

## Welcome to the Dance

As children we danced  
in the graveyards of Maui  
my sister and I  
having come from Seattle  
the mainland visiting our

Grandma and Grandpa  
Nakamura actually  
Nakandakari  
but changed like so many names  
entering America

itself a name changed  
crossing the wide sea and we  
knew it as normal  
as natural as breathing this  
dancing and being with the

living and the dead  
we do not dance for sadness  
my Grandpa once said  
we dance for joy like the child  
who sees that her mother now

dances in the dance  
beyond life and death it seemed  
so far from our home  
in Seattle where I read  
the story of Sadako

and her cranes struck down  
before she reached one thousand  
by the terrible  
bright light of Hiroshima  
turned to cancer in her veins

how can we dance I  
wanted to know when the world  
has known such horrors  
bombings and displacements and  
internments of whole peoples

in the places they've  
come to call home I had no  
answer and I have  
no answer save the answer  
that dances in the dancing

itself we can dance  
because we can because we  
have it in our bones  
because all of our sorrows  
are all of our joys hidden

in the dance between  
the living and the dying  
and the being here  
together welcoming all  
things and people and feelings

like Sadako whose  
cranes are ours to keep folding  
one thousand little  
lights that together are not  
little like the lanterns at

O Bon glowing in  
the darkness gracing the tombs  
of the dead who are  
living here in our hearts here  
in our dance here in our lives

lighting the crossroads  
lifting to the sky like birds  
taking wing dancing  
for joy and sorrow alike  
for all that our dancing brings

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