

MY WIFE, SEWING AT A WINDOW



Image: "Seamstress" by Lily Prigioniero. "My Wife, Sewing at a Window" was written by Eithne Longstaff for *Rattle's* Ekphrastic Challenge, August 2023, and selected as the Artist's Choice.

poem by Eithne Longstaff

Spring wanes
and as is her custom

she pulls the dusty
cover from her Singer

and sits at the window
to fashion cotton,

sprigged with tiny
roses, into tiered

summer skirts
for whichever

grandchild wants one.
Time stretches like

the elastic she holds
and I recall a trip

to Rome where,
laughing, we fell

into a church
as raindrops slid

from bare arms.
In a dark side chapel

we clattered coins
into a metal box

and the space lit up
with a yellow glow,

revealing a Caravaggio,
just for us. She said

he has painted the light

and we stood
and marveled.

Then our ninety seconds
of illumination was over

and we stepped back
into lives that were all about

*where to next, and
our house will be blue.*

Now she is the old
master and as she works

light ripples her clothes
and crowns her head

with cirrus. The rose
fabric is stippled

with thorns and I see
only where the light

falls to make her perfect
and dare not look

to the room's dark corners.