“The Mouse in the Piano”

Hers (or is it his?) is a new and remarkable music, played out in the morning darkness in the darker piano, waking us up at two and then three with those tentative notes struck with mallets of straw or the stems of leaves, but not upon the strings themselves, oh, no-upon the wooden case, releasing the intimate chords from the grain, a music kept hidden there in secret for more than a hundred years, played now with perfect concentration, but with little respect for the old piano itself, as if it were little more than an apple barrel or a bin for flour through which the silvery strings—a great abstraction dumb and human—fall all night like moonbeams through the lifting dust.

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