

Bobbie R. Coleman

Dancing With Grampa Jake

He smiles, tells me
I'm a smart little girl
will make someone a good wife.
My parents say, respect your elders
call him Grampa Jake; dance with him.
The band plays Glen Miller
who died before I was born;
he tells me, this
is how grown-ups dance
not like the trash
your friends listen to.
His hand rubs slowly up my spine,
each vertebra the note
of a chromatic scale
creeps silently up my sweater,
finds the strap
to my training bra
shoots electric current up my backbone
forms a maelstrom in my gut.
He chuckles and fidgets,
the clasp tight
as my clenched jaw.
My parents beam
at their big girl, poised
and grown at ten.

Shallow breath passes my ear
sweat beads his forehead,
I grimace, wait for the band
to end the Moonlight Sercnade.