

For Arletta

She enters the stage
The audience hushes
Her dancer's body unfolds
Becomes a song in motion
Held by ancient threads
Prolonged protection

A ritual dance
That flows as surely
As the blood that ignites
Her young body
Carries oxygen to spark
The internal fire
Allows her smallness

To cast a shadow that fills the building

Then squeezes itself
out into the darkness
To merge with the night.

This expanded largeness
Visits her only in dance
Folds itself into itself at other times
An ordinary reflection of youth.

But when music and movement hold hands
The holy abounds
As nourishing as manna

As welcoming as an oasis
To the solitary wanderer.

Illia Thompson