

Dance till the stars come down from the rafters;

Dance, dance, dance till you drop. – W.H. AUDEN

Ballerina – A principal female dancer of grace and expressiveness,  
well-rehearsed in the movements of:

*Port de bras* – (1) A group of exercises designed so the arms move gracefully and harmoniously.

(2) The carriage of arms, indicative of class (see **immoderate upbringing**).

*Grand battement* – Term for a large beating. An exercise in which the working leg is raised straight from the hip into the air, accent on the downward movement, both knees straight. This must be done with apparent ease, the rest of the body remaining quiet. A beating of the legs, a lashing of thigh-backs, a pointe shoe's wooden block creased with tight-lipped blood stains.

*Chassé* – Literally, 'chased.' Make such a step, following the reflection at the barre: *to chase an illusion, a starvation, a panicked silhouette, ever-moving shadow.*

*Échappé* – Escaping or slipping movement (see **failure**).

Metallic piano scales: muscle twitches keep time, *en relevé*.

Hurried tempo, time degrades like the body's cells. Dance on

to a cracked-leather apartment and letters from home, rent checks paid in full,

chipped yellow teapot, 60 pairs of pointe shoes a year. Dance on

175 calories a day and the voice inside says *I like the bones*. Every little

crumb counts. Scrape the plate, clean the cutlery. Pass the test for discharge.

Black silhouette, arabesque before the white city window.

Later the girl will buy a new grey hat- one she doesn't need- and won't be  
able to tell why.

She'll wear it as she leaves the train, on her way home from the studio,  
smoke curling into the cashmere lining like jagged fingernails.

They take the edge off hunger, cigarettes.

Not at all like the paintings by Degas.

Satin ribbon.

*Demi-plié.*

*Les cinq positions des pieds.*

*Attitude* – Position on one leg with the other lifted behind, at an angle of 90 degrees and well turned out so knee is higher than foot. There are a number of attitudes according to the position of the body in relation to the audience. For whom does she dance?

Overextend – (1) To impose an excessive burden of work or commitments. (2) To stretch the body to the point of fracture (see Fr. *danser*).

#### SYNONYMS

Martyrdom, famine, fresco, Church of the Holy Innocents, *danse macabre*