

RISHMA DUNLOP

Choreography

In the library, among the stacks and card catalogues
with tiny wooden drawers of secret worlds,
I'm in love with transport, the gilt pages
of runaway children, women in heavy silks.

At home in my room, the stacks of overdue books
beside my bed harden into steppes.
My eyes cross them like locomotives carrying
Lara and Yuri through the Urals of *Dr. Zhivago*,
ice crystals on windows. Nabokov's blue butterflies
flit across the room as I read Montaigne,
the poems of Verlaine, mother's *Chatelaine*.

Outside, the sounds of traffic flow
into the night and in my mind
the rivers of the St. Lawrence, and the Volga
intermingle their waters. I waltz
the waltz from *War and Peace* amidst the clang
of closed lockers in the hallways of Beaconsfield High.

In the kitchen, mother hums through a clatter of dishes
and reports of massacres in Cambodia.
In the sharp smell of Chekhov's cherry orchards I turn
the pages, volume by volume, to stay my departure.