

Venus in the Spa

Warm garden airs drift through the summer night.
Sly sprays of jasmine ache, intense and pale,
the winking stars give up their perfumed night
and bougainvillea bursts above the pool.
Nearby, some nightbird flirts its furtive call;
the senses swoon, yet each is on alert—
a hedgehog rootles through indelicate ferns,
a cricket stills, and starts, and stops. It's late
when, milky under moonlight, self-aware,
she stirs the water with her loosening thighs,
demure as half the world, her gaze her own;
smiles at her own conceit and rises from the spa,
half-turning; dabs between her marble breasts
and does not raise her heavy lidded eyes.

Adrian Mitchell