I’m ten years away from the corner you laugh on with your pals, Maggie McGeeley and Jean Duff. The three of you bend from the waist, holding each other, or your knees, and shriek at the pavement. Your polka-dot dress blows round your legs. Marilyn.

I’m not here yet. The thought of me doesn’t occur in the ballroom with the thousand eyes, the fizzy, movie tomorrows the right walk home could bring. I knew you would dance like that. Before you were mine, your Ma stands at the close with a hiding for the late one. You reckon it’s worth it.

The decade ahead of my loud, possessive yell was the best one, eh? I remember my hands in those high-heeled red shoes, relics, and now your ghost clatters toward me over George Square till I see you, clear as scent, under the tree, with its lights, and whose small bites on your neck, sweetheart?

Cha cha cha! You’d teach me the steps on the way home from Mass, stamping stars from the wrong pavement. Even then I wanted the bold girl winking in Portobello, somewhere in Scotland, before I was born. That glamorous love lasts where you sparkle and waltz and laugh. Even then it were mine.

Context:
The poet is talking about her mother as a teenager. In the first stanza she is describing a photo of her mother with friends. This was written as the poet wished she knew her mother before she was born.

Themes:
- Motherhood
- Sacrifice
- Hope
- Love
- Memories
- Childhood