My Papa's Waltz

Theodore Roethke (1948)

At every step you missed

You beat time on my head

Then waltzed me off to bed

Still clinging to your shirt.

My right ear scraped a buckle.

With a palm caked hard by dirt,

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The whiskey on your breath 1 Could make a small boy dizzy; 2 But I hung on like death: 3 Such waltzing was not easy. We romped until the pans 5 Slid from the kitchen shelf; My mother's countenance 7 Could not unfrown itself. The hand that held my wrist 9 Was battered on one knuckle; 10

Was waltzing with his father a pleasant experience for the speaker?