

# dancers: degas

*by* Jerry Ratch

What we see is the aspiration of flesh to beauty  
not the fact, which may be ugly. That the light pours  
down on them, as they wait in the wings to go on  
stage. The cool and warm pastels separating  
on their flesh. Green and white above, warm red  
and blue in the shadows beside a cheekbone  
electric blue at the eyelid and temple, or  
encircling the ear. Warm red on the mouth  
As one reaches back, adjusting a strap to  
keep her shoulder bare, the pastels separate  
and blend into a presence more alive. As if  
seen through moist glass, the colors in streaks  
side by side, so that the eye must put them together  
to achieve a wholeness beyond flesh, with just the  
light of the available moment

Image Detail

