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)