

Marilene Phipps

## DIALOGUE

-Return to your home--in your childhood, in your heart.  
Beyond the present of your being, that is where you live.  
The desire for sleep overwhelms you: it is fear.  
-But what peace can there be in this dizzy of sensations?  
-Sing, and you will recognize your voice:  
in the charmed, puffed-up tutus of ballet dancers,  
many sounds await their time in you  
since the beginning of your sun.  
-When will my poem end? How can it end  
while fruits from my childhood still hang on trees  
like ornaments of an inexhaustible Christmas?  
-Understand that a lustrous, fat cat's paw  
will deliciously strike them down in one distracted, dry pat.  
-So, just like mice, we are its daily fare? And yet, before  
I must leave, I want my friends' voices to return to the foliage,  
see their large faces hang like talismans on my wide open arms,  
hear their love tell that for them I have lived.

## CHAPEL SPACE

In a space where beings are transparencies of color  
or born out of a stone-chiseled struggle for form,  
hard and pale and with a better aptitude to go through time,  
then elevated to a pillared position that establishes a difference  
between us below--uncomfortably sitting, recognizable through  
an illusory temporary favor that reveals us  
as wrapped, robed, stiffened, uncertain, shifting mounds  
bound within thread-stitched layers of charismatic cloth--  
in such a space, is there place for prayer that burns to rest  
in a candid dance for the remembrance of those flimsy and slight  
who carry in their changeable faces the body of my heart's life--  
these memories woven through them, born out  
of solitude and born out of bliss?

