Not Dancing with my Mother
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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.