

Roxanna Font

NOT DANCING WITH MY MOTHER

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We bottleneck into thick
air, bodies just now swaying down to the last song
and leaning in for the next. *This place looks like
a Spanish plaza I danced in once--*

all night you say

and then the Cuban band starts up again,
the floor, a pot of white rice lifting
into a boil, expanding.

You elbow to and grab
the rail, displace a couple who edge out
resentful. Squeezed beside, I watch
a platform at the room's heart
where bodies move
like onions in oil.

¿Qué creen que es? ¿un waltz?

Then your feet pounce into a three-step,
a stamping that grows into your hips' wide
pendulum, through to your mouth opened
to the chandelier overhead,

letting go

laughter under drum, tres, horn.
My hands grip the rail, counter your pull
on each downbeat. It shakes so much
it might just give.

I watch a mother take the floor
with her teenage daughter. Neon lace gloves
to the elbows. I swallow hard and ask
¿Quieres bailar?, rail trembling.
But I AM dancing
you cry.

On our way out before the set ends,
car keys readied in my hands, I turn toward
a thumping above, find a ceiling
of beveled glass squares--

windows

to shoe soles stepping, footprints
for a hundred paper dance lessons
at once.