

## Ballet I

### *Tarrytown YMCA*

The bitty divas power through the moves, toppling barre bars  
and grunting with structure. Primed tutus are mere fluff  
on the fists of them as they lurch into pirouettes and punch  
the air with faltered dainty. The music is all violin, gorgeous  
and aghast, whining sigh beneath collapsed arabesques,  
and the instructor has given up on nudging her charges  
in the general direction of grace. “No! No!” she screams  
as one dancer’s gruff elegance collides with a temple  
and sparks a squirming tangle, sudden crumple and wail.  
I love these teeny burning twirlers, the blind backslap  
and bruise they mistake for rhythm. It is much too late  
to teach them hesitance and the simple sugar of curve  
and slow clicking hip, because there are always the walls--  
the walls of fathers, dead-eyed boys, fumbling curfew fingers,  
clockwork bleed, the spit kiss, walls of hunger and rock.  
There’s no redemption in the needy current of the strings,  
and there is never enough time to stop breaking through.