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The illusionist

by *Michael Shewmaker*

Without the usual work of wands,
she dazzles solely with her hands.

The coin behind your ear is gone.
Her pocket watch has turned to stone.

She plucks the rose from her corsage,
your ring tucked in its petaled cage.

She knows your card. She levitates.
Her eyes flash like azure agates.

And though she makes a show of it—
the scripted struggle, the long wait—

no locks or chains are sound enough
to bind her to this stage. And though

you know the limits of the eye,
her sleight-of-hand, the hidden lie,

you choose to see as through a sieve.
You still applaud. You still believe.

Michael Shewmaker is an editor of *32 Poems*.

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