

Tight Rope



Tight Rope

I'm up on the tight wire
One side's ice and one is fire
It's a circus game with you and me
I'm up on the tight rope
One side's hate and one is hope
But the top-hat on my head is all you
see

And the wire seems to be
The only place for me
A comedy of errors and I'm falling
Like a rubber-neck giraffe
You look into my past
Well maybe you're just too blind to see
I'm up in the spotlight
Oh does it feel right
Oh altitude seems to get to me

I'm up on the tight wire
Flanked by life and the funeral pyre
Putting on a show for you to see

Like a rubber-neck giraffe
You look into my past
Well maybe you're just too blind to see

I'm up in the spotlight
Oh does it feel right
Oh the altitude really gets to get to me
I'm up on the tight wire
Flanked by life and the funeral pyre
Putting on a show for you to see

Leon Russel's honky tonk ballad "Tight Rope" talks about living life in the spotlight, and the thin line we walk in our own day-to-day relationships. The song is a metaphor about clinging to life as if one was on a high wire. This hit song was on Leon Russell's Carny album of 1972.

I remember hearing this song for the first time when it was played as the introduction to the Barnum & Bailey Circus that had come to my hometown Baltimore in the early 1970s. When I first heard the song, I thought it was just a catchy tune. But over the years, I've come to appreciate it more for its notion that close relationships include a fair number of high wire acts, and unintentional performances, most of which we aren't even aware of at the time. And probably the best way to pass through those is like at a circus, where you sit back and enjoy the spectacle of it all.

In this series, I bring together scenes from circuses that came to Leiden and Amsterdam in the last few years. There are high wire performers, clowns, acrobatic dancers and more, all of whom are "up on the tight wire".



































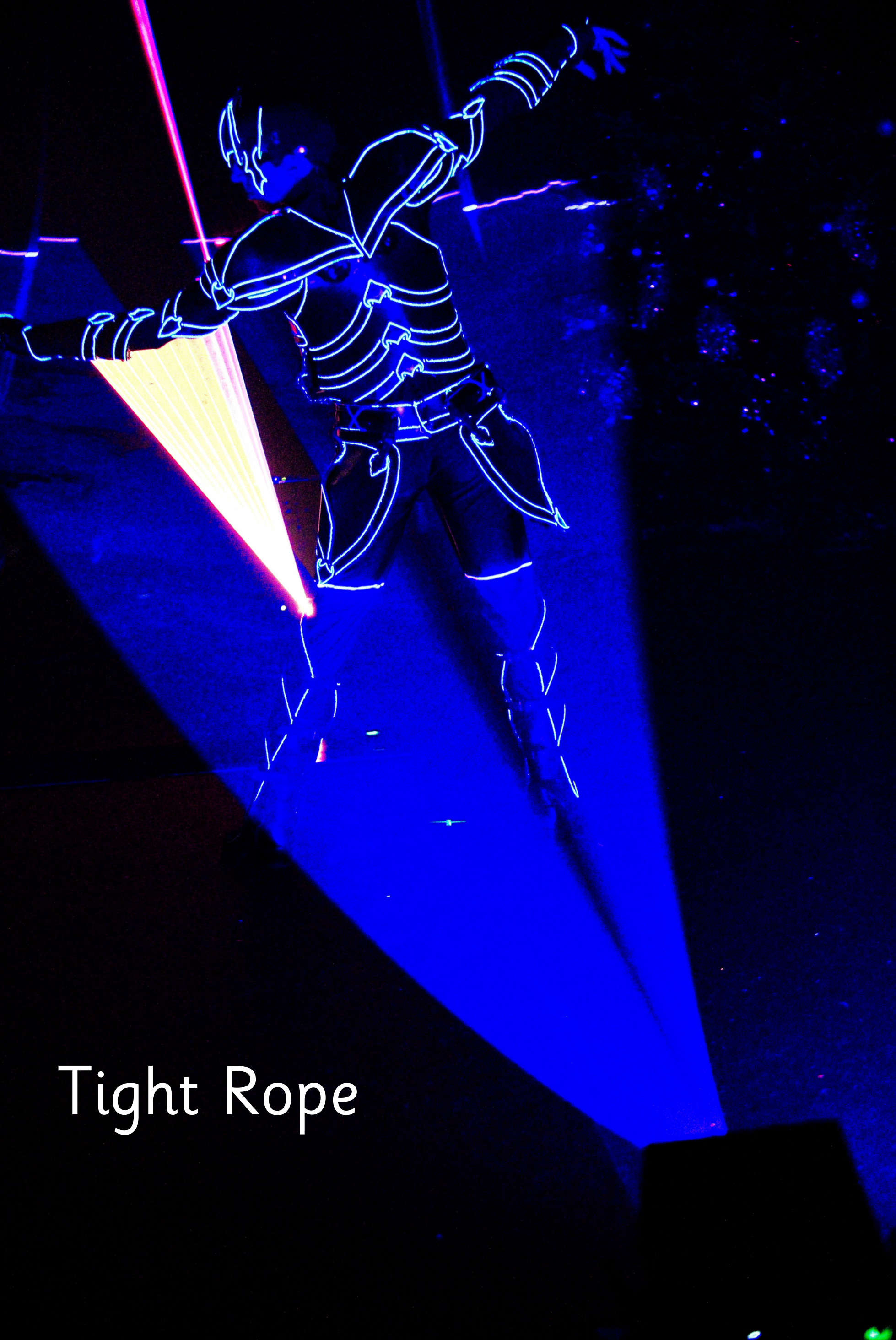












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