

# Dancing With Dad

The square dance begins at 7.  
I am there on time, and so is my dad-  
In his cowboy hat and sequined shirt,  
holding hands with the woman he took up with  
weeks after my mom died.

They step onto the dance floor  
and he twirls Lois, as the caller starts;  
“Promenade right, swing your partner,  
dosey-doe, now promenade left.”

Lois says to me when they come off the dance floor,  
“Go dance with your father.”  
I think, “How can I dance with him,  
when I never saw him dance with my mom?”

He holds his hand out, to take me onto the dance floor.  
I stare at it for a while, but agree to take his hand and go-  
as the caller starts again, “...take your partner, bow hello-  
twirl your partner, ready to go?”

Then he bows to me, actually bows to me-  
A man who used to berate me,  
when I stepped in between him and my mom.  
How could I betray her, by dancing with him?

I notice he is bald on top and looks very fragile...  
But his hands are soft and strong  
and when he holds mine,  
I feel safe with him, for the first time.

I step on his toes; he steps on mine...we laugh

I glance back at Lois and she's is waving at us.  
And I think, “She looks a lot like my mom,”  
and I take comfort in that, somehow,  
and the fact my dad and I are dancing,

He's holding my hand, actually holding my hand.  
I never wanted to hold his hand until today.  
And when the dance is done, I also notice,  
neither of us wants to let go.



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## Theresa Antonia

Theresa Antonia, host of two popular local poetry venues in the LA area: *Mudpuppy Poetry* (originally started in Highland Park at the Mudpuppy Coffeehouse), and *Projectile Poetry* in Brentwood at Dutton's Books. She has appeared in anthologies such as *Looking out of Alhambra*, *Looking out of Pasadena*, numerous *San Gabriel Valley Poetry Quarterlies*, and the anthology *Poetry and Cookies* thru the Alta Dena Library series. She is a contributing editor on *PoeticDiversity*, she is also a director and editor for the *Valley Contemporary Poets*, a member of the *Emerging Urban Poets* and the *Echo Space Poetry Collective*. Along with many self-published chapbooks, she is a contributor to a number of anthologies coming out in 2007/2008. Known for writing about relationships and family in a prose, storytelling style, an art therapist, artist and photographer with a master's degree in Psychology, she works with and also writes about incarcerated women, cancer survivors, and “at risk” youth. In the summer of 2006, she appeared on the television show “Spending a little time with Poetry” as a one woman show, has appeared on various radio poetry shows ...and, her dream came true! She has been featured more than once at Beyond Baroque, in Venice California. From her work as an “artist in residence” she is completing a documentary on kids & creativity. To book an appearance, or poetry feature, contact e-mail: [tc\\_art@hotmail.com](mailto:tc_art@hotmail.com)

