

The Dancers

Four years and six years:
the sum total of your ages but a decade.
And today you bring me
the gift of your presence,
lighting the room with your eyes.
"Can we dance for you?"
So offering Tchaikovsky
I await your approval.
Watching, entranced, I marvel as,
unfettered by the guiding hand,
you move with his music.
Movement as fresh as fields,
as old as the earth,
your small arms silk-like in undulation.

The music puzzles you.
"It's Russian," I say.
"Russian? What does Russian mean?"
Ah, little ones, should I tell you
of that vast place of the great tragedies?
Should innocence be blasted
with the reality that may
slowly wind down your dance,
that even now could end with a suddenness
to leave your blithe imprints as recent history?

But your movement continues, soothing me,
causing a prickle of hope on my skin,
and I dream now
of tens of thousands of you
dancing the world's stage,
clear and fluid,
cleansing the festering minds,
hushing the growling throats.

Terry Hetherington