

# The Year of Not Dancing

Hours passed languid as the flap of a hawk's wing  
in a last July before the awkward initiations  
of fifteen and lifts to far-afield jiving.

He'd work for an uncle, cutting hay, fixing  
shingles with bradawls and hot, smoking pitch –  
evenings, hung round with fairground hands

till the sideshows lit at eight. Then he'd sidestroke  
from the main pier, alone, on a full tide as far  
as the bobbing *Perpetua*, its line of cork floats,

with dock and fairground small as a snow-bubble town,  
bullhorns carrying Frank Ifield's *When the angels ask  
me to recall* out across a calm, irredentist blackness.

—C.L. Dallat, from *The Year of  
Not Dancing* (Blackstaff Press,  
2009)



  
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