

Gino Severini

Here is the artist in a dance studio
in Pigalle, sticking out like a fingernail
from the shiny floor. Just down
the street is the Moulin Rouge.
This is before 1911, when the colors
will be forced into the eye,

the dancers in yellow reduced to isosceles triangles.
It's almost exactly how they move: a kind of
pirouette flattened into three dimensions.
Mostly it is beautiful—how they fill out
their chromatic hues, how they crystallize
out of the light behind them. No sex, just body.

A little poise, a little clumsiness. The weight
not yet upon their angled shoulders.
Skeletal and real. Painted and felt.
Dance before order returns. Dance
before it isn't fun anymore. Dance,
yellow dancers, and be enough.

Josh Ascherman