**Dance On**

Mixed under a hood, a drop can burn skin.

She pushes in cc’s as saline drips down,

mixes, a secret recipe, with “cherry” juice.

I talk books, Germans from Russia, teaching AP.

Comfort to believe chatter eases staccato steps

as nurses choreograph concentration on us.

Patients waltz to IV poles and bags to restroom

wheeling along to rhythms of hearts’ hopes,

then settle back into recliners—knitting, reading,

conversation, silence, television, love.

Siblings, spouses, sons, daughters, friends—

 our hopeful wallflowers—

look on, make phone calls, wander off, return.

Will their love to put toe-tapping melodies

into compounds coursing through our veins?

Lidded toxic waste receives emptiness

as the next chemical, hung and connected

to electric pump, musically chimes problems,

call for RN maestro’s focused attention. across the

Then, for a moment, nurses focus on merrier steps.

Now the floor clears.

Now is my “hour of lead.”

Now still, eerie, peaceful.

My spirit tangos into dark,

barely glimpses

God’s glowing soft-shoe,

tapdancing far ahead.

*I could lose His whispering cadence.*

 *I strain to hear His healing beat.*

*I dance on.*

—Mary Lauck

 Written 2004/revised 2019