

BALLERINAS

DANCER 1:

—The Home for Difficult Children moved in next door to her.

DANCER 2:

—I saw her madness, strange sister, and chose another.

—Her mouth formed a documentary subject: the city thin as light.

DANCER 3:

—She was interviewed by a pair of twins who spoke “only the insufferable language of the young, the only language that deserves to be saved.”

Two questions:

What is the most human virtue of all? And if there's a song that defies all classification, what would it be?

It goes without saying. Happiness. No, humor or courage. And singing goodbye to one's native tongue.

DANCER 4:

—She developed a sense for when he was coming.

DANCER 5:

—She was more modest than she appeared, she had promised, she told herself quite frankly, she felt drawn, she sang, she received and entertained him, she found herself compelled, she wished, she added in hushed tones, she said, she knuckled under, she began to contemplate vile and wicked things, she called to mind, she looked, she sank, she dragged, she thrust his hands away, she softly, softly walked, she hated him, she sat there, she kept warning him, she didn't even look at him, she gave him the bread, she said something, she called him, she harmonized so well, she confessed to him, she responded, she considered herself, she was deeply immersed, she indeed began, she asked, she proceeded, she was a sort of, she sometimes believed, she might possibly, she was in fact, she was nothing more, she was forced, she might be too, she longed for, she wished to, she appeared, she

wept, she did so, she was delicate, she shivered, she was single, she harbored, she didn't know anything, she no longer wanted, she was still, she found herself, she became, she framed, she ran out.

DANCER 6:

—Emaciated: *adjective* free from legal, social, or political restrictions; liberated.

—Abuse: *noun* violent treatment involving sexual assault (someone, esp. a woman or child), esp. on a repeated basis.

DANCER 7:

Brisé, Chaînés, Chassé, Croisé, Écarté, Échappé, Effacé, Fouetté, Plié, Piqué, Porté, Relevé, Retiré, Sauté, Tombé.

Daniele Pantano is a Swiss poet, translator, critic, and editor. His individual poems, essays, and reviews, as well as his translations from the German by Friedrich Dürrenmatt, Georg Trakl, and Robert Walser, have appeared or are forthcoming in numerous magazines, journals, and anthologies worldwide. Pantano's poetry has been translated into several languages, including German, Albanian, Bulgarian, Kurdish, and Farsi. His most recent works include *The Possible Is Monstrous: Selected Poems by Friedrich Dürrenmatt*, *The Oldest Hands in the World*, and *Oppressive Light: Selected Poems by Robert Walser* (all from Black Lawrence Press, 2010–12); *Mass Graves (XIX–XXII)* and *Mass Graves: City of Now* (The Knives, Forks and Spoons Press, 2011–12); *Robert Walser's Fairy Tales: Dramolettes* (New Directions, 2015); and *Dogs in Untended Fields: Selected Poems by Daniele Pantano* (Wolfbach Verlag, 2015). His forthcoming books include *ORAKL* and *Mass Graves: A Confession* (both from Black Lawrence Press). Pantano taught at the University of South Florida, served as the Visiting Poet-in-Residence at Florida Southern College, and directed the Creative Writing program at Edge Hill University, England, where he was Reader in Poetry and Literary Translation. Pantano lives somewhere at the end of a line. For more information, please visit www.danielepantano.ch.