

2007

Contortionist

Mary-Sherman Willis

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.uiowa.edu/iowareview>

Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Willis, Mary-Sherman. "Contortionist." *The Iowa Review* 37.1 (2007): 76-76. Web.
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.6566>

This Contents is brought to you for free and open access by Iowa Research Online. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Iowa Review by an authorized administrator of Iowa Research Online. For more information, please contact lib-ir@uiowa.edu.

Contortionist

The spot snaps on. She lies in center stage
placid as a swan upon a lake.
The look on her face is disengaged
and we prepare to watch her bend or break.

Arms and legs pivot like a doll's.
She plies, unplies, collapses into splits,
her chin is at her feet—we are enthralled:
she holds a glass pagoda with her lips!

Presently she's folded on herself,
a parcel held together in her skin,
and freakish as a gewgaw on a shelf—
a Miesen maid, a precious minikin,

so self-possessed we envy her, her life,
until she walks off, wobbly, like a wife.