

Write Your Life

A micro memoir writing project

Describe a dream that stayed with you and rippled in your memory.

Three Dances

I ask Tizi this morning, “How does your toast taste?” Adding, before she can answer, “That’s fun to say.”

She has no intention of answering. I speak so much foolishness. Her survival strategy is to ignore me.

But I want to tell her: it must have been a dream I had, of a wedding dance. Because I’ve been thinking about it since I got up. At Candy and Norm’s wedding I was eight years old. Candy was my big cousin from the big city. When she turned in Norm’s arms on the dance floor, her white gown swished. I thought of whipped cream and the possibility of beauty. My brother and I stood and watched at the edge of the floor, while other couples joined the bride and groom, our parents included. We looked at each other, surprised and embarrassed. We’d never really seen them as “a couple,” certainly never seen them dance. The way they looked dancing—like they were moving furniture.

Twelve years later I drove to Candy and Norm’s house on the west edge of the big city and had a difficult dinner with them and their two boys. Five years after that, Candy and the boys moved home with her parents, where I was staying briefly. From the basement where I slept I heard the boys upstairs crying at night, in confusion, in anguish.

A year later, at our wedding Tizi and I danced to “I Only Have Eyes for You.”

When our daughter got married I danced with her to “And I Love Her,” a song a little too fast for a slow dance, a little too slow for a fast dance. We hung on through it and whispered to each other.

“Toast taste,” I say now. I want to be sure she heard me. She nods. That’s all I’ll get.

“It bothers me,” I say, “when the server in a restaurant asks, ‘How’s that tasting?’”

She nods—Yes, that. If not terrible, at the very least it’s annoying. She tells me she would never say that. Both of us are agreeably irritable.