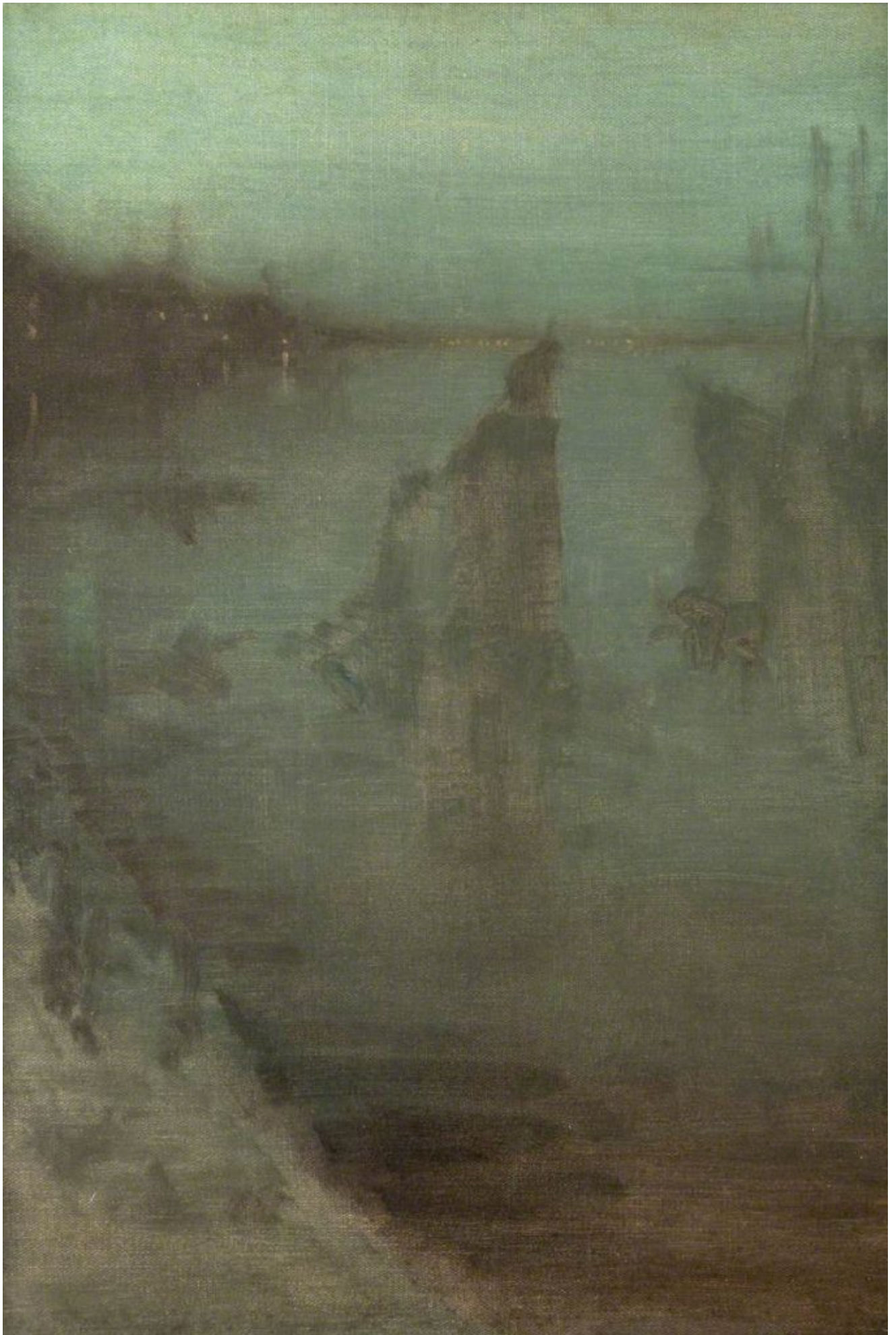


With Unclenched Fingers

by [Cristina Nehring](#) (October 2023)



Nocturne, James McNeill Whistler, 1875-77

You release the god
You never grasped.
To host a deity

Takes a gift for ignorance,
A touch so light
It hurts the eyes.

You cannot doubt
The eventual loss
Nor question the vision

Of black feathers
Beating back into night.
He cannot stay for supper.

He has no taste for bread.
He only turns the wine to blood
And then departs.

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Cristina Nehring is publishing *The Child Who Never Spoke: 23 1/2 Lessons in Fragility* with Heliotrope Books on October 24, 2023. She is the author of *A Vindication of Love: Reinventing Romance* for the 21st Century which was reviewed glowingly on the cover of the *New York Times Book Review*. She writes regularly for the *Atlantic*, *Harper's*, the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal* and many other publications. She lives in Paris with her daughter.

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