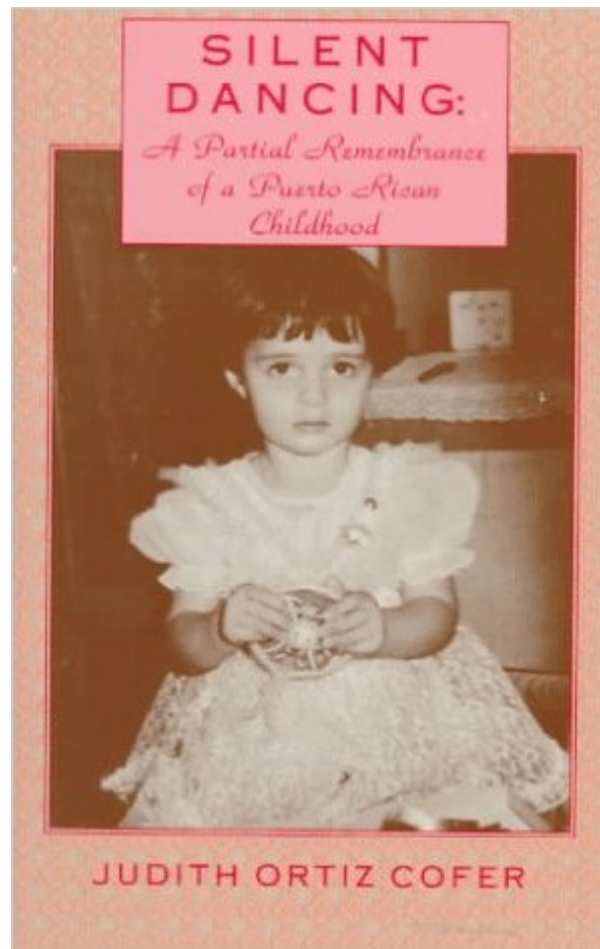


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# Silent Dancing: A Partial Remembrance Of A Puerto Rican Childhood



## Synopsis

A well-known author's memoir also includes a taste of her poetry.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In a seeming easy narrative of remembrance, Ortiz Cofer brilliantly weaves in dense yet accessible political thought on the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized through her literary genius: her keen use of metaphor. Ortiz Cofer's outloud conversational tone is engaging and unintimidating even in the face of the deep issues she raises and the hard questions she subtly yet clearly asks. Through "Silent Dancing," Judith Ortiz Cofer takes the reader along for a very enlightening journey through her self-exploration and self-definition. Ortiz Cofer discusses the ways that race, class, gender, and culture interact in shaping her life experiences without sounding dogmatic or naive. "Silent Dancing" is a work of substance, a work worth revisiting again!

I had to read this book for a course at my college. It is a really interesting way for an autobiography to be written. I really enjoyed the intermittent poetry. This is a book you should read if you are interested in bi-culturalism, or how one deals with living in between two cultures (Puerto Rican and American).

Judith Ortiz Cofer's book, Silent Dancing, is an intriguing personal narrative, which creates an instant curiosity within the reader! The structure of this book is creative in that Cofer writes each chapter as a different phase/aspect of her life and creates a desire, for the reader, to read on. Cofer

writes of her childhood and specific memories she holds of her family and herself. Her shared memories of childhood allow her book to be well understood and allow her readers to relate to their own personal childhoods. In addition, Cofer's shared memories of her life in Puerto Rico and the emphasis on her family's culture had on her life, is very insightful. She opens a wide window into the Puerto Rican culture and allows her readers to see her life as it truly was. This book, although well written and very interesting, should not be considered for young readers. The main reason this book should be read by an adult audience is because of some specific content within the book.

Questionable references to sex and other material including the use of one profanity makes this book one for adults. Overall, this book is extremely interesting in nature and one which should be read in enjoyment. This book offers great insight into the Puerto Rican culture and allows readers to be reminded of the many different cultures which make up the American culture.

**Silent Dancing**  
A Partial Rememberance of a Puerto Rican Childhood  
This book, *Silent Dancing*, is a memoir of a Puerto Rican, Judith Ortiz Cofer's, life as a young child. Judith's grandmother is an important piece in Judith's life. Mama (Judith's name for her Grandmother) could be strict to Judith, but she loved her. Her grandmother was known through out the family by telling storues about a young woman named Maria Sabida. Maria was a poor woman who was called weird for funny, outlandish behavior. From Mama's stories, Maria had a thick and wrinkled old body, but she walked and acted like a little girl. For a living Maria delivered meat pies and other treats to houses. Judith had heard that if you got close to her you could see her swinging a basket with delicious pies, hear her humming a tune that sounded positiley awful, and if you got really close to her, she might smile at you revealing all her yellow teeth in a crooked, sad smile. To Judith, it seemed like a grotesque version of the Little Red Riding Hood. Judith's grandfather, Papa, was a spiritist. He once saw visions of one of his sons, Hernan, being beaten and treated awfully. Mama did not believe him but it was unfortunatly true. Once Hernan was saved from being beaten and tortured, Mama let Papa have all the space and time he needed. When Judith was young, she was made fun of when speaking Spanish and English. When she spoke Spanish people told her that she had an English accent; when she spoke English she had a Spanish accent. Then, one day as Judith came home she was told that a Chilean girl was moving in an apartment above her family's. The Chilean girl's name was Vida. She was tall, thin, and beautiful. Judith admired Vida. Vida looked like a model and wanted to be a movie star someday in Hollywood. Vida did not like her family that much, so she hung out with Judith's family. Vida's past was sad and depressing so she only thought of the future. But then Vida changed Judith. Not on purpose though. It was just that Judith wanted to be

everything like Vida. She was always there for Vida when she needed support and assurance. When Judith and Vida walked up the streets to Judith it was a dangerous but exciting game. But then Vida fell in love. Judith was still loyal to her and was used as a cover for Vida so Vida could meet her Neanderthal, muscley man. Vida had shared to Judith all what he had promised her. On day, once Judith had started school again, Vida came to Judith's apartment complaining that her parents had refused to accept her getting married to her Neanderthal, and wonderful man. Judith's father agreed for Vida to stay in their apartment for a while. After a while, Vida announced that they had broken up their engagement and started seeing other men. But that didn't worry Judith's mother. Mother was mad that Vida wore perfume that got all over my clothes, and stank of alcohol when she came back late at night. To mother, smelling unclean terribly rude. But Vida was changing. She no longer spoke of Hollywood, and wore perfume. Judith came home one afternoon to find Vida gone. The last time she ever saw Vida was on a beauty pageant poster. It read, "Vida wins!" Judith Ortiz Cofer now is remembered for her inspirational book to young people. She has inspired others to write memoirs like her book.

She was the serious one, the one with the talent, the one whom God made a little stern, with big eyes that took in all the world around her, from the tropical heat of Puerto Rico, to the cold tenements of William Carlos Williams' Paterson, where half the year she lived as though paying penance for an entire family's ambition. Is it any wonder this young girl grew up to be a poet, a novelist, and a taker of incredible artistic risks? As her talents grew, she began to think of herself as belonging, oddly, to two nations, a Northern and Southern hemisphere that corresponded to her own fluidity, her ability to change genre in the middle of a sentence. Ortiz Cofer has long been one of America's cultural heroes. Now she strips back the legends of her youth to help us see the seeds of creativity which, or so some day, we all have been born with, even when obscured by circumstance. After reading this collection, you will be moved to do some "silent dancing" of your own.

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