

The Last Dragon Dance

by [Scot Walker](#) (January 2019)



The Seven Gods of Good Fortune in a Lion Dance, Katsushika Hokusai

For Jennifer Crowder

When I and Liu Chow first danced the Dragon Dance,

(Am I today a man?)

Standing erect and tall within our scaly skin,

My toes clinging to his slippery shoulders, unleashing our sweet-scented sweat.

It was I who pulled the lever blinking our dragon eyes and wrinkling our dragon brows,

He who twisted and hurled our serpentine tongue in and out our fiery mouth,

Feeling the power of the gods, knowing our hearts were one.

A generation later, when I and Liu Chow taught our sons the Dragon Dance

(A full grown son! Surely, today I am a man!)

Watching them struggle in their accordion-like plastic tube—

His son operating the mechanized eyes and tongue—

My son breathing dragon fetid breath, half disguised by Listerine, clouded in smoke,

We grimaced when we saw them misdirect the dragon-fire,

Neither of us feeling the power of the gods, hoping our hearts were one.

Two generations later, when I and Liu Chow taught our son's sons the Dragon Dance

(A grandson and thirty-seven photographs bulging in my wallet. Now who is the man?)

Animating their monitors with egregious algorithms and pixels

We fired the blue-gray nostril flames from an electronic control board in Cheboygan

As our sons operated the light and sound boards from manned satellites in space, and

Our grandsons sold tickets on eBay, preferring AmEx to personal checks, no longer

Feeling the power of the gods, wishing our hearts were one.

Three generations later, when Liu Chow and I taught the grandsons of our sons

(A son of my grandson. Now I am a patriarch!)

To listen to the spirit of the moldering carcass of our nearly forgotten dragon,

Longing to taste its saliva, smell its beer-induced vomit, pull the pebbles from

its toes

We combed his shaggy eyebrows, washed its hide,

Massaged its tired feet and laid him in his box,

Forgetting the power of the gods, no longer caring that our hearts were one.

–2007, Hong Kong

Scot Walker has been a writer and poet for many years and is a member of the Dramatists Guild. His work includes *These Forty Years Have Flown So Fast, Poetry by Scot Walker, Winston Churchill's American Cousin and Other Tales* and over 30 published plays, as many short stories, and several novels. He is a retired English teacher. He gave a dramatic reading of *The Last Dragon Dance* in 2007 in Lhasa, Tibet.

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