

The Dance

She dances.

She gyrates,
vibrates.

She bops and boogies.
The music
blasts and blares,
erupting her ear drums
thrumming
humming.
No one else hears
its churning,
chugging.

Only she senses
the notes advancing.
She hears nothing else,
and so she keeps dancing.

She wiggle-wags bony hips,
taps toes,
grinds her heels into the floor,
squashing bugs
only she can see,
grinding their guts
to smithereens
to a rhythm
only she can hear.

And she can't mute it,
stop it,
pause it,
can't remove it.
Must move to it.
She dances.

The pace picks up now,
pulsing,
crescendoing,
and on she goes,
agitated and unending.

Day is done,
but the movement continues
convulsing in muscles and in sinew.
Her bones rattle,
writhing within
pale, thin skin.
It's a necessity.
She must.
She moves.

No one else hears her torment:
a serious affliction
slamming her skull
without consent.
She plugs her ears,
clogs her canals,
but the music does not
cannot
will not stop,
so on she dances.

Stop.
Still.
Quiet.
Sit.
She tries,
smile plastered to
bitten lips.

She can't.

On and on,
she dances.

What She Needs

She needs you to tell her
you love her.
She needs you to say
she's okay.

She needs to you say it.
She'd prefer if you
scream it
spout it
chant it
shout it
from base to summit
phone lines and freeways
intersections, alleys
canyons, valleys.

She yearns to
hear your words
tearing through tunnels
bouncing about beneath bridges
off belltowers and ridges
rebounding from roof tops.
She'll listen
for you
anywhere.

She'll take it in whispers,
but wishes you'd wail it
in her ear
each time
she asks.

And if she can't hear it,
make her see it.
Rearrange
your veins,
until all that
remains are
letters
of love
beneath
layers of
skin.

Can't she feel it?
Hot breathe on freckles
crook of elbow
backs of knees
echoing all she needs
to know.

Press your hot air
to her thin lips
and puff up her chest.
Resuscitate her with like,
fill her with love.

Make her your mantra.

Repeat it
replay it
rerun it
restate it
a refrain to your every breath:
I like you.
I love you.
You are
good
smart
kind
enough.

She's heard it before.
Once,
twice, more
times than she has
fingers and
freckles and pores
and toes but
once more
so she knows
won't you tell her?

Tell her thousands of
strands of
silky soft hair,
her synapses
and cell walls.

Tell them, please.
Tell them all.

Tell her
tenderly
even though
you know
it's never going to be
enough.

She hopes
you understand,
excuse,
absolve,
and say it
again and
again and
again, but

then
who has the patience?
The strength of lungs
endurance of expression
fortitude of vocal cords
to repeat themselves
without question
as their throat runs dry
their words falter
their lips crack,
tear and bleed
and yet, still
it's close
but
not
enough,
not quite what
she needs?

Her Beast

A beast resides
behind her
belly button,
burrows at the
nape of her neck,
catnaps at the crown
of her head.

The beast makes his way
freely through her,
unseen
and silent, but
inside her,
he's violent.
He's vicious and vile,
calling the shots
and pulling the strings
while stomping
about in her bile.

She takes breaths
to calm him,
but he rips, rages, roars,
splashing in her guts,
slamming cabinets and doors,
shattering plates,
smashing mugs,
shredding carpets and rugs,
slaying and seizing
in the interior design
of her body and mind
no matter the
depth of her breathing.

He holds her hostage
at home
trapped in muscle
and bone
banging on thin rib bars,
cartilage and clavicle,
a sacred cavity cradling
her heart.

When she smiles,
he hijacks her breathing.
He extinguishes her air
and vacuums her lungs
'til she's dizzy and
drunk on doubt
and despair.

Back at home
on the couch,
the beast back
in his pouch,
a parasitic joey
and she, the kangaroo.
Her heart won't slow,
cold sweat clings and it sticks,
pupils still dilated, too.

The beast continues his terror,
bigger and faster,
and try though she might,
she can't still the bastard
who just won't stay down in his hole.
They struggle with shovels,
but back up he bubbles,
so she gives the beast all control.