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*When the shoes were ready..*

### **Slow Dance**

‘A slow dance’;

I see you as a silhouette  
diaphanous in the doorway  
as you enter the room.  
The soft sheen on your hair  
the brief glint of starlight in your eye  
as you survey the room.  
The unhurried slant of jawbone  
the ease of hanging arms  
as you conquer the room.

The sudden stillness provoked  
by your entrance  
has nothing to do with the music,  
the sudden cessation of breath  
has all to do with the music  
that starts deep within me,  
as you conquer my inner rooms.

A constriction in my throat  
a flash of recognition  
a new addition to my coursing liquids,  
a speeded heartbeat  
warns me of the next dance  
the slow dance of finding out whom it is  
that I know so intimately,  
having never met.

Blind to all other charms  
among a countless number  
unhearing all but the rhythm of an ancient tune  
I move towards the center of the room  
the place where you are standing,  
solitaire.  
Or outstanding  
notwithstanding the crowded room

your presence alone makes  
the house seem empty now  
and I dare to approach unseen by the throng  
unheard by the music  
unsung by the croonies.  
The clamour in me is enough  
the need to move with you outdoes all other movement.

I stop  
close but unthreateningly to one side  
of your field of vision.  
Awaiting your freedom to choose to see me  
while risking to be invisible for ever.  
If you will not see me now  
this moment will be lost  
and I will be the poorer man.

Infinitesimally you move  
as if your soul's been startled  
by something subcutaneous,  
some presence under your very skin.  
You slowly turn your head  
and the turning begets a smile  
the smile a recognition  
the recognition begets a need  
that started before time  
became continuum,  
before moments gave birth to hours.  
Before days turned in to hopeful longing  
and forever needs.

Assessment and acceptance  
mingle happily in the corner of your eye  
as the neck bends a fraction  
accepting my own courteous bow  
reaching out with a slender hand  
catching me as I fall into you  
while standing on my own  
while moving into the slow dance  
induced by the band

but willed by the need  
to move in harmony with you.

The electric touching of your fingertips  
before the hands have fully met,  
the soft cheek offered for customary stance  
in this form of slow dance  
the soft wave of perfume running like  
a liquid enthusiasm  
over my face and into my face  
and in under my face into the very marrow.  
Another maker of indelible memory  
of ever wanting, never letting go  
of this other half of me  
enrolled in this slow dance.

The strong thighs moving intangibly  
but knowing their way among  
my own trembling legs  
the points of compact contact  
making bridges cross the chasm  
of guessed-at-truths  
about each other  
truths known before we ever met  
here or anywhere at all.  
It takes less time and more light years  
than anyone can measure  
before our bloods boil in similar cadences  
before our eyes lock inseparably  
and our hands fuse into the knowledge  
always hoped for,  
this dance, this slow dance  
will make all coming moments  
filled with all of forever.

The rest of that and all coming days  
are full of mist  
and diaphanous veils  
embalming hours and events  
joining deed and thought inseparably  
and murdering both if either be spoken of.

But the slow dance goes on  
and each new tune makes a new configuration  
on the dance floor of life.

The ballrooms may be empty now  
the dancing shoes split along the seams  
but the dance  
the slow dance  
still will be relived, retold and enjoyed  
by those who have danced with the wind.

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