. Kicking

and dipping, delightful. She wants everyone

to see her whirled, but the calla lilies yawn

and the crocus went to bed and won't get up.

The collie dances and watches a man, and a woman  
that man strides beside concentrates on a stroller  
and a child and the rattle she rattles, and the moon

slips from the limbs of the locust, the moon climbs down  
the stairs. The child is the town crier, her rattle simple

as a well-wrought urn. Darkness keeps time,  
hand on Mary's shoulder, hand in her hand.