

Ballet Russe

By John Masefield

The gnome from moonland
Plays the Chopin air,
The ballerina glides out of the wings
Like all the Aprils of forgotten Springs
Smiling she comes, all smile,
All grace, forget the cruel world awhile,
Forget vexation now and sorrow due.
A blue cap sits coquettish in her hair
She is all youth, all beauty, all delight,
All that a boyhood loves and manhood needs.
What if an Empire perishes, who heeds?
Smiling she comes, her smile
Is all that may inspire, or beguile
All that our haggard folly thinks untrue.
Upon the trouble of the moonlit strain
She moves like living mercy bringing light.
And when the gnomish fingers cease to stray,
She will be gone, still smiling, to the wings
To live among our unforgotten things,
Centaur and unicorn
The queens in Avalon and Roland's horn
The mystery, the magic and the dew
Of a tomorrow and a yesterday.