

1995

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Recommended Citation

Wright, Carolyn. "Eulene's "Noche Oscura"." *The Iowa Review* 25.3 (1995): 160-161. Web.
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.4456>

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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 Manichaeon 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.

