

The Alpha Beta Waltz

©1988 by Howard L. Kaplan

Permanently, irrevocably, indelibly, and unerasably dedicated to one who cannot be named,
because it really happened to her

A flowing waltz (♩ = 180)

I'm fe-male, I'm sin-gle, and my life is filled with ap-point-ments and names of which I must keep track,
And so eve-ry au-tumn I buy a black book that has months in the front and ad-dress lines in back.
Then, for a few weeks, I can live in both times as I co-py the old year's names in-to the new.
My foun-tain pen's filled with in-del-i-ble ink and I judge all the men as they pass in re-view.
"B" be-fore "C", which one was he? I must con-si-der each en-try in turn.
"J" be-fore "K", some names will stay, O-ters are brid-ges I'd just as soon burn.
"K", "L", "M", "N", there's no year when I'm going to co-py them all, As,
in a strict or-der, I choose to re-cord or Re-ject while re-view-ing ad-dres-ses each fall.

Complete lyrics overleaf

The Alpha Beta Waltz ©1988 by Howard L. Kaplan

Permanently, irrevocably, indelibly, and unerasably dedicated to one who cannot be named,
because it really happened to her

I'm female, I'm single, and my life is filled
with appointments and names of which I must keep track,
And so, every autumn I buy a black book
that has months in the front and address lines in back.
Then, for a few weeks, I can live in both times
as I copy the old year's names into the new.
My fountain pen's filled with indelible ink
and I judge all the men as they pass in review.

"B" before "C", which one was he?
I must consider each entry in turn.
"J" before "K", some names will stay;
others are bridges I'd just as soon burn.
"K", "L", "M", "N", there's no year when
I'm going to copy them all,
As, in a strict order, I choose to record or
reject while reviewing addresses each fall.

On Saturday morning I'd bought my black book
and I'd left it at home on my desk when, by chance,
On Saturday evening I met Abel Aaronson;
I played piano and he came to dance.
Each time he'd waltz by and his eye caught my eye,
I'd invent three strange chords as he gave me that look.
The dance being complete, we agreed we must meet,
and I copied his phone number into my book.

Those who live life at the top of the alphabet
learn to love privilege like cardinals and kings,
Hearing their names before everyone else's
they think they deserve to come first in all things.
After the week that it took to discover
that he, as a lover, would simply not please,
It was too late to regret our first date
As I'd finished the "F"s and had started the "G"s.

I'm civil. I've manners. I give explanations.
I picked up the phone for a final farewell.
I made no impression on Mr. Impatience,
who slammed down his end on the words, "Go to hell!". Well,
Good riddance to him, better luck in the new year,
as I must resolve what to do at this stage:
To look at his name in my own careful letters
or strike out or white out to reclaim the page.