



TILLAI AND TYLISSOS

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THE DANCING AT TILLAI
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TILLAI AND TYLISSOS
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THE DANCING AT TILLAI

1. *The Night*

This is Kālī's day
the woman in my sleep
said This is Kālī's
day

O Mother please
please Mother children weep
let it not be till tomorrow
the little children say

There is a woman drumming
until the drumhead breaks
until the maiden wakes
and sees the coming day.

Mother takes the fear away.

Night is Kālī
the god appears between her thighs
stands in beauty, dances, dies.

O Mother, comfort me.

2. *Śiva and Kama*

Look up, look out! Desire
comes to adore you,
over the April meadow.
White, white his flesh is,
silver his laughter.

Uncover your third eye,
burn him to ashes,
that he may cast no shadow
being with you and before you
hereafter and forever.

3. *Epiphany*

Did you hear?
Mrs Le Guin has found God.

Yes, but she found the wrong one.
Absolutely typical.

Look, there they go together.
Mercy! It's a colored woman!

Yes, it's one of those relationships.
They call her Mama Linga.

Why does Jesus always wear a rag?

I don't know; ask his mother.

4. *Carmagnole of the Thirtieth of June*

I will grow fingernails
to scratch the scab
that stops the sore's lips on the scream
the pusty whistle of escape
EEEEEEeeeeooooooooo steamboat annie comin roun the bend
I will grow fingernails
ten feet long and walk on them like stilts
& breathe steam out my nostrils
& split boards with my eye

HAI!

don't get near me with your martial arts
unless you want to get split right down between the balls
neat as a colonel's chicken

I got Real Bad Vibes
I have been talking to my father
who died in 1960
he's 101 years old not feeling very perky
he gets left out of things
locked out.

I will grow fingernails
and claw down the Lubyanka
stone by stone by stone.

Yeah. Sure.

Listen, my vibrations are so bad

they're Richter 8.7
look out down there in Daly City.
My toenails are growing too.
I can dig up graveyards with them
and dance on the burning ground.
I use the urns for footballs
& my tongue hangs out a yard.
I am WUMMUN, ta doody boo-bah,
but even worse than that I'm me
and feeling mean.

God's stomach

rumbles like a drum
when I jump on it
when I dance on his chest he snores
when I dance on his gut he farts
when I dance on his cock he comes
when I dance on his eyes he wakes and all the stones fall down
ashes, ashes
all fall down.

Get up and dance, creation!

5. *School*

The Dancing Master advances
with propriety, stepping neatly.
Elegant sobriety.
Admirably suave.

O, my God! His zipper!
What is that thing? A cobra?
It wags at me so sweetly.
Quick! Put it back inside!

Cummerbund won't cover it.
Nothing hides it completely.
Black tie and gaping pants,
the Dancing Master laughs.

They say he uses cannabis.
I wouldn't trust my daughter
at his school.

O but how sweetly,
sweetly he can dance!

6. *Middle.*

When the pure act turns to drygoods
and the endless yearning
to an earned sum,
when payday comes:

the silly snivelling soul
had better run
stark naked to the woods
and dance to the beating drums.

Turning, turning,
call the dance out, master,
call out the silly soul.

Curtsey to your partner,
do-si-do.

Call out the comets, sister,
and dance the Great Year whole.

The only act that is its end
is the stars' burning.
Swing your partner round and round,
turning, turning.

7. *Tale*

Where did I get this middle eye?
So you can see me clear.
Where did I get these extra arms?
To hug me with my dear.

What have I got these big teeth for?
Bite off my head my sweet
And dance upon my body
There where the rivers meet.

8. *A Semi-Centenary Celebration*

O my terrible darling
I never could dance
I am afraid of tigers
and in love with god

It's time to put your foot down
SO: O Arthur Murray
couldn't do it better
Ginger Rogers Fred Astaire

My anger seeks a lover
so little Joanie Yoni
found lovely Louie Linga
but it's all esoteric
and strictly in the head.

Chorus
Strictly in the head.

And so I learned to tango
and waltz and play the sitar
all at the age of fifty
and everybody laughed.

I am in love with tigers
and afraid of god.

Chorus
You too can have a personalised brahman!
33,000 choices!
From 2 to 30 arms!

When you make love to tigers
they eat you
when you make love to Sambhu
they call it bestiality

or is it vice versa
if you are at the moment human

I will never abandon logic
or lovely Louie Linga
says Mrs Micawber sobbing.

So I tiptoe through the tango
and my necklace-skulls get tangled
with the strings of the veena
and everybody screams.

O my terrible dancing darling
O my dear dirty Louie
do you know who I am?

I am the dance you're dancing
I am the loving tiger
I am the hungry god

You are the drummer, you are the drum
but I am the sound of drumming

9. *Paśupati*

When I think of the herdsman my heart
grows heavy with tenderness.
Let me lie with the lord of sleep
in the bed of the waters.

His hair is never combed.
He dances in the mountains.
The old men
say he's crazy.

A river falls out of the stars
into his hair
hiding the moonlight.
He dances at the crossing
of three rivers
the Ganges and the one beneath the Ganges and the one
that falls out of the stars.

His are all waters
the levelness of waters
the silences the depths.
He's naked, his hair is grey with ashes
hiding the shining crescent.

O my lord I Parvatī know myself
daughter of the king of mountains
immortal, when my heart grows heavy
with tenderness thinking of my husband the herdsman
who never combs his hair.

10. *Drums*

Sun dance
stone dance
bone dance
one dance

sky dance
bird dance
word dance
I dance

11. *The Dancing at Tillai*

I said the center
was a ring of stones
a hearthplace.

I meant a place for bones
and ashes.

Crib, carseat,
bed, park bench,
target center for the neutron bomb
or passed away in sleep at 93
there, and there, and there
is the center and burning ground
the hearth the heart

and no circumference.

They burned Shelley by the sea
There was Tillai
His heart burst noisily
That pleased Kālī

They burned Hiroshima
There was Tillai
The blood burned painfully
That pleased Kālī

I seek comfort, mother.

Find it in the ashes.

I seek comfort, mother.

Find it in the bones.

Mother, I am sick at heart.

Come to the drumming at Chidambaram.

Mother, I am sick at heart.

Come to the dancing at Tillai.

Do you hear the drumming, child?
Do you see the fires?
See where my lord bears drum and flame
his right hand says Be not afraid
his left hand points to the dancing foot
he dances in the heart laid waste
the burning place
river and moon are in his hair
his lifted foot is grace
his lowered foot is sleep
he dances in the center
there, and there, and there,
all time, all space,
the arch of all the stars
contains his splendor.

Come to the drumming at Chidambaram
child, child, child
come to the dancing at Tillai.



THE DANCING AT TYLISSOS

Tylissos

1. *The Dancing*

*I seek comfort, Mother
comfort —*

For me —

no center

no circumference

Mother, I am sick at heart

*The air I breathe is foul
Fouled from the incinerating of cities
from the burning of poets*

*Comfort, Mother
For I am sick at heart!*

Child, child, child
Child of my heart

my hearth

my circumference

Sick you are —

Sick with fear

fear of my Oldness

fear of my Death

imaging your own —

Leave Tillai —

Come home to Tylissos

Dance to dust your fears

Beware the oracle of Tillai
Telling of a poet burned
a city cindered

Across the squid-dark sea lies Thera
fairest of isles
One thin hot thread of smoke
hangs on the air over Thera
Beware —
Lest your thoughts rouse the Monster
who sleeps within the heart of Thera
fairest of isles

No center, Mother

Return to your center
to the Bull Ring of Tyliossos
Dance again the Dance of the Bulls
dancing Youngness
First Love
First Partnering
Relearn the lessons of the Bull Ring!

No circumference, Mother

Where Flat Earth's Rim and Sky bowl meet
at Horizon Line
That is your Circumference —
Dance it!
Arousal
Passion
Coupling
Nesting
Birthing

Sleep the sleep —
lover enfolding
enfolding
Dance the Woman Dance!

I seek comfort, Mother

Find it in the ashes
in the hearth-place of Tyliossos
There each night
Priests burn the Done-Day's burdens
with prayer and incense
Dance in those ashes
ankle deep
Learn ash-purity
fragrant as a flower's breath

I seek comfort, Mother

Find it in the Bones
heaped by the hearth
Bones of the Old Year's Livings
and Dyings
Joyings
and Sorrowings
Dance the Dance of the Bones —
Learn —
as you toss the bones
their cleanness
their subtle sheen
their spare beauty

Faster faster
Dancing tossing
Dance the Bone Dance of Tyliissos!

*Mother, I am sick at heart
fear of death
fear of me
of becoming*

Take my hand —
so —
we circle dance
the Dance of Changing

You the Priests and I
And with us dance the Souls
the Souls of our remembered Dead
of our beloved Dead

Circling circling
Round and round the cooling fire
as Day turns to Night.
Circling circling

*Mother, what
after the Dance of Changing*

Time then to dance the Dance of Tyliissos
Come Daughter —
come to my dolphin-lily megaron

Here, Mother Daughter
we don the dress
of our High Minoan Goddess
Together we dance
the Dance of the Bared Breasts
Celebrating our proud Womanness

The Priests enter
stopping, sweetly kiss
the Goddess-Breasts

Place in our hands Serpents
coiling living symbols —
Male Principle
Proud Manness

Priests Mother Daughter dance
Fierce sweet the beat
the dance

Circling
circling

Dance of Fulfillment

Dance of Tyliissos

2. *Name Day*

The Old Queen
sigh
smile
Another Name Day!
The dancing at Tyliossos

daughter
coming
by swift ship
For the dancing at Tyliossos

Sunbeams
begin the day's dancing
at Tyliossos

Dry drum chorus
Cicadas in the trees
of Tyliossos
Cicadas drum
soft snores
The Young King

Dream assures
Tis not the Sun
but moonbeams
against
his
shut
eyes

That I
Old Queen
should
so be

Embowered
in roses

Count them!
A hundred?

I
Old Queen
watch
all day
The dancing at Tyliossos

Morning
Young King
Girls Boys
laughing

The Dancing over
Bulls
Tyliossos

Renewing
the world

Noon dance
The Mothers
dancing

Making
Eating
the feast of thanksgiving

day's end
Young King
lighting
the New Fire
at Tyliossos

daughter
dancing
throwing incense
into the flames
oil of cedar

evening
darkening

new moon
silver crescent

I
even I

Old Woman
dance the New Moon Dance
at Tyliossos

circling
circling

Dream dance
Round a darkening
New Fire

Holding hands
circling, circling
old young
beloved remembered
dead
hands joined
circling

Dancing to sleep
to dreams

New Moon
New Fire
Name Day
Dancing at Tyliossos.



Envoi

Sun dance
stone dance
bone dance
one dance

tree dance
bird dance
word dance
we dance