In San Pedro

Old woman kneeling in a Lima church
among the Christianized gold loot of past centuries,
among the sacred hearts and the vulgarities,

staring through tears at examples of bad art:
Catholic in a Catholic country
in a no-longer-Catholic world.

The candles flicker, a priest intones, a youth
waits his turn at the confessional. All this
is beyond theologies of faith (or doubt);

God is here because the old woman
sees him, she has chosen
angels rather than angst, and they answer her.

Her paradise is not lost; her dying god
lives in her wonder. As the sparks fly upward,
as incense rises, she dreams (creates) heaven.

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