

Eulene's *Noche Oscura*  
Carolynne Wright

When Eulene walked in, habits  
turned the color of strangle-vines.  
Nuns scrubbed the chapel  
on their knees, the wrathful afternoon  
glowering through stained glass,  
choirstalls halved by Manichaean shadow.

Now,  
Eulene sneaks out during Evening Prayer  
to work on her icon of Big Nun—  
fishwife in a chain-gang rosary  
and goat's-hair veil, her Popeye forearms  
tattooed with the Pontiff's face.

Eulene hums snatches of the Vatican Rag  
and the house gets narrower.

Who else would laugh  
at the prioress's black tabby  
with white paws and monsignor collar,  
or christen it *Magnificat*  
at the vestry water cooler?  
All night it yowls from the dead hemlock  
in the convent close, Eulene's  
*cri-de-coeur's semblable*.

What is she after?  
She's weary of tinsel stars,  
names in neon aureoles  
breakdancing on the big marquees.  
Through "Religious Preference"  
she still draws a line  
straight as a brain-scan.

