

**Pieces of Advice for a Dancing Girl**

Ronny Someck

Translated by  
Robert Manaster & Hana Inbar

#### **4 Pieces of Advice for a Dancing Girl**

Dance as if no one  
Is looking at you,  
Be a Picasso lifting from the body's canvass  
Shoulders and hands.  
Let the fire-brush blacken  
Charcoal burning in the eyes.  
And remember that from the moment of your birth, I'm ripping out  
Tiles burning beneath your feet.

### **A Fifth Piece of Advice for a Dancing Girl**

See the girls in the dancing studio  
Arranged like lines in an epic poem  
About sugar-cane groves.  
Their heads straighten along furrows  
Of translucent air  
Where toes are the body's simple plough.  
I'm writing these lines with a hand  
Extending like a bird's wing.  
Tomorrow you shall dance them with a foot  
That'll sow a tear and reap a song.

## **A Sixth Piece of Advice to a Dancing Girl**

When you're unwinding threads of your foot  
From the body's spool  
And you keep your eyes pin-sharp,  
Don't forget dance is a needle  
With which God has sewn the foamy crest  
On the waves' heads, the chattering teeth  
Of those diving into water, and the flags of luxury liners  
That sail from the shoulder's shores towards the tips of fingers,  
With which I pack the farewell luggage  
Of your childhood

## **Pointe shoes**

From the moment ballet lights up in you  
Pink ribbons thread up  
Your ankles.  
And you  
Erect  
A body  
Like a boom lift  
At the end of which stands the one who changes  
Burnt-out bulbs in the belly  
Of street lamps.  
Beneath the cast-off light  
I water with a glance  
The flowers of electricity that sprout  
From the tar-face of  
Asphalt.

**Swan Lake. A Seventh Piece of Advice to a Dancing Girl**

Make it so that a tear from the swan's cheek  
Becomes a cornerstone  
For the Ocean of Joy.  
There  
I shall learn to swim.

## **Knees. An Eighth Piece of Advice for a Dancing Girl**

For seven months every player dribbles  
Nearly 80 games. His weight could reach 290 pounds,  
And when he lands badly on the court, the knees  
Shed tears.  
The knee's an engine. It's the will's pivot lifting up spine.  
A turnaround will glorify  
The jump  
For whoever came to see  
Ballet  
On the scoreboard.  
And there are knees sneaky under a dress dancing the flamenco,  
Knees very obedient in tango,  
Knees born for the caress of salsa,  
And there are knees that are yours.  
I remember the day you started crawling.  
We laid your knees on the pool table,  
And the balls that rolled around started losing color.  
You didn't let go. When you tried to stand up, you fell down with that beauty  
Of a one-hand  
Clap.

Since then, about the knees, I'm less worried.