

WAYNE MORRIS

Looking at Pictures, 1975
Oil on canvas, 64 1/2 x 53 1/2 in.



COURTESY JAMES A. MICHENER ART MUSEUM. GIFT OF YVONNE SHAFER IN MEMORY OF HER HUSBAND ROBERT CHAMBERLAIN.

WILMA MARCUS CHANDLER

The Supernumeraries

We are all standing upstage,
left and right,
holding fake spears.

Someone pulls the curtain open
and we are both relieved
at having no lines to say
but also worried
we will not even be seen.

We will stand here,
wearing our brocaded
velvet doublets,
for the whole performance
and never have the chance
in what may be two or three hours
to be part of the action,
or even the chorus,
or the corps de ballet.

After the final bows,
where we will go first,
then move quickly aside
as the leads receive their accolades,
we will carefully
hang up our costumes
and leave through the stage door,
wearing old, reliable clothes.

Wilma Marcus Chandler is a theater and dance educator who has taught at University of Iowa and University of California, Santa Cruz, and is emeritus chair of theater arts at Cabrillo College. Her theater arts books are available through Smith & Kraus and her first book of poetry, *The Night Bridge*, was published by Hummingbird Press in 2016. She is artistic director of the Santa Cruz Actors' Theatre as well as the founder of the Willing Suspension Armchair Theater and In Celebration of the Muse, the annual Bay Area festival of women in literature. She lives in Santa Cruz, California, with her husband, the writer John Chandler.