My Life as a Sari

Securely tuck your fears under elastic
at the centre of your waist with your left hand,
and with your right, hold the remaining
metres of spun silk - your future,
facing inside.

Measure the drop of the fall
and it's finely stitched edge
for correct positioning against heels.

Wrap yourself in the gossamer fold, swirling
the diaphanous film behind but stay level,
and wedge the top border into your petticoat.

Like a bride preparing herself,
you are now ready to pleat.

At a distance from the last fixing,
hand-measure the delicate veil,
embroidered with details
important to who you are
toward the middle of your body.

Some may need five pleats, some six.
Less is more. Another judgement
held on show – a statement of size
however graciously it moves.

Securely fix the perfumed fanning and grasp
what is left, bring it back around
to wrap warmly and return to the front.

These days, you can choose to gather all loose
ends onto your left shoulder, secured with a jewel.

But many prefer to throw the remainder
over, remembering to hold an arm half bent,
letting the end float freely – the beaded
edge skimming the inside of your wrist.

Frances Macaulay Forde © 2007

Painting by [Jessica McCallum](#)

dance (detail) 300mm x 100mm (x