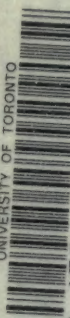


POEMS OF THE DANCE

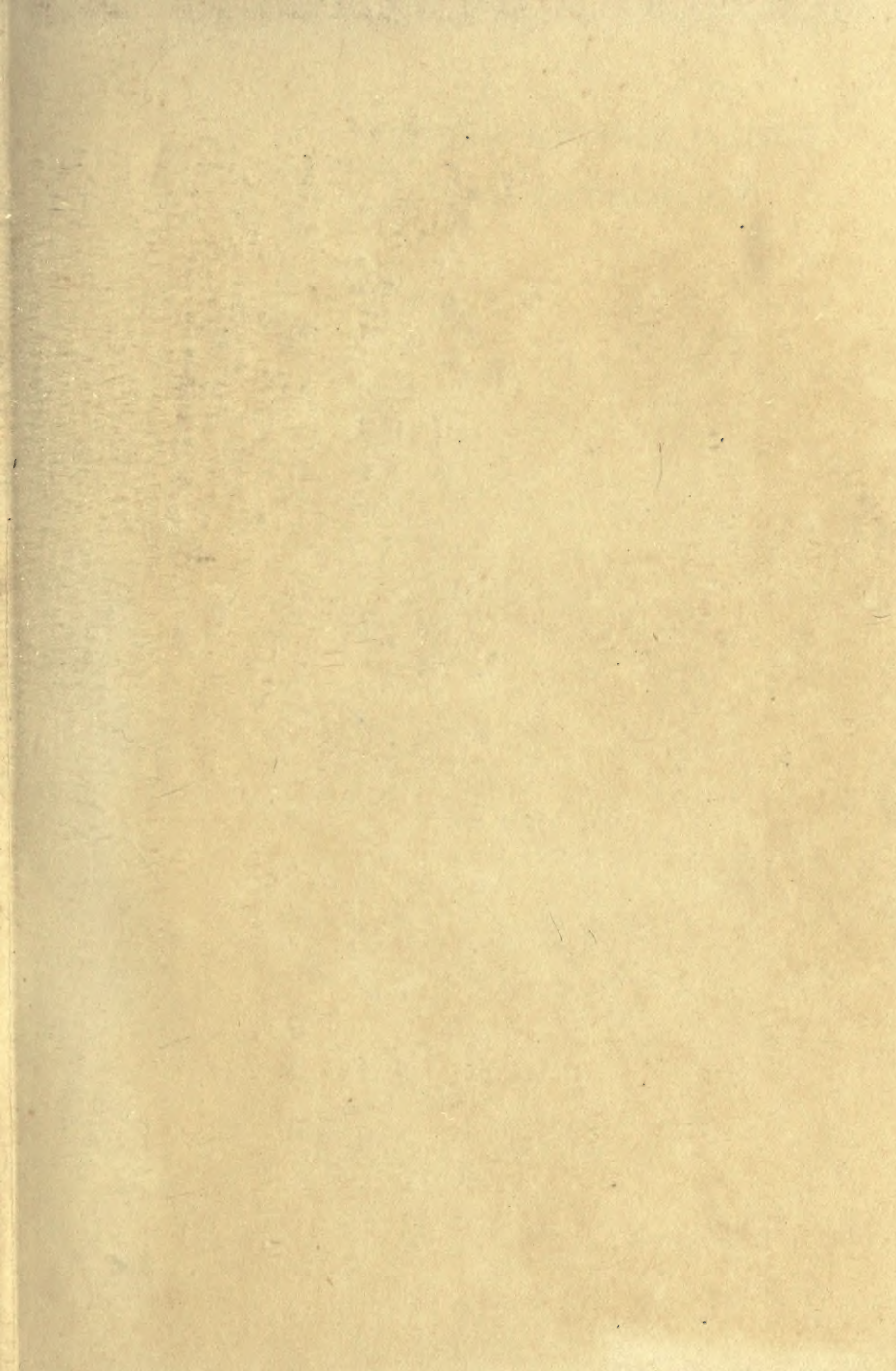
AN ANTHOLOGY

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



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EDWARD · R · DICKSON





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POEMS OF THE DANCE
AN ANTHOLOGY

NEW BORZOI POETRY

FALL 1921

THE PIER GLASS

By Robert Graves

A PENNY WHISTLE

By Bert Leston Taylor

POEMS OF THE DANCE

AN ANTHOLOGY, Edited By
Edward R. Dickson



POEMS OF THE DANCE

AN ANTHOLOGY

[1500 B. C.—1920 A. D.]

Chosen and Edited by

EDWARD R. DICKSON

with pictorial photographs by him

Introduction by

LOUIS UNTERMAYER



New York · ALFRED A. KNOPF · 1921


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TO EDWINE

Around whom there ever clings
the fragrance
of
friendship

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The editor is most grateful to the dancers who with grace and willingness lent much of their art in the making of the pictures in this first anthology of poems related to the dance. He is also personally indebted to Mr. Louis Untermeyer for his sympathetic help and discernment in the final selections of many of these poems. Mr. Untermeyer's prefatory essay places before the dancers, delightful glimpses into the beauty and tradition of their life-rejuvenating art.

For permission to reprint the poems in this volume, thanks, which cannot be adequately expressed, are due to the poets, the translators, and the various publishers, so many of whom are holders of the copyright. An alphabetical list of this indebtedness follows:

The Andiron Club of New York City, publishers of *The Colonnade*—for the poem *Ballet Russe* by John W. Draper.

The Bellman—for the poem *The Dance in the Steerage* by Joseph Warren Beach.

B. H. Blackwell, London—for the poem *Jessica Dances* from *Sonnets and Poems* by Eleanor Farjeon: and for the poem *Elfin Dancer* by Bernard Gilbert from *Rebel Verses*.

The Century Company—for the poem *Dancing Boys* from *War and Laughter* by James Oppenheim: for the poems *The Runner in the Skies* and *Dancers* from *Songs for the New Age* by James Oppenheim: for the poem *A Dancer*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

from *Trails Sunward* by Cale Young Rice: for the poem *Christmas Night* from *Christmas Night in the Quarters* by Irwin Russell.

The Century Magazine—for the poem *Mirror-Dance* by Edith M. Thomas.

Chapple Publishing Company, Ltd.—for the poem *The Choral Dance* from *Through Realms of Song* by Isaac Bassett Choate.

John Collier—for his poem *Isadora Duncan* from *The Indwelling Splendor*.

Ananda Coomaraswamy—for his translation of *The Dance of the Milkmaids* from *The Taking of Toll*.

The Cornhill Company—for the poem *The Dancing Girl* from *Fifty Years and Other Poems* by James Weldon Johnson.

Salomón dela Selva:—for his translation of two Fifteenth Century Spanish *Dance-Songs*.

Babette Deutsch—for her translation from the Russian of Victor Hofman's poem *A Languorous Waltz by the River*.

Dodd, Mead & Company—for the poem *A Prairie Minuet* from *Poems* by Ernest McGaffey.

George H. Doran Company—for the poem *That Night I Danced* from *Songs from the Journey* by Wilton Agnew Barrett: for the poems *Anna* and *Bacchanal* from *Banners* by Babette Deutsch.

Duffield & Company—for the poem *Pavlowa* by Murdock Pemberton from *The Broadway Anthology*.

The Four Seas Company—for the poem *At the Dance* from *One Who Dreamed* by Arthur Crew Inman.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Harcourt, Brace & Howe, Inc.—for the poems *On With The Dance* and *To a Faun* from *Including Horace* by Louis Untermeyer. For the poems *Isadora Duncan Dancing—Iphigenia*—and *Isadora Duncan Dancing—Chopin*—from *Challenge* by Louis Untermeyer.

Harper & Brothers—for the two poems *Butterfly Dance-Song* and *Maliseet Indian Dance-Song* from *The Indians' Book* by Natalie Curtis. For the poem *The Country Dance* from *The Laughing Muse* by Arthur Guiterman.

Hodder & Stoughton, London—for the selection from *Lyrics and Narrative Poems* by Herbert Trench.

Henry Holt & Company—for the poem *Mask* from *Chicago Poems* by Carl Sandburg: for the poem *An End of Dancing* from *Salvage* by Owen Seaman: for the poem *The Dancers* from *The Old Road to Paradise* by Margaret Widdemer.

Houghton Mifflin Company—The selections from the *Poetical works* of John Greenleaf Whittier: Richard Watson Gilder: Grace Fallow Norton: Frank Dempster Sherman and James Russell Lowell are used by permission of, and by special arrangement with Houghton Mifflin Company, the authorized publishers.

The International—for the poem *Isadora Duncan Dancing* by Joel Elias Spingarn.

Mitchell Kennerley—for the poem *The Dancer* from *An April Elegy* by Arthur Davison Ficke: for the poem *The Dance* from *Divinations and Creations* by Horace Holley: for the poem *The Dancing Days* from *Irish Poems* by Arthur Stringer: for the poem *La Gitana* from *Processionals* by John Curtis Underwood.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- John Lane Company—for the poem *The Dancer* from *The Vagabond and Other Poems* by R. C. Lehmann: for the poem *Indian Dancers* from *The Golden Threshold* by Sarojini Naidu: for the poems *April Midnight: To a Gitana Dancing: The Primrose Dance: Nora on the Pavement: To a Dancer: Javanese Dancers: The Dance:* from *Poems* by Arthur Symons. For the poem *To a Dancer of Tánagra* from *Garden Overseas and Other Poems* by Thomas Walsh.
- The Liberator—for the poem *Isadora Duncan* by Max Eastman.
- David McKay—for the poem *Danse Macabre* from *Mere Melodies* by Edwin Meade Robinson.
- The Macmillan Company—for selections from *Youth Riding* by Mary Carolyn Davies: from *Sword Blades and Poppy Seed* by Amy Lowell: from *The Present Hour* and *Complete Poems* by Percy Mackaye: from *You and I* by Harriet Monroe: from *Insurrections* by James Stephens: from *Songs of Kabir* by Rabindranath Tagore.
- The Masses—for the poems *To a Child Dancing* by Oscar Roesner: and *The Dance* by James Stevens.
- Elkin Matthew—for the poem *The Little Dancers* from *London Visions* by Laurence Binyon.
- Maunsell & Company, Ltd., Dublin—for the poem *The Dancer* from *Irishry* by Joseph Campbell.
- The Midland Magazine—for the poems *Tewa Corn Dance* by Rose Henderson and *A Child Dancing at Twilight* by Anna Blanche McGill.
- Moffatt, Yard & Company—for the poem *Let's go Dancing* from *City Ways and Company Streets* by Charles Divine.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

John P. Morton & Company—for the poem *The Dancer* from *The Poet and Nature* by Madison Cawein.

Humphrey Mulford, London—for the poem *Earth: The Passing of a Dancer* from *The Sun Thief and Other Poems* by Rhys Carpenter.

Mary Ellis Opdycke and Kurt Schwindler for their translation from the Spanish of Angel Guimera's poem *The Dance of the Nuns*.

Pagan Publishing Company—for the poem *Bacchante* by Alice Louise Jones.

Photo-Graphic Art—for the poem *Young Bacchante's Hymn* by Salomon dela Selva.

The Poetry Bookshop, London—for the poem *Pannyra of the Golden Heel* by Albert Semain as translated by James Elroy Flecker in *The Old Ships*.

Poetry: A Magazine of Verse—for the two poems *The Dancer* and *Poem to be Danced* by Helen Hoyt; for the poem *A Girl Dancing on the Sea Shore* by Henry C. Thomas.

Princeton University Press:—for the poems *Dance* by Raymond Peckham Holden and *Pyrrhic Dancers* by R. M. Jackson, from *The Book of Princeton Verse II*.

G. P. Putnam's Sons—for the poem *Dance Music* from *The Moonlight Sonata* by M. A. B. Evans: for the poem *The Cakewalk* by Wilfrid Wilson Gibson from *Georgian Poetry*: for the poem *The Dance* from *Collected Poems* by Grace Denio Litchfield: for the poem *Dancing Girls* from *Collected Poems* by Arthur Peterson: for the poem *The Fire Dancer* from *Ships in Port* by Lewis Worthington Smith:

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

for the poem *To Vernon Castle* from *The Winged Spirit* by Marie Tudor.

Charles Scribner's Sons—for the poem *The Praise of Dionysus* from *On Viol and Flute* by Edmund Gosse.

The Seven Arts—for the poem *The Harlem Dancer* by Eli Edwards.

G. Arnold Shaw—for the two poems *The Dance* and *To Isadora Duncan* from *Mandragora Poems* by John Cowper Powys.

Sherman, French & Company—for the poem *A Dance Hall* from *The Human Fantasy* by John Hall Wheelock: for the poem *Your Body's Motion is Like Music* from *Love and Liberation* by John Hall Wheelick.

Small, Maynard & Company—for the poem *The Dance of the Sunbeams* from *April Airs* by Bliss Carman.

Smart Set—for the two poems *A Cabaret Dancer* by Zoë Akins and *Première Danseuse* by Fanny Hodges Newman.

The Sunwise Turn, Inc.—for the poem *Vision of the Sacred Dance* from *The Dance of Siva* by Ananda Coomaraswamy.

The Trend—for the poem *Salome* by Pitts Sanborn.

James T. White & Company—for the poem *The Dancer in the Wood* from *Gods and Devils* by John Russell McCarthy: for the poem *Ho! Dancers* from *Out-of-Doors* by John Russell McCarthy.

Yale University Press—for the poem *Morgiana Dances* from *Merchants From Cathay*: for the poem *The Pale Dancer* from *Perpetual Light* by William Rose Benét: for the poem *A West Indian Dance* from *Beggar And King* by Richard Butler Glaenzer.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The selections from Homer are from Books *viii* and *xviii* of the *Odyssey* and *Illiad*. Hesiod's poem is from *The Theogony* and the selection from *Theocritus* is from *Idyll xviii*. The selections from *Euripides* are both from *The Bacchae* and those from *Aristophanes* may be found in his *Frogs*. Availability has been made of the excellent translations by Chapman, Elton and Gilbert Murray.

The ancient Hindu selection *Dawn* is from *Hymns of the Rigveda* and that of the *Dance of a Nautch Girl* is from *Psalms of the Brethren* as translated by Mrs. Rhys Davids.

The old Chinese poems are from *The Shu-King* as translated by James Legge.

Go, little book,
To him who, on a lute with horns of pearl,
Sang of the white feet of the Golden Girl:
And bid him look
Into thy pages: it may hap that he
May find that Golden Maidens dance through thee.

OSCAR WILDE.

FOREWORD

She comes—the spirit of the dance,
And but for those large, eloquent eyes,
Where passion speaks in every glance,
She'd seem a wandered from the skies.

—*Osgood.*

The poets now lead forth the dancers.—Through the market-places of ancient India and China: the palaces of Vulcan and Alcinous: over the hills of Helicon and the convent walls of Spain: through the streets of London and halls and cabarets of America: we may follow the dancers as they whirl in their vestments of verses mellowed and unmellowed by time. In many of these places I found the poets not only writing of the dancers: but dancing with them. Passionately have they, too, loved the rhythmic measure of the dance, for the poetic revelations on the long, and at times irksome, way to the shrines of the dancers and the poets, are of a beauty and variety worthy of these arts.

The accompanying impersonal pictures, espousing the cause of no particular dancer or school of dancing, and illustrating no particular poem, are used as decorative

FOREWORD

intervals. The photographic medium has been employed to link the oldest with the newest of the arts, and the pictures were nearly all made beneath unsecret skies and sunlit landscape.

And what can I say of this anthology other than express an entertained wish that *Poems of the Dance* may carry poetry farther into the realm of dancery, so that dancers may regard poetry with added appreciation and be voluntarily led to dance to the very poems written for them by so many poets, through so many ages.

E. R. D.

Inwood, Manhattan.

June, 1920.

A PREFATORY ESSAY BY LOUIS UNTERMAYER

In most catalogs it is listed as the seventh art. Obviously it should be the first. If the erudite statisticians whose souls worry along the shelves of the library had pierced their beloved past further than the seventies, they would have recognized that the impulse to leap in the air was the first aesthetic expression of joy. It came before song, even before speech. The chant sprang up almost immediately after to dramatize its emotion, and the raw rhythms of the savage drum followed to intensify it. From its aboriginal pacings, its swaying and tossing of limbs, the dance became not only the central passion but the most intense expression of the tribe; it was its religion as well as its ecstasy. It was not the exploiting of a single personality; it was the people who celebrated.

The childhood of the race was literally filled with dancing. Dancing was its sublimation; its apotheosis of fear, joy, anger, reverence, hatred, worship. Centuries ago in the African jungles, black warriors celebrated their phallic rites while, a continent to the north, Druid priestesses paced slowly beneath the upright rocks at Stonehenge. Even before the Indian girls were performing wild nautches in Hindu temples,

a Hebrew king on a sacrificial occasion had danced naked before his God, and the children of Israel, reverting to a more primitive hunger than the desire for ten commandments, had been found dancing frenetically about a golden calf. The war-dances of the early Greeks were unconsciously imitated (even to the head-dress, the movements of crouching and attack) by the red Indians of undiscovered America. Ancient art is a kaleidoscope of ritual dancing:—mysterious prancings and posturings before Priapic statues which later became converted into saints; devotees with dishevelled hair flying through Assyrian groves; the dancing ground of the Zunis crowded with children and chiefs swaying in rhythmic invocations for rain; the Pyrrhic dances at Sparta; the *Bibasis*, recorded on many a vase, where the performer took a special pride in striking his own buttocks with his heels; the Sun and Nature festivals; the later bacchanals in honour of the Bona Dea—the young world seems to have questioned and answered itself in rhythmic leaps and gesticulations.

“We begin to appreciate the serious nature and the importance of the dance among primitive folk,” writes Edward Carpenter in *Pagan and Christian Creeds*. “To dub a youth ‘a good dancer’ is to pay him a great compliment. Among the well-known inscriptions on the rocks in the island of Thera in the Aegean sea, there are many which record in deeply-graven letters the friendship and devotion to each other of Spartan warrior-comrades. It seems strange at first to

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find how often such an epithet of praise occurs as 'Bathyacles *dances well*, Eumelos is a *perfect dancer*.' One hardly expects one warrior to praise another for his dancing! But when one realizes what is really meant—namely the fitness of the loved comrade to lead in religious and magical rituals—then indeed the compliment takes on a new complexion."

It was with the sweep of Christian dogma and its accompanying repressions and taboos that the dance was degraded; it became an exhibition instead of an exaltation. Even its exponents were smirched by an appreciation that was furtive and salacious. After the first wave of prohibitive hypocrisy had passed, people began to revive the dance. But its religious vigour and clean magic were not part of the revival. Performers dwindled; audiences grew. Even the on-lookers' vision had changed; they came to enjoy the dance not because it was lovely but because it seemed lewd.

With the decay of this profound and deep-reaching art, the world suffered a loss that not all its static and manufactured beauty could redeem: the loss of the human body. . . . That sentence is, of course, a piece of poetic rhetoric. The human body, like the poor, we have always with us; but, like the poor, it is covered with rags and hidden in many places. In a most literal application of the phrase, civilization sought to deny the flesh. The denial of its glory was, however, something more than an aesthetic negation; it was like a denial of faith. But the repudiation, far from

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strengthening a frail morality, merely added a fresh burden to the already over-taxed sense of shame. It turned upon itself with poisonous effect. It put an unholy premium on an exposed breast; a thigh became something for silk tights and musical comedies; a publicly uncovered shoulder came to be the hall-mark of dissipated aristocracy, and a naked figure was the cue for an outraged censor. The tyranny of dress instead of making people blind to the human body merely made them furtive about it; a race of Peeping Toms.

And art, which is the sublimated record of life, received its greatest set-back with the hiding and debasing of the living flesh. Since the Greeks and Romans, practically no statues have enriched the world other than Michelangelo's and a few heroic marbles, until Rodin began a new departure from the oldest of models. When the body fell into disrepute, sculpture fell with it. One has only to think of the stony senatorial suits and the baggy bronze trousers of our modern effigies to realize that these trappings were not merely the symbols of art and propriety but of statesmanship!

And as Rodin rescued sculpture from its horrible, humourless parodies, so Isadora Duncan saved dancing from its ridiculous pirouettings, its inane *pas deux* and its paint and powder unrealities. The renascence, the international interest, the communal participation in the dance are all part of that vast movement of which she was both propagandist and prophetess. From the choreographic Russian Ballet to the smallest of the

neighbourhood schools, her influence is obvious. To have seen Isadora Duncan when she first danced to Gluck's "Iphigenia in Aulis" was to have seen one of beauty's swiftest and most memorable triumphs. And in her recent appearances that triumph was even greater. For the rapture and revelation came through a body no longer beautiful in itself; an ecstasy that was as bodiless as the magic with which it melted; austere, consecrated, compelling.

Yet if Isadora Duncan had been merely an isolated inspired dancer, the impetus of her reanimating art would never have reached beyond certain changes in the terpsichorean technique and a reaction from the elaborate formalism of the tarlatan ballet. It was her fidelity to the fundamental qualities of her art—its healing strength, its universal emotional release—that was her greatest contribution; the conviction that the dance was, first of all, a communal experience to be brought to its highest development by the people rather than a person.

More than one echo of this is captured in Mr. Dickson's anthology. His collection of poems of the dance is not only a unique assembling but is an illumined commentary: a record of how poets of various centuries and frequently opposed temperaments have responded to this seemingly neglected art. Possibly the most outstanding feature of Mr. Dickson's compilation is its range; he selects, with a discriminating catholicity, from the ancient Chinese and Hindu classics as well as from the most experimental moderns; if he seems par-

tial to the Elizabethans, it is not because he is unaware of the Georgians. From Jeremiah to James Oppenheim, from Shakespeare to Carl Sandburg, from William Blake to William Benét—one is given a wide variety of perceptions of a fundamental passion. Here, illuminated by a few of Mr. Dickson's sensitive photographs, are reminders of that primitive wonder.

Rousing the world, the dance still rejuvenates both art and life. For its leap expresses the oldest wish for freedom and its rhythms contain the mirth and gravity of youth.

LOUIS UNTERMAYER.

Note: The prefatory essay by Mr. Untermeyer was first printed, in another and more restricted form, as a *causerie* on The Dance in *The Seven Arts*.

E. R. D.



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POEMS OF THE DANCE

Dawn

Anonymous [Hindu 1500-1000 B.C.]

The Dawns have brought a distinct perception as
before;

Red-hued, they have attained their fulgent brilliancy.
They sing their songs like women active in their tasks,
Along their common path hither from far away,
Bringing refreshment to the liberal devotee,
Yea, all things to the worshipper
Who pours the juice.

She, like a dancer,
Puts her broidered garments on,
As a cow yields her udder so bares she her breast.

Dance of a Nautch Girl

Anonymous [Hindu 1500-1000 B.C.]

Bedecked with trinkets and with pretty frock,
Wreathèd with flowers, raddled with sandal wood,
In the main street, before the multitude
A Nautch girl danced to music's five-fold sound.
Into the city I had gone for alms,
And passing I beheld the dancer decked
In brave array, like a snare of Māra laid.

Vision of the Sacred Dance

Anonymous [Hindu 1500-1000 B.C.]

His form is everywhere: all pervading in His Siva-
Śakti:

Chidambaram is everywhere, everywhere His dance:

As Śiva is all and omnipresent,

Everywhere is Śiva's gracious dance made manifest.

His five-fold dances are temporal and timeless.

His five-fold dances are His Five Activities.

By His grace He performs the five acts,

This is the sacred dance of Umā-Sahāya.

He dances with Water, Fire, Wind and Ether,

Thus our Lord dances ever in the court.

Visible to those who pass over Māyā and Mahāmāyā

Our Lord dances His eternal dance.

The form of the Śakti is all delight—

This united delight is Umā's body:

This form of Śakti arising in time

And uniting the twain is the dance.

An Officer Dances for a Duke

Anonymous [Chou Dynasty 1121-1076 B.C.]

With mind indifferent, things I easy take.
In every dance I prompt appearance make:—
Then, when the sun is at his topmost height;
There, in the place that courts the public sight
With figure large I in the courtyard dance,
And the duke smiles, when he beholds me prance.
A tiger's strength I have; the steed's swift bound;
The reins as ribbons in my hands are found.
See how I hold the flute in my left hand;
In right the pheasant's plume, waved like a wand;
With visage red, where rouge you think to trace,
While the duke pleased, sends down the cup of grace.

A Riotous Dance

Anonymous [Chou Dynasty 877-841 B. C.]

The white elms by the east gate grow,
And clumps of oaks crown Yuen-K'ew's head;
There Tsze-chung's daughter oft we see,
Dancing about beneath the shade.
On a bright morning they have planned
To seek the plain that southward lies;
Then from her task of twisting hemp,
See! dancing through the mart she hies.

The Dance of Delight

Anonymous [Chou Dynasty 543 B.C.]

K'in—K'in—the bells peal on
And the lutes in the concert we hear.
Deep breathes the organ tone;
Sounding stones join their notes rich and clear.
The while through the vessel there ring
The Ya and the Nan which they sing,
And the dancers with flutes now appear.

A Dance in the Palace of Alcinous

Homer [850 B.C.]

This sung the sacred muse, whose notes and words
The dancers' feet kept as his hands his chords.
Ulysses much was pleased, and all the crew.
This would the king have varied with a new
And pleasing measure, and performed by
Two, with whom none would strive in dancery;
And those his sons were, that must therefore dance
Alone, and only to the harp advance,
Without the words. And this sweet couple was
Young Halius, and divine Laodamas;
Who danc'd a ball dance. Then the rich-wrought ball,
That Polybus had made, of purple all,
They took to hand. One threw it to the sky,
And then danc'd back; the other, capering high,
Would surely catch it ere his foot touch'd ground,
And up again advanc'd it, and so found
The other cause of dance; and then did he
Dance lofty tricks, till next it came to be
His turn to catch, and serve the other still.
When they had kept it up to either's will,
They then danced ground tricks, oft mix'd hand in hand,
And did so gracefully their change command,
That all the other youth that stood at pause,
With deaf'ning shouts, gave them the great applause.

A Dance in the Palace of Vulcan

Homer [850 B.C.]

Next to these, he cut a dancing place,
All full of turnings, that was like the admirable maze
For fair-hair'd Ariadne made, by cunning Daedalus;
And in it youths and virgins danc'd, all young and
 beauteous,
And glewèd in another's palms. Weeds that the wind
 did toss
The virgins wore; the youths wov'n coats, that cast a
 faint dim gloss
Like that of oil. Fresh garlands too, the virgins'
 temples bawdrics bound.
Sometimes all wound close in a ring, to which as fast
 they spun
As any wheel a turner makes, being tried how it will
 run,
While he is set; and out again, as full of speed they
 wound,
Not one left fast, or breaking hands. A multitude
 stood round,
Delighted with their nimble sport; to end which two
 began,
Mids all, a song, and turning sung the sports con-
 clusion.

The Dance of the Muses

Hesiod [735 B.C.]

Begin we from the Muses, O my song!
Whose mansion is the mountain vast and holy
Of Helicon; where aye with delicate feet
Fast by Jove's altar and purpureal fount
They tread the measured round; their tender limbs
Lav'd in Permessian waters, or the stream
Of blest Olmius, or pure Hippocrene,
On the high top of Helicon they wont
To lead the mazy measure, breathing grace,
Enkindling love, and glance their quivering feet.
Thence break they forth tumultuous, and enwrap
Wide with dim air, through silence of the night
Shape their ethereal way, and send abroad
A voice, in the stilly darkness beautiful.

The Dancer

Jeremiah [650 B.C.]

Again will I build thee,
And thou shalt be built,
O virgin of Israel.
Again shalt thou be adorned with thy tabrets,
And shalt go forth
In the dances of them that make merry.



O Bacchanals, Come!

Euripides [480-406 B.C.]

Hither, O fragrant of Tmolus the Golden,
Come with the voice of timbrel and drum;
Let the cry of your joyance uplift and embolden
The God of the joy-cry; O Bacchanals, come!
With pealing of pipes and with Phrygian clamour,
On, where the vision of holiness thrills,
And the music climbs and the maddening glamour,
With the wild White Maids, to the hills, to the hills!
Oh, then, like a colt as he runs by a river,
A colt by his dam, when the heart of him sings,
With the keen limbs drawn and the fleet foot a-quiver,
Away the Bacchanal springs!

The Long, Long Dances

Euripides [480-406 B.C.]

Will they ever come to me, ever again,
The long, long dances,
On through the dark till the dim stars wane?
Shall I feel the dew on my throat, and the stream
Of wind in my hair? Shall our white feet gleam
In the dim expanses?
Oh, feet of a fawn to the greenwood fled,
Alone in the grass and the loveliness;
Leap of the hunted, no more in dread,
Beyond the snares and the deadly press;
Yet a voice still in the distance sounds,
A voice and a fear and a haste of hounds;
O wildly labouring, fiercely fleet,
Onward yet by river and glen . . .
Is it joy or terror, ye storm-swift feet? . . .
To the dear lone lands untroubled of men,
Where no voice sounds, and amid the shadowy green
The little things of the woodland live unseen.

The Happy Dancer

Aristophanes [455-385 B.C.]

Iacchus high in glory, thou whose day
Of all is merriest, hither, help our play;
Show, as we throne thee at thy Maiden's side,
How light to thee are our long leagues of way.
Iacchus, happy dancer, be our guide.

Thyself, that poorest men thy joy should share,
Didst rend thy robe, thy royal sandal tear,
That feet unshod might dance, and robes rent wide
Wave in thy revel with no after care.
Iacchus, happy dancer, be our guide.

Lo there! but now across the dance apace
A maiden tripped, a maiden fair of face,
Whose tattered smock and kerchief scarce could hide
The merry bosom peering from its place.
Iacchus, happy dancer, be our guide.

Dancing in the Meadow

Aristophanes [445-385 B.C.]

Thou that dwellest in the shadow
Of great glory here beside us,
Spirit, Spirit, we have hied us
To thy dancing in the meadow!
Come, Iacchus; let thy brow
Toss its fruited myrtle bough;
We are thine, O happy dancer; O our comrade, come
and guide us!
Let the mystic measure beat;
Come in riot fiery fleet;
Free and holy all before thee,
While the Charities adore thee,
And thy Mystae wait the music of thy feet.

The Marriage of Helen and Menelaus

Theocritus [270 B.C.]

And so in Sparta long ago the maids,
With blooming hyacinth their locks among,
In fair-haired Menelaus' halls, before
The newly-limnèd bridal-chamber, set
Their dances—twelve fair girls, the city's pride,
The flower of Lacedemon's maids,—what time
The younger son of Atreus wooed and won
Helen, the darling child of Tyndareus,
And took her to his bower. In one accord
They sang, with measured beat and woven steps,
While loud the halls rang with the marriage-lay.

On with the Dance

Horace [Book ii Ode ii 65 B.C.]

Why all these questions that worry and weary us?
Let's drop the serious rôle for a while.
Youth, with smooth cheeks, will be laughing behind us;
Age will not mind us; the cynic—he'll smile.

Come, for the gray hairs already are fretting us;
Girls are forgetting us. Lord, how we've got!
Come, let's convince them our blood is—well, red yet.
We are not dead yet. Let's show them we're not!

Yes, we'll have cups till you can't keep a count of
them;
Any amount of them—hundreds, at least.
I'll have the table all tempting and tidy—
And we'll get Lyde to come to the feast!

To a Faun

Horace [Book iii Ode xviii 65 B.C.]

You sprightly mischief dancing by,
As you pursue the nymphs that fly
 From your embraces,
Run lightly through my garden plot,
Respect the flower-beds that dot
 My favorite places;
Avoiding please the early peas while going through
 your paces.

Be gentle to the pigs and sows,
The horses, chickens, ducks and cows;
 Pray, don't alarm them.
And treat each tender, youngling kid
With comradeship, as if you did
 Not want to harm them.
They'll frisk and how their heads will bow if you should
 pass and charm them!

For you there shall be sacrificed
The herd's unblemished, highest-priced
 And best example.
Incense shall cloud the festive shrine
And there shall be great bowls of wine
 For you to sample—
Providing all the while, of course, my grounds you do
 not trample.

And now, to celebrate your day,
Cattle romp and shepherds play
 For flocks to gambol.

The world throws off its sordid shams
And no one works while wolf and lambs
 Together amble.

The village goes to tear its clothes on rustic bush and
 bramble.

The town turns out, a giddy rout:
Lodger, landlord, lover, lout,
 Prince and pastor.

While laborers who dig or till,
Dance with passion, leaping still
 Higher, faster.

Striking the earth, their enemy, to show they are its
 master!

The Dance on the Terrace

Li-Tai-Pe [T'Ang Dynasty 699-763 A.D.]

Never more beautiful,
In loveliest balance,
There dances before him—
Beauty itself—Si-Chy! . . .
Fatigued by love, alas,
Upon his couch to rest she lies.

The Village Dance

(Medieval Latin Students' Song)

Anonymous [12th Century]

Wide the lime-tree to the air
Spreads her boughs and foliage fair;
Thyme beneath is growing
On the verdant meadow where
Dancers' feet are going.

Through the grass a little spring
Runs with jocund murmuring:
All the place rejoices;
Cooling zephyrs breathe and sing
With their summer voices.

Invitation to the Dance

(Medieval Latin Students' Song)

Anonymous [12th Century]

Cast aside dull books and thought;
Sweet is folly, sweet is play:
Take the pleasure Spring hath brought
In youth's opening holiday!
Right it is old age should ponder
On grave matters fraught with care;
Tender youth is free to wander,
Free to frolic light as air.

Live we like the gods above;
This is wisdom, this is truth;
Chase the joys of tender love
In the leisure of our youth!
Keep the vows we swore together,
Lads, obey that ordinance;
Seek the fields in sunny weather
Where the laughing maidens dance.

There the lad who lists may see
Which among the maids is kind;
There young limbs deliciously
Flashing through the dances wind:
While the girls their arms are raising.
Moving, winding o'er the lea,
Still I stand and gaze, and gazing,
They have stolen the soul of me!

The Dancing Friar

Anonymous [15th Century (English)]

Jacke took his pype and began to blowe,
Then the friar, as I trowe,
Began to daunce soone,
As soone as he the pype herd,
Like a wood-man he fared,
He lepte and daunced aboute;
The greres scratched hym in the face,
And in many an other place,
That the blode brast out;
And tare his clothes by and by,
His cope and his scapelary,
And all his other wede.
He daunced amonge thornes thycke,
In many places they dyde hym prycke,
That fast gan he blede.
Jacke pyped and laughed amonge,
The friar amonge the thornes was thronge,
He hopped wunders hye;

At the last he held up his honde,
And sayd "I have daunced so longe,
That I am lyke to dye;
Gentyll Jacke, holde thy pype still,
And my trowth I plyght the tyll,
I will do the no woo."

The Urchins' Dance

John M. Lyly [1554-1600]

By the moon we sport and play,
With the night begins our day;
As we frisk the dew doth fall;
Trip it, little urchins all!
Lightly as the little bee,
Two by two and three by three;
And about, about we go.

Ariel's Song

William Shakespeare [1564-1616]

Come unto these yellow sands,
And then take hands:
Curt'sied when you have, and kissed—
(The wild waves whist)—
Foot it featly here and there;
And sweet Sprites, the burthen bear.
 Hark, hark!
 Bow, wow!
The watch-dog's bark:
 Bow, wow,
 Hark, hark! I hear
The strain of strutting Chanticleer.



Dancing

Sir John Davies [1569-1626]

Of all their ways I love Meander's path,
Which to the tune of dying swans doth dance;
Such winding flights, such turns and cricks he hath,
Such creaks, such wrenches, and such dalliance;
That, whether it be hap or heedless chance,
In this indented course and wriggling play,
He seems to dance a perfect cunning hay!

But wherefore do these streams for ever run?
To keep themselves for ever sweet and clear;
For let their everlasting course be done,
They straight corrupt and foul with mud appear.
O ye sweet nymphs that beauty's loss do fear,
Contemn the drugs that physic doth devise,
And learn of love this dainty exercise.

See how those flowers that have sweet beauty too
(The only jewels that the earth doth wear,
When this young sun in bravery her doth woo),
As oft as they the whistling wind do hear,
Do wave their tender bodies here and there;
And though their dance no perfect measure is,
Yet oftentimes their music makes them kiss.

Dancings of the Air

*(Antinous praises Dancing before
Queen Penelope)*

Sir John Davies [1569-1626]

'For that brave Sun the Father of the Day,
Doth love this Earth, the Mother of Night:
And like a reveller in rich array,
Doth dance his galliard in his leman's sight,
Both back and forth, and sideways, passing light;
His princely grace doth so the gods amaze,
That all stand still and at his beauty gaze.

But see the Earth, when he approacheth near,
How she for joy doth spring and sweetly smile;
But see again her sad and heavy sheer
When changing places he retires awhile;
But those black clouds he shortly will exile,
And make them all before his presence fly,
And mists consum'd before his cheerful eye.

And now behold your tender nurse the Air
And common neighbour that aye runs around;
How many pictures and impressions fair
Within her empty regions are there found;
Which to your senses Dancing do propound.
For what are Breath, Speech, Echoes, Music, Winds,
But Dancings of the Air in sundry kinds.

A Song to the Maskers

Robert Herrick [1591-1634]

Come down, and dance ye in the toyle
Of pleasures, to a Heate:
But if to moisture, Let the oyle
Of Roses be your sweat.

Not only to your selves assume
These sweets, but let them fly;
From this, to that, and so Perfume
E'ne all the standers by.

A Goddess Isis (when she went,
Or glided through the street)
Made all that touch't her, with her scent,
And whom she touch't turne sweet.

The Fairies' Dance

Anonymous [1604-1675]

Dare you haunt our hallowed green?
None but fairies here are seen.

Down and sleep

Wake and weep;

Pinch him black and pinch him blue,

That seeks to steal a lover true!

When you come to hear us sing,

Or to tread our fairy ring,

Pinch him black and pinch him blue!

O thus our nails shall handle you!

The Elves' Dance

Anonymous [1604-1675]

Round about in a fairy ring-a,
Thus we dance and thus we sing-a;
Trip and go, to and fro,
 Over this green-a;
All about, in and out,
 Over this green-a.

At a Wedding

Sir John Suckling [1609-1641]

Her feet beneath her petticoat,
Like little mice, stole in and out,
As if they feared the light.
And oh! she dances such a way
No sun upon an Easter day
Is half so fine a sight.

The Daunce of the Daughters of Delight

Edmund Spenser [1552-1599]

They say that Venus, when she did dispose
Herselfe to pleasaunce, used to resort
Unto this place, and therein to repose
And rest herselfe as in a gladsome port,
Or with the Graces there to play and sport;
That even her owne Cytheron, though in it
She used most to keepe her royall court
And in her souveraine maiesty to sit,
She in regard hereof refusde and thought unfit.

Unto this place when as the Elfin Knight
Approcht, him seemed that the merry sound
Of a shrill pipe he playing heard on hight,
And many feete fast thumping th' hollow ground,
That through the woods their eccho did rebound.
He nigher drew, to weete what mote it be:
There he a troupe of ladies dauncing found
Full merrily, and making gladfull glee,
And in the midst a shepheard piping he did see.

He durst not enter into th' open greene,
For dread of them unwares to be descryde,
For breaking of their daunce, if he were seene;
But in the covert of the wood did byde,
Beholding all, yet of them unesyde:
There he did see, that pleased much his sight,
That even he himselfe his eyes envyde,
[59]

An hundred naked maidens lilly white
All raunged in a ring and dauncing in delight.

All they without were raunged in a ring,
And daunced round; but in the midst of them
Three other ladies did both daunce and sing,
The whilest the rest them round about did hemme,
And like a gurlond did in compasse stemme;
And in the middest of those same three was placed
Another Damzell, as a precious gemme
Amidst a ring most richly well enchaced,
That with her goodly presence all the rest much graced.

Such was the beauty of this goodly band,
Whose sundry parts were here too long to tell:
But she, that in the midst of them did stand,
Seem'd all the rest in beauty to excell,
Crownd with a rosie gurlond that right well
Did her beseeme: and ever, as the crew
About her daunst, sweet flowres, that far did smell,
And fragrant odours they uppon her threw;
But, most of all, those Three did her with gifts endew.

Those were the Graces, daughters of delight,
Handmaides of Venus, which are wont to haunt
Uppon this hill, and daunce there day and night.
Those three to men all gifts of grace do graunt;
And all that Venus in herselfe doth vaunt
Is borrowed of them: but that faire one,
That in the midst was placed paravaunt,
Was she to whom that Shepheard pypt alone;
That made him pipe so merrily, as never none.

The Daunce of the Shepheards

Edmund Spenser [1552-1599]

One day, when as the shepheard swaynes together
Were met, to make their sports and merrie glee,
As they are wont in faire sunshynie weather,
The whiles their flockes in shadowes shrouded bee;
They fell to daunce: then did they all agree,
That Colin Clout should pipe, as one most fit;
And Calidore should lead the ring, as hee
That most in Pastorellaes grace did sit:
Thereat frown'd Coridon, and his lip closely bit.

But Calidore, of courteous inclination,
Tooke Coridon and set him in his place,
That he should lead the daunce, as was his fashion;
For Coridon could daunce, and trimly trace;
And when as Pastorella, him to grace,
Her flowry girlond tooke from her owne head,
And plast on his, he did it soone displace,
And did it put on Coridon's in stead:
Then Coridon woxe frolicke, that earst seemed dead.

Gratiana Dancing

Richard Lovelace [1618-1658]

She beat the happy pavèment—
By such a star made firmament,
Which now no more the roof envies!
But swells up high, with Atlas even,
Bearing the brighter, nobler heaven,
And, in her, all the deities.

Each step trod out a lover's thought,
And the ambitious hopes he brought,
Chained to her brave feet with such arts,
Such sweet command and gentle awe,
As, when she ceased, we sighing saw
The floor lay paved with broken hearts.

So did she move, so did she sing,
Like the harmonious spheres that bring
Unto their rounds their music's aid:
Which she performèd such a way
As all the enamoured world will say,
"The Graces danced, and Apollo played."

Dance Song

Anonymous [15th Century (Spanish)]

Your feet are like twin nests
Where even turtles brood,
And when you dance it seems to me
As if, in a tall wood

A thousand birds of dawn
Awake to greet the day
Outdoing one another there
With lovely things to say.

So angels dance, to music
That God makes merrily!
I know what wings inform your flesh,
And dread your flight from me!

Dance Song

Anonymous [16th Century (Spanish)]

The rustling of your silks
Whene'er you dance
Is audibly the counterpart
Of your wanton glance.

And will you flee me, will you?
And do you think to flee?
With a *tan, tan, tan!* and a *ton, ton, ton!*
And a *lir-a-lee!*

You never can elude me;
By day, your glance
Will tell me true where you have hid:
By night—your silks at dance.

Then will you have me, will you?
And will you come with me?
With a *swish, swish, swish!* and a *sweet, sweet, sweet!*
A measure above your knee!

The Dance of the Milkmaids

Anonymous [18th Century (Hindu)]

Filled with delight they mingled with Mohan,
Their gems and jewels shone like lamps,
And then was Krishna with Rādhā enlaced,
The milkmaids sported in the glades and groves:
In every ring the Lord was found,
Every milkmaid's heart consented,
Some brought scent and some brought incense,
Some fulfilled the Vedic rites:
While Rādhā fed His mouth with pan,
Another waved the fan above His head!
Some beat time and some the drum,
Some did chant the evensong,
With many a song and dance and honeyed word
To celebrate the General Dance:
Wherever a lad with a damsel dallied,
There were Rādhā and Krishna mated.

The Perfect Dance

Anonymous [1720 (French)]

The perfect dance needs music sweet
As dreams; seductive, so the feet
Are led to move as by some spell;
Or music as of murmuring shell.
True dance shows naught of haste or heat,
Nor trick, nor any kind of cheat.
Beauty and Joy, twin souls, should meet
To make that lovely miracle—
The perfect dance.

A field of wind-kissed waving wheat;
A swaying sea, scarce waked to greet
The dawn; clouds drifting; these things tell
What dance may be—if it excel.

Men said they saw in hers complete,—
The perfect dance.



The General Dance

Anonymous [18th Century (English)]

Tomorrow will be my dancing day.
I would my true love did so chance
To see the legend of my play,
To call my true love to my dance.
Sing Oh! my love, Oh! my love, my love, my love, my
love,
This I have done for my true love.

When I was born of Virgin pure
Of her I took fleshy substance,
Then was I knit to man's nature,
To call my true love to my dance.
Sing Oh! my love, Oh! my love, my love, my love, my
love,
This I have done for my true love.

Then up to Heaven I did ascend,
Where now I dwell in sure substance
On the right hand of God, that men
May come unto the General Dance.
Sing Oh! my love, Oh! my love, my love, my love, my
love,
This I have done for my true love.

Butterfly Dance-Song

Tawakwaptiwa

Now for corn-blossoms we wrestle
Now for bean-blossoms we wrestle.

We are youths, 'mid the corn
Chasing each other in sport,
Playing with butterfly-maidens.

Hither, hither!
Thunder will hither move,
We shall summon the thunder here,
That the maiden-plants
Upward may help one another to grow.

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Maliseet Indian Dance-Song

Anonymous

Hey, ho, dance away,
Dance away!
Hey, ho, dance away,
Dance away!
Dance away!
Harder, faster let us go.
Dance away!
Dance away!
Youths and maidens, be gay.
Dance away!
Youths and maidens, be gay,
Dance away!
Faster and faster let us go.
Dance away!
Come, come, come, come!

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The Dance at the Little Gila Ranch

James Barton Adams [1843-1918]

Git yo' little fillies ready;
Trot 'em out upon the floor—
Line up there, you cusses! Steady!
Lively now! One couple more.
Shorty, shed that ol' sombrero!
Bronco, douse that cigarette!
Stop yer cussin' Casinero
'Fore the ladies! Now all set!
Salute yer ladies, all together,
Ladies opposite the same!
Hit the lumber with yer leather,
Balance all and swing yer dame!
Bunch the heifers in the middle,
Circle, stags, an' do-se-do—
Pay attention to the fiddle,
Swing her round and off yer go!
First four forward! Back to places!
Second Follow! Shuffle Back!
Now you've got it down to cases,
Swing 'em till their trotters crack!
Gents all right a-heel an' toein'
Swing 'em! Kiss 'em if you kin!
On to the next an' keep a-goin'
Till yo' hit yer pards agin'
Gents to center, ladies round 'em!
Form a basket; balance all!

Whirl yer gals to where yo' found 'em!
Promenade around the hall!

Balance to yer pards an' trot 'em!
Round the circle double quick!
Grab an' kiss 'em while you've got 'em!
Hold 'em to it if they kick!

Ladies! Left hand to yer sonnies!
Alaman! Grand right an' left!
Balance all an' swing yer honies -
Pick 'em up and feel their heft!
Promenade like skeery kattle,
Balance all an' swing yer sweets!
Shake yer spurs an' make 'em rattle!
Keno! Promenade to seats!

A Cabaret Dancer

Zoë Akins [1886-]

Completely of our day and of our mood,
You dance and charm the multitude;
No venerable tradition guides your feet—
O Pagan of café and street!

With accents subtle and strange energy,
And a repose more strange to me,
You step and glide—and step—and stop—and
 sway—
And step—and stop—and step—and glide away.

The woman in your arms is like a snake,
Responsive to each move you make;
Watchful and eager, following, alert,
Ensnared and charmed—too grave to flirt—
Aware of every thought she reads your eyes,
And gives obedience, and tries
To please you utterly; her face is proud,
And something perfect is allowed
To grace you both.

Abandoned and intense,
But with a sort of innocence,
You step—and stop—and step—and glide,
and go—
Through measured movements, swift and
slow. . . .
Ennui is vanquished while we watch you dance
Your sensual, naive romance.

That Night I Danced

Wilton Agnew Barrett [1885-]

That night I danced,
And he was still only a little while in the earth.
People, if they had known,
Would have said I was cold-hearted and did not care
 much,
But all that day I had been seeing his face—
The face shut in the buried coffin—
And the pain had made a darkness of my heart.
So to whirl and wend through the dancers seemed
 little sin—
To give over to the music, little forgetfulness.
For the dead, if they have the power to remember,
Have the gift to understand.

The Dance in the Steerage

Joseph Warren Beach [1880-]

The lights are dim on the steerage deck,
But the stars are big and nigh,
And a white wave flashes by the rail
Whenever the deck goes high.

They have cleared a space among the ropes
Enough to spin a top,
And there the cook and a mother of nine
Spin round with never a stop,—

Spin like a top, spin like a ball,
Spin like a humming wheel,
Spin like a world upon its poles
On tireless toe and heel.

And what's the tune to which they spin?
Accordion, fiddle, flute?
Tune of the white wave, tune of the stars,
Tune of the great souls mute?

Never a word and never a smile
And never a glance they drop
Never a pause to scrape and bow,
But round and round like a top.

Never a glance and never a word
And never the ghost of a smile,
While stars go marching down the west
And waves wash mile on mile.

And is it love? And is it prayer?
And is it childish glee?
It is the craving of the world
And that which had to be.

Morgiana Dances

William Rose Benét [1886-]

Aha! A guest!
Within my master's house, a guest—
To eat
With his meat
No salt?
Say you so!
His vest—his vest—
What glitters through his merchant's vest?
Fast and fleet! Tabor, beat!
Round again we go!

Scarves about my head—so!
Silver girdle, flash—ho!
Round again—again we go.
Round again—again we go.
Chalk upon the panel there;
Oil upon the pave—beware!
A guest, ho! A guest, ho!
A sweet guest, ho!

Laden mules, laden mules
Came within our court there.
Who boil
In their oil?
The thieves?
Say you so!
Fair fools—fair fools!

The moon saw the sport there!
Spin, spin! Tabor, din!
Round again we go!

Thieves' beards be red—so!
Poinard, forth and flash—ho!
Round again—again we go.
Round again—again we go.
Master Ali, drunk with wine.
Houssain, only I divine!
A guest, ho! A guest, ho!
A sly guest, ho!

For treasure, for pleasure
Stabbed and plotted many men.
The fox
Picked the locks.
The springs
Seized him—so!
Full measure—full measure!
Purses for my dancing, then?
Purple are the shadows;
The lamps are red and low.

Poinard at my breast—so!
Poinard at my breast—ho!
Round again—again we go.
Round again—again we go.
Here's a dagger's smart should be
Salt for such villainy!
A guest, ho! A guest, ho!
A dead guest, ho!

The Pale Dancer

William Rose Benét [1886-]

My heart's a still shore; all the golden sails are gone.
A pale, silver floor in the hugeness of dawn
My heart lies once more, and the little ripples beat
This small, idle tune, like the fall of elves' feet,
"Oh, come, airy dancer—come dance on us, Sweet!"

She comes like a breeze in the midnight of May.
The tumbling of the seas makes a tunic far away.
She comes with closed eyes, with light footsteps she
nears,
And she sings the low song that each lipping ripple
hears.
"In love there is laughter, and after—come tears!"

She dances like the moonlight—light, languorous,
aswoon.
Her face floats uplifted, a flower to the moon,
To the moon pale in heaven and the dawn coming slow,
And under her measure the ripples breathe low,
"The dancer, the dancer from ages ago!"

Oh, dance me no more! Witching dancer be gone!
For my heart's a still shore in the hugeness of dawn,
And some answer is thrilling, is trembling for me
In the errie still brightness of heaven and sea,
And the little ripples whisper, "What thing can it be?"
[78]

Pale dancer, pale dancer, atread without breath,
Majestic and yearning and brooding as death,
Oh, passion of my heart, oh, enchanted despair
That glides before God like a bird from a snare,
Return, then, return to me, clothe me with care! —
But the beautiful dancer has vanished in air.

The Little Dancers

Laurence Binyon [1869-]

Lonely, save for a few faint stars, the sky
Dreams; and lonely, below, the little street
In its gloom retires, secluded and shy.
Scarcely the dumb roar enters this soft retreat;
And all is dark, save where come flooding rays
From a tavern window: there, to the brisk measure
Of an organ that down in an alley merrily plays,
Two children, all alone and no one by,
Holding their tatter'd frocks, through an airy maze
Of motion, lightly threaded with nimble feet,
Dance sedately: face to face they gaze—
Their eyes shining, grave with a perfect pleasure.



Song

William Blake [1757-1827]

I love the jocund dance,
The softly-breathing song,
Where innocent eyes do glance,
And where lips the maiden's tongue.

I love the laughing vale,
I love the echoing hill,
Where mirth does never fail,
And the jolly swain laughs his fill.

Tam O'Shanter

Robert Burns [1759-1796]

As Tammie glow'rd, amaz'd, and curious,
The mirth and fun grew fast and furious;
The piper loud and louder blew,
The dancers quick and quicker flew,
They reel'd, they set, they cross'd, they cleekit,
Till ilka carlin swat and reekit,
And coost her duddies to the wark,
And linket at it in her sark!

On Maria Dancing

Robert Burns [1759-1796]

How graceful Maria leads the dance!
She's life itself. I never saw a foot
So nimble and so elegant; it speaks,
And the sweet whispering poetry it makes
Shames the musician.

Isadora

(*To her Six Dancers*)

Witter Bynner [1881-]

Beauty came out of the early world,
Her hyacinthine hair still curled,
Her robe still white on auroral limbs;
And her body sang the self-same hymns
It long ago had sung to the morn
When death gave birth and love was born.

And once again her presence proved,
As most immortally she moved,
That in her meditative eye
The child of death can never die
But dances with inspired feet
On every hill, in every street.

She raised her hand—and Irma came,
Theresa, Lisel, each like a flame,
Anna, Erica, Gretel: the tread
Of life still dying, never dead. . . .
And like a bird-song in a wood,
Within their very heart she stood.

An Ode to a Dancer

(*Isadora Duncan*)

Witter Bynner [1881-]

O Keats, thy Grecian urn has been upturned
And from its ashes is a woman made,
To dance them back again as when they burned
In young antiquity and pipes were played!
And who that early woman was that danced
Them dead, thou, Keats, wert born too late to know
And born too early for her later birth.
And yet thy lips of poesy could blow
Both lives, until their ankles met and glanced
Between the dead world and the unborn earth.

Here is thy living witness from the dead,
With the garment and the measure and the grace
Of a Greek maid, with the daisies on her head
And the daring of a new world in her face.
Dancing, she walks in perfect sacrifice. . . .
Dancing, she lifts her beauty in her hands
And bears it to the altar, as a sign
Of joy in all the waters and the lands.
And while she praises with her pure device,
The breath she dances with, O Keats, is thine!

Life rises rippling through her like a spring,
Or like a stream it flows with deepening whirl.

Leaves in a wind taught her that fluttering
Of finger-tips. She moves, a rosy girl
Caught in a rain of love; a prophetess
Of dust struck on the instant dumb with pain;
A lovely melancholy being, wild
With remembering, with groping to attain
The edge and entrance of a wilderness,
To play again, untroubled as a child.

She strikes at death. But the escaping foe
Awaits unwearied, knowing every wile.
Forward she comes to take the final blow—
And in defeat defies him with her smile. . . .
Upward she bears her throat to the keen thrust
Of triumph:— "*O ye gods of time who give
And take, ye makers of beauty, though I die
In this my body,—beauty still shall live
Because of me and my immortal dust!—
O urn! Take back my ashes! It is I!*"

Don Juan

Lord Byron [1788-1824]

And then he danced;—all foreigners excel
The serious Angels in the eloquence
Of pantomime! He danced, I say, right well,
With emphasis, and also with good sense —
A thing in footing indispensable;
He danced without theatrical pretence,
Not like a ballet-master in the van
Of his drilled nymphs, but like a gentleman.

Chaste were his steps, each kept within due bound,
And elegance was sprinkled o'er his figure;
Like swift Camilla, he scarce skimm'd the ground,
And rather held in than put forth his vigour,
And then he had an ear for Music's sound,
Which might defy a crochet critic's rigour.

The Waltz

Lord Byron [1788-1824]

Muse of the many-twinkling feet! whose charms
Are now extended up from legs to arms;
Terpsichore! — too long misdeem'd a maid —
Reproachful term bestow'd but to upbraid —
Henceforth in all the bronze of brightness shine,
The least a vestal of the virgin Nine.
Far be from thee and thine the name of prude;
Mock'd, yet triumphant; sneer'd at, unsubdued;
Thy legs must move to conquer as they fly,
If but thy coats are reasonably high;
Thy breast — if bare enough — requires no shield;
Dance forth—SANS ARMOUR—thou shalt take
the field,
And own — impregnable to most assaults,
Thy none too lawfully begotten “waltz.”

The Dancer

Joseph Campbell [1879-]

The tall dancer dances
With slowly-taken breath:
In his feet music,
And on his face death.

His face is a mask,
It is so still and white:
His withered eyes shut,
Unmindful of light.

The old fiddler fiddles
The merry "Silver Tip"
With softly-beating foot
And laughing eye and lip —

And round the dark walls
The people sit and stand,
Praising the art
Of the dancer of the land.

But he dances there
As if his kin were dead:
Clay in his thoughts,
And lightning in his tread.

The Dance of the Sunbeams

Bliss Carman [1861-]

When morning is high o'er the hilltops
On river and stream and lake,
Wherever a young breeze whispers,
The sun-clad dancers wake.

One after one upspringing,
They flash from their dim retreat;
Merry as running laughter
Is the news of their twinkling feet.

Over the floors of azure
Wherever the wind-flaws run,
Sparkling, leaping, and racing,
Their antics scatter the sun.

As long as water ripples
And weather is clear and glad,
Day after day they are dancing,
Never a moment sad.

But when through the field of heaven
The wings of storm take flight,
At a touch of the flying shadows
They falter and slip from sight.

Until, at the gray day's ending,
As the squadrons of clouds retire,
They pass in the triumph of sunset
With banners of crimson fire.

Earth: The Passing of a Dancer

Rhys Carpenter [1889-]

She is made of mist and silver, and her clinging dress
is bound

With the planets for her girdle and the stars to deck
her round;

And she dances, dances, dances, with her softly gliding
feet

Round and round her golden lover, and their
burdening glances meet.

She hath deeds of men for raiment, and within her
hair she places

Shining souls of high adventure and the beauty of
young faces;

And she dances, dances, dances with her softly gliding
feet

Down and down eternal paths where past and future
meet.

She hath gone: the silence echoes, where but now her
music thrilled,

And the floor of heaven darkens, and the sound of
feet is stilled.

The Dancer

Madison Cawein [1865-1914]

Those gold marauders of the air,
The brown bees, bustling everywhere,
 Led me away
To where, in sulphur-colored showers,
The Autumn heaped her gold of flowers,
 And bound her hair
With all the beauty of their disarray.

Above her head the birds took flight,
And by her side a shape of light
 Danced like a Fay,
Who wove strange magic with the grace
Of glancing limbs and twinkling face,
 And raiment bright,
That blew like gossamers about the day.

Who was this creature, dancing past?
Who came and went, now slow, now fast,
 At airy play;
The goldenrod unto her feet
Kept time; and with her heart's wild beat,
 To the very last,
The Black-eyed Susans set their heads asway.

I asked of flower and of tree:
"Who is this Elfin? What is she

So bright and gay?"
They murmured what I could not hear;
For she kept laughing in my ear,
 Bewildering me,
And whispering words too wild for me to say.

Then, in a movement, she was gone,
Flying a veil of cloudy lawn,
 Pinned with a ray;
And then I heard: "The Wind am I!
The Wind who now must say good-bye,
 And go till dawn
And dance with stars and waves upon the bay."

And all night long, snug in my bed,
I heard her feet as far they led
 The dancing spray;
And to the moon and stars a shout
She raised and tried to blow them out,
 Then laughed and fled
To greet the dawn who walked on hilltops gray.

The Choral Dance

Isaac Bassett Choate [1833-1917]

With claspèd hands, devoutly circling round
An altar garlanded with myrtle green,
Fair maids in honor of the Cyprian Queen
Weave festal dance, their brows with myrtle crowned;
Their feet unsandalled beat the grassy ground
To music made by rustic Pan, unseen.
Piping two scraggy olive trees between
While lithe limbs register the mystic sound.

Slowly the marble crumbles into dust,
The chiselled lines — so delicate — grow dim,
And flush of joy from maiden cheeks is gone;
But yet those lifelike, graceful figures must
Repeat the modulation of the hymn
As here the happy choral dance goes on.



Isadora Duncan

(The Modern Age)

John Collier [1884-]

O Priestess of an unperish'd fire that glows
To ecstasy ere our mind can understand!
O Life-Spring from a permanent stream that flows
Even 'neath our famish'd land!

We bless you for the mighty Thought you bring,
And for the dumb despairs your motions thrill
To such glad life as in our dreams may sing,
And which is singing still.

We bless you for the token to us all
You flash'd on our raised vision, through the dust
Of staggering hours. O Lode-Star beautiful
In skies that are not lost!

O'er road that is not lost. O'er April lands
Where rains dance through the tide of human flowers,
And sunrise, and the work of human hands
Fulfil unspeakable hours!

Oh not a dream! Though when you went away
Such silence fell as long we had not known,
Who had forgotten Silence in the fray —
Oh out of silence grown,

And from your dancing, from the awakening reed
Of unheard music, from the beckoning hand
Of your sweet summons, rise the desires that lead
Into your land, our land!

The Dancer

Mary Carolyn Davies [—]

I watch the dancer,
Bending,
Lithely stooping,
Leaping, rippling,
Her motions changing
As though she were a song of many notes;
Her white robes swaying,
Her scarves like water under wind;
Her face held up to joy
As a leaf to sunlight;
Her arms yearning and crying out for beauty,
Reaching up
And pulling down beauty upon her head,
Then flinging it from her, to our outstretched hands.

But it is you
Calm, restrained, motionless,
Sitting beside me in your orchestra seat, watching
her also.
It is you whom I see dancing with such ecstasy,
Tortured with music
Mad with motion
Giving yourself to your joy;
It is your throat, upon whose whiteness the light falls,
Your transfigured face I see
Held up to gladness
[97]

As a leaf to sunlight,
And your lifted arms
Asking, and holding beauty.
You
Seeing my tranced eyes fixed upon her
Are a little jealous.
— You need not be,
Beloved.—

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Dance

Mary Carolyn Davies [—]

God's in me when I dance.
God, making Spring
Out of his thoughts
And building worlds
By wishing.
God
Laughing at his own
Queer fancies,
Standing awed,
And sobbing;
Musing,
Dreaming,
Throbbing;
Commanding;
Creating —
God's in me
When I dance.

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Young Bacchante's Hymn

Salomón dela Selva [1894-]

Dionysus! Dionysus! Dionysus!
By the throes of thy Mother and her swift travail,
Out of the waters, where they shimmer pale,
Rise, Woman-fleshed, twice born of dew and fire,
And lead the sacred dance of Earth's desire:
Evoé! Evoé! Evoé!

The tendrils of the vine shall cling to thy hair;
Passionate lips, like grapes, shall be crushed for thee;
Dionysus! fairer than Apollo is fair,
Youngest of the gods who waitest wondrously
To give the land new youth and love anew,
O Woman-souled, twice born of flame and dew,
Dionysus! Dionysus! Dionysus!

O wisest above wisdom! More than god,
Who hast in thee the life-breath of the sod
And art the eternal fruitfulness of Earth!
Teach now the virgins new virginity,
How love an endless maidenhood shall be
With Earth's abundance and the brave Sea's mirth!
O Woman-worshipped, born of dew and fire,
Lead us the sacred dance of our desire!
Evoé! Evoé! Evoé!
Dionysus!

Anna

Babette Deutsch [1895-]

Are there holier ones
Than these?
Is there a more fit altar for worship?
Limbs of a young Aphrodite;
The virgin torso;
Feet firmly planted,
Or lifted only in rhythm,
Beating the ground like the clear
Round golden notes of the cymbal;
Fingers that draw the heart
Like a flute that calls in the twilight;
Brows serious,
Serene,
Hair wind-blown and dark,
Lips that are parted slightly,
A wondering god's;
But this is a maiden. . . .
This is the flying torch
From the maternal temple.

Bacchanal

Babette Deutsch [1895-]

Slowly to the altar . . . slow,
As with heavy feet,
Bound by a woe foreknown,
Slowly we come.
Our arms bear high
Their bloomy burden, lift and loose them all:
We shake our limbs free in the purple fall
Of offering.
The dark is torn with a cry.

Oh we are mad,
We are drunk with wine of the god.
Our feet are athrill with the juice of the vine we have
trod.
Our arms are upflung,
Our fingers are spread on the air;
The scent of the grape in our nostrils;
The wind in our hair:
We are mad with our maidenhood;
Night has come down on the hills.
We dance for the god
Where the music of mystery fills
The hollows of earth, and the stars leap white in the
sky.

Our glad hands softly beat.
With beautiful stamping feet
We come.
With flying hair;
To face the awful joining,
Throat-lifted, pale knees bare.

Slowly on the dark mountain-top
Moving,
More slowly now. . . .
Faint and vague are our traces,
Trouble and halt in our paces
Where wan dawn follows close.
God, we are overthrown.
Night breaks, we lie alone.
Evoé! Dionysos.

The Village Coquettes

Charles Dickens [1812-1870]

Join the dance, with step as light
As every heart should be tonight;
Music, shake the lofty dome,
In honour of our Harvest Home.

Join the dance, and banish care,
All are young, and gay, and fair;
Even age has youthful grown,
In honour of our Harvest Home.

Join the dance, bright faces beam,
Sweet lips smile, and dark eyes gleam;
All these charms have hither come,
In honour of our Harvest Home.

Join the dance, with step as light,
As ev'ry heart should be tonight;
Music, shake the lofty dome,
In honour of our Harvest Home.

Let's Go Dancing

Charles Divine [1889-]

Let's go dancing, you and I,
Far away from town,
And beneath October's sky,
Columbine and clown;
Autumn leaves are mad and spry,
Dancing, let us dare defy
Etiquette of town.

Where no restaurants are nigh —
Not a satin gown,
Linen collar or a tie,
As they do in town —
Out beneath October's sky,
There's no one to lift an eye
If your hair comes down.

Ballet Russe

John W. Draper [1893-]

The scene is lit with surging light
And swinging lamps and chandeliers;
And, as the music-rhythm veers,
And as the dance in variant flight
Now dulls, now flames upon our ears,
The radiance changes to our sight,
The radiance from the chandeliers.

A gash upon night's canopy,
A yellow form on indigo,
Flitting, fleeing, to and fro;
And gauzes follow like the sea
A-curling ever up the way;

And gauzes flicker to and fro:
And, like cyclonic tempests, blow.
Then all the veilings fade to gray,
And fading, flutter to repose:
They vanish in a sudden close;
The dancers swiftly slip away,
Their gauzes flowing to and fro.

The music wails in long decline,
Goes wailing to the chandeliers;
And, as the final cadence nears,
And as the final sounds repine,
Merging to sadness in our ears,
The swinging lights, as at a sign,
Go out within the chandeliers.

Isadora Duncan

Max Eastman [1883-]

You bring the fire and terror of the wars
Of infidels in thunder-running hordes,
With spears like sun-rays, shields, and wheeling swords
Flame shape, death shape and shaped like scimitars,
With crimson eagles and blue pennantry,
And teeth and armor flashing, and white eyes
Of battle horses, and the silver cries
Of trumpets unto storm and victory!

Who is this naked-footed lovely girl
Of summer meadows dancing on the grass?
So young and tenderly her footsteps pass,
So dreary-limbed and lightly wild and warm,
The bugles murmur and the banners furl,
And they are lost and vanished like a storm!

The Harlem Dancer

Eli Edwards [1889-]

Applauding youths laughed with young prostitutes
And watched her perfect, half-clothed body sway:
Her voice was like the sound of blended flutes
Blown by black players upon a picnic day.
She sang and danced on gracefully and calm,
The light gauze hanging loose about her form;
To me she seemed a proudly swaying palm
Grown lovelier for passing through a storm.
Upon her swarthy neck, black, shiny curls
Profusely fell; and, tossing coins in praise,
The wine-flushed, bold-eyed boys, and even the girls,
Devoured her with eager, passionate gaze:
But, looking at her falsely-smiling face,
I knew her self was not in that strange place.



Dance Music

M. A. B. Evans [—]

The dance goes on in merry guise,
With rhythmic sway, and fall, and rise,
And throws its spell that all adore
The merry lads and lassies o'er,
And none its influence denies.

While rosy cheeks and laughing eyes
Provoke full many lovers' sighs;
Though maids are coy, and youths implore,
The dance goes on.

For, with a charm that never dies,
To youthful hearts its power applies.
And, though no longer, as of yore,
One finds one's place upon the floor,
Be sure within one's heart, if wise,
The dance goes on.

The Death of the Minuet

Catherine Maria Fanshawe [1765-1834]

But Minuets are no more !
No more the well-taught feet shall tread
The figure of the mazy zed :
The beau of other times shall mourn,
As gone, and never to return,
The graceful bow, the curts'y low,
The floating forms, that undulating glide
(Like anchored vessels on the swelling tide),
That rise and sink, alternate, as they go,
Now bent the knee, now lifted on the toe,
The side-long step that works its even way,
The slow pas-grave, and slower balancé—
Still with fix'd gaze he eyes the imagin'd fair.
And turns the corner with an easy air.
Not so his partner—from her 'tangled train
To free her captive foot, she strives in vain ;
Her 'tangled train, the struggling captive holds
(Like Great Atrides) in its fatal folds ;
The laws of gallantry his aid demand,
The laws of etiquette withhold his hand.
Such pains, such pleasures, now alike are o'er,
And beau and etiquette shall soon exist no more.
In their stead, behold advancing,
Modern men and women dancing !
Step and dress alike express,
Above, below, from head to toe,
[110]

Male and female awkwardness.
Without a hoop, without a ruffle,
One eternal jig and shuffle;
Where's the air, and where's the gait?
Where's the feather in the hat?
Where's the frizz'd toupee? and where
Oh, where's the powder for their hair?
Where are all their former graces?
And where three quarters of their faces?
With half the forehead lost and half the chin?
We know not where they end, or where begin.

Jessica Dances

Eleanor Farjeon [—]

When Joy and Molly on the lawn
Danced bare of foot like spirits of dawn
Jessica watched in wonderment
Until delight would not be pent,
And shoe and sock she cast in mirth
And felt her naked toes touch earth.
Swiftly the fresh green joy shot in
Through the fresh young rosy skin,
And in a golden glee the child
Went dancing innocently-wild
Up and down and round and round
Like daisies covering the ground,
Called sunward by the age-long spell
No ages can destroy
Of youth that never sighed or sinned,—
While elfin Molly and fairy Joy
Danced on like lilies in a dell
Or harebells in the wind.

The Dancer.

Arthur Davison Ficke [1883-]

Strange little dancer whom I saw here once,
You could leaven this lump.
Where are you tonight? . . .

They were goodly people, all of them,
With whom I had dined here
That night of ours,—
Substantial citizens
With their virtuous wives
And a stray daughter or two.
And when I spoke my admiration of your dancing.—
You, the little half-clothed painted cabaret performer
Who was pirouetting before us,—
They laughed a strange laugh,
Wondering if the city had corrupted me.
It was only as the absurd voicing
Of a preposterous fancy,
That one of the virtuous wives said to me—
“Why don't you go over and dance with her, your-
self!”

Her voice stung me,—it was so sure
That to dance with you would be a shameful and un-
pleasant thing.
So I answered crossly—“For a nickel I would!”
And one of the daughters,
Who doubtless suffered later for her evil act,
Handed me a nickel. . . .

And that was how it came to be
That you and I
Before the gaping herd of respectable fellow townsmen
Forgot the world.
Light was the pressure of your hand
And your body was as answering to my touch
As a little willow to the wind.
I could not see your painted face against my shoulder;
I forgot that you were clad in veils to lure the lustful
crowd;
The tawdry glitter of the hour faded and died
As you and I soared up
Upon the music.
O soul of a bird!
O cooling wind from the mountains of wild laurel!
O dreamer of a pattern of whirling stars
Down which we moved
In dizzy orbits!
Perfumes of Arabia were around us;
Tremulous melody heard by none other
Out of some distant garden poured in wild song.
And there were lights in the air;
And there were memories
Of forgotten Thracian hillsides,
And madness, and oblivion,
And a fierce white peace.

Then the dance ended. . . .
And you were once more a little painted dancer
In an ugly café

Before a vulgar audience.
So I led you back to your table
And thanked you conventionally,
And turned to go. — But a sudden impulse
Swept me. —
And in the sight of all the gaping respectabilities
I turned to you again
And kissed your passive, your strange, actual lips
In recognition and farewell
To that winged spirit which you late had been.

The Cakewalk

Wilfrid Wilson Gibson [1878-]

In smoky lamplight of a Smyrna Café,
He saw then, seven solemn negroes dancing,
With faces rapt and out-thrust bellies prancing
In a solemn ceremonial cakewalk,
Dancing and prancing to the sombre tom-tom
Thumped by a crookbacked grizzled negro squatting.
And as he watched . . . within the steamy twilight
Of swampy forest in rank greenness rotting,
That sombre tom-tom at his heartstrings strumming
Set all his sinews twitching, and a singing
Of cold fire through his blood — and he was dancing
Among his fellows in the dank green twilight
With naked, oiled, bronze-gleaming bodies swinging
In a rapt holy everlasting cakewalk
For evermore in slow procession prancing.

Elfin Dancer

Bernard Gilbert [—]

Beneath unfathomable seas,
Deeper than dreams,
Sounder than sleep,
Beyond the magic of trees
Where never light nor gladness gleams,
Where neither life nor love can glow;
There, you lie low:
Frozen, encased in crystal shape,
Enwrapped, enmeshed by claws that gape;
And not until you start from sleep
May you be drawn from cavern deep,
And never till the earth has quaked
Can you from fairy trance be waked.

You dance!
You dance on tiptoe!
Up from the grave of withered fears,
The earth-wind, rushing in your ears,
Spirit of joy and youth, most fair,
Crowned by your wonder-loosened hair;
You dance!
You dance on tiptoe!
The grass just bending at your feet
The earth untouched, as fairy-fleet
Onward you go,
Upward you flow,

Up through the leaves, a spiral flame,
A tongue of fire, with arrow-aim,
Whose mystic essence inter-blending
Flows in a torrent never ending;
Through that strange tree whose blossoms pale
Wreathe, lily-like, a bridal veil!
(Mysterious tree, whose knotted base
Scarce bears the ardour of your chase!)
Emerging thence by rapture swayed
You rise from leafy ambushade
Poised in the ether to and fro,
One moment, hesitating — so —
Flashing from elfin eyes one glance
Still on tiptoe
You dance!
You dance!

Oh! earth born spirit!
Swift wonder-child of flame;
The essence of your being,
Dull human eyes, unseeing,
Can never hope to tame;
You may be worshipped from afar!
By faith, by hope, we see the star
From whence you came:
Fleet as the wind amongst the hills
Your spirit listeth as it wills;
Oh Pagan huntress, chaste and wild,
You dwell amongst us, undefiled!
But if we falter at your door

At one false step your shrine, before
One discord note, one word awry
You vanish straight from human eye:
The earth unfolds herself to seize,
Your laughter echoes in the trees;
And you are known no more.

The Dancers

Richard Watson Gilder [1844-1909]

Behold these maidens in a row
Against the birches' freshening green;
Their lines like music sway and flow;
They move before the emerald screen
Like broidered figures dimly seen
On woven cloths, in moony glow —
Gracious, and graceful, and serene.
They hear the harp; its lovely tones
Each maiden in each motion owns,
As if she were a living note
Which from the curvèd harp doth float.

A West Indian Dance

Richard Butler Glaenzer [1876-]

Ho! There's a dance in the Ballahou!
B'lip—b'lip—b'lip . . . be—rum! be—rum!

Hark! The roll of the big tambou,
Roll of the goat-skin barrel-drum!

Over the river to old Roseau
Rumbles the call of the Tambouyé;
Over the river, and faster, flow
The barefoot blacks to their wild bélé.

See them grinning—Pierre, Zabette!
Are they going? Who is not!
In working jupe, in gay douillette,
In tatters, in no matter what!

Watch them swaying as they come,
Turbanned, with every parrot hue!
B'lip—b'lip—b'lip . . . be—rum! be—rum!
Aie! There's a dance in a Ballahou!

The Praise of Dionysus

Edmund Gosse [1849-]

Behold, behold! the granite gates unclose,
And down the vales a lyric people flows;
Dancing to music, in their dance they fling
Their frantic robes to every wind that blows,
And deathless praises to the vine-god sing.
Nearer they press, and nearer still in sight,
Still dancing blithely in a seemly choir;
Tossing on high the symbol of their rite,
The cone-tipped thyrsus of the god's desire;
Nearer they come, tall damsels flushed and fair,
With ivy circling their abundant hair:
Onward, with even pace, in stately rows,
With eye that flashes, and with cheek that glows,
And all the while their tribute-songs they bring,
And newer glories of the past disclose,
And deathless praises to the vine-god sing.

The Dance of the Nuns

Ángel Guimerá [1847-]

In the fields near the convent of San Raphael
Hear the sounds of the graceful Sardanas swell;
They enchant and entice with mellifluous spell.

When was e'er a Sardana as sweet as this,
E'en the elders now join in the dancers' bliss,
And the children are tripping to win mother's kiss.

Over mountains and meadows the breezes stray,
And they carry the tune so jolly and gay,
E'en the rivers are stirring to music's play.

On the crest of the mountain a convent stands,
To its garden on tiptoes trip timid bands
Of the nuns, where the rose all its fragrance expands,

The sounds of the dance with its innocent sway
And the mirth of the crowd and the merriment gay
Touch their hearts with a yearning that naught can
 allay.

Locking hands in the shadows come sisters twain,
While the others are lured by the glad refrain,
Until all of them sway in a graceful chain.

Now they tread so demurely a measured round,
While they blush, as they trip to the lilting sound
And their toes hardly press on the mossy ground.

Grumbling Mother Superior reaches the throng,
But her heart quickly softens: Forgotten long,
Scenes of her childhood stir on wings of the song.

The full moon is arising; her face is wan,
She peeps over the wall, where the nuns have gone,
And she calls to them fondly: "Dance on! dance on!"



The Country Dance

Arthur Guiterman [1871-]

Tread of the thistledown
Lighting on heather,—
Curls in a dancing crown
Bursting their tether,—
Laugh of a bobolink
Swaying on rushes,—
Breath of the meadow-pink
Born of her blushes,—
Free as a swallow dips,
Moving to viol-tones,
Over the mead she trips,
Men's hearts her stepping-stones.

The Dancer in the Shrine

Amanda Benjamin Hall [—]

I am a dancer. When I pray
I do not gather thoughts with clumsy thread
Into poor phrases. Birds all have a way
Of singing home the truth that they are birds,
And so my loving litany is said
Without the aid of words.

I am a dancer. Under me
The floor dreams lapis lazuli,
With inlaid gems of every hue —
Mother o'pearl I tread like dew,
While at the window of her frame
Our Lady, of the hallowed name,
Leans on the sill. Gray saints glare down,
Too long by godliness entranced,
With piety of painted frown,
Who never danced —

But Oh, Our Lady's quaint, arrested look
Remembers when she danced with bird and brook,
Of wind and flower and innocence a part,
Before the rose of Jesus kissed her heart
And men heaped heavy prayers upon her breast.
She watches me with gladness half confessed
Who dare to gesture homage with my feet
Or twinkle lacey steps of joy
To entertain the Holy Boy;
Who, laughing, pirouette and pass,

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Translated by the colored glass,
To meanings infinitely sweet.
And though it is not much, I know,
To fan the incense to and fro
With skirt as flighty as a wing,
It seems Our Lady understands
The method of my worshipping,
The hymns I'm lifting in my hands ——
I am a dancer ——

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the editor.

The Cabaret Dancer

Hermann Hagedorn [1882-]

Breathe not the Tomorrow in her ears.
Tomorrow is for men who send their ships
Over the sea to moor at laden slips;
For dreamers, dawdlers, martyrs, pioneers,
Not for this golden mote. To her appears
No hovering dark that prophesies eclipse.
Grace of the swallow in the swaying hips,
Heart of the swallow, knowing not the years!

Breathe not a word of beauty that shall fade,
Of lagging steps, of bare and lonely sorrow
On roads that other dancing feet have found
Beyond the grove where life with laughter played.
Breathe not a word of that grim land Tomorrow,
Lest she should quake to ashes at the sound.

Tewa Corn-Dance

Rose Henderson [—]

Over the purple mesas, over the pale green valley,
over the golden pueblo, the summer sun beams.

White-browed clouds sweep up across the scorching
corn lands,

Borne on the hidden wings of the mighty-breasted rain
god.

Deep blue shadows wave among the yellowing corn
stalks.

Cottonwoods are bright against the sky and the
sunshine.

Softly out of the long blue shadows, out of the yellow
earth, out of the bleaching corn stalks,

March the grotesque *koshare*, the ancient, protecting
spirits.

Slowly their withered feet join in the stately cadence.

Corn leaves wave from their heads and their pollen-
colored bodies.

Out of the east and the west, out of the south come
the runners,

Heralding dangers from foes who lurk to steal and
to plunder.

Warriors drink and depart to hurl back the treacherous
spoilers.

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Young men join in the dance, their bodies virile and glowing.

Their steps are the lifting leaves, the rhythm of waving grasses.

Their steps are the sound of rain on the softly scrolling corn blades.

Their steps are the vibrant earth, wrapping the long brown corn roots.

They move in a prayer-dance to the mighty gods of the harvest.

Silent faces watch from the balconies of the pueblo.

Dark eyes turn to the clouds, and the sun, and the sky-flung mountains.

Out of the desert the wind breathes over the golden pueblo, over the golden flesh of the gently-swaying dancers.

The corn leaves whisper, the shadows wave, and the earth grows gold in the sunset.

A Languorous Waltz Beside the River

Victor Victorovitch Hofman [1882-1911]

Still was the evening of the ball,
The summer ball, with dancers wending
Where ancient linden shadows fall
Upon the river steeply bending.

Where in the trees the breezes breathe
And willows droop like drowsy dreamers;
Where it seemed beautiful to wreath
The lanterns and the colored streamers.

A languorous waltz of slow retreatings,
A waltz that singing hardly sounded.
And many faces, many meetings.
Soft clouds like women's shoulders rounded.

The river looked a sculptured stream,
Serenely the whole heaven holding,
A fluent and enchanted dream
Of joyous miracles unfolding.

A crimson mantle, golden-bright,
Upon the clouds the sun was flinging.
The dream-swept waltz was drowned in light,
And calling through the dusk and singing.

A languorous waltz beside the river,
And many meetings, many faces;
And nearness of the lovely quiver
Where eyelash with long eyelash laces.

Dance

Raymond Peckham Holden [1894-]

Loud the horns and sweet the strings,
Silvery the soft flute sings.
Music melting flesh away,
Music making holiday.
Loud the horns and wild the strings,
Plaintively the soft flute sings.
Shining limbs with colors blend,
With horns that thrill and bows that bend;
Limbs that leap and limbs that lie,
Wild limbs swift with melody.
Laughing face, triumphant arm,
None but trembles and is warm,
None but gleams and glows with fire,
Swaying flame of blown desire.
Lips and eyes and limbs arrayed
In beauty out of music made,
Telling what the ages know
Of singing breath and winds that blow,
Of birds that eyes are glad to see
And wings that stir invisibly,
Of faces and the flowers of earth —
All things that live and wait for birth.

The Dance

Horace Holley [1887-]

Slow moonlight steeps the jungle-glade,
And all the movement, all the pulse of night,
Gathers within the hollow-sounding ocean.
Long, melancholy waves
Beat nature's avid life within my blood;
An essence slips from the still trees
Freeing my thought from dream.
I rise,
Feeling the air like womanhood about me,
Arise and grope through silence to the moon,
Then turn, sway, bow and pause again,
Waiting the rhythm.
Find me, sea-loud night!
Find me, for you are spent and old.
I bring fresh heart and joyous consciousness
Will give you speech, soul, freedom, thought,—
Will tell the old, heroic lie of life
So gaily none will doubt for another age.
The rhythm falls like woman's passion
Upon my lips, my hands;
The world's sudden music and I dance,
I dance, the soul of the lonely, moon-steeped glade,
The thought, the freedom of the laboured sea,
Swayed by a grace not mine
In worship to a long-forgotten god.
The womanhood of things closely and warm
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Presses my thrilling senses,
Creating at my fingers and my eyes
A vision,— Eve, all palpable and warm,—
That beats upon my sobs
And mates my life with passion.
Eve!
I come . . . O Eve!
Then, like a setting moon, a storm subdued,
The rhythm closes round about itself,
Passing to secret consummation
Beyond nature, farther out than thought.
Lost even to heart-beats.
And I, tossed by, forgotten, wingless to follow,
Sink back into the apathetic darkness
With earth's ten million years,
Into the prison-house of tree and ocean.
Eve. . . .

Poem to Be Danced

Helen Hoyt [—]

Can a poem say my heart
While I stand apart?
I myself would be the song,
I myself would be the rhyme,
Moving delicately along;
And my steps would make the time,
And the stanzas be my rest.

What can I say with the words of my lips?
Oh, let me speak from my toes' tips
Of my treasure and my zest!

Dancing, I can tell every sweet —
Slow and soft, soft and fleet.
Dancing, I can tell every ill,
All my inmost wish fulfil,
All my sorrowing I can heal.
Oh, to reveal
With the bending of my head,
With the curving of my hand,
What no poem has ever said,
What no words could understand!
Things for a book too sad, too gay,
The verses of my feet would say;
Telling sorrow, telling delight
Into the very marrow of men's sight.

The Dancer

Helen Hoyt [—]

Why are you gay, little tree,
That you dance on the hillside? —
Holding out your delicate skirt,
Holding out your delicate fingers,
Tilting your little head when the wind comes blowing,
Softly,
Suddenly,
You will shake your twinkling locks,
You will leap and skip, little tree,
Tree on the hillside —
Lightly,
And twirl yourself away.

The Ballet School

Russell Hughes [1898-]

O, what a ballet-school!

The master is the boisterous springtime wind.

Under his rough instruction, slim grass blades

Curve and bend and learn their porte de bras.

The dandelions pirouette in skirts

Of yellow tarletan. They are younger, yet

Are premier ballerinas striving to

Become as excellent in technique as

The pink peach-blossom, caught from off her bough

And flung (by a designing maitre-ballet)

Across the floor among the corps-ballet.

Three robins and a cello-throated dove

Make fitting music for pliez and turns,

And arabesques.

O, what a ballet-school!

At the Dance

Arthur Crew Inman [1895-]

He is so old;
He sits against the further wall,
Once he was tall.
I wonder why he sits in here
Where all is youth and cheer?
He is so old.
A queer half-smile, like shadow mirth
Or mellowed pain,
Plays across his mouth;
Deep lines of care unfold.
Soft music throbs again,
A lilting, languid air.
He watches where
The dancers sway.
It is so gay
And he is so old, so old.
He shuts his wrinkled eyes.
I wonder what the dreams that rise
Behind those curtained, trembling lids;
What memory bids
Him conjure up his half-forgotten youth?
He must be wise —
But he is old, uncouth;
His white hands shake;
The dancers take
Their undulating, graceful flow,

Now fast — now slow,
And pass him by;

He sits alone, unseen,
An alien,
Lost in some romance
Caught
From fleeting thought.

Mad youth returns unsought.
I know not why he sits in here,
Where all is youth and cheer,
And watches while they dance.

Pyrrhic Dancers

R. M. Jackson [— — —]

None of your silly modern dancers they—
Half-women, draped in chiffon, smeared with paint —
But men strong both of body and of mind,
Akin to those of the Heroic Age
Of whom the Gods made friends. Such men as fought
Upon the blood-soaked plain of Ilium
And poured their lives out on Skamander's banks
Because a prince's wife had proved untrue.
They are the fathers, lovers, heirs of Greece,
Endowed with every beauty, strength and grace—

.
By two and two, with motion swift or slow,
They posture in the plastic attitudes
Of this the dance of war, the Pyrrhic Dance,
Acting a martial dumbshow to the sound
Of clashing bell-like arms and rhythmic chant.
The torchlight glinting helm and shield and sword
Reveals, accentuates the subtle mould
Of might-muscled naked limb and torse.
The brown of sun-tanned skin, the gold of bronze,
The red of shield device and glancing plume
Move in a flaring chiaroscuro 'gainst
The darkly spacious background of the night.
And all the while the well-stressed numbers sound.



Now, in a burst of noise, the music ends.
The dancers vanish from the torches' light.
A long-drawn line of flitting ghostly shapes
Melting into the darkness. On each form
In turn the glimmer lingers, dims, and dies.
Until they all are gone. Now to the feast—
After the plunge in the cool star-flecked pool
To cleanse their sweat-drenched limbs. The flute-
girls wait
Rose-garlanded to charm them. Through the streets,
Thither they haste to spend the hours of night
In mirth and wine and song and transient love;
To sleep the weary sleep of early day
Couched with fair forms of women bought for gold.

Salome

Orrick Johns [1887-]

The fruit of that beauty
Was too heavy for my branch.
Here I lie flung upon the road
By storms that came too soon.

I have flowered
And borne no fruit;
I have bled
And borne no spring.

What was music to me but one voice,
The soft dropping leaves,
The rising of the wind like a blade at dark-coming
The snapping even of the twig that bore me!

O dim far wine of the sky,
I have ripened under you,
I have decayed under you. . . .
I shall sleep under you.

The Dancing Girl

James Weldon Johnson [1871-]

Do you know what it is to dance?
Perhaps, you do know, after a fashion;
But by dancing I mean,
Not what's generally seen,
But dancing of fire and passion,
Of fire and delirious passion.

With a dusky-haired señorita,
Her dark, misty eyes near your own,
And her scarlet-red mouth,
Like a rose of the south,
The reddest that ever was grown,
So close that you catch
Her quick-panting breath,
As across your own face it is blown,
With a sigh, and a moan.

Ah! that is dancing,
As here by the Carib it's known.
Now, whirling and twirling
Like furies we go;
Now, soft and caressing
And sinuously slow;
With an undulating motion,
Like waves on a breeze-kissed ocean;—
And her scarlet-red mouth

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Is nearer your own,
And the dark, misty eyes
Still softer have grown.

Ah! that is dancing, that is loving,
As here by the Carib they're known.

Bacchante

Alice Louise Jones [1894-]

I bathe in the lush of the moon;
Of her shadows I weave
From my breast to my knees a whole garment
To tantalize Pan!
My mouth has the red of the adder
With sharp teeth that sting
As they close on the mouth of another.
My breasts are like great pointed bubbles
Which the hands
Of some wood-god have fashioned.
. . . I wait for the beat of Pan's hoofs
As he leaps
Pushing great hairy fingers to crumble the shoots
Of the vine and bushes that hide me:—

Then
Spring I erect,
Tossing glad swaying hands and bright shoulders,
A moment,
And then,—
Fleet of foot, with wild laughter
I whirl and am gone.

The Dance of the Merry Damsels

John Keats [1795-1821]

And as I sat, over the light blue hills
There came a noise of revellers: the rills
Into the wide stream came of purple hue —
 'Twas Bacchus and his crew!
The earnest trumpet spake, and silver thrills
From kissing cymbals made a merry din —
 'Twas Bacchus and his kin!
Like to a moving village down they came,
Crown'd with green leaves, and faces all on flame;
All madly dancing through the pleasant valley,
 To scare thee, Melancholy!
O then, O then, thou wast a simple name!
And I forgot thee, as the berried holly
By shepherds is forgotten, when, in June,
Tall chestnuts keep away the sun and moon: —
 I rush'd into the folly!

Within his car, aloft, young Bacchus stood,
Trifling his ivy-dart, in dancing mood,
 With sidelong laughing;
And little rills of crimson wine imbrued
His plump white arms, and shoulders, enough white
 For Venus' pearly bite:
And near him rode Silenus on his ass,
Pelted with flowers as he on did pass
 Tipsily quaffing.

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Whence came ye, merry Damsels! whence came ye!
So many, and so many, and such glee?
Why have ye left your bowers desolate,
Your lutes, and gentler fate?—
We follow Bacchus! Bacchus on the wing,
A conquering!
Bacchus, young Bacchus! good or ill betide,
We dance before him through kingdoms wide:—
Come hither, lady fair, and joined be
To our wild minstrelsy!

Dance

Alfred Kreymborg [—]

I went to a dance last night.
And it occurred to me,
Somehow,
That you and father used to dance —
Though I never saw you.
Folk speak of it,
Gently,
With tender admiration.
It must have been fun dancing with you.
Though you were small.

I'm growing younger these days.
After a fashion.
I'll be a dancer some day.
May I have the next dance?
That old Strauss waltz
The wind is playing for you?
You used to love me, too —
Will you?

The Dancer

R. C. Lehmann [1856-]

When good-nights have been prattled, and prayers
have been said,

And the last little sunbeam is tucked up into bed,
Then, skirting the trees on a carpet of snow,
The elves and the fairies come out in a row.

With a preening of wings

They are forming in rings;

Pirouetting and setting, they cross and advance
In a ripple of laughter, and pair for a dance.

And it's oh for the boom of the fairy bassoon,
And the oboes and horns as they strike up a tune,
And the twang of the harps and the sigh of the lutes,
And the clash of the cymbals, the purl of the flutes;

And the fiddles sail in

To the musical din,

While the chief all on fire, with a flame for a hand,
Rattles on the gay measure and stirs up the band.

With a pointing of toes and a lifting of wrists
They are off through the whirls and the twirls and
the twists;

Tread the mazes of marvelous figures, and chime
With a bow to curtsey and always keep time:

All the gallants and girls

In their diamonds and pearls,

And their gauze and their sparkles designed for a
 dance
By the leaders of fairy-land fashion in France.

But the old lady fairies sit out by the trees,
And the old beaux attend them as pert as you please.
They quizz the young dancers and scorn their display
And deny any grace to the dance of to-day;

 “ In Oberon’s reign,”

 So they’re heard to complain,

“When we went out at night we could temper our fun
With some manners in dancing, but now there are
 none.”

But at last, though the music goes gallantly on,
And the dancers are none of them weary or gone,
When the gauze is in rags and the hair is awry,
Comes a light in the East and a sudden cock-cry.

 With a scurry of fear

 Then they all disappear;

Leaving never a trace of their gay little selves
Or the winter-night dance of the fairies and elves.

The Dance

Grace Denio Litchfield [1849-]

Let the music play,
I would dance alway —
Dance till the dawn of the bright young day!
Wild notes are sounding — swift lights are glancing,
And I — I am mad with the rapture of dancing —
Mad with a breathless delight.
With thine arm to enfold me,
Thy strong arm to hold me,
I could dance through an endless night.

Doth the music play?
Or is it — oh, say —
But the sound of thy voice that I hear for alway?
Is it thy smile or the sweet lights glancing?
Is it thy presence or only the dancing
Makes the whole world so glad?
Love I — ah me! —
Or the dance, or thee?
Am I mad? Am I mad? Am I mad?

Bid the music play!
Let us dance alway —
Through all life — through all time — dance for ever
and aye!
Such wild notes are sounding! Such bright lights are
glancing!

And I — I am mad with the madness of dancing —
Of dancing? — or dancing with thee?
Let thy heart's love enfold me!
Thy heart's strength uphold me!
Let us dance till earth ceases to be!

After Hearing a Waltz by Bartók

Amy Lowell [1874-]

But why did I kill him? Why? Why?
In the small, gilded room, near the stair?
My ears rack and throb with his cry.
And his eyes goggle under his hair,
As my fingers sink into the fair
White skin of his throat. It was I.

I killed him! My God! Don't you hear?
I shook him until his red tongue
Hung lapping out through the black, queer,
Swollen lines of his lips. And I clung
With my nails drawing blood, while I flung
The loose, heavy body in fear.

Fear lest he should still not be dead.
I was drunk with the lust of his life.
The blood-drops oozed slow from his head
And dabbled a chair. And our strife
Lasted one reeling second, his knife
Lay and winked in the lights overhead.

And the waltz from the ballroom I heard,
When I called him a low, sneaking cur.
And the wail of the violins stirred
My brute anger with visions of her.

As I throttled his windpipe, the purr
Of his breath with the waltz became blurred.

I have ridden ten miles through the dark,
With that music, an infernal din
Pounding rhythmic inside me. Just hark!
One! Two! Three! And my fingers sink in
To his flesh when the violins, thin
And straining with passion, grow stark.

One! Two! Three! Oh, the horror of sound!
While she danced I was crushing his throat.
He had tasted the joy of her, wound
Round her body, and I heard him gloat
On the favour. That instant I smote.
One! Two! Three! How the dancers swirl round!

He is here in the room, in my arm,
His limp body hangs on the spin
Of the waltz we are dancing, a swarm
Of blood-drops is hemming us in!
Round and round! One! Two! Three! And his sin
Is red like his tongue lolling warm.

One! Two! Three! And the drums are his knell.
He is heavy, his feet beat the floor
As I drag him about in the swell
Of the waltz. With a menacing roar,
The trumpets crash in through the door.
One! Two! Three! clangs his funeral bell.

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One! Two! Three! In the chaos of space
Rolls the earth to the hideous glee
Of death! And so cramped is this place,
I stifle and pant. One! Two! Three!
Round and round! God! 'Tis he throttles me!
He has covered my mouth with his face!

And his blood has dripped into my heart!
And my heart beats and labours. One! Two!
Three! His dead limbs have coiled every part
Of my body in tentacles. Through
My ears the waltz jangles. Like glue
His dead body holds me athwart.

One! Two! Three! Give me air! Oh! My God!
One! Two! Three! I am drowning in slime!
One! Two! Three! And his corpse like a clod,
Beats me into a jelly! The chime,
One! Two! Three! And his dead legs keep time.
Air! Give me air! Air! My God!

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A Fable for Critics

James Russell Lowell [1819-1891]

And folks are beginning to think it looks odd,
To choke a poor scamp for the glory of God;
And that He who esteems the Virginia reel
A bait to draw saints from their spiritual weal,
And regards the quadrille as a far greater knavery
Than crushing His African children with slavery —
Since all who take part in a waltz or cotillion
Are mounted for hell on the Devil's own pillion,
Who, as every true orthodox Christian well knows,
Approaches the heart through the door of the toes, —
That He, I was saying, whose judgments are stored
For such as take steps in despite of his word,
Should look with delight on the agonized prancing
Of a wretch who has not the least ground for his
dancing.

The Dancer in the Wood

John Russell McCarthy [1889-]

No song of nymph within the laughing dell,
No dance of naiad by the wooded lake;
All graceful sprites, that in the forest dwell
Or in fancy the free wooing make,
Are faded on the wind, and their soft spell
Dreams into silence, with the words they spake.

Yet when Apollo — envious red was he —
Beat his reluctant wings against the west,
Within a wood that whispers of the sea,
I saw three maples bend to make a nest;
And, on a sudden, blithe and merrily,
Like Dancing April came their maiden guest.

Her raiment was a windspun woof of spray
That covered her with kisses for a veil;
Her dancing lilted like a lyric lay
Of a wild young poet, singing a lover's tale;
And her two feet, that trod the fragrant way,
Kept time with hearts that know not how to fail.

Kept time with lovers' hearts, for she was young
And had come forth to dance the dance of spring;
And when her body's anthem had been sung,
Wordless and sweet, as kisses on the wing,
She fled.— Like chimes that have been rung.
The maples trembled at so fair a thing.

Ho! Dancers

John Russell McCarthy [1889-]

Ho, dancers! in your silken hose
And evening dress and all,
So deftly stepping on the toes
Of others at the ball,
How can you heed Terpsichore,
When sounds the skater's call?
How can you grin and enter in
The glaring perfumed hall,
When on the lake the skaters make
Such rhythmic music sweet,
That all the stars and moons and things
Go wishing they had feet?

The swallows fain would hock their wings
To purchase gliders neat,
And even boats go sailing on
A set of skates complete.
Ho, dancers! drop your silks, and don
The swift and gleaming skate,
And roll to music that the winds
Are singing soon and late;
Go forth in graceful curlicues,
Or glide in haughty state —
Ho, dancers! doff the satin shoes,
And do the "figure eight."

A Prairie Minuet

Ernest McGaffey [1861-]

Slow bobbing, bobbing to and fro
With awkward steps across the grass,
In solemn lines they come and go
And like dancers change and pass.

Their ceiling is the deep blue sky,
The ball-room floor, the level plains,
Their music, winds that hurry by
This minuet of sand-hill cranes.

To Dance

Margaret B. McGee [—]

I want to dance!
When the sun catches the aspen leaves
They dance;
When it flecks the grasses and mottles the streams
They dance;
When the dark storm bends the black branches
And the wind whips up the waves
They dance;
The bird swings on the elm twig,
The sap races in the tree,
Horses run in the pasture,
Mist fairies glide to and fro in the valley,
Cloud children play in heaven,
The stars sing and dance,
And I want to dance!
I can be rain drops.
I can be leaves and bending grasses,
Gold mottled streams and running horses,
Racing sap and the hidden heart of flowers.
I can be fire light and moon light,
A child of the night mist and a sister of the stars.
All the world sings and dances,
And I am a child of all the world. I want to sing,
and —
I want to dance.

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A Child Dancing at Twilight

Anna Blanche McGill [—]

Once in the wind-stirred twilight
Tip-toe under a green tree,
I saw you swaying a moment,
Light as a leaf breeze-lifted —
Yet to no music, save haply
The rippling exquisite rhythms
Of Joy in a child's heart singing.

Ah, what melodies freshet
Of gladness the tune was calling!
What Flutes of Dream were piping?
Almost I heard them silvering
With high cool treble the twilight —
Minstrelsy of white magic,
Your woven paces compelling.

Darling little dancer of twilight,
Would I might hold you forever,
Fast in my heart as I saw you,
White in the spring dusk swaying,
Quickening my breast with memories,
Young like you and as lovely —
The Dreams that once danced in my heart.

The Child-Dancers

Percy Mackaye [1875-]

*A bomb has fallen over Nôtre Dame:
Germans have burned another Belgian town:
Russians quelled in the east: England in qualm:*

I closed my eyes, and laid the paper down.

Gray ledge and moor-grass and pale bloom of light
By pale blue seas!

What laughter of a child world-sprite,
Sweet as the horns of lone October bees,
Shrills the faint shore with mellow, old delight?

What elves are these

In smocks gray-blue as sea and ledge,
Dancing upon the silvered edge

Of darkness — each ecstatic one

Making a happy orison,

With shining limbs, to the low-sunken sun? —

See: now they cease

Like nesting birds from flight:

Demure and debonair

They troop beside their hostess' chair

To make their bedtime courtesies:

“Spokoinoi notchi! — Gute Nacht!

Bon soir! Bon soir! — Good night!”

What far-gleamed lives are these

Linked in one holy family of art? —

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Dreams: dreams once Christ and Plato dreamed:
How fair their happy shades depart!

Dear God! how simple it all seemed,
Till once again
Before my eyes the red type quivered: *Slain:*
Ten Thousand of the enemy. —
Then laughter! laughter from the ancient sea
Sang in the gloaming: "*Athens! Galilee!*"
And elfin voices called from the extinguished light: —
"Spokoinoi notchi! Gute Nacht!
Bon soir! Bon soir! — Good night!"

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Dance Motive

(*Lethe*)

Percy Mackaye [1875-]

Alone by a starless sea
I lay with sorrow;
And mists of slumber breathed
From the mouth of my lover;

And I rose from his numbing arms
And moaned: "O, release me!
Let me flame, let me leap once more
On the hills of vision!"

Then one by one stood round us
Stars of the morning:
Their lyric bodies sang,
Their torch-limbs beckoned;

But the fog of my blind lover's breath
Congealed their burning
Till they drooped on the banks of dawn
Like lilies frost-slain,

And I drooped to his lethal lips
Of anguish, and lay there
Till the shy stars bloomed again
By shores of the evening

Beckoning anew, with their palms
Of flame, to rejoin them
On the mountains of joy, and once more
I rose in my yearning

And gazed: I am coming! But ah!
The arrows of my gazing
Pierced them there, side by side,
And they waned by the waters,

Lying like mermaids, dead
In the shoals of twilight.
Then my soul waned with them, and kissed
The cold mouth of my lover.

But still, through the pulsing mists
Of our pitiful dreaming,
I feel their immortal eyes
Burning with wonder.

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Dance, My Children

Norman Macleod [1812-1872]

Dance, my children! lads, and lasses!
Cut and shuffle, toes and heels!
Piper, roar from every chanter,
Hurricanes of Highland reels!

Make the old barn shake with laughter,
Beat its flooring like a drum,
Batter it with Tullochgorum,
Till the storm without is dumb!

Sweep in circles like a whirlwind,
Flit across like meteors glancing,
Crack your fingers, shout in gladness,
Think of nothing but of dancing!

Terpsichore in the Quarters

John A. Macon [1858(?)]

Listen when I call de figgers! Watch de music es
you go!

Chassay forrard! (Now look at 'em! Some too fas'
an' some too slow)

Step out when I gibbs de order; keep up eben wid de
line;

What's got in dem lazy niggers? Stop dat stringin'
out behin'

All go forrard to de center! Balance 'roun' an' den
go back!

Keep up in de proper 'rection, right straight up an'
down de crack!

Moobe up sides an' min' de music; listen when you
hear me speak!

(Jes look at dem Pea Ridge niggers, how dey's buckin'
gin de Creek!)

Dat's de proper action, Sambo! Den you done de
biznis right!

Now show 'em how you knocked de splinters at de
shuckin' t'udder night;

Try to do your lebbel bes' an' stomp it like you use
to do;

Jes' come down on de "Flat Creek Step" an' show
de Ridge a ting or two!

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Now look at dat limber Jonah tryin' to tech de fancy
fling!

(Who ebber seed a yaller nigger dat could cut de
pidgin-wing?)

Try dat lick agin, dar, Moses; tell you what, dat's
hard to beat!

(How kin sech a little nigger handle sech a pile o'
feet!)

Swing your corners! Turn your pardners! ('Pears
de motion's gittin' slow

What's de matter wid de music? Put some rosgum
on dat bow!

Moobe up, Tom! Don' be so sleepy! Let 'em see
what you kin do;

Light off in de "gra-vine-twis" an' knock de "double-
shuffle," too!

Gosh! Dat dubble-jinted Steben flings a hifalutin'
hoof!

He kicks de dus' plum out de planks, an' jars de
shingles on de roof!

Steady, now, an' check de motion! Let de fiddler
stop de chune!

I smell de 'possum froo de crack, an' supper's gwine
to call you soon!

De white folks come it mighty handay, waltzin' 'roun'
so nice an' fine;

But when you comes to reg'lar dancin', niggers leabes
'em way behin'

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The Dance

Edna St. Vincent Millay [1892-]

How stealthily their feet upon the floor
Strike down! — these are no spirits, but a band
Of children, surely, leaping hand in hand
Into the air, in groups of three and four!
Wearing their silken rags as if they wore
Leaves only and light grasses, or a strand
Of black elusive seaweed oozing sand,
And running hard, as if along a shore!
I know how lost forever, and at length
How still, these lovely tossing limbs shall lie,
And the bright laughter and the panting breath;
And yet, before such beauty and such strength,
Again, as always when the dance is high,
I am rebuked that I believe in death.

Haste Thee, Nymph

John Milton [1608-1674]

Haste thee, nymph, and bring with thee
Jest and youthful jollity,
Quips, and cranks, and wanton wiles,
Nods, and becks, and wreathèd smiles,
Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek;
Sport that wrinkled care derides;
And laughter holding both his sides.
Come, and trip it as you go
On the light fantastic toe,
And in thy right hand lead with thee
The mountain nymph, sweet Liberty.



Autumn

(Third movement of The Dance of the Seasons)

Harriet Monroe [—]

Come with me —
All that live!
Dance with me —
Love — and give!
Give me your love, ye souls of the corn and the vine!
Dance with me! laugh with me! crowd me! be mine!
 — be mine!
Up from the earth in your splendor of scarlet and
 gold —
Haste, oh make haste ere the warm rich year grow
 old!
Ye throngs that gaily rise
Multitudinous
As the red red leaves that flutter
All tremulous
When the wind rides down from the skies;
Ye spirits that shout and mutter
In laughter, in pain,
When the year of her sowing and reaping
Would waste again,
Come spend of your treasure, full heaping,
Be lavish, be bold!
Cast your hope on the winds, from your feet shake
 the dark damp mould;

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Come dancing, come shouting, come leaping,
See the earth grow cold!
Come, wings of the air; come, feet that trample the
grasses!
Come, tree-top spirits that kindle the leaves to flame!
Come, sprites of the sea that shout when the gray
storm passes!
Come, wraiths of the desert whom sorrow nor death
may tame!
Come eat of the rich ripe fruit, come drink of the vine!
Come dance till your revels are drunken with joy,
with wine.
For the labor is over and done,
The spoil of the battle is won!
Ah trample it, scatter it,
Cast it afar!
The tempests will batter it —
On with the war!
Let your bright robes float, let them whirl with the
rush of your feet —
The gauzes of crimson and gold!
Give your will to the winds — they are chasing, they
haste, they are fleet,
They are eager and ruthless and bold.
On! on! till you circle the earth with the rush of
your dancing,
With the shout and the song;
Till your choral of crowds, like a river in flood-time
advancing,

Bears all things along!
Dance! dance! for the end comes soon —
Do you feel the chill?
White winds of the winter croon
From their cave in the hill.
Yes, death and the end come soon —
Spread your gaudy robes!
Haste! haste! for the leaves are falling.
Shout! shout! for the storms are calling.
Give all, for the year grows old,
And the world grows cold.

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from *You and I*, by Harriet Monroe.

Dance the Romaika

Thomas Moore [1780-1852]

Oh, when the Balaika is heard o'er the sea,
I'll dance the Romaika by moonlight with thee;
If waves then advancing, should steal on our play,
Thy white feet, in dancing, shall chase them away.
When the Balaika is heard o'er the sea,
Thou'lt dance the Romaika, my own love, with me.

On then, how featly the dance we'll renew,
Treading so fleetly its light mazes through:
Till stars, looking o'er us from heaven's high bow'rs
Would change their bright chorus for one dance of
ours!

When the Balaika is heard o'er the sea,
Thou'lt dance the Romaika, my own love, with me.

The Fudge Family in Paris

Thomas Moore [1780-1852]

But, the dancing — ah! parlez-moi, Dolly, de ça —
There, indeed, is a treat that charms all but Papa.
Such beauty — such grace — oh ye sylphs of romance!
Fly, fly to Titania, and ask her if she has
One light-footed nymph in her train that can dance
Like divine Bigottini and sweet Fanny Bias!
Fanny Bias in Flora — dear creature — you'd swear,
When her delicate feet in the dance twinkle round,
That her steps are of light, that her home is the air,
And she only par complaisance touches the ground.
And when Bigottini in Psyche dishevels
Her black flowing hair, and by daemons is driven,
Oh! Who does not envy those rude little devils,
That hold her and hug her, and keep her from heaven?
Then, the music — so softly its cadences die,
So divinely — Oh Dolly! between you and I,
It's a-well for my peace that there's nobody nigh
To make love to me then — you've a soul and can
 judge
What a crisis 'twould be for your friend Bidy Fudge.

Indian Dancers

Sarojini Naidu [1879-]

Eyes ravished with rapture, celestially panting, what
passionate bosoms aflaming with fire
Drink deep of the hush of the hyacinth heavens that
glimmer around them in fountains of light;
O wild and entrancing the strain of keen music that
cleaveth the stars like a wail of desire,
And beautiful dancers with houri-like faces bewitch
the voluptuous watches of night.

The scents of roses and sandalwood flutter and die in
the maze of their gem-tangled hair,
And smiles are entwining like magical serpents the
poppies of lips that are opiate-sweet;
Their glittering garments of purple are burning like
tremulous dawns in the quivering air,
And exquisite, subtle and slow are the tinkle and tread
of their rhythmical, slumber-soft feet.

Now silent, now singing and swaying and swinging,
like blossoms that bend to the breezes or showers,
Now wantonly winding, they flash, now they falter,
and, lingering, languish in radiant choir;
Their jewel-girt arms and warm, wavering, lily-long
fingers enchant through melodious hours,
Eyes ravished with rapture, celestially panting, what
passionate bosoms aflaming with fire!

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Première Danseuse

Fanny Hodges Newman [—]

Blue as the Danube leaps the flame,
Sorcerer fires, *one - two, one - two,*
Calling with tongues my name, my name;
Ardors of the old that thrill me through.

Call of the boughs asway, asway,
Call of the bending blades of wheat,
Drag of the stars away, away;
Ah, here am I with answering feet!

Dance with me, winds that rock the sea,
I am a wave across the deep;
Blow sweet amours and dandle me,
Far in some glamorous cave, to sleep.

Dance with me, lilies, lilies tall,
Purple and gold and white as milk;
Motion is life and rhythm is all;
Come and caress me, hands of silk.

Here to me, roses, roses red!
Pour me your fervid wine tonight;
Die of the gift, and leave me dead,
Ebbled with the music's last delight.

The Dancer

Grace Fallow Norton [1876-]

There's a shining in the Northlands
Because my love is there;
It comes from his brow, the heart in his breast,
And from his sun-gold hair.
I am dancing alone in the Southland
Because he is so fair.

When he sailed unto those countries,
Intolerable on their night
Fell the flaming of the leaping
Of his white galley-light:
They knew not in the Northlands
That aught could shine so bright.

And I, nard-scented, silken,
By tropic-fever tossed,
Lay burning, ever burning,
Though I was bound in frost;
For I, ere he had found me,
Though lordly lodged, was lost.

And O, I was anhungered,
And O, they brought me food.
Gold were our fields, yet famine
Raged ever in my blood.
He lived, he shone! I lived not
Till I knew his kingdom.

And now I dance in the darkness
And in the still noon air;
I dance in a dream at midnight
With a jewel in my hair;
My sandals crush the almond-blooms,
Because he is so fair!

Dancing Boys

James Oppenheim [1882-]

Two dancing boys at bedtime. . . .
One of them was mine.

They were naked: of shapeliest grace of body; and
lightness of foot. . . .

Waving their hands, crooking their knees, they wove
in and out,

With improvised pattern, spontaneous design. . . .

The yellow hair of one, the black hair of the other
shook free and wild:

Their cheeks glowed; their eyes sparkled; their lips
opened in laughter;

Like little savages, like Indian boys naked in the
moonlight.

Two boys dancing at bedtime. . . .
One of them was mine.

The Runner in the Skies

James Oppenheim [1882-]

Who is the runner in the skies,
With her blowing scarf of stars,
And our Earth and sun hovering like bees about her
 blossoming heart?
Her feet are on the winds, where space is deep,
Her eyes are nebulous and veiled,
She hurries through the night to a far lover.

Dancers

James Oppenheim [1882-]

I have a notion tonight, that the Earth and I,
 locked in each other's arms,
Are dancing madly through the skies
Overcome the sublimity of life,
While the whirling dervishes, the speedy suns,
Pause to behold us. . . .

A Dancing Girl

Frances Sargeant Osgood [1811-1850]

She comes — the spirit of the dance!
And but for those large, eloquent eyes,
Where passion speaks in every glance,
She'd seem a wanderer from the skies.

So light that, gazing breathless there,
Lest the celestial dream should go,
You'd think the music in the air
Waved the fair vision to and fro!

Or that the melody's sweet flow
Within the radiant creature played,
And those soft wreathing arms of snow
And white sylph feet the music made.

Now gliding slow with dreamy grace,
Her eyes beneath their lashes lost,
Now motionless, with lifted face,
And small hands on her bosom crossed.

And now with flashing eyes she springs, —
Her whole bright figure raised in air,
As if her soul had spread its wings
And poised her one wild instant there!

She spoke not; but, so richly fraught
With language are her glance and smile,
That, when the curtain fell, I thought
She had been talking all the while.

Herodias

Arthur O'Shaughnessy [1844-1881]

Her long black hair danced round her like a snake
Allured to each charm'd movement she did make;
Her voice came strangely sweet;
She sang: "O, Herod wilt thou look on me —
Have I no beauty thy heart cares to see?"
And what her voice did sing her dancing feet
Seem'd ever to repeat.

She sang: "O, Herod, wilt thou look on me? —
What sweet I have, I have it all for thee";
And through the dance and song
She freed and floated on the air her arms
Above thin v̄eils that hid her bosom's charms:
The passion of her singing was so strong
It drew all hearts along.

Her sweet arms were unfolded on the air,
They seem'd like floating flowers the most fair —
White lilies the most choice:
And in the gradual bending of her hand
There lurk'd a grace that no man could withstand;
Yea, none knew whether hands, or feet or voice,
Most made his heart rejoice.

Pavlowa

Murdock Pemberton [1888-]

I was working on "The Daily News"
When I first heard of her,
And from that time
Until the day she came to town
I longed to see her dance.
The night the dancer and her ballet came
The Desk assigned me to my nightly run
Of hotels, clubs, and undertakers' shops:
I was so green
I had not learned
The art of using telephones
To make it seem
That I was hot upon the trail of news
While loafing elsewhere.
How could I do my trick
And also see her dance?
So I left bread and butter flat,
To feast my eyes, which had been prairie-fed,
Upon this vision from another world.

I'd seen the wind
Go rippling over seas of wheat;
I'd stood at night within a wood
And felt the pulse of growing things
Upon the April air;
I'd seen the hawks arise and soar;

And dragon-flies
At sunrise over misty pools —
But all these things had never known a name
Until I saw Pavlowa dance.

Next day the editor explained
That although art was — art,
He'd found a boy to take my place.
The days that followed
When I walked the town
Seeking for some sort of work,
The haze of Indian Summer
Blended with the dream
Of that one night's magic.
And though I needed work to keep alive;
My thoughts would go no further
Than Pavlowa as the maid Giselle. . . .
Then cold days came,
And found the dream a fabric much too thin;
And finally a job,
And I was back to stomach fare.
But through the years
I've nursed the sacrifice,
Counting it a tribute
Unlike all the things
That kings and queens have laid before her feet;
And wishing somehow she might know
About the price
The cub reporter paid
To see Pavlowa dance.

And then by trick of time,
We came together at the Hippodrome;
And every day I saw her dance.
One morning in the darkened wings
I saw a big-eyed woman in a filmy thing
Go through the exercises
Athletes use when training for a team;
And from a stage-hand learned
That this Pavlowa, incomparable one,
Out of every day spent hours
On elementary practice steps.
And now somehow
I can not find the heart
To tell Pavlowa of the price I paid
To see her dance.

Dancing Girls

Arthur Peterson [1851-]

Welcome once more, ye dancing forms
That do intoxicate my soul!
Your beauty is a magic bowl
Whose draught my weary spirit warms.

Forward and backward, round and round,
Like nymphs Arcadian on the lea;
Naught but the rhythmic dance I see,
I hear naught but the music's sound.

The music's sound, the rhythmic dance,
The happy faces flushed, the feet
Time keeping to the music's beat,
The lovely limbs, the tender glance!

O what more beautiful than this?
Than maidens in the mazy dance?
A draught it is that doth entrance
My soul: delight's elixir 'tis!

A Polka Lyric

Barclay Phillips [—]

Qui nunc dancere vult modo,
Wants to dance in the fashion, oh!
Discere debet — ought to know,
Kickere floor cum heel and toe,
 One, two, three,
 Hop with me,
Whirligig, twirligig, rapide.

Polkam jungere, virgo, vis,
Will you join the polka, Miss?
Liberius — most willingly,
Sic agimus — then let us try:
 Nunc vide,
 Skip with me,
Whirlabout, roundabout, celere.

Tum laeva cito, tum dextra,
First to the left, and then t'other way,
Aspice retro in vultu,
You look at her, and she looks at you.
 Das palmam,
 Change hands, ma'am:
Celere — run away, just in sham.

Dance Figure

Ezra Pound [1885-]

Dark-eyed,
O woman of my dreams,
Ivory sandalled,
There is none like thee among the dancers,
None with swift feet.

I have not found thee in the tents,
In the broken darkness.
I have not found thee at the well-head
Among the women with pitchers.
Thine arms are as a young sapling under the bark;
Thy face as a river with lights.

White as an almond are thy shoulders;
As new almonds stripped from the husk.

They guard thee not with eunuchs;
Not with bars of copper.
Gilt turquoise and silver are in the place of thy rest.
A brown robe, with threads of gold woven in patterns,
 hast thou gathered about thee,
O Nathat-Ikanaie, "Tee-at-the-river."

As a rillet among the sedge are thy hands upon me;
Thy fingers a frosted stream.

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Thy maidens are white like pebbles
Their music about thee.

There is none like thee among the dancers;
None with swift feet.

The Dance

John Cowper Powys [1872-]

Dance on; we would not touch you,
Nay — let us turn aside,
Lest the shadow of what we've looked on
In our eyes should be descried.
Somewhere at least must fingers
Be clasped to the burning sun;
Somewhere must limbs be music
To the tune the fates have spun;
Somewhere the high immortals
Must have oblations poured;
Somewhere in classic portals,
The gods must be adored;
Somewhere must life be beauty
Though the prophets darken their eyes,
Somewhere must beauty be very truth
Though the planets fall from the skies.
Dance on: heed not our plight;
Dance on: be cruel and free,
Dance like a flame in the night!
Dance like a star on the sea!

To Isadora Duncan

John Cowper Powys [1872-]

With the gesture of a god,
You gave me back my youth;
And a scent of violets
Overflowed the world.
With the gesture of a god,
You gave me back my love,
And tears deeper than tears
Overflowed my heart.
With the gesture of a god,
You trampled on fate,
You lifted up on high
Those that had fallen —
All the oppressed,
All the humiliated,
All the offended;
You lifted them up on high
And they were comforted.
With the gesture of a god,
You wrestled with Demogorgon;
You brought hope back
And freedom and triumph
To those whom the world had crushed.
All of us, sitting in darkness,
Saw a great light.
You danced as dance the morning stars
And the universe was conquered;

You smote the universe in the mouth;
And you saved us —
You — a woman.

The Belle of the Ball

William Mackworth Praed [1802-1839]

I saw her at a county ball;
There when the sound of flute and fiddle
Gave signal sweet in that old hall,
Of hands across and down the middle,
Hers was the subtlest spell by far
Of all that sets young hearts romancing;
She was the queen, our rose, our star;
And when she danced — Oh, heaven, her dancing!

A Dancer

Cale Young Rice [1872-]

Beautiful as a wave before it breaks,
And troubling as a wave when it has broken,
You are as one whose luring spirit wakes
Desire so deep it can never be spoken.
You are as one to whom men sing a paean
Of praise, then long to strangle with wild throes,
For the body of you is a thing Circean,
Your heart a mystery that no man knows.

Beautiful as a gull that breasts the waters
Then goes upon swift wings across the sea,
You are as one of Time's eternal daughters
Who never give desire satiety.
Your feet go through the hearts of men, and flowers
Of passion spring, to haunt them till they die;
For you were framed by those elusive powers
That made Eve for more bliss than Eden sigh.

Danse Macabre

Edwin Meade Robinson [1879-]

Choose your partners! Take your places!
'Tis the wildest dance — the last!
Now again unmask your faces —
Tear therefrom the flesh's cast!
Hark, the hautboy's eerie blast
Echoes from the sexton's hut;
Up! The night is nearly past —
Here's a dance you cannot cut!

Now, with hideous grimaces,
Death, the old Iconoclast,
Puts the party through its paces,
Sets the tempo sharp and fast;
Gleam the eyeballs, sick and glassed,
Blares the brass and shrieks the gut —
To it, friend! Why stand aghast?
Here's a dance you cannot cut!

Ho, thou beau with airs and graces,
Show us now what steps thou hast!
Soon thou'lt whirl through endless spaces —
Hell's broad ballroom's chill and vast!
Here the gibbering crowd is massed,
Where the graveyard gates are shut;
Trip it, old enthusiast —
Here's a dance you cannot cut!

Prince! Your grave is filled and grassed;
Hasten, ere the last worm glut
On your last lone bioplast —
Here's a dance you cannot cut!



Dance of Women

Dante Gabriel Rossetti [1829-1882]

Scarcely, I think; yet indeed it may be
The meaning reached him, when this music rang
Clear through his frame, a sweet possessive pang,
And he beheld these rocks and that ridged sea.
But I believe that, leaning tow'rds them, he
Just felt their hair carried across his face
As each girl passed him; nor gave ear to trace
How many feet; nor bent assuredly
His eyes from the blind fixedness of thought
To know the dancers. It is bitter glad
Even unto tears. Its meaning filleth it,
A secret of the wells of Life: to wit: —
The heart's each pulse shall keep the sense it had
With all, though the mind's labour run to nought.

To a Child Dancing

(*On Grand Street*)

Oscar Roesner [1874-]

Trippingly trip, unhoued of care,
Let feet fashion gay rhythms rare,
In and out of the hurrying throng
Sylph-like weave your way along
From "L" shadow into the sun,
Featly foot it till dance is done.
Poise and pirouette half-clad maid,
Happy, lightsome and unafraid,
Scorning beggar and "old-clothes" man,
Vender, cadet, and garbage can,
Babies, broker, buggies and thief,
Rabbi, harlot and gangster chief.
Merrily skip and trip on toes —
What's in the future no one knows.

Christmas Night

Irwin Russell [1853-1879]

O Mahsr! let dis gath'rin fin' a blessin' in yo' sight!
Don't jedge us hard fur what we does — you know it's
 Christmus night;

An' all de balance ob de yeah we does as right's we kin.
Ef dancin's wrong, O Mahsr! let de time excuse de sin!

We labors in de vineya'd, wukin' hard an' mukin' true;
Now shorely you won't notus, ef we eats a grape or two,
An' takes a leetle holiday, a leetle restin' spell,—
Bekase, nex' week, we'll start in fresh, an' labor twicet
 as well.

Remember, Mahsr,— min' dis now,— de sinfulness ob
 sin

Is 'pendin' 'pon de sperrit what we goes an' does it in:
An' in a righchis frame ob min' we's gwine to dance
 an' sing,
A-feelin' like King David, when he cut de pigeon-wing.

It seems to me — indeed it do — I mebbe mout be
 wrong —
That people raly ought to dance, when Christmus comes
 along;

Des dance bekase dey's happy — like de birds hops in
de trees,
De pine-top fiddle soundin' to de bowin' ob de breeze.

We has no ark to dance afore, like Isrul's prophet king;
We has no harp to soun' de chords, to help us out to
sing;
But 'cordin' to de gif's we has we does de bes' we
knows,—
An' folks don't spise de vi'let-flower bekase it ain't
de rose.

You bless us, please, sah, eben ef we's doin' wrong
tonight,
Kase den we'll need de blessin' more'n ef we's doin'
right;
An' let de blessin' stay wid us, untel we comes to die,
An' goes to keep our Chrismus wid dem sherrifs in
de sky!

Yes, tell dem preshis anguls we's a-gwine to jine 'em
soon;
Our voices we's a-trainin' fur to sing de glory tune;
We's ready when you wants us, an' it ain't no matter
when —
O Mahsr! call yo' chillen soon, an' take 'em home!
Amen.

Pannyra of the Golden Heel

Albert Samain [1859-1900]

The revel pauses and the room is still:
The silver flute invites her with a trill,
And buried in her great veils fold on fold
Rises to dance Pannyra, Heel of Gold.
Her light steps cross; her subtle arm impels
The clinging drapery; it shrinks and swells,
Hollows and floats, and bursts into a whirl:
She is a flower, a moth, a flaming girl.
All lips are silent; eyes are all in trance:
She slowly wakes the madness of the dance,
Windy and wild the golden torches burn,
She turns, and swifter yet she tries to turn,
Then stops: a sudden marble stiff she stands,
The veil that round her coiled its spiral bands,
Checked in its course, brings all its folds to rest,
And clinging to bright limb and pointed breast
Shows, as beneath silk waters woven fine,
Pannyra naked in a flash divine!

Salome

Pitts Sanborn [1884-]

Thou ill-starred daughter of Herodias,
Dancing enigma, impish tool of doom,
Demurely stepping through the scented gloom
Where in the brazier light they wait to pass
Over thy limbs the veils that dropped, alas,
Beside the cistern that was soon the tomb,
Unsheathing, veil by veil, the fatal bloom
That cloyed the gaze of Herod Antipas.

Didst thou then lust so for the lips of John
Thou didst not sicken at the blood thereon,
The husks of life from which the life had gone?
Indeed, I think thou wast the docile child,
Doing thy turn by passion unbeguiled,
As Memling drew thee, saucer-eyed and mild.

Mask

Carl Sandburg [1878-]

Fling your red scarf faster and faster, dancer.
It is summer and the sun loves a million green leaves,
masses of green —
Your red scarf flashes across them calling and a-calling.
The silk and flare of it is a great soprano leading a
chorus
Carried along in a rouse of voices reaching for the
heart of the world.
Your toes are singing to meet the song of your arms:

Let the red scarf go swifter.
Summer and the sun command you.

An End of Dancing

Owen Seaman [1861-]

Time was, a few brief lustres back,
When in the many-damsel'd dance,
Ere I had grown supine and slack,
It was my purest joy to prance
The whole night long,
Returning with the milkman's matin song.

My waist was relatively slim,
And to the waltz's amorous flow
None brought a lustier turn of limb,
A lighter, more elastic toe;
It was a treat
Merely to sit and watch my mobile feet.

But now the jumping movement jars
Upon a frame maturely stout;
And when I've borne a dozen bars
I find my wind is giving out;
I wheeze; I puff;
I tell my partner I have had enough.

And while I undergo repair,
And she, impatient, paws the ground,
I ask myself what brought me there,

Why should I go careering round,
Hustled and hot,
And talking unimaginable rot?

Such, roughly, be the reasons why
At 10 P.M; replete with food,
When o'er a pipe my pensive eye
Betrays the after-dinner mood,
I loathe to rise
And irk myself with choric exercise.

Ah, Ladies, you whose halls of light
Lament the dearth of dancing males,
Have pity! Though my heart is right,
Think of the solid flesh that quails!
Ask me no more
To pound with ponderous foot the shining floor!

And you, Terpsichore, the One
I wooed the most of all the Nine! —
Now that my palmy days are done,
Now, ere my drooping powers decline
By further slumps —
To you I dedicate these pious bumps!

They Who Dance

Marjorie Allen Seiffert [—]

The feet of dancers
Shine with laughter,
Their hearts are vibrant as bells;

The air flows by them
Divided, like water
Before a gleaming ship.

Triumphantly their bodies sing,
Their eyes
Are blind with music.

They move through threatening ghosts,
Feeling them as cool as mist
Against their brows.

They who dance
Find infinite golden floors
Beneath their feet.

Weave the Dance

Percy Bysshe Shelley [1792-1822]

— CHORUS —

Weave the dance on the floor of the breeze,
Pierce with wild song heaven's silent light,
Enchant the day that too swiftly flees,
To check its flight ere the cave of Night.

Once the hungry Hours were hounds
Which chased the day like a bleeding deer,
And it limped and stumbled with many wounds
Through the nightly dells of the desert year.

But now, oh weave the mystic measure
Of music, and dance, and shapes of light,
Let the Hours, and the spirits of might and pleasure,
Like the clouds and sunbeams, unite.

— A VOICE —

Unite!

— PANTHEA —

See, where the Spirits of human mind
Wrapped in sweet sounds, as in bright veils, approach.

— CHORUS OF SPIRITS —

We join the throng
Of the dance and the song,
By the whirlwind of gladness borne along;
As the flying-fish leap
From the Indian deep,
And mix with the sea-birds, half asleep.

The Waltz

Richard Brinsley Sheridan [1751-1816]

Behold with downcast eyes and modest glance,
In measured step, a well-dressed pair advance,
One hand on hers, the other on her hip,
For thus the law's ordained by Baron Trip.
'Twas in such posture our first parents moved,
When hand in hand through Eden's bowers they roved,
Ere yet the devil with practice foul and false
Turned their poor heads and taught them how to
waltz.

The Fairies' Dance

Frank Dempster Sherman [1860-1916]

Once in the morning when the breeze
Set all the leaves astir,
And music floated from the trees
As from a dulcimer,
I saw the roses, one by one,
Bow gracefully, as though
A fairy dance were just begun
Upon the ground below.

The lilies white, beside the walk,
Like ladies fair and tall,
Together joined in whispered talk
About the fairies' ball;
The slender grasses waved along
The garden path, and I
Could almost hear the fairies' song
When blew the light wind by.

I waited there till noon to hear
The elfin music sweet;
I saw the servant bees appear
In golden jackets neat;
And though I wished just once to see
The happy little elves,
They were so much afraid of me
They never showed themselves!

The Fire Dancer

Lewis Worthington Smith [1866-]

A riot of colors, the orient splendor of dawn,
The grace of a face round and sweet in its meshings
of lace
Where pearly and white falls the opaline light, till
the space
Is full of the filmy and fragrant effulgence of flowers
Where rose petals close through the languorous lapse
of the hours,
And fancies are glances that smile in the eyes and are
gone.

Then lowly and slowly,
Like winds drugged with moly,
Or blown over meadows of asphodel bloom
Where hyacinths pour out their heavy perfume,
The violins breathe, and the billowy clouds touched
with fire
Break out into butterfly wings, gaudy sapphire and rose,
Brave purples and amethysts lucent as dawn in the sky,
When up, like a cup that is pouring the wine of desire,
The sun rises over the hills and the singers go by
With hymns to Aurora, whose limbs catch the hues,
where she goes,
Of lily and rose, and the form, sweetly rounded and
warm,
Of soft, waxy petals that hide in the leaves from the
storm.

Then swaying and lithe, as a spirit too blithe for the
earth,
Like webs of the spider the winds toss and turn in the
sun,
While over the network the delicate shimmerings run,
As bright, iridescent, and strangely canescent as fire
That plays in the blaze where a diamond or opal has
birth,
She glides on the tides of the music that thrills with
desire.

She sways as the fronds
Of the fern that responds
To the kiss of that riffer
Of sweets, that gay trifler
The South Wind. Her robes, soft and fine,
Drift out on the air and then twine
In mazes of happy inclosure
About her fair figure's exposure,
Protecting and draping its exquisite shaping
With luminous fold upon fold of spun gold
That trembles and faintly dissembles, escaping
Again in a flutter of sunshine unrolled,
Like noonday ablaze on the grass of the summer at
height
Then lightly as winds that blow ripplingly over the
wheat
That bends as if yielding itself to a lover's delight
And offering grace for caresses unspeakably sweet,



She flings her spread wings to the full of their emerald
expanse
And turns where the heart of joy burns in the swirl
of the dance.

The Dance

William Somerville [1675-1742]

See with what pomp
The gaudy bands advance in trim array;
Love beats in ev'ry vein, from ev'ry eye
Darts his contagious flame. They frisk, they bound,
Now to brisk airs and to the speaking strings
Attentive, in midway the sexes meet;
Joyous, their adverse fronts they close, and press
To strict embrace, as resolute to force
And storm a passage to each other's heart;
Till, by the varying notes forewarn'd, back they
Recoil disparted; each with longing eyes
Pursues his mate retiring, till again
The blended sexes mix; then hand in hand
Fast lock'd, around they fly, or nimbly wheel
In mazes intricate. The jocund troop,
Pleas'd with their grateful toil, incessant shake
Their uncouth brawny limbs, and knock their heels
Sonorous; down each brow the trickling balm
In torrents flow, exhaling sweets refresh
The gazing crowd, and heav'nly fragrance fills
The circuit wide. So danc'd in days of yore,
When Orpheus play'd a lesson to the brutes,
The list'ning savages; the speckled pard
Dandled the kid, and with the bounding roe
The lion gambol'd. But what heav'nly Muse
With equal lays shall Ganderetta sing,

When goddess-like she skims the verdant plain
Gracefully gliding? Ev'ry ravish'd eye
The nymph attracts, and ev'ry heart she wounds.
Thee most, transported Hobbinol! Lo, now,
Now to thy op'ning arms she scuds along
With yielding blushes glowing on her cheeks,
And eyes that sweetly languish; but too soon,
Too soon, alas! she flies thy vain embrace,
But flies to be pursu'd.

Isadora Duncan Dancing

Joel Elias Springarn [1875-]

Dance, and let tired eyes, weary of seeing only
Feed for once their fill upon immortal music;
Dance, and let the dreams of poets half-forgotten,
Speak through you as never spoke their printed pages;
Dance, and let the pictured visions of the painters
Move and speak and breathe and tear our quickened
heart-strings;

Dance, and in the throbbing joy of rhythm and gesture,
Music, poetry, and painting melt together.

Now I know the power, understand the secret,
Why the old religious took you to their bosom,
Wound themselves about you, called your magic sacred,
Why we moderns, lacking faith, have lived without you:
While you dance, once more the Aegean dances with
you;

All the heathen black folk whisper secrets to you;
On the western plains the red man stops and listens;
Gods and idols, faith and beauty, always craving
Human motion married to immortal music.

The Dancer

James Stephens [—]

I will not dance:

I say I will not dance.

Your audience, pah, let them go home again,

Sleek, ugly pigs. Am I to hop and prance

As long as they will pay,

And posture for their eyes, and lay

My womanhood before them? Let them drain

Their porter pots and snuffle — I'll not stay.

For he is dead:

I tell you he is dead.

My God, did you not hear me say it

Twice already? I held his groaning head

In these remembering arms,

And cursed the charms

That could not stop his going. Must I bay it

Like a dog to you? Quit your alarms!

They shout and stamp?

Then, let them shout and stamp,

Those booted hogs and lechers — I'm away

To sit beside my dead. O God, you tramp

Upon me too, and twine

More sorrows round me than are mine

With holy unconcern. . . . Don't bar my way,

I'm going to my dead. . . . Ah-h-h, stamping swine!

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from *Insurrections*, by James Stephens.

The Dance

James Stevens [—]

Riotous ragtime from the throbbing strings —
The booming horns and the drum's rhythmic roar —
The ropes are loosened, and the golden floor
Becomes a garden of gay human things.
Pale faces smile and the sad heart now sings;
And dreams stir sweetly, and pain sleeps once more
In those who know that dancing is a door
To fairy fanes where naught but laughter rings.

A frail one joyous, in her lover's arm,
Like a weak flower enchanted by the rain;
Forgetting toil, heat, steam, and the alarm
Of mad machines that roared through hours of pain.
To her young soul the dance is sweet and warm,
Like light of spring where gloom and cold have lain.

Autumn Ballet

Charles Wharton Stork [1881-7]

Oh dancers in yellow! —
Tall, saffron-garmented poplars with arms uplifted,
Slender-limbed beeches
Draped in a modester russet,
Chestnuts, walnuts and sassafrasses,
And ruffle-skirted maples —
Why do ye stand at pause?
When will the music begin
For you, oh dancers in yellow?

The Dancing Days

Arthur Stringer [1874-]

'Tis a year and a day back to Kindree
Where the gerrls had no shoes to their feet!
'Tis many a mile to the ould town
Where the childer' wanst danced in the street!

Here's bread to be had for the breakin'
Here's moilin' and frettin' and froth!
But thinkin' av Home, how me heart's blood
Must jig like a wave o' Lake Roth!

Av Home, och, where down thro' the ould street
Wid his pipin' went Ragged MacGee —
And faith, how the colleens thrailed round at his heels
And all jigged like the leaves av a tree!

The walls were a tumble av stone-heaps,
The skim-milk wid wather was thinned,
And the thatch it was broken and moss-grown —
But we danced like the grass in the wind!

Not worth a traneeen was the village,
But no wan was sthoppin' to fret —
And I'll wager they're goin' like a tree-top to-day,
Faith, dancin' and starvin' there yet!

April Midnight

Arthur Symons [1865-]

Side by side through the streets at midnight,
Roaming together,
Through the tumultuous night of London,
In the miraculous April weather.

Roaming together under the gaslight,
Day's work over,
How the Spring calls to us, here in the city,
Calls to the heart from the heart of a lover!

Cool the wind blows, fresh in our faces,
Cleansing, entrancing,
After the heat and the fumes and the footlights,
Where you dance and I watch your dancing.

Good it is to be here together,
Good to be roaming,
Even in London, even at midnight,
Lover-like in a lover's gloaming.

You the dancer and I the dreamer,
Children together,
Wandering lost in the night of London,
In the miraculous April weather.

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To A Gitana Dancing

Arthur Symons [1865-]

Because you are fair as souls of the lost are fair,
And your eyelids laugh with desire, and your laughing
feet

Are winged with desire, and your hands are wanton,
and sweet

Is the promise of love in your lips, and the rose in your
hair

Sweet, unfaded, a promise sweet to be sought,
And the maze you tread is as old as the world is old,
Therefore you hold me, body and soul, in your hold,
And time, as you dance, is not, and the world is as
nought.

You dance, and I know the desire of all flesh, and the
pain

Of all longing of body for body; you beckon, repel,
Entreat, and entice, and bewilder, and build up the
spell,

Link by link, with deliberate steps, of a flower-soft
chain.

You laugh, and I know the despair, and you smile,
and I know

The delight of your love, and the flower in your hair
is a star.

It brightens, I follow; it fades, and I see it afar;
You pause: I awake; have I dreamt? Was it longer
ago

Than a dream that I saw you smile? for you turn,
 you turn,
As a startled beast in the toils: it is you that entreat,
Desperate, hating the coils that have fastened your
 feet,
The desire you desired that has come; and your lips
 now yearn,
And your hands now ache, and your feet faint for love.
Longing has taken hold even on you,
You, the witch of desire; and you pause, and anew.
Your stillness moves, and you pause, and your hands
 move.
Time, as you dance, is as nought, and the moments
 seem
Swift as eternity; time is at end, for you close
Eyes and lips and hands in sudden repose;
You smile: was it all no longer ago than a dream?

The Primrose Dance

Arthur Symons [1865-]

Skirts like the amber petals of a flower,
A primrose dancing for delight
In some enchantment of a bower
That rose to wizard music in the night;

A rhythmic flower whose petals pirouette
In delicate circles, fain to follow
The vague aerial minuet,
The mazy dancing of the swallow;

A flower's caprice, a bird's command
Of all the airy ways that lie
In light along the wonder-land,
The wonder-haunted loneliness of sky;

So, in the smoke-polluted place,
Where bird or flower might never be,
With glimmering feet, with flower-like face,
She dances at the Tivoli.

Nora on the Pavement

Arthur Symons [1865-]

As Nora on the pavement
Dances, and she entrances the grey hour
Into the laughing circle of her power,
The magic circle of her glances,
As Nora dances on the midnight pavement;

Petulant and bewildered,
Thronging desires and longing looks recur,
And memorably re-incarnate her,
As I remember that old longing,
A footlight fancy, petulant and bewildered;

There where the ballet circles,
See her, but ah! not free her from the race
Of glittering lines that link and interlace;
This colour now, now that, may be her,
In the bright web of those harmonious circles.

But what are these dance-measures,
Leaping and joyous, keeping time alone
With life's capricious rhythm, and all her own,
Life's rhythm and hers, long sleeping,
That wakes, and knows not why, in these dance-
measures?

It is the very Nora;
Child, and most blithe, and wild as any elf,
And innocently spendthrift of herself,
And guileless and most unbeguiled,
Herself at last, leaps free the very Nora.

It is the very soul of Nora
Living at last, and giving forth to the night
Bird-like the burden of its own delight,
All its desire, and all the joy of living,
In that blithe madness of the soul of Nora.

To A Dancer

Arthur Symons [1865-]

Intoxically

Her eyes across the footlights gleam,
(The wine of love, the wine of dream,)
Her eyes, that gleam for me!

The eyes of all that see

Draw to her glances, stealing fire
From her desire that leaps to my desire:
Her eyes that gleam for me!

Subtly, deliciously,

A quickening fire within me, beat
The rhythms of her poisoning feet;
Her feet that poise to me!

Her body's melody,

In silent waves of wandering sound,
Thrills to the sense of all around,
Yet thrills alone for me!

And O, intoxicatingly,

When, at the magic moment's close,
She dies into the rapture of repose,
Her eyes that gleam for me!

Javanese Dancers

Arthur Symons [1865-]

Twitched strings, the clang of metal, beaten drums,
Dull, shrill, continuous, disquieting;
And now the stealthy dancer comes,
Undulantly with cat-like steps that cling;

Smiling between her painted lids a smile
Motionless, unintelligible, she twines
Her fingers into mazy lines,
The scarves across her fingers twine the while.

One, two, three, four glide forth, and, to and fro,
Delicately and imperceptibly,
Now swaying gently in a row,
Now interthreading slow and rhythmically,

Still, with fixed eyes, monotonously still.
Mysteriously, with smiles inanimate,
With lingering feet that undulate,
With sinuous fingers, spectral hands that thrill

In measure while the gnats of music whirr,
The little amber-coloured dancers move,
Like painted idols seen to stir,
By the idolaters in a magic grove.



The Dance

Arthur Symons [1865-]

For the immortal moment of a passionate dance,
Surely our two souls rushed together and were one,
Once, in the beat of our winged feet in unison;
When, in the brief and flaming ardour of your glance,
The world withered away, vanishing into smoke;
The world narrowed about us, and we heard the beat
As of the rushing winds encompassing our feet;
In the blind heart of the winds, eternal silence woke,
And, cast adrift on our unchainable ecstasy
Once, and once only, heart to heart and soul to soul
For an immortal moment we endured the whole
Rapture of intolerable immortality.

Fern Song

John B. Tabb [1845-1909]

Dance to the beat of the rain, little Fern,
And spread out your palms again,
And say, "Tho' the sun
Hath my vesture spun,
He had labored, alas, in vain,
But for the shade
That the Cloud hath made,
And the gift of the Dew and the Rain."

Then laugh and upturn
All your fronds, little Fern,
And rejoice in the beat of the Rain!

Dance, My Heart!

Rabindranath Tagore [1861-]

Dance, my heart! dance today with joy.

The streams of love fill the days and nights with music,
and the world is listening to its melodies.

Mad with joy, life and death dance to the rhythm of
this music. The hills and the sea and the earth
dance.

The world of man dances in laughter and tears.

Why put on the robe of the monk, and live aloof from
the world in lonely pride?

Behold! my heart dances in the delight of a hundred
arts; and the Creator is well pleased.

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from *Songs of Kabir* by Rabindranath Tagore.

Mirror-Dance

Edith M. Thomas [1854-]

Whenso my lady lists to dance,
'Tis thine, O mirror, to repeat
Her smile, her bright, adventurous glance,
Her moving grace from head to feet.

And mine it is, two visions fair
To hold within my field of sight —
The substance here, the shadow there,
And all to double my delight.

O glass, if on thy polished sphere
Some Merlin's charm I might but lay,
Then wouldst thou keep her image dear
When she has danced — and danced away!

A Girl Dancing on the Shore

Henry C. Thomas [1898-]

Dance on, dance on to your flute's song,
Girl of the setting sun!
The waves are wild to do you wrong
Before the dance is done;
But your white fleeting feet
Have caught the sway and beat
Of the ocean's eager cry.
The wave-men vainly strain
To drown your slow refrain
And the flute's mellow sigh.

Dance on, dance swift, light on the breeze —
You, the pale sea's fair daughter!
The sun has set beyond the seas
In lakes of gilded water.
So play like tossing spray
As mistily fades the day,
And smoke-blue shadows creep.
Now tread one rhythm more,
Then rest upon the shore
And pipe the waves to sleep.

Deirdre Dances

Herbert Trench [1865-]

They seek down through the Wood of Awe that hems
Findruim, like the throng about his grave,
Dusk with the swarth locks of ten thousand stems
In naked poise. These make no rustle save
Some pine-cone dropt, or murmur that condemns
Murmur; benumb'd with moss that giant nave.
But let Findruim shake out overhead
His old sea-sigh, and when it doth arrive
At once their tawny boles become alive
With gleams that come and go, and they revive

The north's Fomorian roar — "I am enthrall'd,"
He said, "as by the blueness of a ray
That, dropping through this presence sombre-wall'd,
Burns low about the image of a spray,
Of some poor beech-spray witch'd to emerald.
Wilt thou not dance, daughter of heaven, today
Free, at last free? For here no moody raindrop
Can reach thee, nor betrayer overpeer;
And none the self-delightful measure hear
That thy soul moves to, quit of mortal ear!"

Full loth she pleads, yet cannot him resist,
And on the enmossèd lights begins to dance.
Away, away, far floating like a mist
To fade into some leafy brilliance;
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Then, smiling to the inward melodist,
Over the printless turf with slow advance
Of showery footsteps, makes she infinite
That crowded glen. But quick, possess'd by strange
Rapture, wider than dreams her motions range
Till to a span the forests shrink and change.

And in her eyes and glimmering arms she brings
Hither all promise, all the unlook'd-for boon
Of rainbow'd life, all rare and speechless things
That shine and swell under the brimming Moon.
Who shall pluck tympan? For what need of strings
To waft her blood who is herself the tune —
Herself the warm and breathing melody?
Art come from the Land of the Ever-Young? O stay!
For his heart, after thee rising away,
Falls dark and spirit-faint back to the clay.

Griefs, like the yellow leaves by winter curl'd,
Rise after her — long-buried pangs arouse —
About that bosom the grey forests whirl'd,
And tempests with her beauty might espouse;
She rose with the green waters of the world
And the winds heaved with her their depth of boughs.
Then vague again as blows the beanfield's odour
On the dark lap of air she chose to sink,
As, winnowing with plumes, to the river-brink
The pigeons from the cliff come down to drink.

To Vernon Castle

Marie Tudor [1870-]

We who have danced with you
Did not see the wings
Upon your heels. . . .
When the trumpet called
You fled with magical speed,
To seek your larger sphere,
Which bore you to the height
Of wingèd dreams.
Yet not content, you went on wings
Alone — out into the night.

La Gitana

John Curtis Underwood [—]

None of the girls of Ronda have feet as fine as mine,
That glimmer and glance through the whirl of the
 dance as fire-flies blaze and shine,
Seen in some shadowy rambla outside of a gay café.
None of the girls in Ronda can dance down death, my
 way.

Carmen and fat Conchita can sell themselves for shoes,
Black as their souls with the heels of red, such as the
 Cubans use.
They can sell themselves for their stockings, their
 spider webs of silk,
And their feet like their brows are brazen, but mine are
 white as milk.

For mine was a Northern mother gypsy father found
In a brothel in Bascaya. And love in drink he
 drowned.
So I grew up in the gutter, slinking and wild to be
Alone, alive, in the open, sunlit, and flushed and free,
Naked in running rivers. So I must dance today
Where the eyes of the men are upon my face and flesh
 like beasts of prey.

And the tongues of the tawdry women they tear my
 life apart

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As they smear my name with their women's shame as
their teeth would tear my heart,

As they'd rip the flesh away from my face and the
bodice from my breasts.

And the wave of life is around me. I am lifted on its
crests.

I am lifted high on its surges; and the light it lends
my eyes

Is the strength of noon and sunrise and the splendor of
the skies.

I am caged in their snarling city, but between its
shadowy bars

I see the loom of tomorrow, and the altar lights of
stars.

Savage, violent, virgin; like a trainer in their cage,
They snarl at my looks like lashes, these women
marred with age,

These men that my mind has mastered; and I rule their
restless lives

With my feet that flicker through shadows like the
bickering light of knives.

I dance and they bow before me. Barefoot I turn,
I tread

On the throbbing hearts of the living and the ashes of
the dead.

I dance till I stop, where he stands apart, till I hold
his love and his hate;

Master and man and the bravest heart, sultan and
slave and mate.

Dorothy

Louis Untermeyer [1885-]

This is no child that dances. This is flame.
Here fire has found a habitable frame.

What else is that which burns and flies
From those enkindled eyes . . .
What is that inner blaze
Which plays
About that lighted face . . .
This thing is fire set free—
Fire possesses her, or rather she
Controls its mastery.
With every gesture, every rhythmic stride,
Beat after beat,
It follows, purring at her side,
Or licks the shadows of her flashing feet.
Around her everywhere
It coils its twisting threads of yellow hair.
Through every vein its bright blood creeps,
And its red hands
Caress her as she stands
Or lift her boldly when she leaps.
Then, as the surge
Of radiance grows stronger
These two are two no longer
And they merge

Into a disembodied ecstasy;
Free
To express some half-forgotten hunger,
Some half-forbidden urge.

What mystery
Has been at work until it blent
One child and that fierce element?
Give it no name.
It is enough that flesh has danced with flame.

Isadora Duncan Dancing

(*Iphigenia in Aulis*)

Louis Untermeyer [1885-]

I

Fling the stones and let them all

Lie;

Take a breath, and toss the ball

High. . . .

And before it strikes the floor

Of the hoar and agèd shore,

Sweep them up, though there should be

Even more than two or three.

Add a pebble, then once more

Fling the stones and let them all

Lie;

Take a breath, and toss the ball

High. . . .

II

Rises now the sound of ancient chants

And the circling figure treads more slowly.

Thus the risen gods themselves must dance

While the world grows rapturous and holy.

Thus the gods might dream a new Romance

Moving to the sighs of flute and psalter;

Till the last of all the many chants,

And the priestess sinks before the altar.

III

Cease, oh cease the murmured singing;
Hush the numbers brave or blithe;
For she enters, gravely swinging,
Lowering and lithe —
Dark and vengeful, as the ringing
Scythe meets scythe.

While the flame is fiercely sweeping,
All her virgin airs depart;
She is, without smiles and weeping,
Or a maiden's art,
Stern and savage as the leaping
Heart meets heart.

IV

Now the tune grows frantic,
Now the torches flare —
Wild and corybantic
Echoes fill the air.
With a sudden sally,
All the voices shout;
And the bacchic rally
Turns into a rout.

Here is life that surges
Through each burning vein;
Here is joy that purges

Every creeping pain.
Even sober Sadness
Casts aside her pall,
Till with buoyant madness
She must swoon and fall. . . .

Isadora Duncan Dancing

(*Chopin*)

Louis Untermeyer [1885-]

Faint preludings on a flute,
And she swims before us;
Shadows follow in pursuit,
Like a phantom chorus.
Sense and sound are intertwined
Through her necromancy,
Till our dreaming souls are blind
To all things but fancy.

Haunted woods and perfumed nights;
Swift and soft desires;
Roses, violet-colored lights,
And the sound of lyres;
Vague chromatics on a flute —
All are subtly blended
Till the instrument grows mute
And the dance is ended.

To a Dancer of Tánagra

Thomas Walsh [1875—]

Around thee, barefoot girl, there float
The comely draperies of Greece;
Still sways thy form as to some note
Of childhood that can never cease.

Ho, for thy crystal skies! the throngs
In Proserpine's or Dion's rite
Trailing the mountain towns with songs
And garlands,—till again the night

Finds in thy votive breast a flame
As on the altars. Hush,—dost hear
Thy lover whispering thy name,
Corinna,—or was't Thelaira?

Soft through the moonlit vines the flute
Trills forth,—and thou art fain to dance,
Lithe girl of Tánagra. How mute
The syrinx that could so entrance! —

Now o'er our fireplace let no blast
Nor memory touch thee with regret,
Dance on,—frail terra-cotta cast,—
Our hearts make music yet.

A Tropic Dance

Max Weber [1881-]

The right foot forward,
Heads thrown about:
Arms spread out
To the sun they dance
In laughter, ecstasy and joy!
Warmer their laughing tears,
More tactile their tread and touch;
Hotter their blood;
Livelier their motion;
Midst cactus and palm, they dance
In rhythm fierce and wild!

To the hidden they give motion;
To the silent they give music.
Their limbs and arms higher they lift
In the air; they dance
Like sunlit waving seas!
Like butterflies they flutter,
Still higher they rise;
To the sun they dance
In rhythm fierce and wild!
With souls illumined,
They dance the rhythm of pulse and tear —
Their souls ebb: their spirits play;
Their bodies leap in fitting time,
And they dance their life away!

A Dance Hall

John Hall Wheelock [1886-]

The dance—the dance—with wild and whirling bodies
They moved together to the tawdry tune,
He heard it in her dreadful, hurried breathing
— Tonight, tonight, and O tonight is soon!

The ball-room with its tinsel decoration
Shone with a radiance lurid and electric,
Beneath the balcony a feverish harlot
Surveyed the dancers, critical and hectic.

Tonight — tonight — around them and around them
Reeled in a cloud the women and the men,
The orchestra throbbed with a shameful tremor,—
Another and another dance again!

The empty, squalid faces, and the figures
Of drunken men moved with a motion dreary —
The smoky air — dilapidated dresses —
Her smile was cruel and her eyes grew weary.

“ Give me the glass, drink, let us drink together,
O sweet, I love you and I hate you, too!
What have you done to me with all your beauty,” —
Around the rim their lips together drew.

A wheezing meteor in his head of fire
Dazzled his brain with inner radiance thrilling,
A shriller music heard above the music,
Through all his thoughts went shivering and shrilling.

With twenty thousand suns of blaring brilliance
Glared in his head the barren blaze of noon —
The dance — the dance — with wild and whirling
bodies
They moved together to the tawdry tune!

Madder and madder whirled the dance, and madder
The whirling shapes like Maenads to the moon;
Madder and madder with the lights above them,
They whirled together to the tawdry tune!

The lights grew dimmer and the music hurried.
Dance, for the day is soon, the day is soon!
The dancers wearied and the music wearied —
O dance together to the tawdry tune!

O drown the other faces out forever,
With you, with you, whirled round as in a swoon!
O I will hate them in your arms forever!
O dance and dance till morning turn to noon!

Suddenly waned the lamps, and all the music,
Went out like a light. A terror seized the riot.
As in a dream he felt her close beside him —
The city street loomed cavernous and quiet.

Your Body's Motion is Like Music

John Hall Wheelock [1886-]

Your body's motion is like music,
Her stride, ecstatic and bright,
Moves to the rhythm of dumb music,
The unheard music of delight.

The silent splendor of Creation
Speaks through your body's stately strength,
And the lithe harmony of Beauty
Undulates through its lovely length:

And rhythmically your bosom's arches,
Alternately, with every breath
Lift lifeward in long lines of beauty,
And lapse along the slopes of death.

The Cities of the Plain

John Greenleaf Whittier [1807-1892]

'Twas an evening of beauty; the air was perfume,
The earth was all greenness, the trees were all bloom;
And softly the delicate viol was heard,
Like the murmur of love or the notes of a bird.

And beautiful maidens moved down in the dance,
With the magic of motion and sunshine of glance;
And white arms wreathed lightly, and tresses fell free
As the plumage of birds in some tropical tree.

The Dancers

Margaret Widdemer [— — —]

Ours was a quiet town, a still town, a sober town,
Softly curled the yellow roads that slept in the sun,
Staid came the day and staid came the night down
And staidly went we sleepwise when the day's work
was done!

Oh, they came dancing down, the gay ones, the bonny
ones,
We had never seen the like, sweet and wild and glad,
Down the long road they came, fluting and dancing,
Flowers in each lass's hair and plumes on each lad!

Sweet were their clinging hands, kind were their voices,
"Dance with us, laugh with us, good grave folk," said
they,
"Swift we must go from you, time's long for toiling,
Come and make joy with us the brief while we stay!"

Oh, then was a gay time, a wild time, a glad time,
Hand in hand we danced with them beneath sun and
moon,
Flowers were for garlanding and greens were for
dancing —
This was the wisdom we learned of them too soon!

Swift went the day past, a glad day, a wild day,
Swift went the night past, a night wild and glad,
Down fell their arms from us, loosening, fleeting
Far down the roads they danced, wild lass and wild lad!

Far fled their dancing feet, far rang their laughter,
Far gleamed their mocking eyes beneath the garlands
 gay,
All too late we knew them then, the wild eyes, the
 elf-eyes,
Wood-folk and faun-folk that danced our hearts away!

Ours is a still town, a sad town, a sober town,
Still lie the dun roads all empty in the sun,
Sad comes the day up and sad falls the night down,
And sadly go we sleepwise when the day's watch is
 done!

The Harlot's House

Oscar Wilde [1856-1900]

We caught the tread of dancing feet,
We loitered down the moonlit street,
And stopped beneath the Harlot's house.

Inside, above the din and fray,
We heard the loud musicians play
The "Treues Liebes Herz" of Strauss.

Like strange mechanical grotesques,
Making fantastic arabesques,
The shadows raced across the blind.

We watched the ghostly dancers spin
To sound of horn and violin,
Like black leaves wheeling in the wind.

Like wire-pulled automatons,
Slim silhouetted skeletons
Went sidling through the slow quadrille.

They took each other by the hand,
And danced a stately saraband;
Their laughter echoed thin and shrill.

Sometimes a clockwork puppet pressed
A phantom lover to her breast,
Sometimes they seemed to try to sing.

Sometimes a horrible marionette
Came out, and smoked its cigarette
Upon the steps like a live thing.

Then, turning to my love, I said,
"The dead are dancing with the dead,
The dust is whirling with the dust."

But she — she heard the violin,
And left my side, and entered in:
Love passed into the house of lust.

Then suddenly the tune went false,
The dancers wearied of the waltz,
The shadows ceased to wheel and whirl.

And down the long and silent street,
The dawn, with silver-sandalled feet,
Crept like a frightened girl.

The Daffodils

William Wordsworth [1770-1850]

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host of golden daffodils,
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretch'd in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee: —
A Poet could not but be gay
In such a jocund company!
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought;

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

The Dancer

Annette Wynne [—]

I shall sing a song of joy
With my hair flying;
The wind shall be my loved one —
My Bacchante.

I shall dance, I shall sing;
I shall sing a song of joy
Up to the stars;
I shall dance with my Bacchante
Thru the trees.

I shall dance, I shall sing a song of joy,
Of wind and wine and glowing ships;
Because my heart is breaking
I shall sing it.

THE END

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