

The Dance

She dances.
She gyrates,
vibrates,
her limbs
and pony tail
oscillate.

She bops and boogies.
The music
blasts and blares,
erupting her ear drums
thrumming
humming.
But 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
so she moves to it.
She dances.

The pace picks up now,
pulsing,

crescendoing,
and on she goes
agitated and unending.

Day is done,
but the melody,
and movement continue
convulsing in muscles and in sinew
her bones rattling
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.

They say:
stop
still
quiet
sit.
She tries,
smile plastered to
bit lips.
She can't.

So 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 is
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 --
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.
Say it
again and
again and
again.

But who could
tolerate
the ears that don't hear
the truth
that they're told?
The downtrodden face,
the guilt that it holds.

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?

Well,

she hopes it's you.

She hopes it's you
because
she needs you
to make it okay.

And that's
really all
that 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,
and yet to viewers,
it's unseen
and silent.
To her,
he is 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.

Though she's a social
butterfly, the beast's
an introvert.
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
and the fun
she was having deflates.
She disappears,
dejected
her character affected
less likely
to leave again.

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 stuck 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.