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Impromptu

Lillien Waller

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Impromptu

I am trying to make this look easy. There's a smile tacked over the grimace under my nose and I only flap my wings when no one's looking so the labor of this flight goes undetected. My feet are dancing as fast as they can, I am kissing strangers on street corners and screaming

in my sleep and I still have a generation of ghosts to feed. The faces of my grandchildren are already picked out and so are their names, to save time. This poem is my insides out, more awake than anything I could otherwise create and more lasting. It's typed on onion skin,

thicker than my own these days and I am trying to make this look easy. There's nobility in ease, dignity in labor and I possess neither, crouched between a shadow and what casts it. What's easy is the pretense, a woman in three stanzas, written on the run. What's difficult is the pretense, a calculated labyrinth of language and an impromptu, make-shift, onion-skin shield.

Lillian Waller