

Still

I close my eyes and feel my big toe begin to bleed.
My heart beats; my skin's cold.
I'm practicing the steps I learned before I learned to read.
My neck cracks; my knee feels so old...
Pas de bourée, pas de bourée, up and down, developé.
Pas de b...
No. Again.
And... Pas de bourée, pas de...
I don't want to do this today.

The sun comes up, I make my bed and feel where I ache.
I get to class, rehearse my piece; my ribcage might just break.
I float above the ground despite the tired in my bones.
I arabesque, and every vertebra inside me moans.
Pas de bourée, pas de bourée, up and down, no. Shit.
Pas de bourée, pas de bourée, up and down, go.
I look so thin, so full of grace.
No pain shows on my face.
I just need... No.
My toes bleed... No.
I feel like I'm climbing uphill.
If only I could give up and be still.

The sun goes down, I ice my feet, then stretch where I feel tight.
I eat some food, then straight to bed: eight hours every night.
I sleep so that my body heals from deep inside my core.
I dream about the little girls in dance class when they're four...
Pas de bourée, pas de bourée, up and sous-sous! Yes.
Little tutus, little pink shoes, up and sous-sous!
I'm back with them! I dance! I fly!
My head is held so high.
I need it... No!
I love it... No!
I'll do this forever until...
I jerk awake, unable to hold still.

And what if tomorrow, I stay in the bed?
Forget that the sugar plums danced in my head?
What if I *do* hold still?
No more faillie through and hold. No ballet.
No praying and wishing the damn hurt away.

No disappointing reviews. No bum knee.
Just sleeping and healing... and food...
Sounds good to me.
Stillness.
Stillness.

The moon is bright, and I hold still, one twitch behind my eye.
I feel my body open up with stillness. I could cry.
I open up my mind to stillness, too, the peace of calm.
The moon's rays wash me clean of struggle like a healing balm.
Pas de bourée, pas de bourée. Suddenly, I'm scared.
Pas de bourée, pas de bourée. I feel unprepared...
If I don't dance, who will I be?
I dance so that I know I'm me.
I hate it... No.
I love it.... No.
It's such a bitter, bitter pill:
I'll break apart completely if I'm still.