

Poem | *Daniel C. Potts, MD*
The Dance

You beckoned me back then
To join you in dancing
Upon a floor made clear for us
To have our moment in the waltz.
Perhaps you heard it first, then I:
The sameness of the string tunes
Played by strumming hands upon our hearts,
Drawing us with every finger stroke
In seamless unison toward the floor of dreams.
String songs merged melodiously
As our hands first clasped
And gazes locked into the warm ensemble
Which became the rhythm of our newfound joy.
So certain was your step, so deft your lead
Across all reaches of the floor
I felt uneasiness depart, and with closing eyes
Let myself be swept aloft by arms
Which bade me out a moment past
From new life's fringe.
As symphonies of dreams seem to play unendingly
Though but a solitary phrase has passed,
So the moment of our waltz went on and on.
Through pianos and fortes, allegros and andantes
We glided gracefully with steps both light and firm.
Other would-be waltzers there
Gazed out at us with wishful eyes,
Hoping their appointed time to take the floor
Would be as ours had been.
And then as a ritard began
Which ushers in the swan song of each pair
I sensed the slightest changes in your step. . .
No longer purposeful and sure

You seemed to hesitate for me,
To need the warmth of other feet as guide,
Those familiar with your stride
Who'd danced the steps you'd made with them
In life's waning waltz.
At first you tried to hold the lead,
To take the steps innately yours.
But, wavering, you gazed at me with speaking eyes
While you still knew,
While you still could,
And through the music of our song
Asked me to lead us to our rest at dancing's end.
And so I did.
The steps I made did not appear to me as deft
And graceful as the ones that led me
Out from youth's uncertainties
Onto life's polished hardwood floor.
But turning back upon our dancing time
As one rewinds a music box
To watch the gliding figures thereupon
In twirling, ebbing embrace,
An unexpected revelation comes:
The purest beauty of our dance
Is that we listened for life's song for us,
And hearing harmonies within,
Yielded to their sound.
And then, when half of our completed whole
No longer had the mind to yield
Life's truest grace broke forth, subitio,
Upon the floor:
The soul's own song of selfless love
Triumphantly revealed
In feeble, faltering steps of dance.

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