

Wilderness House Literary Review 6/3

Alice Weiss

Misdemeanor

Spring, and I slough off the gabardine
I always wear to court and wear instead
a shirtwaist dress of white and yellow silk,
to represent a working girl, also
in silks, a long white scarf like cirrous clouds
and fringes, shimmering like rain
from the margins of her bustier.
The courtrooms, halls and waiting rooms
fill with the crew from last night's bars
and shoplifters from department stores
who gawk at her and hiss in little whispers.
She sails on as if the walls were sky.

No cop come to testify, the magistrate
dismisses us and we walk together
to the marble pavement of the courtyard
where wind blows parish, state,
and federal flags and clouds
ripple above the county jail.
Parting, she cocks her head and says
"Nice silks," slips me a hundred dollar bill,
herself back to the streets.