

## Contra Dancing

Cool autumn Friday  
nights, blizzard evenings, even  
dusk in breezeless summer  
we skitter with our lovers  
to a hall charmed by  
a century of dance.

Pairs of us in strings  
from the double-doors to  
the fiddles, banjos, guitars that flirt  
with our jittery feet. We know  
the calls, how the faces change  
with every swing and twirl.  
Already, that music throbs  
through our veins.

Our hands lock as the caller  
steers us into circles,  
squares and left-hand stars. Our bodies  
warm with do-si-do and promenade,  
with ladies chain and pass  
on through. We balance and swing with  
our new partners, our passion  
soaking up our shirts. We whoop  
and laugh, whoop and laugh, the walls  
dizzy like our blood. Again  
an unfamiliar face, again and  
again we realize  
some nights it's what we live for  
breathless in the arms of another.

ALLISON CHILDS WELLS