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Naked Ladies

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The Naked Ladies

David Schelhaas

Ten naked ladies dally on the terrace
slender and supple in their
pale pink skin.

Completely unembarrassed
they raise their arms to heaven
as they dance in languid steps
to the rhythm of the breeze.
They do not toil or spin
and seem unaware of sin.

Ten naked ladies shiver on the terrace
blotched sun-burned and wretched
in their scoriaceous skin.

By hot winds harassed
they silently struggle
to hold up each other
as they bend to the curb.
They have not spun or toiled
yet their shredded skin is soiled.

Ten naked ladies left their bones on the terrace
dry broken reeds when
pink flesh had fled.

The life that they cherished
like a smoke puff has gone.
The dance and the struggle
reduced to the rattle
(like old gossips' prattle)
of dry broken reeds.

Consider the lilies.