

## PRIOR TO THE TEA DANCE/ WISHES OF AN OLD GENTLEMAN

What can you tell me  
If your lies I already know?  
You see no life,  
though it passes you constantly  
in changing images.  
"Mirror, mirror, on the wall..."  
staring at pain -  
unfeeling, unpossessed,  
unhoping, unremembering...  
Show me not wrinkles of time.  
Talk to me, instead,  
of ragtime,  
aching quick steps  
following a stubborn sound.  
Tell me of her smile,  
the cupper raised  
as memories flow.  
She, who will be there again,  
she, "...the fairest of them all..."  
"Mirror, mirror, on the wall."

Manuel L. Ponte - Bogotá, Colombia, October 30, 1972