

The Dancer

shards of conscience
time-muted
smoke-veiled
edges worn round
excruciating
only seldom
now

mindless dulling music
vacant eyes
staring
or furtive glancing
away
pretending no lust

gray thick air
beer-laden
sour
walling the space
around her
but not enough

piercing guitar
clawing at spaces
between crashing drums
and wailing horns

always
moving
rhythmic
or not
no matter
slow swaying hips
beneath smoothing fabric
revealing even the soul

crescendo
non-event
nadir
awkward silence
painful
discarded props
gathered along
with mustered dignity
precious little left
of each

unseeing steps
to the door
escaping
until the next hour
the collective, killing leer

This and "Hard Eyes" written in contemplation of the hard and sorry life of young women "in the sex trade" as observed in Winnipeg's inner core area when I worked out of office space on Notre Dame near Portage Avenue in the mid-70's.

A handwritten signature in grey ink, consisting of a series of overlapping loops on the left side that transition into a more linear, slightly upward-sloping stroke on the right side.