

RICK PATRICK

## Papa's Dance

I've never seen him look so small  
or so happy, his face a concentrated

smile, his feet, those wretched limbs  
a flurry of steps and jumps, pure joy

at his daughter's wedding feast  
and if, as she said, he was slowing down

I didn't see it there, except perhaps  
in the physical stature, the diminution

of size, no longer to my eyes the man  
who moved pianos single-handed

and now that the party's over I  
still have this vision of him dancing

dancing right out of his body  
as if it were the most natural thing

in the world, to be a spirit-dancer  
jigging, conceding briefly to gravity

and then not at all, kicking free  
of pain and the flesh, arms out

head back, feet all a-flutter, that worn  
body stepping back oh so lightly into grace