

## Dancing in the Royal Hotel

Was it a foxtrot or waltz?  
We weren't much good at it  
but that wasn't the point,  
you teetering in your heels,  
me awkward in a dark suit,  
two small-town newly-weds  
who'd driven miles and miles  
down lonely country roads  
to dance in the Royal Hotel  
on a misty Friday night.

There was hardly anyone there.  
Do you remember the waiters  
in black bow-ties and tuxedos  
who leaned across a balustrade  
and watched our every move?  
And how the elderly pianist  
kept on playing *Summertime*  
and glancing over his shoulder  
as if longing for someone  
to step onto the dance floor?

You wore your party dress,  
still my favourite, even now,  
the one as black as mascara  
with white Botticelli flowers.  
Their fragrancy was you.  
I was watching your hands,  
candle-lit, slender, supple,  
breaking open a bread-roll  
when out of nowhere came  
love's tender, amorous gasp.

Next thing the gilded mirrors,  
the dark mahogany wainscot,  
the waiters just weren't there  
as haltingly we started to step  
and glide across the floor.  
I smelt your skin's perfume  
and felt your body's touch

lightly coming and going,  
so joyful I'll never forget  
the slow swirl of that dance.

Does music wake your shades?  
Each time that *Summertime*  
sings in my contemplations  
you in your flowered dress  
show up across the cutlery.  
You're flushed, exuberant,  
a village where the faithful  
celebrate a healing vision.  
I'm smitten with regret to think  
we didn't do this more often.

Next thing, the candelabra,  
the lonesome at their tables,  
the blaze of hot white lights  
above the pianist returns.  
For we are dancing again,  
dancing as if the energy  
that floats the earth, the stars  
and each dead atom in its grip  
frees us to breathe and dream  
and dance love into time.