Ebb Tide

Little by little
they drifted into dream,
left behind
their world of joys and sorrows,
family, friends,
entered an inner life.

We tried to call them back
through music, verse,
and momentarily,
they looked around,
smiled at familiar faces,
stalked their feet
to the beat of a remembered tune—
when they had danced with a wife,
taken a husband by the hand.

The cruelty
for those left behind—
who could not follow them
to wherever they went,
could not know
the inner lives of their secret worlds
from which there would be no waking.

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