

slippage

an interrogation of memory and myth through movement

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“To forget the past is to lose the sense of loss that is also memory of an absent richness and a set of clues to navigate the present by; the art is not one of forgetting but letting go. And when everything else is gone, you can be rich in loss...The stories shatter. Or you wear them out or leave them behind. Over time the story or the memory loses its power. Over time you become someone else. Only when the honey turns to dust are you free.” - Rebecca Solnit

I began this project a long time ago. I didn't know it, but it was accumulating in me, along the way...when my oma and opa moved in and then a few years later my oma was carried out. I started professional caregiving on another coast. My opa moved out and my grandmother moved in, then my opa was carried out and my grandmother was out and in and out. Then, when my grandmother was carried out, I was still caregiving, 3000 miles away. Caregiving is about listening. To what is said and unsaid. To the slips - in memory, in speech, in physicality - that belie the inner truths. It's about holding space and being present. It took me, is still taking me, a long time to unlearn that, in relationships about partnership.

Thank you to...

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My body, chronically learning and trying together.

The end is the beginning and the beginning is an end. Each holds the other, a mirror reflection focusing on different elements of the same picture. Only sometimes we are pierced more acutely.

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I. Departure

Memory is a strange thing. Experiences, words spoken over our lives, travel with us, ingrained on the inside of skin. Most are fleeting and transient. Sculpted by time and the happenings that come after it. The only things we can know for sure are the things we've learned about ourselves, and even those are always changing.

Illumination I: Beginnings

Memory and myths help us locate ourselves. They are the stories we tell ourselves to make sense of the world, to create reality, to foster resilience. The myths passed down through generations create a sense of family, of tribe, of belonging. Memory is the mythology we tell ourselves time and again to mine inner truths - the home we create to locate ourselves in the wider world. The story of the worlds we create to make sense of reality. These myths are alive, embedded in our psyche, encapsulating a version of reality that may or may not be factual, but is true nonetheless.

Memory, like ice, slowly melts over time, gently slipping and sliding away from us. Sometimes slowly, sometimes quickly, it seeps out of our neural pathways and pools in our hearts. Gradually rising to the surface, glistening and dissipating into the ether, leaving us alone in our skin. What was once solid, compact, knowable, is shaped and eroded by time. It is a palimpsest. Precious inscriptions on the inside of our skin scraped away and replaced, yet they are never completely gone; new views inscribe epitaphs to old stories. Until the final stage of dementia, memories are living and breathing, even as they are dying. While clarity may fade, certain aspects persist. Traces are revived by a sound or scent or face, ricocheting through our insides in recognition of something just out of grasp.

Water is a life source, necessary for survival, a symbol of creative fertility (Leeming 341). A calm lake of water inverts and reflects its surroundings back. When I first begin to create a work, I see only the surface. Dipping a toe ripples the lake into eternity, subtly shaking up the

balanced reflection and hinting at a secret world beneath. As the temperature drops and the water begins to freeze, I set out across the smooth, icy surface to find the truth. But what is compact and knowable at shore is less sure the farther we go. The ice cracks, but it is too far to return, and my dancers and I plunge beneath the surface, into the deep blue. I have fallen through the ice in a panic many times. Now, I am ready for the slip. Feet become flippers, and breath stays long and slow. In a world where there is no panic about drowning, it is here that dance making truly begins. We swim beneath the surface, tracing cracks in the ice like stories on the inside of our skin. As the ice begins to melt, some of it is subsumed into the waters we move in, and some is lost to the sky; what remains envelopes us. The dance's smooth reflection returns; there is a new view, from inside the work. The edges are far behind.

When the honey turns to dust engaged external research on memory and creation mythology with personal experience. I found the internal and external chaos created by memory loss mirrors the chaos of creation. Chaos is “the primal void, the unformed material that perhaps contains potential” (Leeming 389), the dormant possibility of thought and form, and the undeveloped beginnings; it is also the forgetting of details, the ensuing arguments, the tangling of neurofibers, the disorientation of failed memory, and the approach toward death. Elements of chaos and wildness are present in both destruction and construction, destabilization and stabilization. They are simultaneously in the moments before we begin and the moments before we end. So how can chaos and destabilization be both destructive and generative? I turned these questions not only to my own creative process, but also to my native dance language. How does ballet rely on mythology, and what can be gained by disrupting its mythology? How do we explore how to disrupt our own mythology through movement, reshaping our perspectives?

In this written record¹, I'm going to re-member the piece in at least three different ways. The external research fires in different ways for each of my memories about this work: the *content* of the piece itself, the excavation *process* of constructing the piece, and the questioning of *structure* through destabilization. I will explain how I used creation myths as a map for digging, rather than a story arc. I will circle back to repeat things, saying them differently, both changing the research and my memory of it, as I apply it to the construction of my work. I cannot tell this story in a straight line, nor remember it correctly, though I am presenting it in a linear format. All of the elements I explain are happening at once, in conversation with my external and experiential research simultaneously, yet in different ways.

Illumination II: Memory is Myth

Mythology creates ways of understanding and assigning meaning to both creation and destruction. It is through myths that we create social norms that become so ingrained beneath our skin, we no longer remember their authorship. Family and community stories, personal and communal memory, take root. Whether ingrained by myths passed through generations or personal myths created by memory, beliefs and norms create material response. My research for this project sought to engage with myth in multiple modes: Story (and therefore memory) as myth and creation myths as process, in order to interrogate the inner, destabilized world experienced with the loss of myth through the death of memory.

Memory links us to the past, present, and future. The very consciousness of humanity craves meaning, and we call upon memory to create a narrative to understand our past and future.

¹ *What this paper is really meant to be, is the story of my time here. Here is in this body that is my home. In this body that was a safe haven, but which I no longer know. A body now swathed in dis-ease.*

Memories anchor us to our past and give us identity, for without them, “we would be lost to ourselves” (Ferryhough 4). The chaos and wildness of creation is mirrored in the tiny daily deaths of memory. For memories are not discreet possessions that can be pulled off the shelf of the mind, dusted off, and examined at leisure. Like dance, they are ephemeral constructions, affected by the passage of time. They are “mediated by previous acts of remembering” (Ferryhough 16), and changed in the process of reconsolidation, or as they are re-colored by subsequent events (Markowitsch 19). Just as memory changes every time we recall and restore it, it changes each time an event affects the way we see the past. It is fallible.

There are two overarching categories of distorted memory: omission and commission (Schacter 188). Sometimes we are unable to remember a fact, a story, a word; sometimes preoccupation thwarts memory storage and recall; sometimes memory is transient, weakening over time. At other times, we recall information, but misattribute how we know the information; we unwittingly create false memories we believe to be true; we remember things we wish to forget. Memories are myths affected by our personal beliefs and distorted to fit our knowledge structures (Ferryhough 12). Consistency bias is particularly prevalent (Schacter 193), perhaps because we so wish for narrative-based meaning. What we feel we recall with certainty may actually be a construct of our former experiences enmeshed with current judgements, as our “recollections tend to exaggerate the consistency between...past and present attitudes, beliefs, and feelings” (Schacter 193).

For this work, I sought to both create content and convey meaning by exploring the fallacy of our memories. I committed to working each week with what we remembered from the

The story of where I have been to where I am now.

week before, rather than re-teaching or insisting on original phrase work. In this way, we used memory errors of omission and commission in creating the work. If the dancers or I had a mental block trying to remember what came next, I added something new or sewed together the parts we did remember. When dancers mis-stepped or turned the “wrong” way, we incorporated the falsehood as a new truth. We leaned into our memory mishaps, and in doing so, created a new story. We allowed the spandrels (Schacter 198) in our memory to create room for new ways of knowing and being.

We questioned, what if our psyche’s fallibility is actually adaptive? What if lapses in memory, though annoying in youth and terrifying in early stages of dementia, actually belie a chaos that has the generative potential of chaos present in creation myths? Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia begin with short term memory gaps; as the disease progresses, people gradually worsen until they are returned to an infant-like state of total dependency (Cayton 29). Traces of memories fade, forcing the mind to literally circle back, sticking in earlier times. Perhaps not sticking. Fluidly passing through earlier adulthood and childhood, but unable to regain continuity or remain consistently tethered to the present. How do our physical bodies hold the stories of our emotional, relational, and experiential lives? What happens when these memories morph and fade, when shifting neural pathways reshape the inner landscapes of our physicality? How is identity re-formed? Is this slippage, these tiny deaths, an act of creation, in and of itself? If dance mirrors the fleeting nature of existence and memory, how is movement a pathway for exploring the construction of memory and mythology?

When the honey turns to dust sought to create a world in which dancers could move

It's the choices I've made and the decisions I've followed, based on the memories of the life that I've had; the story of all that I'd like to keep intact as a myth, so that I can continue this flight path as an artist;

through ghosts of memory, collecting and disintegrating in and out of wispy, embodied reminiscences. We sought to embody disorientation, creating a concrete world and then encapsulating a sense of being lost in familiar places, as dancers and witnesses. Dancers were caught in metaphorical movement loops, repetitive gestural phrases, and whispered remembrances. The stage installation, mimicking the neurofibrillary tangles (NFTs) present in Alzheimer's and other dementias (Lantos & Cairns 194), literally trapped dancers in a tangle of strings. Over the course of the piece and the course of the show run, the strings became further and further tangled, winding in new ways around each other and the structure, forming “tangles of twisted protein molecules” (Cayton 19).

Illumination III: Myths of Linearity

In the same way memory forms our identity and helps us make sense of our world, wider cultural myths are stories “employed by creators to help in shaping their own identity and their purpose and place in life” (Van Bakkum 139). Joseph Campbell’s interpretation of myths creates a prototypical, linear action sequence at the center of the hero’s journey (departure, initiation, and return): an expansion of consciousness through illumination and transfiguration that results in freedom (Campbell & Moyers). We are all the heroes of our own linear stories. Ballet is a dance form that upholds Western cultural myths about order, linearity, and regulation. Where non-concert dance forms originate and orient themselves within a community, often as a means of bonding, storytelling, or resilience, ballet developed as a tool to control bodies and relay moral

as a human in partnership with another human who has his own mythology of memory.

messages about sex, gender, class, marriage, and death. It is a form originating out of a desire to exert control, codify courtier movement and interactions, and create power structures based on surveillance through carefully curated bodies and expressions. It is a myth upholding the regulation of body, of shape, of identity, of relationship of self to other.

In a traditional corps de ballet, each individual body has a purpose and place: mirroring the body next to them, standing erect and rigid in grid-like rows and columns. Each form is indiscernible enough from the next to create the illusion of a single, unified body, many parts moving as one. As a presentational dance form, every movement and gesture is steeped in meaning meant to be conveyed not to fellow dancers, but oriented toward a silent, receptive audience. Training a vertical, immobile spine, emphasizes hierarchy within verticality and values precision of shape in form and body. Ballet creates a feeling of being locked in time. In both myths and ballet, linearity is the taming of the wild. Ballet is an antithesis of and antidote for chaos and wildness. It is a myth of linearity that shapes identity, creating meaning and place.

This linearity shaping identity is created as the auto-noetic consciousness - or the ability to place our self in time and travel back to re-experience a memory - allows for episodic-autobiographical memories (EAM) to develop (Markowitsch 17, 18). EAMs are the personal myths affecting our daily living, contingent on the ability to center self as the primary character along a linear timeline. The cognitive self, and the ability to understand “an enduring sense of self across time,” develops between ages 2-5 and continues maturing during the first decade of life (Markoswitsch 24). This means our perceived early childhood memories are often actually collective memories (Fernyhough 17), built up collaboratively over time with the re-telling of

The story of me. The story of us. The story of our intersecting paths. The story of all the ways we hang so tightly to our own myths, afraid to open our hands, to let go, to see and trace the scars they've left on our palms;

stories by family or caregivers. This mimics the way our cultural myths and familial stories are shared memories, passed from generation to generation, creating a sense of unity and belonging. How easily do we get stuck in our narratives? In what ways does linearity fail to encapsulate the truth of our identities formed over the journey? Can the linear form of ballet be broken to mine the impermanence of memory and question both the form itself and life's wider myth of structure and order?

Illumination IV: Creation Myth Road Maps

Just as our psyches crave order and create linear understanding of our personal stories, cultures convey literal or symbolic truth through creation myths, embedding a sense of order by establishing a “beginning” for our communal path through life. Creation myths help address how chaos is tamed into meaning. Though each creation myth is told with its own set of circumstances and nuance, creation myths across cultures as a whole fall into five main categories: ex nihilo (creation from nothing), chaos (pre-existing, undifferentiated material brought to order), world parents (breaking apart of a static primeval state for the formation of something new), emergence (creation in stages, emerging from a hole in the earth), and earth diver (incepting the surface of the primeval waters to retrieve material to create the earth) (Leeming 1). In addition to interrogating the myths surrounding ballet, I sought to engage creation myths in the creation of the piece. Not as a story arc for literal translation, but rather as a road map for process.

I don't believe in ex nihilo creation. As an artist, I find that everything reflects or refracts

of all the ways we reconstruct our memories and mythology to justify the present; of all the ways we forget and remember, falling in and out and around as we follow the threads of our thoughts along the way.

off personal and social circumstances surrounding creation. I tend to experience emergence creation, in which the work unfolds in stages, growing and developing upon itself, unfolding into full form that will continue to expand, given opportunity. There is certainly an element of chaos to be sifted through, as well, at the origin of each project: chaotic thought, translation of phrase work, floor patterns, and bodies training together in space.

While the distinctions of each creation myth are unique, several themes emerge across genres: light, water, breath, duality, and chaos or death instigating creation. I used these themes as a jumping off point for my choreographic research. In my work, some of the creation myth themes were abstracted to physicality, while others were featured in collaboration with sound and lighting design. Several movement and world motifs developed early, carrying through the entire piece. The sound score began and ended with water. First dripping into the world, the score slowly built to torrential rains before mellowing into the lapping of the ocean at the end of the piece. Water is both a birth and a baptism, with creation myths featuring primordial waters from which the world is born and torrential rains by which the world is flooded in judgement before rebirth. In my work, water signified the malleability of memory, always rippling, coming in waves. When one wave is crashing, the next is already on the horizon, just as the one before is still pulling out to sea. Water is the unconscious.

Myths feature light as a moment of birth, creation, or illumination. We use light to mark time in our daily lives, but that gets scrambled with dementia. Dusk becomes a time suspended in uneasy confusion, as sundowners causes restlessness, anxiety, and disorientation that often heightens until dawn. In my work, light created the world dancers and audience found

Of all the ways we are destabilized, and how we find our way (back), or if we ever do.

themselves in. It was a world full of repetition, circularity, gesture, and a looming structure. At the beginning of the piece, while the space was bathed in darkness, refracted teardrops of light slowly streamed down the strands on the stage installation, evoking a sense of neurons speeding along their routes. At other times, pools of light locked dancers within their kinesphere. Blue backlight dawned over waves of peaked knees. A strong diagonal tunnel of light illuminated the pathway for travel. And finally, the abrupt absence of light as the final dancer standing touched the diagonal strand, plunging the world into darkness, created a sense of loss and finality as the string snapped back toward the structure.

Breath was also vitally important, in two ways. In the beginning, as the work slowly built, dancers used breath to count, as they moved in physical waves from floor to standing to floor again. The exhale of life to initiate movement held them together in time as their waves grew and then departed from unison. There was also a duet and trio section where dancers were pushed toward exhaustion, cultivating audible breath in exertion. Additionally, I explored breath as voice, having one dancer whisper memories through almost the entire piece, and then bringing in her recorded voice for the last section. This was a practice of slow exhalation, an audible effort at remembering in a constant state of preoccupation and forgetfulness.

Duality in creation myths is the contrast between chaos and order, darkness and light, good and evil, past and present moments of inception. In my work, I played with duality in casting strong contemporary dancers and strong ballet dancers. How can two disparate aesthetic worlds combine to create something new? I also played with duality by threading virtuosity between pedestrian entrances and exits to create a world dancers seemed to drop in and out of,

But I can't say it all here. Not in time. How do any of us say all we need to say in the time we have? How do we put together words in the moment before knowing, in that sacred space between the breath before and the breath after?

shifting between embodiment and witnessing. In this world, it was unclear if the witnesses (both on stage and in the audience) could see everything, or were simply catching glimpses of memory. The duality of original versus copy was also important to this work, even as I sought to use repetition to blur the boundaries. While movements and motifs repeated over and over, sometimes they were embodied with grounded clarity, while other times they were less distinct tracings of the original. As the piece evolved, I noticed a stark differentiation between original experience and the memory of it. But there was also a collapsing of experience and memory through repetition; rewinding and fast forwarding, we undid time. In presenting strong, clear motifs scrambled with less distinct ghosts of movement, I was able to disrupt the linear flow of the piece, creating a palimpsest of the past with the present.

Arms diving through the thick space, bodies getting stuck so fingers could trace the lines on upturned palms, flat palms holding down the tumultuous earth, and fingers picking through invisible strands of thought were all important physical motifs in my work. Circularity was immanent throughout the piece: arm circles, wrist circles, head circles, bodies circling, circular floor patterns; always circling, stirring the mind for memory, carving routes along invisible neural pathways through the stage space. The circularity of the piece helped to create a controlled chaos, in which circular pathways of individuals, duets, and trios sometimes overlapped and sometimes coincided.

Overall, the research behind this project is a looking glass for the creation process, form, collaborations, performance, and even reflection on the project. The ephemerality of dance mirrors fleeting memory. It gathers and centers an audience in a specific space and time that

Instead, I will just say, some of us are born into the deep, the wild blue of deep ocean. In the depths we dive and drift, engulfed in silence, yet surrounded by life. Shifting sands the only echo of the waves above.

occurs once and will never happen again. Each night of performance is slightly different, a shimmering hologram of the shows before and the shows to come. As the first night of nerves wears off and weariness sets in, the dancers' physicality and emotional transparency shifts in the space, forming a new embodied recall of the movement and contributing to different improvisational choices each night. In this way, each performance slips between varying memories of the material, creating slightly different perspective of the "truth," interpreted by the audience as reality.

II. Initiation

The distance from where we started to where we've come is a winding path.

(We've yet to arrive.)

The stories are engraved on the inside of our skin.

What happens when they start to slip away?

Transfiguration I: Structure

Chimes ring, resonating through darkness, calling us to gather, to attention, to feel the fullness of our sensorial physicality in the dark space. Drops of light bleed down a cage of thread, dropping from the sky to pool on the ground, illuminating a lone figure kneeling within the web, sorting through thin strands of thought. A pool of light gently rises on another figure, whispering as she picks through invisible strands, kneeling in a sea of knees rising from the ground. A final pool illuminates a crouched form, skimming the ground with her foot before releasing to the sky, immersed in invisible threads as raindrops begin to fall and bodies rise in waves from the earth.

Others of us are born near the surface. The ocean is so persistent – shaping and always simultaneously being shaped. Displaced by craggy rocks, yet wearing them down, molding them. Never in a hurry. Always full and patient with the knowledge that there is enough time.

The grounded architecture of the stage space, fabricated through a collaboration of light and structural installation, created the incredibly important world to hang movement within. When I began the process of creating *when the honey turns to dust*, I intended to relay meaning via structure and the disintegration of form. From its inception, ballet has been used as a vehicle for reflecting Western cultural norms and promulgating moral codes through structure and form. Typical ballets crescendo into a climax in plot, music, and movement. Following the line of my research in memory loss and the inherent disintegration of identity, I wanted to invert this structure and create a ballet that disintegrated over the course of the piece. What does it mean to use a dance form based in structure, lines, shape, and verticality to relay emotion and meaning through the decomposition of its foundational attributes?

The myth of ballet is an aura of clarity through space and time. While co-teaching an improv and composition class at a ballet school last year, I asked teen dancers why ballet felt inaccessible as an improvisatory tool. They replied something to the effect of, “because ballet has been the same way for centuries. The same steps passed down from generation to generation with a right and wrong way to do the technique.” This struck me as curious, though I was not surprised by their answer. I experienced this mindset growing up and this attitude continues to dominate the way ballet is still taught in many schools today. However, it’s simply not true. While seemingly rigid in form, ballet has actually morphed and changed across time and geographic location. It is simply (and literally) a performance of stability, an ethos masking alteration through authoritative pedagogical and choreographic habits that create an unattainable and unquestionable mystique around the form. However, its seeming clarity is counterfeit.

The lone crag is patient, too; stubbornly standing her ground for years. Refusing to give way easily, despite the evidence of time eroding; she is challenging, welcoming, cupping the waves; creating tiny rivers; becoming a bed to be passed through, before the water returns to the sea.

Though slow moving, the form has changed greatly over time as it passes from body to body and culture to culture.

When the honey turns to dust interrogated that seeming stability, pushing dancers off center as they slipped out of classical balletic line into gesture and floorwork, only to recover. I sought to fully embrace the slippage of a contemporized form, showcasing a ballet aesthetic in conversation with the give and take of gravity and the earth, rather than obsessed with ascension. Time and again I asked dancers to pull off their center and then restabilize, to fall and then recover integrating gesture, and to find repetition with variation. I originally envisioned the choreography sur les pointes. I wanted to question the history of the pointe shoe as a tool of regulation and confinement, showing its possibility as a liberating tool to stretch boundaries of technique and push further beyond centered axes. Where pointe was created to suggest otherness and ethereal femininity, I desire to use it to create power and length flexible enough to skew verticality.

When I cast my dancers, I chose strong, intelligent movers with strong ballet or contemporary backgrounds. I decided to stick to my original gut about a larger cast of nine dancers, instead of narrowing the scope of the work to only feature dancers strong on pointe. This choice created quite a challenge as we began to work together. With a cast of stellar dancers with differing strengths, the scope of the piece shifted slightly, away from a pure contemporary ballet line. It was more important to feature strengths of the cast than to stick to my envisioned aesthetics. I put pointe on the backburner in favor of consistency in execution and quality of

But I was born in blue mountains and have spent my whole life walking toward the sea, mostly through woods.

world-creation. I sought to hybridize the piece, creating sections of contemporary and sections of ballet, then interspersing and ultimately mixing them to create a distinct gesture-driven world that blurred the lines between contemporary dance and ballet. While I think the end result was strong, there is definitely something left yet to explore with this research on pointe.

Interestingly, though I felt fluidity within the form, I experienced rigidity in my thought processes, believing the ballet myth that the structure for the arc of the piece would hold the content. From a belief in the circularity of life and the chaos of beginnings and endings, I leaned into a desire to create a strong corps beginning that would unravel over the course of the piece as it played with timing, groupings, and contemporized movement, until it ended in chaos. Instead of building up a piece from chaos to resolution, I wondered what would happen in a linear form when disintegration to chaos became the resolution.

However, deconstructing linearity is still a direct path. Over the course of the project, I felt a shift from trying to answer a puzzle to allowing the questions to continue to puzzle. With the coaxing of feedback from a showing, I changed gears so we could drop into chaos right away, instead of rewinding into it. This required an emotional pivot. Particularly for longer works, I enjoy having a skeleton to flesh out choreographically. With an eye toward an arc descending into chaos, I felt structurally tethered to the research, believing the experience of the passage of time showing a rift splintering into nothingness would effectively mine the research. In actuality, I still believe this skeleton could be fleshed out. However, it did not work for this particular time and place. I think it would require a cohesive set of dancers with specific shared skills to physicalize that vision.

I ran down a path, flying like an arrow, until the earth trembled under my feet, and everything was undone for the first time. When I looked up, a new deer trail emerged, promising a way forward, and again I walked, carrying a promise to tether me home.

Instead, after creating the work linearly, I tore everything apart. In weaving the piece back together after destruction, a new patchwork evolved which further highlighted motifs, allowing phrase work to enmesh that formerly never touched. In jumbling the pieces, a different kind of continuity developed. My seed goal was to create enough repetition with variation to develop the audience's memory over the course of the piece. By the end of the piece, I wanted them to have a familiarity with the movement - a feeling they had seen a particular movement before, but not in quite the same way they were seeing it again. My job was to invoke the comfort of recall over the course of the performance, but slightly skewed.

In tearing apart the structure to re-form the work, I was able to palimpsest a new "text" over my original linear story. Simultaneously, one piece of movement happening would be a clear inscription, while the rest of the movements were traces from other inscriptions. In the chaos toward the end, two dancers walked slowly toward each other as everyone whirled and gestured around them. The emotive connection between Emma and Attiyya as they moved slowly towards each other, holding the tumultuous ground down with tense energy from their flat palms, created a tether as the other dancers swirled in overlapping, circular worlds. At that moment, every movement that was happening on stage had been seen before. However, the circling of the gestural ballet dancers was a recognizable reverberation of an earlier section in the work, while the contemporary duet was an original that had been previously introduced by an echo across the opening piece as a duet exited. The surrounding dancers became whirling, ghostly memories.

But the wind picked up, whistling through the trees. Dust whirling around my ankles, I closed my eyes for a moment and leaned back, falling into space and place and the inward parts.

Transfiguration II: Destabilization

For this work, I used three modes of creation: elements of earth diver creation and world parent creation myths fed into emergence creation. In world parent creation myths, there is a sudden breaking apart of a static primeval state, for the “base of any creative act...is the necessity of sacrifice” (Leeming 20). There is an emphasis on breaking unity in order for creation to manifest. Earth diver myths, on the other hand, involve a hero diving into the depths of the primordial waters to bring up material for creation. I used both of these ideas - presenting parent material to rupture into newness and asking dancers to dive into their experience and psyche for material - to slowly allow the complete work to emerge, unfolding in stages.

I began my choreographic research with the creation of episodic vignettes. Though I envisioned starting the piece with a corps de ballet in tight formations that began to unravel, I chose to start the rehearsal process with what I thought might be toward the end of the piece – whirling turns and gestural phrases taught in sequence as a parent phrase, then broken apart by each dancer to create their own phrase. The dancers regathered to learn each other’s phrases, and I began to weave the pieces together. Once everyone knew the new facet of the material, it was time to tear it apart again. I began staging the section with the desire to use the entire space and to create a stark contrast, juxtaposing the pedestrian with virtuosity. Dancers walked on, starting their new phrases at different times, sometimes overlapping spatially or choreographically, but always returning to their own distinct phrase. In this way, they broke up the original views we created, reassembling “the bits and pieces to shed new light on inner structure of reality” (Leeming 21).

I began to learn to spread my fingers wide instead of clutching them tightly to my seed. The looser I held, the more there was, fanning out around me, tripping along in curling wisps of promise.

From the early stages of the work, collaboration with the dancers was important to the process. I created phrase work, taught what I remembered of the choreographic intention in large group, without worrying about formation or spacing, and then asked the dancers to work individually, picking apart the phrases to create something that felt good on their bodies. This process of working created a familiar vocabulary for both dancers and viewer, skewed by individual interpretation, desire, and perspective. I found working with an open hand - rather than trying to grasp firmly to process and choreography - worked well for the piece, and I tried to stay committed to movement that worked well on my dancers' bodies while still fulfilling intention, rather than rigidly chasing the parent material. This allowed the picture to morph and change throughout creation, incorporating accidents, questions, and new ideas into the final sketch.

Destabilization has a negative connotation, but in creation myths, it is the stirring of primordial waters, the rending of static primeval state, the shaking of no-thing-ness that gestates a new world. In seeking to destabilize prior knowledge of what "ballet" is, to trim away pieces of phrases that didn't stick from week to week, and to integrate dancer accidents and misunderstandings into the movement patterns, I sought to integrate disruption into the work. This created a natural, threaded repetition and a feeling of beginning, forgetting, remembering, and beginning again, with tweaks along the way.

While I actively chose some destabilizations to convey the wildness in creation myths and in the destruction of memory, the piece acquired other destabilizations beyond my control. The stage installation, while integral for creating visual architectural hooks for the audience, was

And time always continues, even when it stands still.

destabilizing for the performers. The installation was made from steel and climbing rope: a large ring set on an inner and outer tripod of legs. It was constructed with set screws and the intention that the inner leg foot plates would interlock when set up. Unfortunately, with the amount of force from dancers moving, the set screws loosened little by little over the course of each performance, creating a huge amount of wobble for my two dancers using the structure for weight bearing movement. Attempts to stabilize the structure were in vain. Though in retrospect, I appreciate steel as a material that shows the passage of time, it was incredibly frustrating that once we were able to leave it constructed in the space during show week, the additional self-tapping screws we hoped to secure the installation with were unable to bite into the steel legs for support.

Nonetheless, surrendering to the instability created an interesting effect as Hattie and Sami wrapped, spiraled, turned within the ropes to tangle them. Waves of unrest translated up through the steel to become tremors in the string lofting to the grid. The weaving of strands dangling to the ground created a ripple effect from the structure to the rafters that sustained even after the dancers escaped into the main space. They were caught in the tangled neuropathways of their minds; they were caught lost in thought in a primordial chaos.

Transfiguration III: Installation

Thread spinning from the sky to pool on the ground, illuminated from above and continuously examined. Each dancer who entered the sculpture installation followed their own lines of thought - questioning and getting mixed between memories: sometimes seeing some

So there we stood in the middle of the woods, a cathedral of sorts, staring at the sun glistening off tears in each other's eyes. And even the birds knew that things would never be the same.

small detail as if new for the first time, sometimes running over and over the same thread until weary, sometimes moving threads to different attachments. At times, our memories become the phone booths we visit to say sweet nothings into, to grieve in, to allow whispers to dissipate into the ether, carried by the wind toward lost loved ones. At other times they are a bus stop: a place of repose, a holding pattern, a place of transition before finding newness. Thoughts bubble up and then they disappear. The installation was of vital importance to my piece's world. It was simultaneously a holding point, a pass through, and its own entity, lurking just outside the light. It was both a passive rest stop for weary travelers lost in thought and a sea of neural pathways, at times engaging and at times supporting.

The stage installation was created as a reverberating echo of two memory placeholders built in different parts of the world: a phone booth installed in a backyard in Japan and a bus stop built outside of the Benrath Senior Center in Düsseldorf, Germany. Historically, dementia care has included physical or chemical restraints to calm anxiety, fear, and anger. The bus stops first built in Germany and now all around the world, are a new physical and psychological tether for disoriented dementia care unit residents searching for a way to go home. Confused residents sometimes slip outside, anxious to return to their families or childhood homes. The bus stop creates a feeling of proactiveness and authority - like a bus may be just around the corner, ready to take residents anywhere. In actuality, it is a rest stop to sit and enjoy the outdoors. Residents get lost in thought and then lose their thoughts in the fresh air, before gently being brought back to the dementia care unit by a caregiver. It's quite literally a bus stop to nowhere, meant to catch wandering residents. "When people get the bus stop, the mood is very dark...and also urgent.

I circled and circled the glade as fingers knit tight together unraveled, seams spooling to the ground. I gathered the thread and brought it with us, until my hands were raw from pulling.

Then, after a while, as they are sitting there thinking their escape is on the way, that urgent feeling disappears...The forgetting is both the problem and the solution” (“A Bus to Nowhere”). In *when the honey turns to dust*, there is always a dancer in the structure until the last moment, mulling over their thoughts and picking through the past. It is a holding space for reflection, rest, and wrestling with past and present. A place to get lost and a place to be found.

Similar to the bus stops outside of dementia care residences, the phone booth is a holding space to nowhere. In the wake of the 2011 tsunami that hit Japan, Itaru Sasaki installed a telephone booth in his backyard in Otsuchi, on the edge of the Pacific Ocean. He wanted to talk to his lost cousin. As word spread about the wind phone booth, other bereaved families began to visit, calling their absent family members to update them on life (“One Last Thing”). It became a space for reflection, for remembering and promising to continue to remember, for holding tight to the ways what is lost is still present. A place of waiting for responses while inhabiting the truth that they will never come. Like the wind that carries the thoughts and tears from the Otsuchi phone booth to the sea, the memories explored in the stage installation are whisked away by the dancers surrounding it, fleeting phantoms of the past.

For the last section of the piece, the dancers gathered within the installation, acknowledging the rest stop before slowly emerging, string caught on shoulders and slipping off heads. The final pathway was a long diagonal, a group of bodies emerging from the web and steadily advancing slowly toward the end, leaving one lone figure waiting among the strands of thought. To create the movement, each dancer worked separately from the same textual prompt. I read a few passages to them, and then allowed them to process physically. Their movement was

And we were closer to the sea than I knew. For when the earth rent herself in two, I heard the water thundering beneath her skin, and sunk down, forehead kissing dirt as branches rose high above. Yielding as a practice of prayer, a prayer to be held together.

stunning. Diving into their own thoughts and memories, they drew deep physical connections between the text and their own reminiscences.

The dancers carved a pathway through a single beam of light, pulling a strand of memory with them as they traversed the original pools of light toward the downstage corner. As they moved, the light became a sharper shaft, casting the rest of the stage into darkness until the bulk of the structure disappeared from view, just threads of light gently swooping down from the sky. Motifs from the beginning returned, with hands diving through space, fingers pulling strands of thread from the air and from belly buttons, and slicing, molding, circling wrists through thick memories. Bodies pull and step away from the group, only to be subsumed again as the group moves steadily forward. Finally, dancers begin to break free, surrendering to the earth. The lone figure in the installation moves faster and faster, following the diagonal strand of thought back and forth between dancers and structure until finally, daring to touch the string, it breaks. The world falls into darkness, just drops of refracted light sliding along strands hanging from the installation, as the lapping of waves envelopes the space.

III. Return

That is a good plan.

Get acquainted.

Don't feel pressured by the minute rules.

It can be anxiety-provoking.

Only do it if it is liberating!

(isn't that a good life rule?)

I am not good at abiding.

*Your body lay beside me at night, breathing deeply as I tossed and turned in the fallen leaves.
Your eyes looked at me and your head nodded when I spoke, but there was no conversation. You
were a shell.*

Freedom I: Finding Spandrels

At the end of project, as the dancers clear the floor, what is left in the echo of footsteps? What fleeting “maybes” and “what ifs” become ghosts that haunt as a new project begins? What sticks and what fades? After nine months of work, where have I found myself and where have I left myself behind?

Aesthetically, I am enamored with gesture-driven contemporary ballet that breaks line and form to be in conversation with gravity, the earth, and humanity. I am interested in process: my own and bringing my dancers’ and collaborators’ in, as well. I want to dislodge the artifice of structure seeded at the root of ballet while juxtaposing virtuosic movement with the pedestrian. At the end of this process, I was ultimately left questioning the ruptured structure I presented. Couldn’t I have gone farther? Though I successfully disrupted the linearity I was originally creating - letting go of riding a story arc into the disintegration of memory in favor of dropping the viewer into the middle of the experience of disintegration - ultimately, how dare I present a work about memory in the proscenium? Isn’t memory (and shouldn’t a dance about it be) experiential? What if the audience wandered through the work, interacting rather than surveilling? How did placing viewers on the outside of the work uphold their position of power? What does an interrogation of the structure of ballet really mean, and how can it draw ballet from the past into the here and now?

Ultimately, both the process and the final product of *when the honey turns to dust* confirms my drive toward work derived from story. Story is the flame that draws us near. Near enough to singe our wings, yet set us free. I do not believe all stories need to be told in the

I was too weary to hold you to my ear.

language of ballet, nor do I believe they could be. I am inspired by contemporary dance companies and choreographers like Arcos, Charles Slender-White of FACT/SF, and Bill T Jones/Arnie Zane Company. Each of these choreographers and companies produce work strongly rooted in how story forms identity. Austin-based Arcos melds multimedia with dance. Their recent 2018 work, *The Warriors: A Love Story*, interrogated whether or not dance is the best modality for exploring memory and story. With an overlay of text, the work immersed viewers in an experience of secret thoughts through movement, video, mirrors, and projection.

FACT/SF recently rounded out their triptych on death, mourning, and loss. This three-part series was a collaborative process, integrating choreographer Charles Slender-White and dancers' experiences with death and grief into the performance, as well as dialogue with viewers after each show. Bill T Jones has built a lifetime of dance exploring story as it relates to identity, through the creation of evening length works. For instance, "Still/Here," created in 1994 after his partner Arnie Zanes passed due to complications from AIDS, explored his own identity as a gay, HIV-positive man. It also incorporated the stories of non-dancers facing chronic and terminal illnesses across the country. He continues to use movement and text as storytelling devices in his work today, premiering "Analogy Trilogy" last year, which looked at the intersection of trauma, memory, and narrative.

However, *when the honey turns to dust* reified my secret (that is not so secret) love affair with ballet: a belief that ballet can be used for so much more than it has historically shown, a belief there is redemption yet to be discovered for this hierarchical, classist, heteronormative, Eurocentric dance form. What liberation can be found in the spandrels of ballet, that leftover

The sign pointing through the trees on the way to the river said, "Safety Zone - No Shooting." Arms down, surrender.

space between lines, on the outside of the curve? What if ballet, instead of relaying the moral codes and hierarchical valuations of the past, can become an avenue for embodied stories of our present? In what ways can we consistently deconstruct the structure, linearity, and hierarchy of the form? By disrupting the nature and very memory of what ballet is, how can we create room for a new identity?

While Romantic and Classical ballets may continue to echo through time, particularly within large, mainstream ballet companies, today's proliferation of smaller companies and freelance artists has created space for new musings and wonderments. There are more and more choreographers and dancers interested in exploring new ways into and out of ballet. Complexions Contemporary Ballet has been bending the rules of ballet since the mid-nineties under the direction of Dwight Rhoden and Desmond Richardson. Jae Man Joo, formerly a principal dancer with Complexions and Ballet Hispanico, now creates contemporary ballet works for Complexions, Ailey 2, and other companies, pushing dancers to reach beyond traditional balletic line. Internationally-renowned Greek choreographer, Andonis Foniadakis - presently the artistic director of Greek National Opera - has created his own technique with foundations in ballet vocabulary. However, companies that are working in the ballet idiom to contemporize line are not automatically breaking free of the remnants of ballet's hierarchical, authoritarian roots. The overarching aesthetic of how choreographers use the lexicon can ultimately reinscribe inequitable values of the past if they are not searching for liberation.

However, some choreographers consistently seek to not just update ballet, but question its past in order to bring it into the here and now. It is these movers and shakers that I feel a

That's just the pocket of solace I need.

particular connection to. Amy Seiwert's *Imagery* consistently presents gesture driven work that integrates improvisational prompts and responses, circuitous spines and limbs, and the pedestrian. She also seeks to provide a safe place for choreographers to blow apart preconceptions about ballet in her summer SKETCH series, which brings in guest choreographers to collaborate with dancers around a new prompt each year. This season, returning to Sacramento Ballet as artistic director, Seiwert is also exploring the use of text and myth in her work, premiering a work inspired by the Neil Gaiman story "Instructions."

Alonzo King also pushes back against the boundaries of ballet, abandoning linearity in favor of abstraction in movement, libretto, and relationship of bodies in space. Movement is pedestrian, curvilinear, polyrhythmic, grounded, and gestural, focusing on the momentum and swing of arms and legs, rather than prizing linearity above all else. There is a sense of call and response in his choreography, rather than unison movement or linear floor patterns and formations. King is renowned for his artistic collaborations. Each season brings a new partnership, often with instrumental musicians, but also with architects, poets, opera singers, sound designers, visual artists, and others.

Robert Dekker founded his San Francisco company *Post:Ballet* on collaboration and storytelling. His movers seamlessly weave choreography and improvisational prompts as they eat stage space with virtuosic turns and jumps. Spinal undulations take dancers into internal explorations in contrast to performative group work. Dekker engages collaborations in multiple ways: with visual artists creating artistic response during performance, with musicians like Patrick Haggerty, with visual artists and architects creating stage installations and set design, and

I've cried and laughed and cried again, thinking of all the wasted time, cursing loyalty and faithfulness.

with the dancers themselves.

A thread running through each of these choreographer's work is the collaborative spirit they bring to rehearsal, breaking down the choreographer-dancer hierarchy so prevalent in ballet. In one way or another, they ask their movers to mine their own stories and physicality for movement responses to choreographic prompts. I believe this shift is key to the liberatory potential of ballet today. Valuing kinesthetic wisdom of all bodies within rehearsal process and the stories each body has to tell creates a new facet of ballet. It sets the work of these contemporary choreographers apart from the history of ballet.

Freedom II: Disrupting Hierarchy

Another facet of this important shift to liberate ballet is breaking down the hierarchy within rehearsal processes, both in how we value choreographer/dancer time and between the dancers themselves. From personal professional experience, I feel heightened sensitivity to honoring un(der)paid rehearsal time, particularly in the wider scope of dance as an underpaid, undervalued profession in which freelance artists and artists in small companies must often hold multiple jobs in order to "make it." I feel the same accountability toward efficiency in working with undergraduates for such a lengthy project. In an effort to honor my dancers' time, I rehearsed small groups for the majority of the project so folks weren't called to rehearsal if they weren't needed. Many of these groups were formed around who was available, as well as complementary strengths.

However, split rehearsals made it a challenge to foster a cohesive spirit of camaraderie

The decisions I made, the choices to bend and curve, to cultivate silence, to open my hands, release the threads, and turn my palms to the sun, to shrink and expand and allow dissipation;

within my group. I believe another facet of bringing liberatory pedagogy and practices to dance is the break down of hierarchy between dancers; this is particularly poignant in ballet, a form established around the pursuit of hierarchy. Working with dancers from disparate worlds, I felt particularly sensitive about community building. While working in small groups allowed me to create distinct experiences for duets and trios that were generated from the same seed ideas, it also created a challenge in trying to foster a cohesive, tight-knit group. We had some good community building the first few rehearsals, before breaking into smaller groups. As the semester progressed, we came back together to work on the group section, but smaller group rehearsals were on either side of the large group rehearsals. In the future, I think I would return to the same call time for everyone, or interject a warm-up at the start of the big group rehearsal. While allowing dancers independent warm-up saved time and promoted somatic autonomy, we lacked the cohesiveness formed by moving and sweating together in a ritualized, collaborative warm-up every gathering.

Freedom III: Reclaiming Voice

Text was very important to the creation process of this piece, both my own writing and the research I was reading. I enjoyed using text* to start conversations and to ask the dancers to find their own emotional connections and personal recollections. Working in different groupings, I was able to choose who heard or saw what information. For instance, I had two trios created from different perspectives of the same event. One of the trios read the entire reflection the piece

*The texts used in creating *when the honey turns to dust* can be found in the Appendix.

they're all beyond me now.

was springing from. They discussed the work, reflecting on what stood out to them, what connected to their own experience in life, and what experience they were creating in the piece. The second trio had much less information. The dancers that had the full experience waited several weeks, and then recounted what they remembered of the text to the second trio. These memories were then overlaid onto what the second trio was already working on. While this was particularly poignant for a piece about mythology and memory, I know text will continue to be an important aspect of future work for me. Essentially, every work I create is tied to story. Though I ultimately desire to use movement to explore story, the use of language as a spark before the beginning processes of movement formation is a form of reclamation.

I use language in partnership with movement to perforate academic assumptions about rigor prejudiced by ideas of Cartesian Dualism. I seek to deconstruct the valuation of Apollonian thought over Dionysian expression, integrating the mind and body in order to value a holistic “third” entity created when subject and object merge. Language has historically been considered the product of male intellect, and today it continues to be a tool propping up patriarchal power. Reclaiming it for metaphor, for dreaming, for emotion, for poetry, for autobiography, begins to highlight its capacity to deconstruct systemic gender assumptions and inequities. In this project, we dis-membered and re-membered words, myths, and memories; we rejected the static logic assumed of language, shifting perspective to value the creative space opened up by impermanence. When we used text from Others, we questioned it, we dissected it, and we reshaped it with our own perspectives. Memory is autobiographical, and if one believes that the

So what little can be said, in this brief moment between? Some parts are treacherous.

personal is inherently political, merging the power of words with movement in favor of memory is a political reclamation of self. Rather than passively allowing the language of scholars to take primacy - as the ballet dancer historically becomes a docile, disembodied body (Wolff 95), surveilled by and relying on the patriarchal, third-person Other in the form of the director - I seek to centralize both my words and my dancers'. We bring personal voice to power through both a rearticulation of language and a redirection of ballet.

Words ground me; they help me make sense of and shape my lived experience; like movement, they are a way of finding myself. I will always be intrigued by how our physical bodies hold the memory of our emotional, relational, and experiential lives, and I seek to tap into the accumulated wisdom of the body through movement. For now, ballet is my language, but a ballet that is in resistance both to its own past and mine. I believe in parables and metaphor; in the way that life circles and folds in on itself as we gather experiences along the journey. We are all collecting pieces from the stories that intersect our lives, weaving them into our own. Our bodies carry our memories, dreams, hopes, loves, fears, and losses. They are inscribed on the inside of our skin. Art is my omer, the witness to and accounting of my individual and collective life.

The woods have shifted and now the looser I hold, the more escapes. Now, when I turn in surprise towards you there is no space, no place, no inward parts. Only a constant dis-ease.

IV. Appendix

2009

*I've lost [redacted] times [redacted]
but [redacted] west [redacted] you always liked.
[redacted] every half hour.*

*You know [redacted] my life.
Remember that time we sat across the table, divided [redacted]
[redacted] why we were [redacted] where we would be [redacted] I
asked you if [redacted] our paths
would always intertwine.
You [redacted] wouldn't have it [redacted]*

*[redacted]
I'm still crossing [redacted] lines.*

*[redacted]
I've been wanting [redacted] I changed [redacted]*

*The morning I left [redacted] I found [redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted] Trails, my Tiny [redacted]
I smiled softly, [redacted] and walked out
[redacted] for the last time.
[redacted] in the end, the changes don't matter...
[redacted] along the way.*

*And so
[redacted]
this is what it feels like, [redacted] the sunset.*

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The Lady with the Lamp

California, Virginia and drove West. I packed I
what I needed, I
drove 3000 miles with one right turn. what you need
is 7 part-time jobs and an application for food stamps.
Eldercare. this is gonna be really
easy. My grandmother spent two years in our house dying,
aloud with crossed legs dangling
over the bed; foot swinging back and forth to tick off the seconds and minutes and months and
years as she slowly passed. Seeing needs and
meeting them. there was a full
moon; a glowing orb of silver hanging in the sky. I counted off the months until they turned into
years by the light of that full moon, trying to see needs and meet them.

But I didn't know – sometimes needs
perpetually had poop under her fingernails,
sometimes needs are pulling tampons out
keep your bearings
in an alternate universe. I didn't know that seeing and meeting needs
And when
I asked Why? Why am I always
the patience of God.

The patients of God?

I hope She has more than me...

screaming, staring blankly out
the full moon hanging gently in the sky. all the mug handles
turned in the same direction

what would happen if I kept steering

Some clients needed evening care; some needed morning care; some needed a visit and
help grocery shopping. Some knew who I was; some distrusted who I was; some thought of me as
their child. Some forgot me
some never got up. Everyone needed someone to be there to turn on the light in the morning
and turn it off at night. Everyone called out into the darkness for the lady with the lamp.

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[REDACTED] lie down
on the couch, [REDACTED] before she decided it was really time [REDACTED]

blinds drawn, Dr. Oz squeeze, squeeze, squeeze it into the milk.
Stir, stir, stir, swirling the rich chocolate into white milk, She would only sip
it at 10 and 2.

_____. As the moons waxed and waned, _____ mind continued to slip away. _____ stayed full _____

[REDACTED] but always waited for [REDACTED] the lady with the lamp. In the daylight, she would try to trick me into taking her back [REDACTED]

*In the evening, when she was weary [REDACTED] of staring into space, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Good night, to the
lady with lamp. Turn off the light and look at the full moon hanging heavy in the sky, wondering
where time goes and what we need [REDACTED]*

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In Good Time

so what are five things you learned this year?

unabashedly,

scrambled.

Like we had been miles apart,

side-by-side

screaming is sometimes the only remedy.

the most concealed and most transparent

slowing down just listen

treasure each expansion and collapse

I wanted

To listen to unspoken things

your story.

how to not care so much. draw a line and stand behind

I can't say yet.

Instead

often it takes more And sometimes they will

looked back at her

with my hands open and palms up.

Sometimes there's just too much

space between

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Ode to Broken Things - Pablo Neruda

Things get broken
at home
like they were pushed
by an invisible, deliberate smasher.
It's not my hands
or yours
It wasn't the girls
with their hard fingernails
or the motion of the planet.
It wasn't anything or anybody
It wasn't the wind
It wasn't the orange-colored noontime
Or night over the earth
It wasn't even the nose or the elbow
Or the hips getting bigger
or the ankle
or the air.
The plate broke, the lamp fell
All the flower pots tumbled over
one by one. That pot
which overflowed with scarlet
in the middle of October,
it got tired from all the violets
and another empty one
rolled round and round and round
all through winter
until it was only the powder
of a flowerpot,
a broken memory, shining dust.

And that clock
whose sound
was
the voice of our lives,
the secret
thread of our weeks,
which released

one by one, so many hours
for honey and silence
for so many births and jobs,
that clock also
fell
and its delicate blue guts
vibrated
among the broken glass
its wide heart
unsprung.

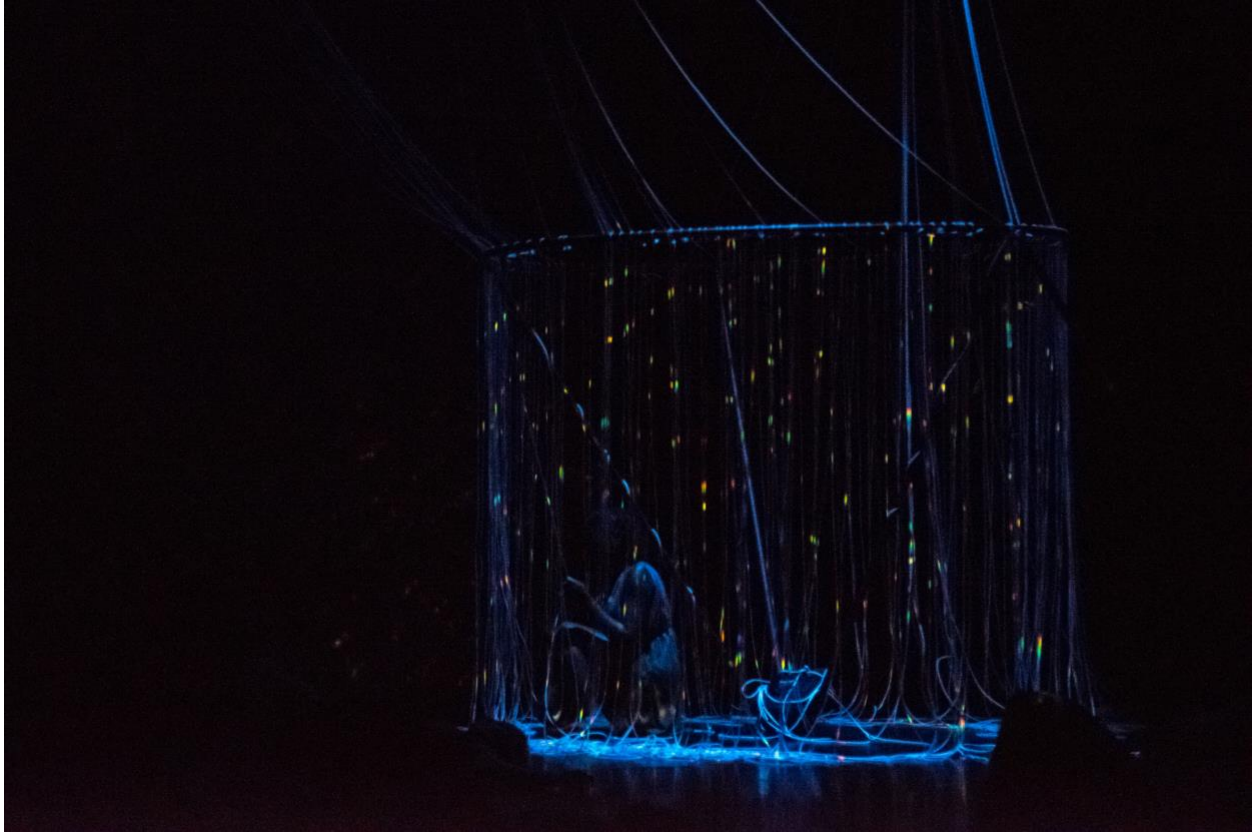
Life goes on grinding up
glass, wearing out clothes
making fragments
breaking down
forms
and what lasts through time
is like an island on a ship in the sea,
perishable
surrounded by dangerous fragility
by merciless waters and threats.

Let's put all our treasures together
-- the clocks, plates, cups cracked by the
cold --
into a sack and carry them
to the sea
and let our possessions sink
into one alarming breaker
that sounds like a river.
May whatever breaks
be reconstructed by the sea
with the long labor of its tides.
So many useless things
which nobody broke
but which got broken anyway

Excerpt from *A Field Guide to Getting Lost* by Rebecca Solnit

The world is blue at its edges and in its depths. This blue is the light that got lost. Light at the blue end of the spectrum does not travel the whole distance from the sun to us. It disperses among the molecules of the air, it scatters in water. Water is colorless, shallow water appears to be the color of whatever lies underneath it, but deep water is full of this scattered light, the purer the water the deeper the blue. The sky is blue for the same reason, but the blue at the horizon, the blue of land that seems to be dissolving into the sky, is a deeper, dreamier, melancholy blue, the blue at the farthest reaches of the places where you see for miles, the blue of distance. This light that does not touch us, does not travel the whole distance, the light that gets lost, give us the beauty of the world, so much of which is in the color blue.

For many years, I have been moved by the blue at the far edges of what can be seen, that color of horizons, of remote mountain ranges, of anything far away. The color of that distance is the color of an emotion, the color of solitude and of desire, the color of there seen from here, the color of where you are not. And the color of where you can never go. For the blue is not in the place those miles away at the horizon, but in the atmospheric distance between you and the mountains. "Longing," says the poet Robert Hass, "because desire is full of endless distances." Blue is the color of longing for the distances you never arrive in, for the blue world...we treat desire as a problem to be solved, address what desire is or and focus on that something and how to acquire it rather than on the nature and sensation of desire, though often it is the distance between us and the object of desire that fills the space in between with the blue of longing.



Photos by Ian McMorran

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Bottom photo by Gretchen LaBorwit

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Photos by Gretchen LaBorwit

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**CU PERFORM
ING ARTS**
theatre & dance

Provenance

An MFA dance concert

Keith Haynes and Laura Malpass, choreographers

There will be one 15-minute intermission.

7:30 p.m., Nov. 8-10
2 p.m., Nov. 11
Charlotte York Irey Theatre
University Theatre Building

CU ★ PRESENTS



University of Colorado **Boulder**

when the honey turns to dust

Choreography
Laura Malpass, in collaboration with each dancer

Dancers
Attiya Fortuné
Maddie Hayes
Hattie Houser
Mary Kelly
Anastasia Muszynski
Olivia Sander
Emma Scher
Sami Scovel
Ryan Sinton

Installation Designer
Melissa Scialani

Music
Memory/house by Max Richter

Soundscore
mixed and arranged by Zaak Kerstetter

Special thanks

- THANK YOU TO Mom and Dad, cheerleading since Puss n Boots.
- Sarah, my favorite sister, who waits through that middle part, when nothing is happening.
- Jeremy, like WHOAH.
- Fudgie, incessantly believing. I miss you.
- Keith, Leah and Marla, pushing and crying and celebrating and challenging and loving—almost there.
- Bridget, Elba, Emily and Krista, refusing to back down. I carry your hearts with me.
- My amazing collaborators and cast of powerful, intelligent movers—you inspire.
- My wonderful faculty mentors, for your honesty and encouragement.

Production team

Director of Dance Production
Iain Court

Lighting and Projection Designer
Reed Otto

Stage Manager
Teresa Orsco

Lightboard Operator
Leah Barber

AV Operator
Carson Hodas

Assistant Stage Manager
Alex Carlson

Deck crew
Aleighya Dawkins
Adriana Moldano

Dressers
Wesley Juels
Katelyn Skeen

Painter/Dyer
Ana Langmead

Dance production

Technical crew
Maria Aki, Nathan Bala, Xaalan Dolence, Attiyya Fortuné, Wesley Halloran, Hattie Houser, Kaitlyn Lawrence, Laura Malpass, Ian McMorran, Teresa Orsco, Reed Otto, Olivia Sander, Emma Scher, Maria Schulz, Sami Scovel, Sarah Vail, Kelley Ann Walsh, Leah Woods

Scenery and electrics

Lead production assistants
Maria Aki, Wesley Halloran, Ian McMorran, Destin Woods

Production assistants
Lauren Chen, Eli Davis, Nathan Dow, Asher Farr, Kelsey Gallotte, Greta Hooston, Jill Ingebritsen, Hannah Male, Zach Mayer, Bret Pilkington, Ryan Rouillard, Maddy Salvucci, Jahan Shafii, Sadie Skolnekovich, CeCe Smith

Practicum students and shop volunteers
Kylah Garcia, Sean Guderian, Ana Langmead, Ashley Munson, Teresa Orsco, Viktoria Padilla, Nia Quan, Sarah Rand, CeCe Smith, Braden Sturek, Michael Tandy, Alexis Thiel

Right to Remain...

Sections and subtitles

UN

recognizable
identified
known
der control
noticed
accepted
natural
derpowered
certain
exposed
feeling

Annihilation
The body is baptized through perspiration and physical exertion

RE

cognizable
fresh
store
trieve
turn
plensish
sistance
construct
vive
build
verse

Choreography
Keith Haynes, in collaboration with dancers

Dancers
Hailey Abraham
Attiya Fortuné
Hanna Ghadessi
Kristen Holleyman
Hattie Houser
Vivian Kim
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Music
Right to Remain: Soundscape for Contemporary Dance by Collin Hill

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