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The Athenan

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The Athenian

We came to this cafe when we were young.
There was a dancer.
I dared put money in her belt.
The anziano
who played with the band
came out and danced—
no one offered him money.
His dance haunted us.
We did not know why
(he danced and we felt his dance and did not know why).
We did not then know of Odesseus,
or of Vafiades,
or of the stone of time
that rolled between them.
And again we are here,
his dance telling us of all this,
making the pages of our books
nothing more than pages.

He dances and the instruments trail off
until only the lap of tide
and wind in awnings and fronds accompany him,
and he stops.



The dance continues in his complete motionlessness,
he staring over the bay, arms outstretched.
The band huddling, following his stare
(thinking of home and sleep—it is late),
the girl-dancer following his stare, legs turned under.
dinner guests murmuring,
clinking glasses,
turned inward into their tables.

And when at night
through the eaves the thrush chants,
it is the voice of the anziano's shoes
on the stones of the cafe.

