Cissy Worswick Dances

My first teacher, you seemed so very old;
Your hair up in a French roll, your gold
Rimmed glasses flashing, your thin, long,
Chalky fingers and your icy lashing tongue.

I feared you Miss Worswick, your bony clutch,
Your slap, your razor voice, your needle eyes;
And yet, long after you were dead, I met in church
A woman who had known you in those times.

She told me how you spinstered round the house
Skivvying for ageing parents. Daughter, slave;
No time for dancing or for walking out,
Your job: to serve them on their journey to the grave.

And yet, each Sunday after the roast, when they
Were fast asleep, upstairs taking their Sabbath nap;
You closed the curtains poured yourself a sherry
And stripped stark naked in the damask dark. Merry

And electric you waltzed around the house
Feeling, you told this old friend, ‘Somehow
Deliciously wicked.’ And in this way
You found your sole delight in those cold days.

So dance Miss Worswick dance
Let the soft light in the room hold you in his arms,
Let the warm summer shadows waltz you faster,
Naked past the aspidistra, brass coal scuttle, lace antimacassars.

Another glass of sherry, Cissy, let it warm
You like the sun whose long tongue creeps through a curtain crack,
Searching through the gloom
To lick your un kissed breasts
And flash across your creamy thighs,
Your soft downed back,
As you sashay round the summer-dark room.

Dance until the stars come out, Miss Worswick,
Dance until the barren desert blooms,
Or until the shuffling footsteps overhead
Tell you that it’s time for you to dress again,
To let the light in from the summer street,
Lay out the plates and scald the pot for tea.

*Mike Harding*

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is published by Luath Press.

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**MISSILE DEFENCE**

**What Russia and China Think**

‘The heads of state pointed out that the strengthening of missile
defence by a country or group of countries in a unilateral and
unrestrained manner in disregard of the legitimate interests of other
countries will cause harm to international security and global strategic
stability. The relevant issue must be addressed by all countries
concerned through political and diplomatic efforts.’

*Shanghai Co-operation Organisation,*

*Beijing declaration, 7 June 2012*

For decades after the Second World War, it was a prime objective of
Western policy to keep apart the Soviet Union and China, especially
militarily. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, it took only
a few years for the two great powers of Eurasia to begin drawing closer
together. In 1996, they began meeting in a forum known as the
Shanghai Five, because it gathered in that city, comprising China,
Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tadjikistan. In 2001, this
grouping was expanded to include Uzbekistan and declared itself to be
the ‘Shanghai Co-operation Organisation’. Since then, it has met
regularly. Its eleventh annual summit in Beijing in June included, in
addition to the core members, five observer states (India, Pakistan,
Iran, Mongolia and Afghanistan) and three ‘Dialogue Partners’ (Belarus,
Turkey, Sri Lanka), all represented by their heads of state. The United
States had applied for observer status, in 2006, but this was rejected.
In addition to military co-operation, the SCO encourages joint activities
in an increasing number of fields including health, agriculture, economy
and banking. It is developing its relations with the United Nations. More
information is available online (www.sectsco.org).