

## **Peter Hammill**

# **"Something About Ysabel's Dance"**

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In the new hotel on Fiesta Night  
The staff are bored;  
Donna Ysabel dances, zombie-like,  
The guests applaud....  
The colour is local,  
The tourists are tanned  
The natives are restless  
And everything's second hand.  
Places disappear, but the names endure  
As alibis;  
Memory's hazy here, no one's really sure  
Of how time flies....  
Well drunk the bass player  
Cries into his beer -  
Are Ysabel's mother  
Or Ysabel dancing here?  
After hours all the couriers are in the bar  
Round the corner  
With the drivers in a game of cards...  
In bursts Ysabel, her hair let loose,  
Her limbs set free;  
On the tabletops she's dancing to a memory -  
Conversations stops and every eye  
Is turned to see...  
Something about Ysabel's dance.  
It's a shrinking world, it's a fun-packed cruise,  
A museum trip:  
Skirt the native girl, check the rabid dog,  
Rejoin the ship.  
There's no Charlie Mingus,  
His Tijnena's gone...  
This smile for the camera  
Is all just a tourist con.  
But after hours all the couriers and drivers know  
Of a cantina where there's every chance  
That she might show, and maybe Ysabel  
Will dance the dance for real again,  
Her mother's footsteps, vice and virtue,  
Lust and love and pain.  
There's something here  
The anthropologists dare not explain,  
Something about Ysabel's dance

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