

The night I learnt to dance

(for Jen Thorne)

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The night I learnt to dance, I danced once with the girl with the flaming hair,

Then she, sensibly enough, got up to dance with another.

I had been at this place many times before,

The one you wanted to dance with dancing with another,

And all the poison of regret and self-loathing building up in you.

Until the voice of God spoke up to me and said,

“Get up and dance now or sit forever looking on,

Forever regretting what you did not do,

Forever with everything bottled up

And the heart of your life never given to another,

Always kept chaste and pure, but never happy.”

So I got up and danced,

Danced with whoever would dance with me,

And gave my all to it.

And the strangest thing happened –

The girl with the flaming hair

Must have seen that I was recklessly giving my time to another,

And so after her dance with the other was over,

She came back to me,

And we danced, happy to have bluffed the world

And found each other.

So when you sit at the side of the dance looking on,

Do not let it be forever,

But throw yourself on the dance,

Uncaring, unheeding,

And magically the thing you seek will come to you.

Or so at least it has been for me,

And for that I am forever grateful.