

OT

Category: Poems

written by Maggie Westland | July 4, 2014

Maggie Westland

I have a dance routine all in my hands, with steps
To take to make them bend again, at least to stall
The stalk of past abuse, of joint and sinew overuse

This jig more intricate, more complex, more diffuse
Than simple shuffles of the well-shod foot, requires
Both patience brute and gentle force to stake its worth

I dance five times each day twice daily bathe in wax
Or wrap socks full of rice from wrist to finger's tip
Twist, push, press on in rhythmic jerks response

All this is done sans band, no orchestra, no horns
No tapping toe, but from the clocks in four time zones
Keep track of reps, by background metronome

Each day I find new strengths, new curves, new hope
Rejoice as knuckles knock from inside out, transform
My hands to home-grown castanets.

About the poet:

Maggie Westland is a physician board-certified in public health and general preventive medicine. Since retiring from the pharmaceutical industry, she has focused on her lifelong avocation of writing and reading poetry. In addition to appearing in featured readings at venues throughout Southern California, she has performed with the Razor Babes and Moorpark College dancers. Her work appears in the anthologies [If We Dance](#), [Daybreak](#), [Above Us Only Sky](#) and [Ekphrastia Gone Wild](#). Her website is called [Conscious Ooze Poetry](#).

About the poem:

"This poem was written as I faced the reality of being diagnosed with chronic advanced osteoarthritis; it reflects how I am learning to cope with its accompanying disabilities. Occupational therapy has brought me more pain relief and more improvement of function than any other treatment modality."

Poetry editors:

Johanna Shapiro and Judy Schaefer