

1992

## Tradition

Lillian Waller

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## Tradition

Mandy cleans this theatre  
late nights and listens  
for mice creeping  
between what would be pews  
if it were a church  
or some other holy place  
but it isn't.

She sweeps under  
ragged red seats  
that smell of habit:  
peanuts and organ music  
and colored help.

The theatre: she rubs  
on the small of it's  
back with an easy hand  
like dancing with an old lover  
someone worthy of caress.

Leaning into it, she traces  
a perfect box step and  
for one reckless moment  
she is all grace and shadow.

Dust and screen and darkness  
reach back to her  
fold into the arch of her  
movements, pause, and  
a little more hoïy  
she presses on.

*Lillian Waller*