

Bill Coppel Young Writers' Award 2011

Winner, 14 years category

The Dancer by Elizabeth Lim

I step across the hard oak floor,
Barefoot, and bear in thought,
Alone I stand, and I will leave,
The moment I once sought,

Sunlight filters, shutters closed,
The darkness suits me best,
Patience and technique they say,
They hold the final test,

I curl my toes endure the pain,
Facades are all that show,
So hold my frame for seconds more,
Then dip my back arm low,

Rhythmic pulses, rhythmic sounds,
Escaping from my heart,
Beat in time with outside songs,
Travelling falls apart,

I curl up swift, and catch myself,
Although it was too late,
Tears burn slowly, so do dreams,
I realise my mistake.

They lean in with their preying eyes,
And take their final note,
I quiver at the stream of words,
That gushes from my throat.

“There’s more, still more that’s not the end
Please watch me one last time,
I promise you, my words are true,
I hope you are inclined.”

With doubtful glances, cautious now,
Extend their hands to me,
A fleeting moment of rejoice,
They met my desperate plea,

So pick up now, upon my feet,
I feel my spirits rise,
A half smile, half glance to their seats,
To claim this abstract prize,

Victory rests upon the hand,
Then rolls with passing time,
I pause mid-step, and glance around,
Is this wish a crime?

To feel my heart fall, flights of stairs,
And here the sound that’s clear,
Persuasive skills I do possess,
My second falter’s near.

I can’t let doubt consume my thoughts,
I can’t this time again,
Overcome, and overcame,
That was my lone thought then,

So spring from qualm, in certainty,
I’ll leap far from it now,
And bound to final posture,
And carry out my vow,

I step across the hard oak floor,
Barefoot, and bear in thought,
Alone I stood, waiting,
The dream it seems was caught.