

sance dance, look at each other a little and keep dancing, unable to speak.)

ASHGIRL (*out*). I'd like to say: I love dancing with you—but I don't want him to know I've never danced with a boy before.

AMIR (*out*). I'd like to say: I love dancing with you—but I don't want her to know how much I'm enjoying being with her.

ASHGIRL. I'd like to say: Please stay with me all evening—but I don't want him to think I'm too stupid to talk to anyone else.

AMIR. I'd like to say: Come in to dinner with me and sit with me—but I don't want her to know she's the only girl I want to talk to.

ASHGIRL. I'd like to say: It's so beautiful here—but I don't want him to know I've never been anywhere so full of light and colour, even though it's true.

AMIR. I'd like to ask: Where have you come from? Why so late? And without parents—but I don't want her to think I'm so interested, even though I am.

ASHGIRL. Should I leave? I want to stay.

AMIR. Should I stop dancing? I want to go on.

ASHGIRL. I can't say anything: he must think I'm stupid.

AMIR. She must think I'm a cretin.

(They look at each other, each holds a hand out to the other.)

ASHGIRL/AMIR (*over each other*). What's your name?
(They laugh, pause. Over each other.) Ashgirl. Amir.
(They laugh.)

AMIR. Where have you come from, Ashgirl?

ASHGIRL (*out*). I can't tell him about now, but I could about before... *(To AMIR.)* I had a pony when I was little. *(Out.)* Why did I say that!

AMIR. There are wild ponies where I come from. Great festivals too. *(Out.)* What a stupid thing to say.

ASHGIRL We had music and flowers in our house. *(Out.)* He's going to think, so what?

AMIR. We raced ponies over the plains. *(Out.)* Why can't I stop talking about horses!

ASHGIRL. I'm tongueless, mute, unvoiced. Fairy of the Mirror, change this silence into words.

AMIR. I can fight battles, I've never feared death, but I'm too afraid to say anything to her.

ASHGIRL/AMIR. I loved dancing with you!

AMIR. Come in with me to have dinner.

ASHGIRL. Yes! I'm so hungry.

(ASHGIRL starts at what she's just said then moves off with AMIR. JUDITH and RUTH come on, food in their mouths, and collapse on the cushions.)

JUDITH. You eat, you dance, you get hot, you get bothered, you get tired, you get bored, it's such hard work marrying a prince, I'm going home.

RUTH. Mother said one of us has to marry this prince.

JUDITH. What will she do if we don't?

RUTH. When Mother is disappointed I feel like I'm going to shrivel into a speck of dust.

JUDITH. With me it's more like feeling strangled.

RUTH. She loves us and wants everything for us.

JUDITH. I don't want everything, I only want a microscope.