

# The Go-Back Club

Newsletter of the Simple-Living Brigade

January 2014

Thirty-eight members in eight states, the District of Columbia and three countries.

## South Scores 11<sup>th</sup>-Hour Win on Climate Loss and Damage

By Stephen Leahy

WARSAW, November 24, 2013 (IPS) — The U.N. climate talks in Warsaw ended in dramatic fashion in what looked like a schoolyard fight with a mob of dark-suited supporters packed around the weary combatants, Todd Stern of the United States and Sai Navoti of Fiji representing G77 nations.

It took two weeks and 36 straight hours of negotiations to get to this point.

At issue in this classic North versus South battle was the creation of a third pillar of a new climate treaty to be finalized in 2015. Countries of the South, with 80 percent of the world's people, finally won, creating a "Loss and Damage" pillar to go with the mitigation (emissions reduction) and adaptation pillars.

Super-typhoon Haiyan's impact on the Philippines just days before the 19<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP19) amply illustrated the reality of loss and damages arising from climate change. Philippines lead negotiator Yeb Saño made an emotional speech announcing "Fast for the Climate" at the COP19 opening that garnered worldwide attention, including nearly a million YouTube views.

His fast would only end with agreement on a "Loss and Damage" mechanism — an official process now called the "Warsaw Mechanism" — to determine how to implement this third pillar. Much still needs to be defined. Climate impacts result in both economic and non-economic losses, including the growing issue of climate refugees, people who are forced to move because their homelands can no longer support them.

"This Warsaw decision on 'Loss and Damage' is a major breakthrough," said Bangladesh's Saleem Huq, a senior fellow at the International Institute for Environment and Development in the U.K.

"There is a long way yet to go for an



Photo courtesy ENB

*COP19 delegates huddle to resolve the issue of "Loss and Damage."*

effective climate treaty," Huq told IPS.

Overall, the results from COP19 are mixed, said Alden Meyer, the Union of Concerned Scientists' director of strategy and policy, who has attended all but one of these climate negotiations over the past 19 years.

"Loss and Damages' is big but we have the bare minimum in the rest to keep going," he told IPS.

The U.N. talks known as COPs are part of a complex and acronym-laden process to create a new climate treaty to keep global warming to less than two degrees C and to help poorer countries survive the mounting impacts.

In 2009, at the semi-infamous Copenhagen talks, the rich countries made a deal with developing countries, saying in effect: "We'll give you billions of dollars for adaptation, ramping up to 100 billion dollars a year by 2020, in exchange for our mitigation amounting to small CO<sub>2</sub> cuts instead of making the big cuts that we should do."

The money to help poor countries adapt flowed for the first three years but has largely dried up. Warsaw was supposed to be the "Finance COP" to bring the promised money. That didn't happen.

Countries like Germany, Switzerland and others in Europe only managed to scrape together promises of 110 million dollars into the Green Climate Fund. Developing countries wanted a guarantee of 70 billion a year by 2016 but were blocked by the U.S., Canada, Australia, Japan and others.

"Rich governments have refused to recognize their legal and moral responsibility to provide international climate finance," said Lidy Nacpil, director of Jubilee South, Asia Pacific Movement on Debt and Development.

The mitigation pillar in Warsaw is even shakier. Japan said they couldn't make their promised emission reductions and gave themselves a new, extremely weak target. Canada and Australia thumbed their noses at their reduction commitments and are

Warsaw continued on page 2

# How to Help the Trees

The Friday before Sandy struck, Dr. Jim worked on trees in the coastal Rumson area of New Jersey.

Dr. Jim says, “The trees said that they are expecting 60 mph winds.” Dr. Jim believes that most of the trees know innately what to do when a storm is approaching. However, they are a lot like us in some ways: they get a little “confused” in the panic of the approaching storm. Therefore, the “Whispers” below will help to center the trees and put them on the right path so they can care for themselves during this storm.

If you are inclined to talk with trees — and aside from the practical things you can do — here is another way you can help your trees through Hurricane Sandy.

Go outside and walk among your trees

and plants on your property. You may also touch them. In your heart, say the following phrases to all your trees and plants. (If you are elsewhere, ask your trees to send these wishes to trees on the East Coast USA.)

**1.** I care for you. There is a big storm coming.

**2.** Roots, please grip soil and earth with all your might.

**3.** Trunk, branches and stems, please be supple and bend like a dancer.

**4.** Leaves, please drop if you can or become slippery and turn on edge so the wind-driven rain slips past you or any snow slips off.

**5.** Community of Green Beings, please tighten your web of connections.

**6.** Ecosystem, please become connected and interconnected.

**7.** Element of Earth, please hold roots

tight.

**8.** Element of Air, please caress, not assault.

**9.** Element of Water, please flow smoothly over.

**10.** Element of Fire, please give strength to the whole.

**11.** Spirit of the Land, please meet the Spirit of the Storm with serenity.

Please do this more than once in the coming days, if you can. When the storm arrives, see to your own well-being first. Continue to send these messages to your trees, even from inside the house or from afar.

More information is at [www.TheTreeWhisperer.com](http://www.TheTreeWhisperer.com) and [www.CooperativeBioBalance.org](http://www.CooperativeBioBalance.org).

Source: <http://www.wisewomantradition.com>

---

## Warsaw continued from page 1

increasing emissions.

Today's reality is that slightly more than half of annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are coming from the global south. In Warsaw, the big emitters like China and India refused to take on specific reduction targets. Instead they agreed to make “contributions.” Specific details about reduction amounts and timing was deferred to a specially-convened leader's climate summit in New York on September 23, 2014.

“We need those promises to add up to enough real action to keep us below the internationally-agreed, two-degree temperature rise,” U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said here in Warsaw.

The one surprising success at COP 19 was an agreement on REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation). This will provide compensation for countries that could lose revenue from not exploiting their forests. Deforestation and conversion of forests to farmland contributes about 10 percent of total human-caused CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

“We now have a system in place to do REDD and reduce emissions,” said Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, an indigenous representative from the Philippines. It's a strong package

that includes verification, monitoring and safeguards for local communities. Countries have to put all of this in place before they can access finance either through the Green Climate Fund or through carbon markets, Tauli-Corpuz told IPS.

“Hopefully, it will pump a lot of money into local communities and reduce deforestation,” she said. Honoring land tenure or land rights of local communities to care for the forests is the key to making REDD work as intended and benefit local people and not corporations or national governments, she said.

Emissions from deforestation have been slowly declining. However, the vast majority of CO<sub>2</sub> comes from burning fossil fuels, especially coal, and it continues to grow quickly. Those emissions will heat the planet for centuries and yet governments spend more than 500 billion dollars to subsidize these industries, said Kumi Naidoo, Greenpeace international executive director.

“Democracy has been stolen by corporations,” Naidoo told IPS. “While activists and protesters are arrested, the real hooligans are the CEOs of fossil fuel companies.” The only avenue left to people

is civil disobedience and 2014 will be the year of climate activism, he said. “Now is the time to put our lives on the line and face jail time,” Naidoo said.

In what may be the first of many such actions, more than 800 members of civil society walked out of the COP negotiations on the second to last day “in protest against rich industrialized countries jeopardizing international climate action” they said.

While international negotiations inch along, climate scientists are growing increasingly alarmed by mounting evidence that climate change is happening faster and with larger impacts than projected.

To have a good chance at staying under two degrees C, industrialized countries need to crash their CO<sub>2</sub> emissions 10 percent per year starting in 2014, said Kevin Anderson of the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research at the University of Manchester, U.K.

“We can still do two C but not the way we're going,” Anderson said on the sidelines of COP 19 in Warsaw. He wondered why negotiators on the inside are not reacting to the reality that it is too late for incremental changes. “I'm really stunned there is no sense of urgency here,” he told IPS.

## What on Earth is The Go-Back Club?

We are a group of people who are willing to use our lives to purposefully go backwards to using less energy, living more simply, etc. When new people sign up, I'll print their comments and publish our new membership numbers. No further demands, no money, just a monthly, online newsletter.

If you want to share your new and creative tips, I'll be happy to publish them. You can reach me at [gobackclub@pa.net](mailto:gobackclub@pa.net), [www.gobackclub.com](http://www.gobackclub.com) or 21431 Marlin Circle, Shade Gap, Pennsylvania 17255. Hard copy subscriptions are \$30 a year payable to Iona Conner. Thanks!

## Tracking Fracking



Photo submitted by Allen Hengst

One of Broomfield's two election judges being watched during the Fracking Ban recount by several "vote watchers."

## Sore Losers Seek Injunction

Submitted by Allen Hengst  
Washington D.C.

By Megan Quinn, *excerpt*  
*Broomfield Enterprise*: December 5, 2013

Voters have officially banned fracking in Broomfield but the city still faces legal action and a possible election challenge in the wake of the ban's certification. On Thursday, the Broomfield canvass board certified the recount of Question 300, which bans fracking in Broomfield for five years.

The matter, which was subject to an automatic recount because the margin of victory was so slim, passed by just 20 votes

after the recount was completed Tuesday..

The Broomfield Balanced Energy Coalition is seeking an injunction to stop the ban from taking effect until it can obtain "all information in election documents that is available to election judges," such as vote logs and access to what election workers talked about during the alleged closed-door sessions. [Broomfield City and County attorney Bill] Tuthill said Broomfield has given election watchers fair access to the election. Broomfield has 20 days to respond to the lawsuit.

Source: [http://www.broomfieldenterprise.com/broomfield-news/ci\\_24665273/fracking-ban-official-broomfield-but-legal-questions-loom?source=pkg](http://www.broomfieldenterprise.com/broomfield-news/ci_24665273/fracking-ban-official-broomfield-but-legal-questions-loom?source=pkg)

## Study: U.S. Spewing 50% More Methane Than EPA Says

By Seth Borenstein, *excerpt*  
AP: November 26, 2013

WASHINGTON — The United States is spewing 50 percent more methane — a potent heat-trapping gas — than the federal government estimates, a new comprehensive scientific study says. Much of it is coming from just three states: Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas.

That means methane may be a bigger global warming issue than thought, scientists say. Methane is 21 times more potent at trapping heat than carbon dioxide, the most abundant global warming gas, although it doesn't stay in the air as long.

Much of that extra methane, also called natural gas, seems to be coming from livestock including manure, belches and flatulence, as well as leaks from refining and drilling for oil and gas, the study says. It was published Monday in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science*.

The study estimates that in 2008, the U.S. poured 49 million tons of methane into the air. That means U.S. methane emissions trapped about as much heat as all the carbon dioxide pollution coming from cars, trucks and planes in the country in six months.

That's more than the 32 million tons estimated by the U.S.E.P.A. or the nearly 29 million tons reckoned by the European Commission. ...

Read the whole article at [http://finance.yahoo.com/news/study-us-spewing-50-more-122320566.html?soc\\_src=mediacontentsharebuttons](http://finance.yahoo.com/news/study-us-spewing-50-more-122320566.html?soc_src=mediacontentsharebuttons).

## Chevron Halts Romania Shale Work After Protest

By Bogdan Cristel  
*Reuters*: December 7, 2013

PUNGESTI, Romania — U.S. oil major Chevron halted exploration work for shale gas in eastern Romania for the second time in two months on Saturday after anti-fracking protesters broke through wire mesh fences around the site.

Thousands of people have rallied across Romania in recent months to protest against government support for shale gas exploration and separate plans to set up Europe's largest open-cast gold mine in a small Carpathian town.

The U.S. Energy Information Administration estimates Romania could potentially hold 51 trillion cubic feet of shale gas, which would cover domestic demand for more than a century.

Chevron won approval to drill exploratory wells in the small town of Pungesti in the impoverished county of Vaslui in October

but had to halt work soon after when residents blocked access to the site. It resumed work on December 2.

On Saturday, about 300 riot police were deployed in Pungesti, 210 miles northeast of capital Bucharest, to try to prevent an equal number of protesters, mostly local residents, from entering the Chevron site. Some broke through into the site, however.

The activists chanted "Stop Chevron" and held banners saying "No drilling allowed here." Dozens were detained by police.

Chevron said some equipment had been damaged on the site. "Chevron can today confirm it has suspended activities ... as a result of unsafe conditions generated by unlawful and violent protester activities," it said in a statement emailed to Reuters. ...

Read the full story at <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/12/07/romania-shale-chevron-idUKL5N0JM07D20131207>.

## Dedicated to You

By Alisha Newsome

This is for the brokenhearted  
Who finally ran out of tape.  
This is for the preps,  
Who try way too hard, becoming plastic &  
fake.  
This is for the drug addicts,  
Who hate to see their mothers cry.  
This is for the boy in love,  
But just looks from afar cuz he's too shy.  
This is for the baby who has genius ideas,  
But their crayon snaps in two.  
This is for the hard-core gamblers  
Who truly have nothing left to lose.  
This is for the gays, bis & lesbians,  
Who have to pretend to be something they're  
not.  
This is for the high-school basketball star  
Who misses the winning shot.  
This is for the little boy  
told to speak only when spoken to,  
& no one speaks to him at all.  
This is for the bulimic girl,  
Throwing up in public bathroom stalls.  
This is for the constant runaway,  
Used to sleeping hungry, shivering & alone on  
the beach.  
This is for the naive child trying to get his mom's  
booze from the pantry for her,  
But falls off the counter because he cannot  
reach.  
This is for the people killed,  
Rioting against bulls\*\*t regulations & laws.  
This is for those burning memories,  
That always leave resistant eyes wet, red &  
raw.  
This is for the young girl, raped then impregnated,  
But not allowed the choice to get an abortion.  
This is for the newly divorced man, drunk driving,  
Who, through his tears can't see anything but  
distortion.

This is for the geeks/nerds/indies,  
Who believe they're lesser beings than all the  
others.  
This is for the 16-year-old dropout,  
Trying to support five sisters & brothers.  
This is for the fat people,  
Thinking no one will ever see past their looks.  
This is for the kid blocking out the sound of his dad  
beating his mom,  
Just trying to read a mother f\*\*\*\*\*g book.  
This is for the judged blacks, whites  
& everything in between.  
This is for the mute & deaf,  
Who can't hear the sound of their screams.  
This is for the ashamed cutters,  
Trying to actually cover their f\*\*\*\*\*g scars.  
This is for the loving father,  
Who's daughter has to visit him behind bars.  
This is for you, him, her, me.  
This is for everyone, together, us, we.  
This is for the growing hatred in the world most  
people are too dumb or blind to see.  
This is for stupid drama that destroys friendships &  
families.  
This is for the ones who lost all self respect.  
This is for the ones who can't let go of their regrets.  
This is for the bellicose & belligerent.  
This is for the childhood memories long forgotten &  
spent.  
This is for those who have no one left to hold.  
This is for everyone who's trying to fit into some  
bulls\*\*t societal mold.  
This is for that one song set on replay.  
This is for the words that no one has the strength to  
say.  
This is for every tear that's ever been shed.  
This is for the sick, the dying & those already dead.  
This is for the weak, powerless, enervated & sore.  
This is for everyone who doesn't want to hurt  
anymore.

*Alisha Newsome is a junior in high school who loves poetry, heavy metal music and helping suicidal teens. She lives in Ocala, Florida. (Alisha wrote this when she was 15 but is now almost 17.)*

---

---

From Sandy Chilcote's "blue wicker" poetry book, Newfoundland, Canada

**I discuss my thoughts with mountains coming into winter  
robed with clouds and snow, leaving golden leaves behind  
for the unity and diversity of the long, cold nights  
and I talk of leaving birth and even the things before birth  
in order to embrace an appreciation for life and for all changes —  
still, the most intangible things are the most wonderful  
maybe even those after death**

## Letters and Emails to the Editor



**Dear Iona:**

I enjoyed reading about the handmade gifts — what do you have in your 'arsenal' about 'door snakes' or similar items that can be made to stop cold, windy drafts from the base of doorways? I'm sure there are products out there but I'd rather make them myself — do you have ideas and patterns? Thanks!

Deby Morrow, California

**Hi Deby,**

Glad you enjoyed the story. I used double-folded cotton and just measured a bit wider than the width of each door, double-stitched around the two long ends and one short end, turned them inside-out, stuffed them with sandbox sand (clean but somewhat dusty), sewed up the open end and that was it.

I tried to remember to shake out the dust once they were finished so they wouldn't leave too much dust on people's floors.

I don't remember how thick I made them but I cut two rectangles of material, folded them in half and then stitched with double fabric and double rows of stitching. I've stopped making them as we have enough.

It's best to get out your sewing machine and use those tight, even stitches. I wouldn't trust my hand stitching to keep fine grains of sand in.

That's about it! Have fun.

Iona

**Hi Iona,**

May I join your Go Back Club? I would love to receive your online newsletter and updates. I hope you are well.

D.D., Ohio

**Dear Iona,**

Good Morning! I was in the Seoul area this weekend. Korea became a kind of city country. The public transportation system has been advanced very well. Most satellite cities in the Seoul metropolitan area are connected by subways and trains.

And bullet trains connect major cities. Speed? About 200 Kilometers (124 miles) an hour. Maybe it will be 400 kilometers (248 miles) an hour in the near future.

On top of that, major cities have subway systems and most commuters use the systems. Of course some young people love to drive but they will get sick and tired of traffic jams.

This is my Field Report for you. Have a great day.

Pyong Roh, Korea

**Hey Iona,**

See? There is just sooooo much we never hear about. I believe that company that wants the pipeline from Alberta to Texas is the one that dumped a few thousand gallons of oil in a creek that feeds the Kalamzoo River. Killed tens of thousands of fish. God knows what else.

As usual, the CEOs and COOs keep getting their millions and we users have to pay for their greed and stupidity.

Which is worse: to pay government investigators millions to determine how to stop the spills or pay to have the spills cleaned up and forever lose the environment? Obviously, Trans-Canada will not — nor will the other pipeline users — try preventive maintenance to protect us or the environment....

Jerry Byers, Texas

### Jerry Submitted the Following Articles with His Letter

#### Hundreds of Oil Spills Unreported

BISMARCK, North Dakota — North Dakota, the nation's No. 2 oil producer behind Texas, recorded nearly 300 oil pipeline spills in less than two years, state documents show. None was reported to the public, officials said.

According to records obtained by The Associated Press, the pipeline spills — many of them small — are among some 750 "oil field incidents" that have occurred since January 2012 without public notification....

#### Montana, Feds to Seek Damages from Exxon Oil Spill

By Matthew Brown, AP

*Billings Gazette*: November 1, 2013

After two years of review, Montana and federal officials notified ExxonMobil Corp. that they intend to seek damages for injuries to birds, fish and other natural resources from a major crude oil spill into the Yellowstone River.

The Texas company's 12-inch Silvertip pipeline broke near Laurel during flooding in July 2011, releasing 63,000 gallons of oil that washed up along an 85-mile stretch of the scenic river. ...

#### Judge Denies Bid to Reopen Highway to Megaload

By Todd Dvorak, AP

*Great Falls Tribune*: October 11, 2013

BOISE, Idaho — A federal judge has rejected a request to allow a General Electric Co. subsidiary to resume shipments

## My Ten Guidelines for a Spiritual Life

By Sunny War Eagle, Florida

1. I will increase my ability to love everyone unconditionally.
2. I will be able to stay centered and loving no matter what is going on around me.
3. I will always be able to allow others to voice their opinions, even if they are false or judgmental, without responding emotionally or defensively.
4. I will learn to live in peacefulness and wonder of the universe.
5. I will learn to live in gratefulness and know that all that is needed will be provided.
6. I will be able to heal my body, mind and spirit when I first get a clue that I am off balance.
7. I will be able to show love and understanding to those whose behavior and words may be ugly and abusive.
8. I will be able to see that those who act in destructive ways have nothing to do with me but come from their own inability to live their own purpose in a spiritual life.
9. I will put service before all else in my life.
10. I will learn to love it all!!! (smiles & joy)

of massive oil-field equipment on a scenic, two-lane highway in northern Idaho.

U.S. District Judge B. Lynn Winmill issued the decision Thursday, handing environmentalists and the Nez Perce tribal leaders another victory in the latest legal battle over the use of U.S. Highway 12 as a shipping route for the wide, heavy and long loads.

Last month, Winmill issued an injunction that essentially blocked the GE unit from hauling any more megaloads along the winding, two-lane roadway, which also passes through tribal lands and a federally-designated Wild and Scenic River corridor..

# Patience: My Dancing Dreams Come True

By Iona

First published in *The Gazette*, Frederick, Maryland  
July 12, 2001

Heel dig spank shuffle heel dig spank.  
Remember to smile. Heel dig spank heel  
shuffle dig step. Faster! Faster!

This refrain followed my feet during the  
past three months as I tried to catch up to  
my classmates in an adult tap dancing class.  
We were working on our dance for the  
recital last month at the Weinberg.

At 55, I was preparing for my first tap  
recital.

My dance history is brief.

When I was 7, I took a modern dance  
class with my 6-year-old sister. When it was  
time for the recital, they cast my sister as  
celery and me as a plump tomato, crushing  
my self-image.

Three decades later, I signed up for an  
adult ballet class. There was no recital.

And then, when I was 51, I saw  
Riverdance.

I wanted more than anything to do that.

The closest I came was adult beginner  
tap for a three-month summer class. Again  
there was no recital.

Then I found an Irish Step Dancing class,  
which I joined immediately, although late.  
Thankfully, one woman offered to help me  
learn the steps I had missed.

Ecstasy! This was the dance of my soul,  
my roots. We were learning how to dance  
in our hard shoes (aptly named) like the  
Riverdance cast (well, hardly).

Interesting footwork, vigorous exercise  
and oh, such FUN.

That was until my knee crippled me for  
a few months and made it painful even to  
walk. My knee knew that a 202-pound,  
52-year-old woman was abusing it. The  
doctor diagnosed arthritis, spurs and  
floating kneecaps.

Gradually, with intervention on my part,  
my knee healed. We moved from Columbia  
to Frederick and I celebrated my 53<sup>rd</sup>  
birthday.

I signed up for adult ballet at the "Y." A  
gentle return to dance. But only two signed  
up so my class was canceled.

I called my former Irish Step Dance  
teacher to see if I could return to his class.  
It was OK with him so I started practicing  
the Irish jig and reel religiously before  
showing up again.

While my friends were glad to see me, it  
was frightening to me to see how advanced  
they had become in my two-year absence.

But I didn't have to worry for long



I recorded her  
calling out every  
move of the foot  
and then actually  
doing the dance  
to the beat of the  
music. The crisp  
staccato of her taps  
inspired me. I then  
had the courage  
and faith I needed  
to see it through.

I realized this  
was no beginner  
class. I also began  
to understand that  
the others were  
struggling with a  
few of the steps.

The music for our

because my other knee gave a shriek and I  
had to quit again.

Darn! Where to dance? What to do?  
Time was passing. I was 54.

While walking through Frederick one  
summer day, I spotted signs for a local  
dance studio but it wasn't open for business  
yet.

I kept checking until one day, the  
instructor was there getting her new studio  
ready to teach the Isadora Duncan style of  
dance.

I became her first student. I liked it.  
Feminine. Free-spirited. Easy on the knees.  
But it wasn't Riverdance.

When my knees felt stronger, I decided  
to go back to beginner tap (since that never  
hurt) and lose some weight.

I found an adult tap class in town and  
started dancing again this January, at age  
55 and 190 pounds.

Costumes had already been ordered for  
the recital when I showed up for my first  
class but, after participating for an hour, I  
confidently told my teacher I could learn  
the steps they were doing.

I plunged ahead and ordered my  
costume.

"Do you have extra, extra large?"

"No."

"Do you have queen-size tights?"

"No."

"Well, order me the largest sizes you  
have. I'll be smaller by then." (P. S. NOT)

So I worked and worked and practiced  
and practiced.

At a time when I felt I'd better drop out  
so I wouldn't disgrace our teacher and mess  
up the dance for everyone else, my teacher  
agreed to give me a private lesson.

dance was frightfully fast in my opinion,  
but I loved it.

But by this stage of the game, I knew I  
had to perform. I felt this effort symbolized  
closure on an important piece of my life  
— to claim revenge for the humiliated,  
chubby, little girl/tomato.

In contrast to my costume 48 years ago,  
our costumes this time were gorgeous!  
Bright blue Lycra flowing pants and  
graceful tops; tons of glitter on the top and  
velvet shoulders.

There was a slit in the front, up to the  
bra line, which I prudishly wanted to sew  
together. Then I relaxed. This was the  
first time in my life to leave behind the  
conservative dresser and be a "showgirl!"

Dress rehearsal was interesting. Our  
teacher reminded us to smile. But I  
wondered if I could smile and remember  
the steps?

I practiced that evening and again the  
morning of my debut. I was ready.

Our turn came. The curtain rose. The  
music started. Tears came to my eyes.  
Fortunately, our dance started off with our  
backs to the audience so a few quick blinks  
did the trick.

We all danced perfectly.

The day of the performance, my husband  
was out of town and my friend didn't show  
up. There was no one in the audience to  
watch me.

But, do you know what? It didn't matter.  
I danced for ME!

The crushed tomato is gone.

A dancer clothed in glitter and velvet has  
taken her place, with sparkle in her eyes  
and a triumphant smile on her face.