

Distribution Agreement

In presenting this thesis as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for a degree from Emory University, I hereby grant to Emory University and its agents the non-exclusive license to archive, make accessible, and display my thesis in whole or in part in all forms of media, now or hereafter now, including display on the World Wide Web. I understand that I may select some access restrictions as part of the online submission of this thesis. I retain all ownership rights to the copyright of the thesis. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of this thesis.

Clara Schulstad Guyton

April 6, 2017

Whispered Conversations: The Act of Making via Translation between Poetry and Dance

by

Clara Schulstad Guyton

Anna Leo

Adviser

Dance and Movement Studies

Anna Leo

Adviser

Dr. Sheila Cavanagh

Committee Member

Daniel Bosch

Committee Member

Gregory Catellier

Committee Member

2017

Whispered Conversations: The Act of Making via Translation between Poetry and Dance

By

Clara Schulstad Guyton

Anna Leo

Adviser

An abstract of
a thesis submitted to the Faculty of Emory College of Arts and Sciences
of Emory University in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of the degree of
Bachelor of Arts Honors

Dance and Movement Studies

2017

Abstract

Whispered Conversations: The Act of Making via Translation between Poetry and Dance

By Clara Schulstad Guyton

This project investigates the boundaries between the two mediums of dance and poetry. As a double major in English and Dance & Movement Studies, I am interested in exploring the parallels and contrasts between poetry and dance through various experiments of translation. Utilizing both poetic and choreographic techniques of translation, I have choreographed five separate solos based off of the poem, “Dear One Absent This Long While” by Lisa Olstein. Each solo was inspired by the following elements of the poem: form/structure, “call and response” (listening to a reading of the poem and impulsively creating), imagery, site-specific, and a solo created based on my own epistolary poem. My final translation of the work is a creative, written composition of audience responses at the live performance of this suite of solos. Using these responses, I will compare responses to the original poem measuring the degrees of deviation that occurred during the multi-tiered translation process.

The result of this fully created work richly engaging multiple mediums serves to prove my theory that translations of a poem can be understood through the medium of dance with little deviation. My research proves that tools for a poem can be utilized as tools for choreography, and the translation of a poem delivered through the phrases of the body is as rich and alive as a spoken poem expelled through phrases of breath. Using poetic structures and concepts as the controlled variable, this project is an act of making in its creation and result, a collection of poems created by the body and translated from words into dance.

Whispered Conversations: The Act of Making via Translation between Poetry and Dance

By

Clara Schulstad Guyton

Anna Leo

Adviser

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Emory College of Arts and Sciences
of Emory University in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of the degree of
Bachelor of Arts Honors

Dance and Movement Studies

2017

Acknowledgements

My deepest gratitude to my advisor, Anna Leo, for guiding me every step of the way on this extensive journey, and for never batting an eye at the wild places my curiosity took me. My sincerest thanks to Gregory Catellier, Daniel Bosch, and Dr. Sheila Cavanagh for impacting my intellectual and artistic life, altering my path for the better. I would like to thank Sally Radell, George Staib, Anne Walker, and the Emory Dance Program community. I would also like to thank The Lucky Penny community, especially Blake Beckham and MaryGrace Phillips, for their support, love, guidance, and inspiration. And, I am beyond grateful to my exceptionally loving family and friends who have been with me on this journey every step of the way.

Table of Contents

I.	Introduction: <i>Whispered Conversations</i>	1
	a. Choosing My Source	4
	b. Dear One Absent This Long While	5
II.	MESS: <i>Poiēsis – The Act of Making</i>	6
	a. <i>(treatment)</i>	9
III.	Pears	11
IV.	Dance v. Poetry	14
V.	Process of <i>(nearer to the body than the evening): a suite of five solos</i>	17
	a. Treatment I: <i>broken whole</i>	18
	b. Treatment II: <i>temporal</i>	27
	c. Treatment III: <i>penumbra</i>	37
	d. Treatment IV: <i>ellipses</i>	50
	e. Treatment V: <i>relic</i>	67
	f. Treatment VI: <i>(nearer to the body than the evening)</i>	73
VI.	Performance	83
VII.	Conclusion	85
	Appendix A: Promotional Flyer	87
	Appendix B: Concert Program	88
	Appendix C: Performance Photographs	90
	Appendix D: Rehearsal Schedule	99
	Appendix E: Survey Questions	100
	References	101

Table of Figures

Figure 1.....	17
Figure 2.....	18
Figure 3.....	21
Figure 4.....	17
Figure 5.....	27
Figure 6.....	31
Figure 7.....	32
Figure 8.....	32
Figure 9.....	33
Figure 10.....	34
Figure 11.....	37
Figure 12.....	39
Figure 13.....	41
Figure 14.....	46
Figure 15.....	55
Figure 16.....	56
Figure 17.....	57
Figure 18.....	61
Figure 19.....	61
Figure 20.....	63
Figure 21.....	64
Figure 22.....	65
Figure 23.....	69

I. Introduction: Whispered Conversations

“ I look at a poem as a performance. I look on the poet as a man of prowess. Just like an athlete. He’s a performer. And the things you can do in a poem are very various. You speak of figures, tones of voice, varying all the time (...) Every poem is like that: some sort of achievement in performance. “

–Robert Frost, ‘ Paris Review’ Interview¹

Poetry and dance have varying differences and similarities, but one element that links the two is the same: the breath of the human body. The poem inscribed on a page comes to life when read aloud as it is experienced in its original form. Dance is a physical investigation between the body and the external world facilitated through breath. Breath allows for the dialogue we have between our inner selves and the external world. It is also the function that constitutes living. Breath allows for direct conversation between bodies. Conversation between performer and witness is the active practice of any art form. One of the most private conversations that can occur between two people is whispered ones. It is a conversation meant to be secretive while also being communicated. The definition of the verb “whisper” is “to speak softly with little or no vibrations of the vocal cords,” especially for the sake of privacy.²

To speak without using one’s vocal chords is also to dance.

¹ *The Paris Review*, Summer-Fall 1960. ‘Paris Review’ Interview with Richard Poirier. Frost, Robert. *Complete Poems, Prose, & Plays*. New York, NY. Library Classics of the United States, Inc., 1995. Print. American. 1970. Print.

² <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/whisper>

Another matter of privacy is performance itself. Performance is hardly the public spectacle it is often expected to be. True performance is the moment witness and architect meet to experience the same ripple of movement in Time. I am most interested in this fearless place of vulnerability creation facilitates. My desire in performance is to experience the vulnerable practice of inviting the audience into my (often) private world. As Frost mentions, the poet does the same. The poet uses his or her poem as the vessel through which to deliver an atmosphere, a thought, a memory, or, frankly, a full universe to the witness who is transported in that moment in time by the performance. Similarly, as performer, the dancer strives to achieve vessel status as the poem does for the audience. My research explores not only how to perform a poem by embodiment, but also the deconstruction and chaos that precedes any creation of noteworthy value.

Additionally, my research enabled me to explore the question of how the deconstructed poem can appear reconstructed in a new form, and whether or not original content is totally annihilated by the process.

(This is where translation enters in with a basket of exploding pears, a spinning mobile of paper moons, gold glitter, red pants, and a thousand white feathers.)

Translation as a choreographic device is to transfer one movement or movement phrase from one plane or location to another plane or location. Translation, as defined in the Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, is “impossible.”³ However, because of

³ Greene, Robert, Cushman, Stephen, Jahan, Ramazani, Rouzer, Paul. “Translation.” *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. 4th ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012. Print. Page 1456

the impossibility of ever creating a true translation of a poem from one language to the other, the two “impossibilities, poetry and poetic translation,” have “shaped the Western tradition.”⁴ The two require the difficult act of taking a completed work with form, structure, and a certain quality, and reassigning it to a new environment. Translation is the process that allowed me to attempt to take one work of art and set it in a new medium. The process of stripping the poem and rebuilding it in a new space and form is, to me, the act of translation. My research involved the process of how one deconstructs one medium in order to reconstruct it in another and whether or not the original content is completely lost through the translation process.

During the act of translating, I grappled for a while with whether or not I was deviating too far from the original content of the poem. I had anxieties about whether I was being loyal to the original text if I was not thinking of exactly what was stated in the poem when I created a movement. I was afraid of being inspired by any outside source besides the poem, because I did not want to be disloyal to the work. This fear became extremely limiting and produced an immense creative block I could not seem to get over.

Eventually, it became so stifling I decided to give it up completely and “cheat” on the poem in order to just produce physical vocabulary that was not the same reiteration. Only when I stepped away was I able to recognize that a great poem or a great dance does not simply encourage you to remain at its side with blinders on, but actually should inspire eyes and ears to open to whatever personal insight it may bring

⁴ Greene, Robert, Cushman, Stephen, Jahan, Ramazani, Rouzer, Paul. “*Translation.*” *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. 4th ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012. Print. Page 1456

January 24, 2017

To be unfaithful, in this case, is success.

To be inspired by a poem, is to be reading a successful poem.

And so, though this project was completely inspired by Lisa Olstein's "Dear One Absent This Long While," I fearlessly pursued whatever new paths appeared in the process of each treatment. Therefore any deviation in my work I view as the validation that Olstein's poem is an incredibly successful one, as it inspired me to bring my own experience and memories to the work in the impossible translation process.

a. Choosing My Source

This was, perhaps, one of the most difficult parts of this project. I could not simply choose my favorite poem because I have too many of them. I did know, however, that I wanted to work with contemporary work with prosaic language. I did not want to explore anything that I did not feel had an ordinary and pedestrian quality to it. I suppose I thought most about my choreography and what work may be best suited to my movement style. I had discovered "Dear One Absent This Long While" by Lisa Olstein while perusing love poems on Poetry Foundation's website. The poem struck me as one that captures the mingling of expectation, disappointment, and unwavering loyalty tenaciously present in situations of love.

b. Dear One Absent This Long While

“Dear One Absent This Long While”⁵ is a free verse poem written by Lisa Olstein. It is a poem in a series of ten couplets with a murmuring *mélange*

of prosaic and poetic language. There is no rhyme to the work and no consistent meter. Through the use of alliteration and imagery, Olstein

creates a quiet scene that has a very unavoidable focus on what is *not* there by focusing on the act of expecting and the progression of time.

Olstein creates a world that teeters on the edge of immense disappointment and tragic hopefulness in this short work that is separated into eight sentences.

The brokenness of the poem evidenced in the short two line stanzas and the various sentences is the inspiration for creating five, very succinct separate

solos. This, and the celar space on the page of the poem, inspired me to construct my support paper in intentionally fragmented sections. The poem is

the source from which every idea sprouted for the entire project, and I am especially grateful to Lisa Olstein for her incredibly thoughtful work and

generosity. The poem has nature-oriented imagery contrasted by household images, such as the stove and a stairwell. Olstein uses such tools as metaphor

and repetition to emphasize the sometimes-painful, sometimes-quiet, sometimes-silent act of waiting love requires of us. This poem excavates the

ghost of what once was with a persistent hush that is both captivating and haunting, all the while resisting Time’s untiring hand.

⁵ <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/48139>

II. MESS: Poiēsis – The Act of Making

The word “poiēsis” derives from the Greek verb “poieō,” which means, “to make form”.⁶

An extended definition relating to one of the two of the four important elements of movement, Time and Space, is, “the act of formation and transformation of matter in the cosmic sphere in relation to time”.⁷ As described in Rudolf Laban’s theories, “every human movement engages all four factors of motion – space, weight, time, and flow.”

The definition of poiēsis found in the Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics describes the act of physical matter (weight/mass) pushing its way into existence (flow) residing in space in relation to a point of time. In movement, “time” refers to the speed at which one executes a movement. The execution of this movement, either consuming a large or small amount of time, alters the form of the cosmic sphere for the allotted time it takes to reach completion. Physical movement is the most direct alteration of physical matter, transforming shapes we can see with our visual eye.

Dance can be assessed as transformation of the body and the space occupied.

Poiēsis is the action of this transformation occurring.

⁶ Greene, Robert, Cushman, Stephen, Jahan, Ramazani, Rouzer, Paul. *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. 4th ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012. Print. Page 1070.

⁷ Greene, Robert, Cushman, Stephen, Jahan, Ramazani, Rouzer, Paul. *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. 4th ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012. Print. Page 1070.

Poiēsis describes “how we encounter a poem as object, how a poem radically alters reality, how a poem is actually made.”⁸

Poiēsis describes the transformation that must occur of pre-existing matter to shape form.

Matter is extremely condensed energy that cannot be created or destroyed, only shaped.

(As evidenced in Einstein’s equation, $E = mc^2$.)

A poet is a shaper who shapes forms.⁹

A choreographer is a shaper who shapes forms and energy.

My research is focused on investigating poiēsis. As a process driven choreographer and dancer, my research was mostly founded in the development of each treatment. I forced myself to remain painstakingly present to the process of creation in the studio. I investigated the frustrations and successes of making and recorded how dances changed over time. I also became acutely aware of the most important element of poiēsis (of creation):

⁸ Greene, Robert, Cushman, Stephen, Jahan, Ramazani, Rouzer, Paul. *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. 4th ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012. Print. Page 1071.

⁹ Greene, Robert, Cushman, Stephen, Jahan, Ramazani, Rouzer, Paul. *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. 4th ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012. Print. Page 1071.

chaos.

September 7, 2016

(Journal Excerpt)

I've been wondering why it's been such a struggle to squeeze a poem into a dance and a dance into a poem.

But then I remembered that when a poet makes a poem and a choreographer makes a dance, it is first chaos.

My goal is to prove that the process of creation is the same.

That a poet (and a choreographer) uses structures to shape

Mess.

Destruction is necessary for creation. "To form is always to transform, conceived, in a materialist way, as the process of bringing otherness to bear on the world..."¹⁰ which falls upon the artist fearless enough to bear the birth pangs of creation. As an artist, I found myself scraping at my inspiration for nourishment to re-create into my own. In order to glean the fundamental elements I needed for each translation, I had to completely deconstruct Lisa Olstein's poem, "Dear One Absent This Long While."

¹⁰Greene, Robert, Cushman, Stephen, Jahan, Ramazani, Rouzer, Paul. *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. 4th ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012. Print. Page 1071

The process was similar to how one may debone a chicken:

a violent and shambolic ritual of preparation to savor.

The process was a treatment of each “mess” that was created in the deconstruction of the specific aspect of the poem I was exploring. My research for each treatment began with the dissection of the poem’s elements in order to extract what I needed to create each solo.

a. (*treatment*)

A treatment serves as a medical experimentation meant to heal. It is an altercation that is meant to fix something that is not sufficient in its original form. The purpose of altering Lisa Olstein’s poem to fit into a dance is certainly not to suggest that it is broken in any way. The purpose of calling these in-process solos “treatments” is to highlight the importance of my experimentation of the deconstruction and reconstruction of a poem in order to rebuild the work into dance. I choose to see these solos as treatments because I fully accept and recognize that a true translation is absolutely impossible. In fact, several poetic scholars and translators admit, “translating is, as the adage runs, impossible.”¹¹ Irish poet and translator Seamus Heaney said, “there is no answer, there are only the choices people make,” for “poetic translation can be no more “pure” than the various

¹¹Greene, Robert, Cushman, Stephen, Jahan, Ramazani, Rouzer, Paul. “*Translation.*” *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. 4th ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012. Print. Page 1456.

traditions it shapes and is shaped by.”¹² Translator and poet Paul Valéry speaks of poetic translation and creation as “the labor of approximation, with its little successes, its regrets, its conquests, and its resignations.”¹³ The concept of true translation is impossible, because translation is “merely poetry re-begun,” as Yves Bonnefy remarks in his work, “Translating Poetry”¹⁴. Thus, the act of translation becomes the act of creation and a treatment is the term I use to present the act of which I am very guilty.

¹² Greene, Robert, Cushman, Stephen, Jahan, Ramazani, Rouzer, Paul. “*Translation.*” *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. 4th ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012. Print. Page 1456.

¹³ Greene, Robert, Cushman, Stephen, Jahan, Ramazani, Rouzer, Paul. “*Translation.*” *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. 4th ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012. Print. Page 1456.

¹⁴ Greene, Robert, Cushman, Stephen, Jahan, Ramazani, Rouzer, Paul. “*Translation.*” *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. 4th ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012. Print. Page 1456.

III. PEARS

Some say

It was a pear

Eve ate.

Why else the shape

of the womb...

(Excerpt from "Pears" by Linda Pastan)¹⁵

There is an ancient Chinese legend that no two people, lovers, friends, or kin, should split a pear between them, for then they may be separated. The word for "pear" in traditional Chinese is "li," which is also the word for "to suffer from" and "plough".¹⁶ The written characters for "to suffer from," "ploughs," and "pear," however, are very different in their visual form. A plough is incredibly relevant to Lisa Olstein's Poem, "Dear One Absent This Long While," as it is a tool used in the garden like a "hoe" or "gloves." Furthermore, the speaker in Olstein's poem is suffering from the absence of a beloved, therefore the word "li" represents all of these meanings in the form of a literal pear onstage for the duration of these physical translations.

Pears are traditionally symbols of immortality and fertility, two concepts that are integral to poetry, dance, and creation. Immortality is the antithesis of the ephemeral art form of dance, which is experienced in the flesh, performed by a body and witnessed by

¹⁵ Palter, Robert. *The Duchess of Malfi's Apricots, and Other Literary Fruits*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2002. Print. Page 339.

¹⁶ "Li." *Concise English – Chinese, Chinese – English Dictionary*. 2nd ed., 1980.

another. However, what makes a dance immortal is its potential within us. The dance rests in between the bones, wedged in the memory of the witness and stored in the flesh. It is the reason, I believe, that dance has not found its satisfactory archival medium yet; there is too much lost when the dance is not witnessed in real time. For poetry, this is not true. Whenever a poetic work is picked up and spoken into breath, the poet's words are reincarnated into the present, thus being immortal. Immortality is a concept that all art makers grapple with, consciously or unconsciously, for immortality is a matter of the soul, the origin from which all art arises.

The second origin from which art begins is the fertility of its maker. A poem is born from a seed, a thought or idea, and then nourished and cared for until it has reached its mature fruition. The process of a dance is the same. The fertile ground in which the seed grows is in the makers themselves; the soul wisdom of the creator is that which provides the environment conducive to production. The word "fertility" stems from the Latin word "ferre," which means, "to bear."¹⁷ The act of bearing is one that requires more than simply potential; it implies that he or she who is the bearer must be willing to courageously carry and support what life is sprouting. An artist, such as a poet or a choreographer, accepts this demand with great, tender bravery upon the decision to make what is pressing them to take action.

Fertility and immortality are both concepts that relate to the poem with which I specifically chose to work. Fertility is represented by the imagery of the speaker planting vegetables as she awaits the return of her loved one absent this long time.

¹⁷ <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=fertile>

Waiting is hand in hand with bearing.

To bear is to wait in hopeful expectation of an arrival. To be fertile with the promise of new life is what the speaker in the poem holds by expecting the arrival of a beloved; the tragic part is there is little hope that what is meant to arrive actually will. However, through her practices of remembering, such as practicing eulogies, the speaker has discovered a way to keep her beloved present.

Immortality is the essence of a eulogy. Though eulogies are inspired by the mortal fate of the living, immortality is what we are grasping for upon the recitation of someone's virtues and life.

To practice eulogies is to practice immortality.

To frequently recite into life the absence of a loved one is to regularly revive their spirit. Therefore, just as the poem resurrects upon recitation, just as the dance becomes the dance again upon movement in real time, the repetition of a beloved name is the practice of immortality

IV. Dance v. Poetry

A poem is a living fossil resurrected through the expulsions of breath in the body.

A dance is the creation of the flesh that becomes fossil impounded by the physical memory of the mover who is the vessel for the thought.

A dancer is the reader of a poem while the movement vocabulary is the poem itself, together evoking through performance the whole work.

A poem is like an ornate, unique teacup.

A teacup can hold any liquid someone chooses to pour into it, therefore, though the vessel does not change, the content within the vessel changes upon each person's desires or tastes.

A dance is carved into the medium of flesh and therefore cannot hold anything because it is of another. One could argue that dance also has form in which there is consistency, but because the medium is the human body, no one person embodies the work the same. The perception of a dance is affected because it is a visual art form and therefore, the audience must witness the human performing the work. Therefore, the body, gender, and movement affinities of the dancer inevitably shape the audience perception.

A poem can be arranged in different ways on the page, but it is ultimately bound by the same medium of ink and dead trees (or a blaring screen these days, unfortunately).

Everyone can experience a poem. Anyone can hear a poem read by someone else, but should they chose, they could also witness the poem in their own voice, in their own head.

A dance cannot be experienced in this way. A dance is a work that can only fully be experienced by the choreographer and the dancer who can perform the work to its full technical capacity. An audience can witness, but cannot wholly experience the physicality of a dance.

The dance IS.

A poem waits.

The goal of a poem and the goal of a dance is the same:

to describe the indescribable.

Both poetry and dance deal in matters of language. In describing a dance, students of dance are trained to speak of the physical movement as a vocabulary, which is a term used to describe the words that comprise coherent communication. If the collection of movements for an entire dance is called a vocabulary, then the individual movements are the words, arranged in space.

A poem is the arrangement of individual words on the blank space of a page.

A dance is that arrangement of individual movements in space.

V. PROCESS: *(nearer to the body than the evening): a suite of five solos*



Figure 1. In the studio, rehearsal for Treatment IV.

a. Treatment I: *broken whole*

Journal Entry. September, 2016

*The graves of empty promises are shedding mil
dew.*

disappointment falls like sagging bones.

*Salted tongues speak a soft word of comfort
in the presence of life's sucrose tendencies.*

Like salted earth, my grounds are barren.

*Before they told you how desperately your aching eyelids yearn to kiss each other at the
end of a very long day, did you also think*

Love's shadow was Disappointment?

Figure 2. Poem from journal entry in September 2016.

PEARS: none held, two placed together in the downstage right corner.

The pears hold a presence in this particular treatment, but they are never touched. From the physical perspective of the performer, their placement represents the top right corner of a page that is traditionally turned to continue reading a literary work.

CHOREOGRAPHIC/POETIC TOOLS: structure/form, chance

TITLE: *broken whole*

This treatment is stripped movement purely correlating to the structure and rhythm of “Dear One Absent This Long While” by Lisa Olstein. I played with such titles as simply “you” and “undone” that captured the minimal approach and vague emotionality of the movement vocabulary, but neither felt complete enough. The title “broken whole” came to me as I was discussing lighting for my piece with Dance Professor Gregory Catillier. I was describing to him how the end of my performance of all five solos had changed and was using the term “bottom” to describe the final portion. In that moment, it struck me that performing this entire work feels like I begin by breaking ground and digging through the soil until I reach a rocky, impenetrable surface that is the end.

This treatment was created by breaking apart the whole poem and by imaging the beginning as an action of breaking down, I decided that the title “broken whole” served as a description for the creation of the first piece and an introduction to the suite of solos. Additionally, “whole” is a homonym to the word “hole,” which describes the breaking of soil evident in the imagery of Olstein’s poem and a metaphorical beginning for my performance.

PROCESS: *shaping blank things*

September 7, 2016

shaping blank things

Thrown up under a tidal wave

Under, over, above

Shaped around

Pulled by love.

Blade in the ground.

Pull the soil until it is fresh and ready

for roots of something you cannot grasp.

Shoot it and don't forget to comb your hair.

There is a place

Where women sway their hips in the breeze

Thrown up under a tidal wave.

The vast expanse of paperless blank.

Figure 3. Poem from journal entry in September 2016.

Form is the vessel for thought

to be carried into its tangible existence.

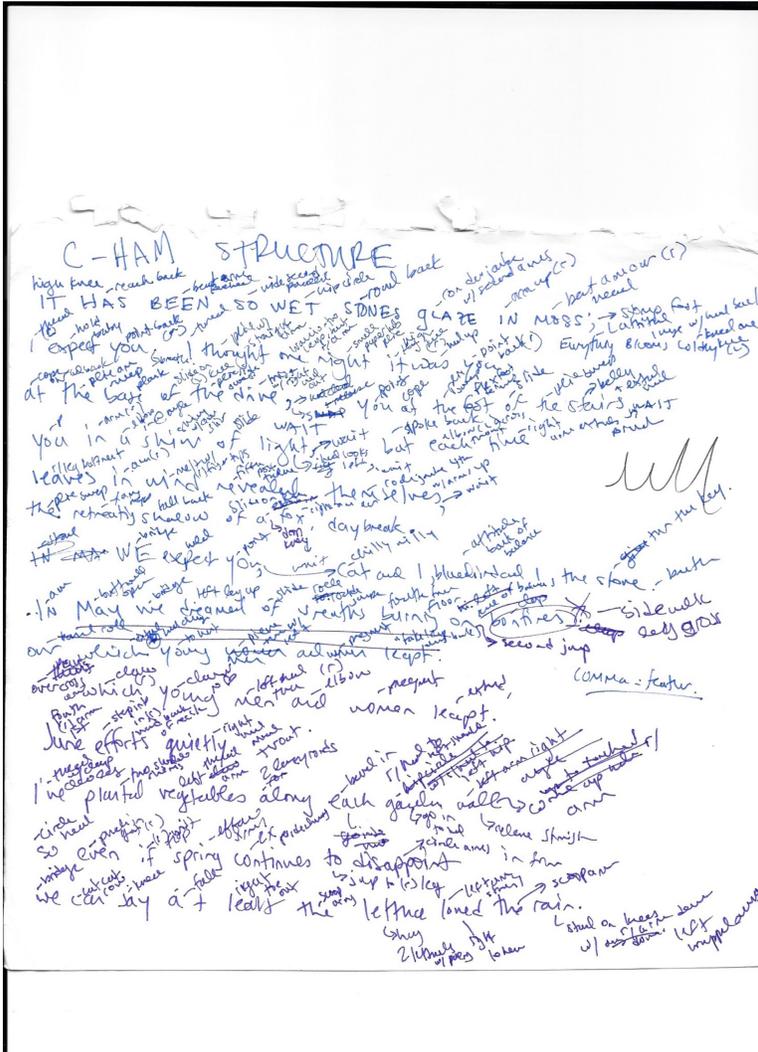


Figure 4: Copy of first “Cunningham Structure” rehearsal notes, Treatment I. September 2016.

PART I: Merce.

The strict adherence to poetic form of “Dear One Absent This Long While” was my practice as I created this specific treatment. It was a strict practice for me, because to

deviate from form is my natural inclination. I am attracted to work that inspires my imagination and that often means it quickly becomes my own. In order to allow my movement to be completely dictated by form, I had to practice an intellectual rigor. It was a rigor that required me to remember movements without attaching any narrative or emotional connotation. The movements often had nothing to do with the word, which made the work even more broken and stripped to me.

To begin this work, I looked to a choreographer I have researched before in the Dance and Movement Studies course History of Western Concert Dance, Merce Cunningham. Merce was a 20th century choreographer famous for stripping emotion from a choreographic process by utilizing such tools as chance methods in order to create dance. Cunningham's work is often incredibly crisp, succinct linear movement in the vertical plane. It is the aesthetic antithesis to my natural affinities. The linearity of Cunningham's work seemed to me to be a perfect parallel to the striking presence of lines arranged on the page. I wanted to capture this sort of clarity in my movement in order to clearly iterate that this treatment is about structure and the visual layout of a poem on paper.

My research into Cunningham led me to choreograph work that was created "by-chance-found"¹⁸ movements that followed the original order of the words in the poem. No movement was created inspired by the meaning or emotional weight of a word. I did not even attempt to imitate an image portrayed by a word. Cunningham believed that "it is

¹⁸ Kostelanetz, Richard, and Jack Anderson, eds. *Merce Cunningham: Dancing in Space and Time*. Chicago, IL: Cappella Books, Incorporated, 1992. Print. Page 42.

possible for anything to follow anything else,”¹⁹ and I practiced trusting this concept through the creation of this solo. I assigned a movement for each word, an audible (or could be audible) sound for each punctuation mark, and a pause at each period. The practice took my emotional self out of the work, creating a very clear vocabulary that was structural and concise.

Part II: *ghost*

In spite of the very dry creation process, over time, this treatment became more and more personal. I see this development as a great testimony to how form truly shapes the poem and the dance. The movement that started as the raw transfer of structure took on fleshy meaning as it settled into itself over time. The only movement that did shift over time is how I would indicate commas in this work. Originally, my vision was to pull out a white feather out of my costume to drop on the ground. The shape of the feather in the air would imitate a comma, and it would be a nice interjection between thoughts. However, as I kept rehearsing the work without the feathers, the flow of the piece became so cemented that to add the feathers seemed to disrupt the rhythm of this treatment. In order to accommodate the space of a comma, I chose to assign a certain corner to be “the ghost” corner. A comma indicates a pause in breath or thought that connects one portion of a sentence to the next. The speaker in Olstein’s “Dear One Absent This Long While” pauses often, and in those pauses, she seems to be remembering (and waiting). I decided that to look at someone “absent this long while” in the downstage right corner would be

¹⁹ Kostelanetz, Richard, and Jack Anderson, eds. *Merce Cunningham: Dancing in Space and Time*. Chicago, IL: Cappella Books, Incorporated, 1992. Print. Page 41.

an appropriate addition to the form. Once this “ghost” corner was assigned, that is when the piece began to take on a more emotional meaning.

While I was creating my solo, “SALT,” in the Dance & Movement Studies course, Choreography I with Professor Anna Leo, I met with Professor George Staib to speak with him about creating solo work. He gave me the advice that there is no such thing as a solo, as even when we are dancing alone we are dancing with something or someone else. This advice has informed my dance making ever since. By imagining the speaker’s beloved (who eventually became my own) in the corner, the solo became a stark epistolary work attempting to communicate with the beloved absent. This action gave the character of this treatment a voice, which then allowed me the space to explore the multifaceted character embedded in the speaker of this poem. The blossoming of character in this treatment led me to create the following four treatments with a new freedom and a personal understanding of what it means to wait.

MOVEMENT ANALYSIS:

The movement choices in this treatment are linear and geometric to mimic the shape of the words on page. The breath that connects each movement links the movements assigned to each word, just as the breath in a poem read aloud is the connective tissue between words. Every period is expressed as a breath. The performance choices of each breath I wanted to remain authentic to each performance, therefore I did not choreograph the breaths to be of a certain length or breadth. I wanted each punctuation mark to represent a very human sound or motion that juxtaposed the stark, technical movement choices. For every comma, I chose to look at the downstage left corner that I assigned to

be the “ghost” corner. The commas soon became a very human break in the movement in order to remind myself that this solo is interrupted by the reminder that in daily activities that tend to feel mechanical, there is someone absent for whom the speaker is always waiting.

The choice to begin the solo facing the audience is a very vulnerable one, intended to mimic the emotionality of the title of the poem. The spatial intention of this treatment is extremely direct, as it is important that this treatment represents a structure that scans a very clear path in order to shape the blank space of the stage, as a poet begins to mar the blank page before a poem. The diagonals are especial important because diagonals express command but also the suggestion of immense spaciousness. The use of the diagonals in this first solo introduces the space in which the rest of the treatments can exist. Spatial angling in this treatment serves as a topographical map to introduce the spatial lives of the following treatments by briefly addressing the front diagonals and the sagittal planes.

The contrast between spatial direction and bodily tension in this solo mimics the prosaic language in this highly structured poem. A poem shaped by ten couplets evenly placed on the page filled with such ordinary language such as “I expect you” calls for movement that is relaxed in its energy but exceptionally clear in its direction and execution.

SOUND DESIGN:

The choice to perform this solo in silence was one that had been clear to me since the beginning of its creation. The silence creates an environment in which the audience is forced to witness the movements and sense the dancer in all of her human capacities

without distraction. Additionally, when a poem is read out loud, it is over the hum of silence. Rarely is a poem read aloud over music and to perform the structure of this poem with my body over music for this treatment would be a disservice to the choreographic intention.

b. Treatment II: *temporal*

January 23, 2017

Ophelia II

in the dream waist deep.

lunar wrists tethered to rolling pears (of reflection)

Of appetite, they thought

I knew little.

To mistake pining and loss

For the sound of brokenness

in the blooming marsh where all that was once dead mingles over hot sangria.

Snapping into place, Desire's strange hold

Hugs his torso like a child

pressed against the folds of her mother's skirt.

Figure 5. Poem from Journal Entry in January 2017.

PEARS: one pear held, one pear remains in the downstage right corner.

This treatment is the first to actively integrate the pears. In literature, pears are often viewed as sexual symbols that offer some sort of innuendo.²⁰ Therefore, a pear is used to express desire in the quest of fulfillment. This treatment explores the wanting evident in the speaker of Olstein's poem, therefore initiating the theme of desire that encapsulates this work.

CHOREOGRAPHIC/POETIC TOOLS USED: call and response

TITLE: *temporal*

The first working title of this treatment I was exploring during this process was “waiting and wanting”. However, I realized that to reiterate the waiting and wanting that is evident in the movement by placing it in the title is redundant. I knew audience members would be led to contemplate desire and sensuality by the image of a woman and a piece of fruit. The biblical connotations of the image would inevitably encourage images that were sexually charged and I did not want to shy away from this. I wanted to encourage audience members to contemplate the passage of time evident in the space between the desire and the attainment (or nonattainment), as well as the temporary nature of desire. Additionally, the pear being handled suggests the image (and the feeling) of flesh on flesh. The “buttery”²¹ flesh of a pear is especially susceptible to bruising, like our skin, which is suggestive of the mortality of all living things. Therefore, “temporal” felt most appropriate, as it describes the finite time in space of earthly things.

²⁰ Palter, Robert. *The Duchess of Malfi's Apricots, and Other Literary Fruits*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2002. Print. Page 346.

²¹ Morgan, Joan. *The Book of Pears*. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2015. Print. Page 7.

PROCESS: *in the dream waist deep*

PART I: *Appel et (non) Réponse*

After creating the very structured first treatment, I began to look at more emotional qualities of the poem. What was especially appealing to me during the time I created this second treatment was the incessant longing pulsing through “Dear One Absent This Long While.” While reading this poem, my first instinct was to brood on the themes of sadness and loss. But in actuality, there is a great deal of frustration and desire evident in the poem. The very succinct and brief sentences such as “I expect you” or “We expect you” translate physically into very direct, powerful movement. For this specific treatment, I attuned myself to the particular emotional quality of desire in the poem as I generated physical material.

To assist me in creating movement with this perspective, I decided to invite a friend into the studio as I created material. I asked her to read the original version, as well as a French translation I composed of “Dear One Absent This Long While.” As I suspected, having another person in the studio with me changed the energy in the room and therefore impacted my movement. My movement had more of an extroverted energy interwoven with my natural affinity of sinuous fluidity. Reacting to the text in a physical manner also drew a desire to embody such loaded, simple phrases as “I expect you” in a very passionate manner.

I believe improvising to the French translation also inspired the more passionate and charged vocabulary of this treatment. It was especially refreshing, as I had become so

familiar to the sound and rhythm of the English text. My creative choices in the improvisational work mimicked the rounded sound of the French language. My choices were especially sequential in response to the text and these were the choices I chose to keep. I recorded the improvised phrases on film, discarded what I did not like, kept what I liked, and then stitched them together.

Improvisation is a crucial part of my choreographic process, but especially in this treatment. It was important for me to rely on improvisation to generate material in this score because, as choreographer Kenneth King states, “improvisation loosens the boundaries between form(s) and content...the set and unset...the known and unknown...”²² allowing the choreographer to break away from structure and investigate what is not immediately evident. Improvising to and viscerally experiencing the poem liberated from structure allowed me to investigate the curiosity this poem ignites for me.

Another factor that allowed me to create a solo that was decidedly foreign from the others was my choice to create my own admittedly strange homophonic translation of “Dear One Absent This Long While” inspired by my rough French translation:

Homophonic Translation (Stanzas 1-5)

²² Alexander, Elena, editor. *Footnotes: six choreographers inscribe the page*. Canada: G+B Arts International imprint, part of The Gordon and Breach Publishing Group, 1998. Print. Page 115.

Sharing Absinthe at the Sea

I'll be melting on the pier of the glass shore at dawn like mousse

Mingling with trampled, flower frost.

Jetting to attend to lunar ennui, I parsed into set toils.

I've lost base love under the peeling escalator stairs.

Twice, freezing Dawn died under luminary circumstances

And the girls who knew hushed the convent of revealing anything,

For lumbered keys never made it into their dampened locks, oddly.

New, crude attention requires blue eyes to witness swans in pairs perusing

main avenues while raising seared Coronas brûléed by the sun (this

Provides an opening sequel to the young men and women out sunbathing).

Figure 6. Homophonic Translation, Stanzas 1-5.

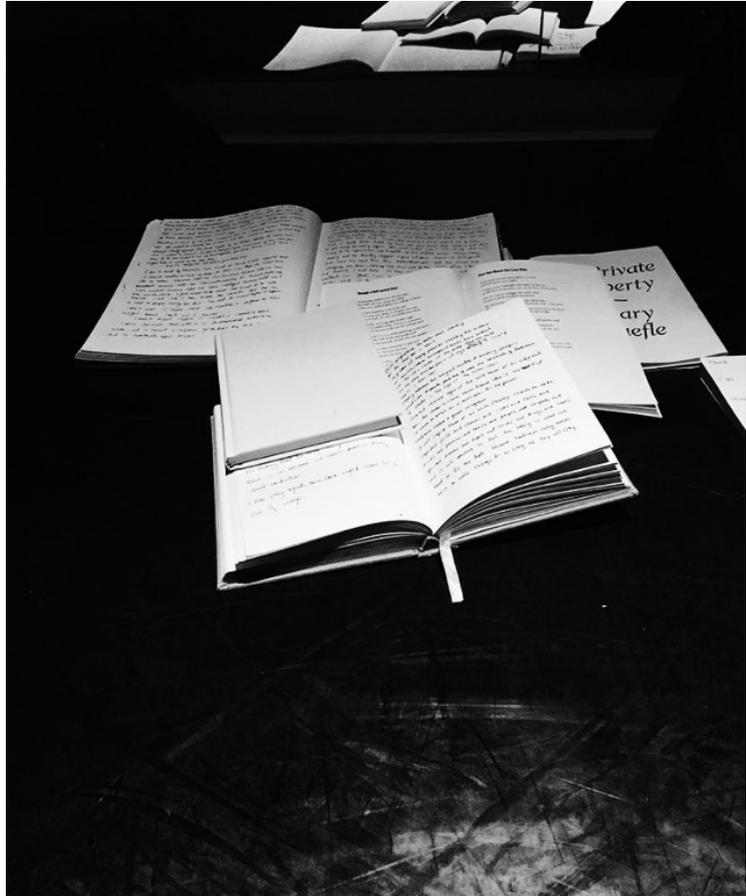


Figure 7. Rehearsal, Fall 2016.

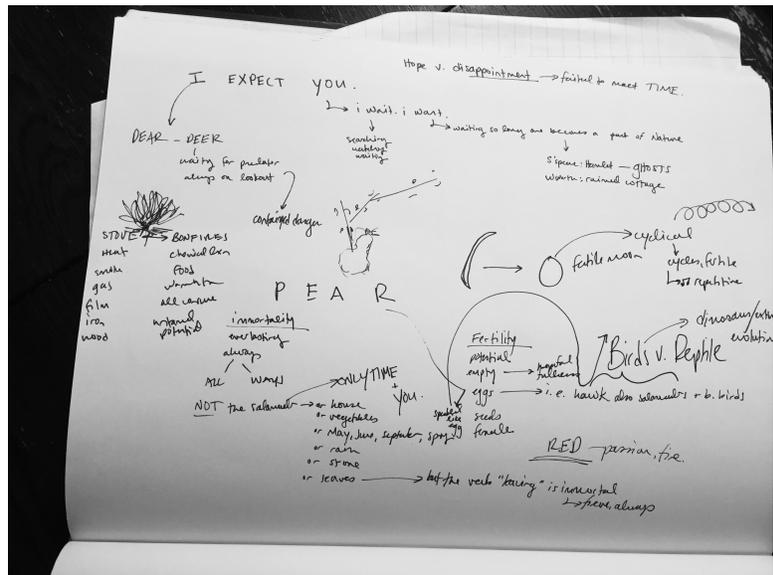


Figure 8. Notes from Treatment II, January 2017.

January 13, 2017

WHEN EYES BECOME HOTHOUSES OVER THE MURMURING STOVE

THE LEAVES CRACK OVER THEMSELVES.

TO SIGNAL THE AFTER-PARTY OF VERSIMILITUDE, I LIT BONFIRES OVER

WHICH RAWBONEDLOVERSLEAPT.

Figure 9. Poem excerpt from journal entry in January 2017.



Figure 10. Still from improvisational video, rehearsal. Treatment II. January, 2017.

PART II: *waiting moon (on repeat)*

My investigation into how the pears fit into the choreographic material of this work began with this particular treatment. The movement material inspired by the conflicting emotions of waiting and wanting ignites the feeling of desire for me. The two emotions chaffing up against one another create a fire that feels either anxious for a drastic change or for what once was to last forever.

“In literature, fruits have been endowed with symbolic meanings which make them expressions of sexual desire or else of the yearning for immortality...”²³

The temporary nature of fruit as an object that is only useful to humans during a certain period of time in contrast to its symbolic association with immortality encapsulates what it means to wait and to want, simultaneously. Fruit requires us to wait in order to satisfy a craving. The concept of immortality associated with fruit is experienced in the base purpose of a fruit that is nourishment. Without nourishment, life cannot persist and exist. The cyclical nature of life on earth is evident in the process of how a fruit grows, therefore representing time.

Cycles such as these are abundant in Olstein’s poem. The mention of how the speaker is “planting vegetables” in early spring and as time passes, the vegetables she had planted before have grown and are thriving. Time passes in this poem rapidly as evident in the changing seasons and the changing times of day. This poem never stays in one place for

²³Chevalier, Jean and Alain Gheerbrant, editors. Buchanan-Brown, John, translator. “*Fruit.*” *The Penguin Dictionary of Symbols*. London: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1996. Print. Page 412.

very long, because the waiting and the wanting the speaker experiences unmercifully persists.

Additionally, though the moon is not present in this poem through words, I find the moon extremely present in the cycles and passing of time. For “the moon is a symbol of life-rhythms” as “it governs all those spheres of nature that fall under the law of recurring cycles: water, rain, plant life, fertility.”²⁴ The moon plays a crucial role in this treatment as I was exploring the incessant cycle of time subjecting the speaker of this poem to the act of waiting. After the completion of this treatment, the moon never left the piece. The deep investigation of the symbolic meaning of the moon, fruit, and the act of both waiting and wanting opened the door for Treatment III to arrive in ways I had never anticipated.

MOVEMENT ANALYSIS:

This treatment is sequential movement framed by polarities of space in a time quality that is suspended, rooted in grounded weight. The movement vocabulary of this treatment serves as a container that holds the chaffing emotions of waiting and wanting. The sensual, sinuous movement quality is the physical representation of this speaker’s desire to be near the physical body of her dear one absent (as she is already especially familiar with the memory). The spatial extension of this movement is wide, swallowing the space with a command that greatly contrasts the first treatment. The pear in this treatment serves to compliment the swallowing of space that this movement consumes. Instead of swallowing the pear and eating it myself, I choose to swallow the space holding the pear:

²⁴ Chevalier, Jean and Alain Gheerbrant, editors. Buchanan-Brown, John, translator. “*Moon.*” *The Penguin Dictionary of Symbols*. London: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1996. Print. Page 669.

which is another example of restricted desire that is beyond one's control. To remain heavily invested in moving in the sagittal, vertical, and horizontal planes on the diagonals satisfies the craving the first treatment ignited to consume space. The gestural vocabulary is heavily textured and tangled with minimal bound resistance.

SOUND DESIGN:

The sound created for this movement is the layering of my own French translation of Lisa Olstein's "Dear One Absent This Long While" read by Laura Briggs in the stairwell I created my site-specific solo, "you don't know, don't tell me" in the Dance and Movement Studies course, Choreography I. Stephen Fowler helped me layer the recording over the piece "glitch" by Canadian record producer and DJ, Dead Mau5. This sound design assisted me in revealing desire by creating an atmosphere that contrasted the animalistic movements of the choreography with the cold robotic sounds of the music. This contrast mimics the opposing images of metal, harsh objects (such as "the stove" or "a new hoe") and softer animals (such as the "bluebirds" and a "cat") found in the poem.

c. Treatment III: penumbra

February 2, 2017

Wings on birds peel away at the heart.

A fractured sternum splayed in rude flight for the sake of getting somewhere.

The undisturbed ribs of what has no choice but

to swallow the air between us.

Floating ribs hanging in our chests,

Almost hugging fragility.

Tied together at the backbone: (which snaps when we work too hard).

We call the ribs a cage, but is it?

A cage is closed without an exit. Or an entrance.

(hence the space between our hands. desiring permanence)

Forget crawling.

I want to live inside your skin.

Figure 11. Poem from journal entry in February 2017.

PEARS: none held, one downstage right, one downstage left

No pears are held during this treatment, but the division in space created by the lighting design of Gregory Catillier makes the pears a very present force on the stage.

Additionally, though I am not holding the pear in this treatment, I am thinking about holding the pear in much of the gestural vocabulary.

CHOREOGRAPHIC/POETIC TOOLS USED: imagery, arms only, spatial restriction

TITLE: *penumbra*

This particular treatment was finished on my 23rd birthday, February 9, 2017. On the night of my birthday, there was both a comet passing earth and a penumbral lunar eclipse. A penumbral lunar eclipse is when the moon passes through the earth's shadow for a fleeting moment and appears to slightly dim. The cyclical nature of the moon relates to the cyclical rotation of the fluid, gestural choreography revolving slowly around the vertical axis of my body, calling to mind the image of an object passing through shadows.

PENUMBRA

(noun)

1: *a space of partial illumination (as in an eclipse) between the perfect shadow on all sides and the full light*

2: *a surrounding or adjoining region in which something exists in a lesser degree*

3: *something that covers, surrounds, or obscures*²⁵

²⁵ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/penumbra>

“Penumbra” was a word that contrasted the intense vulnerability of this very quiet, exposing treatment. The unobtrusive and persistent gestures that secretly blossom in this solo vibrate quietly in the shadow of what was previously expounded into the space during the second treatment, providing an especially intimate mood.



Figure 12. In the studio, rehearsal. Treatment III. February 2017.

PART I: *empty*.

To begin research for this project, I read the definition of “imagery” in the Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics and was especially captivated by the first sentence:

“Imagery, like the related word imitate, invokes the power of imagination, the cultural uses and dangers of likeness, and the baffling confluence of concrete and abstract, literal and figurative, body and mind, matter and spirit.” (PEPP, p. 662)

This depiction inspired me to create a physical vocabulary that was abstract enough that it could invite people in with their own memories. I wanted to create a treatment that allowed the audience to witness a moment of extreme intimacy. An intimate, abstract vocabulary inspired me to investigate the still spaces of the imagery in the poem that are *not* mentioned to fill the page. I wanted to explore not simply the image itself, but the negative space surrounding the image.

Exploring negative space in dance is a familiar exercise to me in contact improvisation work. Last semester, while taking the Dance and Movement Studies World Dance Forms course, “Contact Improvisation,” with Emory Dance professors Kristin O’Neil and Gregory Catellier, we did an exercise that explored the negative space surrounding the structure of a body. Using this tool, the dance between two becomes an exploration of the empty molds created by and around the body, inviting both dancers to become acutely aware of their connection without touching at all.

When two people dance using negative space, it is a trio.

When one person dances using negative space, it is a duet.

When one person writes words on the negative space of a page, it is a poem.

February 1, 2017

the emptiness between the iron arms of a stove burner

the air in the space of an eggshell, between the unborn and the membrane.

The space between the stones filled with glistening, wet moss.

The shadow outlining where the fox WAS,

the skeletons of wreaths on the all consuming bonfire.

The smoke around the fire.

The empty shells of seeds that die once their purpose has been served and the vegetable sprouts.

The space the garden wall holds, the air and raindrops between leaves of lettuce.

The space in which you put your fingers into a glove.

That harrowing space that a eulogy attempts to fill in memory of someone who has moved on to a place we cannot go.

The hollowness between our ribs.

The space between the lungs.

The chambers of the heart.

The emptiness of an unfilled womb.

Figure 13. Journal entry from February 2017.

In relation to all of the images mentioned in the journal entry above, I thought about the space on the page between each couplet. This particular structural choice by Olstein emphasizes the absence the speaker feels; as the space implies there could be a line there, but there isn't.

I thought about the silence the speaker senses when she calls out to her "Dear One Absent This Long While".

(Notice, there is a difference between sensing and hearing. The speaker hears a response in the leaves and the ghostly sounds at the base of the drive or the foot of the stairs. She senses an absence and she hears a presence.)

Gestures emerged from shaping the negative space that would be a pear in my palm or brushing my hand between the chattering leaves on the branches at the edge of the forest and became situated in a sequence within the treatment over time.

The exploration of the emptiness and stillness was also inspired by one of choreographer Deborah Hay's goals while performing her solo concerts in the late 1970s. During her performances, Hay felt as though she was "preparing her body for emptiness, becoming intensely conscious, through her identification of herself as her breath."²⁶ The purpose of this practice of preparing her body for emptiness was to attain the goal she so eloquently said at one of her solo concerts:

"I hope that these dances will evolve to a place where I can suspend the moment for myself and for you the whole time we are together. So the dance is my being here in this

²⁶ Banes, Sally. "*Deborah Hay: The Cosmic Dance.*" *Terpsichore in Sneakers*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1987. Print. Page 126.

space, totally, and preparation for this performance is my entire life and nothing more, or less.”²⁷

Hay’s intentional choices to force herself to remain extremely present in the movement and moment, allowing her whole life to influence the performance as it has influenced the woman she is in the performance, is exactly my intention in this treatment. The quiet, authentic, and introspective performance quality of this particular solo is inspired by Hay’s intent to empty herself of any preconceived performance persona in order to simply be a vessel for the vocabulary. Hay’s solo dances are described as “a delicate balance between a profound experience with slight but concentrated movements that the viewer can enjoy empathetically and aesthetically and moments that remain cryptic, locked in Hay’s private experience.”²⁸ My goal in performing this treatment was to depict exactly what Hay had mastered, for I believe this performance to be a private matter the audience is simply allowed to share with me.

A poem and a dance are both the joining of an artist and witness in the same time and space.

Nothing more, nothing less.

²⁷ Banes, Sally. “*Deborah Hay: The Cosmic Dance.*” *Terpsichore in Sneakers*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1987. Print. Page 126.

²⁸ Banes, Sally. “*Deborah Hay: The Cosmic Dance.*” *Terpsichore in Sneakers*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1987. Print. Page 126-127.

PART II: *to wait*.

During my exploration of how to structure the gestures I had created exploring negative space, I remembered that there is an image that this poem is depicting (but does not explicitly say) that is extremely important:

the image of someone waiting for the one who will not come.

When I was younger, I used to set up a “waiting station” on the card table we used to keep by the sofa near the backdoor whenever a visitor I was especially excited about would be coming. I practiced this event of waiting with a bag of pretzels and my sister’s book of Edgar Allen Poe poems. I had a book with a play clock so I could move the hands every ten-minute increment that passed according to the large clock on the wall.

I used to delight in waiting. This, of course, was a happier act of expectation than the speaker in Olstein’s poem is experiencing, but this memory came up often for me in the creation of this treatment. How much I used to love to wait as a child, and how little I want to rest in it now.

The speaker in Olstein’s poem is so brave to wait for so long.

Olstein’s speaker has grown accustomed to the waiting. She expects the person to arrive, just as I did when I was younger. She waits in the most ordinary of places (the stove, the driveway, the staircase) and only mentions disappointment briefly, only to return to the act of waiting every morning.

The poem is cyclical. It is the act of waiting that has no beginning and no end. There are clear markings of time, such as the material mentioning of a new glove or a new hoe, the vegetables growing, daybreak, or the passing of months.

And yet, there is an eternal clock ticking in Olstein's poem; it is the clock that will not be stopped until this person returns.

The most important image in this poem is the vision of someone awaiting his or her beloved who will not come.

I began to analyze the poem in this light, and found that the speaker is perhaps awaiting their beloved at the end of a long journey (as she expects them "at the base of the drive"), or more intimately, when she comes down the stairs to tend to the morning.

Downstairs (nude/staircase) to the kitchen

Naked to sit at the table (writing/thinking)

(excerpt from "Nude Descending" by Alicia Ostriker)²⁹

She waits for them, expecting them in a "shiver of light". "Light," in this instance, could mean sunshine or moonshine through the window. Or, it could mean, "hope".

²⁹ <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/42616>

Therefore, the stillness I demand of myself in this solo, physically, is reminiscent of this hope in the waiting that I hear in the speaker.

The embodiment of expectation.

This solo is a duet is between the absence and myself.

Self-touch often implies self-care, therefore revealing the nurturing nature of Olstein's speaker, who gardens and tends in response to the pregnant time of waiting, as she is captured in the shadow of emptied nourishment.

PART III: *miscarried.*

Journal Entry. February 9, 2017

TO HOLD WHAT IS LOST.

(miscarriage)

Nursing a grief

Nursing a flower

Nursing a loneliness

Nursing a heart

Nursing a memory

Nursing a lost memory

*Nursing a fossil
a broken*

fossil.

Figure 14. Journal entry from February 2017.

There is something very maternal about this speaker to me. I connect to it emotionally and physically, though I am not a mother. I have always been very interested in the feminine body and how that can be explored and empowered by dance on stage. “SALT,” a work I created in Choreography I, explored the sharp edges and secret desires of the conventionally soft and submissive female body. This exploration of the feminine through dance is a recurring theme in my work, so I wasn’t surprised when it showed up in this treatment.

Miscarriage:

noun

1.the expulsion of a fetus before it is viable, especially between the third and seventh months of pregnancy; spontaneous abortion.

2.failure to attain the just, right, or desired result.

3.failure of something sent, as a letter, to reach its destination.³⁰

³⁰ <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/miscarriage>

To hold something that is lost is an exceptionally important theme in this treatment. The contrast of this work to the more animalistic, devouring, spacious Treatment II is the weighted absence that is felt internally and externally.

The idea of a miscarriage resonated with me in relation to this treatment because I knew that this speaker felt an intimate loss that she still held in her body.

And,

the emptiest space in a woman's body is her womb.

(where space waits like it is meant to be filled.)

*I expect you.*³¹

MOVEMENT ANALYSIS:

The directional path of this work is the only one that moves strictly in the sagittal plane. This choice was intentional, as I wanted this solo to feel as though it was placed in the outer margins of the page, exploring the negative space on the page of the poem, rather than the words and lines themselves.

The gestural vocabulary reveals itself as ritual that had become a sacred practice bound by the necessary demand of waiting. The gestures themselves are screw like with a spatial awareness of the bodily tension a spiral creates. Even when my arm is erected in

³¹ <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/48139>

the vertical space, there is a spiral motion as I feel my pinky stapling itself towards the upstage traveler. A spiral in the body is the attempt to simultaneously reach the furthest points of a line. I imagine this desire to completely fill distance is a feeling the speaker in this poem feels acutely. I wanted to express this distance in my body by way of the spatial tension between body parts. Additionally, as mentioned previously in explaining the title, the movement rotates around the vertical axis as it moves forward in the sagittal plane. This directional path indicates how an object passes through shadows or remains partially hidden. The gestural vocabulary mimics this directional path by utilizing the backspace and front space evenly, repeatedly revealing and hiding itself.

*The retreating shadow of a fox, daybreak.*³²

SOUND DESIGN:

The sound for this work is the merging of composer Jóhann Jóhannsson's piece, "A Model of the Universe" and the Spanish translation of Lisa Olstein's "Dear One Absent This Long While," translated and read by Viviana Coronado. The longing sound of Viviana's voice over the especially poignant piano and guitar created an exceptionally emotional track. I knew from the beginning of the process for this treatment that this is what I wanted for the music. The rich gestural vocabulary enveloped by the unraveled huskiness of Viviana's voice and the delicate melodic sound of Jóhannsson created a special mood for this solo.

³² <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/48139>

d. Treatment IV: *ellipses*

PEARS: Two pears held, one pear in the downstage right corner, one pear downstage left corner.

The pears are held in both hands in this treatment to suggest support. Just as the prop of a pen or a computer keypad supports the poet, and the body supports the dancer, so do the pears support the mover in this particular treatment. The pears also become a part of the body, because they are used as support in the hands, which is a metaphor for how the craft can become so integrated into the identity of the artist.

CHOREOGRAPHIC/POETIC TOOL: site specific, translation, and repetition

TITLE: *ellipses*

The original working title of this work was “ruminantion”. The word stuck with me because the process was a dwelling on and assessment of returning to places. “Ruminate” is also a word used often in the kitchen by chefs and in reference to how cows may spend their time at the edge of a forest. Nevertheless, “ruminantion” feels like a very stationary word to me. And though this treatment has a very strict spatial pattern, it is hardly ever still.

On the night I completed this solo, the moon was at perigee in its ellipse, which means it was at the point in its orbit that it is closest to the earth. This represents, to me, the closest potential for attainability the moon would ever be. It reminded me of how the speaker feels about her beloved who is close enough in memory, and yet all the while, still unattainable.

We also expect the moon every night as the speaker in this poem also expects. The desired appears in different forms in different places in this poem, such as “the base of the drive” or the chattering of the leaves, but nevertheless the beloved is always present. Similarly, the moon always looms near us, though it may appear in different shapes, depending on where it is in its ellipse around the earth.

I wanted to emphasize the constant returning and re-shifting of the theme of absence in the poem in this specific translation, and therefore thought “ellipses” would be a most appropriate title.

PROCESS: *Hardcore Rosary Counting*

PART I: *Le Poêle*

*We expect you. Cat and I, bluebirds and I, the stove...*³³

The kitchen is an especially intimate room in a household. It is a place that represents both community and loneliness, potential and chaos. When I think of Lisa Olstein’s speaker in the kitchen, I imagine her looking out a window standing in a pooling light of blue emitted by the very cold sunrise. I also envision her standing in the kitchen on a very sleepy dark night. In both visions, however, I see her alone.

³³ <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/48139>

*I suppose O it's very quiet
 in my kitchen tonight I'm squeezing
 this plastic honey bear a noodle
 of honey dripping into the odd sweet
 tea. It's pretty late
 Honey bear's cover was loose
 and somehow honey dripping down
 the bear's face catching
 in the crevices beneath
 the bear's eyes O very sad and sweet
 I'm standing in my kitchen O honey
 I'm staring at the honey bear's face.³⁴*

(Excerpt from "Honey Bear" by Eileen Myles)³⁵

My first impulse to begin exploring the site of the kitchen was to look up poems specifically about the kitchen. I wanted to collect various poems in order to find a common emotional thread that could then be paralleled with Olstein's brief mention of simply one part of the kitchen, "the stove."

The stove is the hottest part of the kitchen. It is a large presence anchored next to the glacial fridge. The difference between the two is that a fridge mostly holds food that is ready to eat, whereas the stove is a tool for preparation. Food that must be cooked in order to be consumed must first pass through the stove, demanding our time and

³⁵ <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/54619>

attention. Additionally, the stove is associated with danger, as we often warn young children not to touch it so they do not get hurt.

Olstein intentionally chose this mini inferno that is the stove to be the object waiting for the beloved because it is a place that represents warmth and comfort. The stove expecting could also be a metaphor of the speaker growing weary of preparing for the arrival of her beloved that never comes.

*At night, the dishes done
and the house quiet, we watch her at the kitchen table –
her body slack in some small grief,
beads lacing her fingers with brilliance – afraid...*

(Excerpt from “From the Kitchen” by Myrna Stone)³⁶

As I began to accumulate more kitchen poems, I began to see similar emotional threads: Loneliness. Contemplation. Melancholy. Nostalgia. Waiting. Seeking, Desire.

Upon collecting these emotional threads, I then set foot into my very narrow kitchen to improvise. The limited space was a welcome restriction. It encouraged my improvising to immediately become very stationary and gestural in the vertical. I played a lot with resting my hands on the stove. Tracing the circles around the burners, imaging the orange glow that angrily pierces through the glossy black surface. This particular movement eventually evolved into the circling motion with my hand that is repeated in this solo

³⁶ <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/browse?contentId=39231>

(While in the vertical, I also created a short phrase grounded in a rocking pelvis motif that felt like a slow motion solo disco dance, because I had this very brief, wild vision of a disco party in the kitchen.

However, though it tried desperately to make its way into the piece, nothing from that improvisational moment made the final cut.)

To explore a different plane, I chose to lie down on the floor in front of the stove. I had limited space to move, as there is the oven and kitchen island separated by approximately four feet. Being in the horizontal plane reminded me of a previous movement in the first treatment assigned to the word “eulogies”. I explored how I could return to this position and unfold to come flush up against the stove, then repeating until I met the island.

Which, evolved into a sloshing, rolling, repetition that felt no limitation in the space, in spite of the walls I was running into.



Figure 15. Still from kitchen Improv. February 2017.

To slide each piece

*into a cold blue china bowl
the juice pooling until the whole
fruit is divided from its skin
and only then to eat
so sweet
a discipline
precisely pointless a devout
involvement of the hands and senses
a pause a little emptiness...³⁷*



Figure 16. Still from Kitchen Improv. February 2017.

(Excerpt from “Meditation on a Grapefruit” by Craig Arnold)

³⁷ <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/detail/52980>

PART II: *That Larger Lane*



Figure 17. Still from improvisational work at the driveway. March 2017.

“I expect you. You at the base of the drive...”

January 23, 2017

Crispy spillage of greys.

Cemented river.

A squatty green wall propped like an army of soldiers.

I would much rather be uncontrollably rolling down the hill...

The driveway was a particular site where I created a lengthy jumping phrase that responded to the rigidity of the environment. Not a single bit of this phrase made it into the fourth treatment. However, the longing this space recalled for me, did.

I chose for my site to be the bottom of the President of Emory's driveway in Lullwater Park. The driveway is a rather manicured section of Lullwater that sits atop a hill next to large pine trees that hide metal fences. It is a highly frequented section of Lullwater by walkers, joggers, cars, even deer, and I found myself wishing it were not. I desired the privacy of my own driveway to explore this very introverted work, but I had to persist on, which was a fruitful exercise. I found myself finding great comfort in repetition and becoming wholly invested in whatever movement manifested. This comfort in repetition served as a surprising contrast to Olstein's speaker who wishes the reoccurring absence of a beloved would cease. And yet, natural cycles such as seasons, gardening, night and day, and life and death appear repeatedly in Olstein's poem. So, clearly, the speaker does find some odd comfort in the act of cyclical growth.

The cyclical growth of a movement is what became exceptionally intriguing to me that made its presence extremely known in the studio out of this treatment.

This sort of intrigue carried over into the next site, which served as its own returning cycle.

PART III: *stairwell.*



Figure 18. Still from stairwell improv work. Fall 2016.

I don't know, don't tell me, you don't know.

Nobody knows these things.

But bringing all my senses close

to the light of your skin, you disappear,

you melt like the acid

aroma of a fruit

and the heat of a road...

(Excerpt from "Odes and Burgeonings" by Pablo Neruda)³⁸

³⁸ Neruda, Pablo, and Donald Devenish Walsh. "Odes and Burgeonings." *Love Poems*. New York: New Directions, 2008. N. pag. Print.

In the fall semester of 2015, I created a site-specific work in the bottom of a stairwell in the Schwartz building for the Dance and Movement Studies course Choreography I taught by Professor Anna Leo. It was a highly gestural, rather violent work that was performed in a restricted site. The work was called “you don’t know, don’t tell me” and it later became a short dance film submitted as a final project. The work was incredibly intimate to me and it was the first work I created that specifically used poetry as a large portion of its creation.

*you at the foot of the stairs...*³⁹

One image that comes to mind when I think of this moment in Olstein’s poem is the image of this particular stairwell. I filled the whole base of the stairwell with white feathers to contrast the violent and aggressive movement of the solo for the film. It added whimsy and a natural element to the harsh environment of the metal staircase, just as Olstein contrasts the images of a bluebirds and stoves or hawks and salamanders. This site holds not only the visual image of the “foot of the stairs” but also a memory held in my body. Which, I felt was an important reason to return to this specific site.

Additionally, the movement I created for “you don’t know, don’t tell me” played with repetition; allowing me to revisit the feeling of incessant, driving movement that mimics the pressing passage of Time in “Dear One Absent This Long While.”

³⁹ <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/48139>



Figure 18. Stills from “you don’t know, don’t tell me.” final video. December, 2015.

Part IV. *Shedding at the Edge*

*Yours is the name the leaves chatter
at the edge of the unrabbited woods.⁴⁰*



Figure 19. Still from Improvisational Performance, “Shedding,” Spring, 2015.

⁴⁰ <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/48139>

Woods as I imagine them to be in Olstein's work are nowhere to be found in the metro Atlanta area. I imagine a vast expanse of wild, untouched forest with large conifers and deciduous trees rustling in the wind with a foreboding presence. However, Olstein's use of negation with the word "unrabbited" describes a wood that is eerily devoid of a frequent woodland creature. Perhaps, in an urban setting, this would describe a wood that is not filled with animals because the sound of human presence has permanently scared them off. A wood like this reminded me of the place I performed my site-specific improvisation for the Dance & Movement Studies course, Movement Improv I.

In this improvisational score, I had explored how small movements could be as effective as large movements in reaching across distance. This theme seemed especially appropriate to reinvestigate for this project with Olstein's poem. Revisiting the site allowed me to explore how the number of times a movement is repeated can say just as much as the movement itself. And, how a movement does not have to be large and expansive in order to be heard.

PART V. *The Studio*



Figure 20. Still from rehearsal. Treatment IV. February 2017.

In any location I explored, I would create or revisit a phrase or a movement that lent itself to repetition and/or accumulation. I then allowed for what I physically remembered to be what was important enough to stay, always bringing the information from the site-specific space in terms of mood, lighting, atmosphere, and sound to infiltrate the character of the solo as it formed. I allowed my physical memory to make choices for me and it quickly made the decision that these site specific treatments would not be presented as four mini solos within a solo, but instead a hybrid of all the most important materials.

I created approximately four different dances in this process. During the research for this particular treatment, I researched several postmodern choreographers such as Laura Dean and Trisha Brown (who later inspired Treatment V) who used repetition and accumulation often. The simplicity of their movement and minimalist approach to spatial design was especially captivating to me.

This particular research into choreographers who use an extreme number of repetitions assisted me in understanding the structure I wanted in this treatment and encouraged me to keep movements that were only absolutely necessary. Eventually, I stripped the piece of anything that felt superfluous. I wanted to challenge myself to become swallowed by a gesture in the midst of waiting. I wanted to force the audience to experience the discomfort in expectation.



Figure 21. Still from rehearsal in studio. Treatment IV. February 2017.



Figure 22. Still from rehearsal in studio. February 2017.

March 2, 2017

rumination as prayer.

rumination as survival.

rumination as waiting.

rumination as hello.

rumination as poem.

rumination as goodbye.

rumination as penance.

rumination as running.

rumination as stopping.

rumination as forgiving.

rumination as forgetting.

rumination as losing.

rumination as surrendering.

rumination as progressing.

rumination as remembering.

rumination as loving.

rumination as obsession.

rumination as minimalism.

MOVEMENT ANALYSIS:

This treatment is spatially set on the diagonals. The arching, repetitive nature of the movements is reminiscent of how the poet reminds the readers that this speaker is expecting the same person to arrive over and over again. The waiting never ceases, and neither does the persistence of their absence. This treatment is mostly on the low level, with repetitive vertical insertions of the body (by way of the repetitive rolling in the middle of the treatment), representing the spikiness of a line of poetry. Additionally, this incessant and violent rolling recalls the capacity to be bruised and the brevity of Time as explored in the second treatment.

The simplicity in the form of this solo echoes the clear movement vocabulary of the first treatment. It also recalls the movement path of the second treatment that extends across the long diagonal in a way that is nostalgic of the capacity to consume space. Circular movements in the horizontal plane suggest the act of remembering.

The first path in this movement of simply walking across the back of the stage is another act of remembering, a recollection of where the poem began. It is a return to the title, a remembering of the person to whom this epistolary poem is addressed. It is a tracing of the top of the page where the addressed and the date would be.

The circling motion of the downstage right hand that traces circles on the stage with a pear is also reminiscent of the second treatment, as it is the hand that held the pear throughout that movement. The repetitive drawing motion of the right hand is also meant to represent the action of inscribing a page.

SOUND DESIGN:

Upon finishing Treatment III, I knew I was going to use the piece “Razones” by the Spanish artist Bebe as my soundscape. This piece sounded as though the singer was singing to herself in the emptiness of her home. I envisioned her either in the kitchen or in the shower, her voice echoing in the most private spaces. I asked Stephen to insert sounds from the kitchen and then end the work with sounds of water filling the bathtub in order to indicate the passing of time. Furthermore, these sound additions create an environment that indicates the speaker is passing through the house into different places, restless and mundane.

e. Treatment V: relic

March 2, 2017

womb

[woom]

noun

1. the uterus of the human female and certain higher mammals.

2. the place in which anything is formed or produced:

the womb of time.

3. the interior of anything.⁴¹

the womb fossil. The ocean in my belly has drained to reveal the salt pillars pawing at the rungs of my ribs that hang like cirrus clouds in the orange sky.

my mouth cannot wrap memory around the shapes of the words.

i could stay here. I could stay here revealing and remembering and recognizing in the presence of eyes. i could stay here. i could stay here. i could stay here.

the relic of a womb.

the holy memory bobbing without water on the wet stones.

the sacred and untouchable connection between what could have been and what was.

piercing breathing holes for what is dying to be born.

⁴¹ <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/womb>

assisting the chick in destroying the only place it will ever call home: the soft warmth of someone's heart.

Figure 23. Poem from journal entry in March 2017.

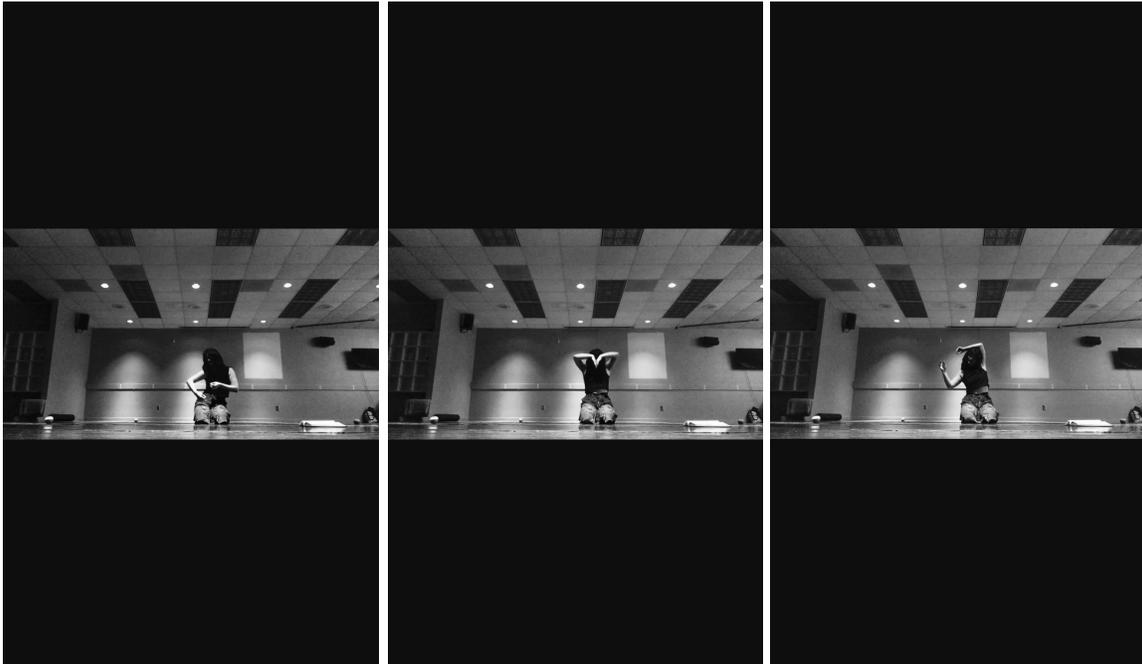


Figure 24. Stills from rehearsal. Treatment V. March 2017.

PEARS:

all four pears placed on stage, three in a diagonal line and one in the downstage right corner, none held.

The pears in this treatment represent the places I have been and the passing of time indicated in this poem. Additionally, I wanted to place myself in the space between the three pears and the one lone pear, indicating the presence within the emptied distance evident in this poem.

CHOREOGRAPHIC/POETIC TOOL: accumulation, translation, arms only

TITLE: *relic*

My original working title for this treatment was “fossil” to recall the metaphor of a fossil to describe an unread poem resting on the page. In the creation of this work, I also explored what it meant to hold something that was only the bones of a once fleshy thing. Yet “fossil” felt too sterile to describe this work I had lived and breathed in, this thing that was created of me.

“Relic” describes all that is left of something.

All that is left that is holy because it is the last.

The speaker in this poem has a lasting memory of this person who has been absent for so long and that memory has developed itself into something of great importance, as it haunts the speaker time after time.

The cryptic, prayer-like movement in this treatment exists by remembering material what was previously done as an example of how one holds onto something that is the only thing left.

Or,

the embodied memory of forgetting.

PROCESS: *physical poem*.

My vision for a treatment based off of my own epistolary poem originally appeared as a solo that was completely my own, separate from Olstein's work. I thought that I would write an epistolary poem in ten couplets to one who I loved and create movement based off of my own written work. However, when the time came for this specific treatment, I felt as though my own epistolary poem was already embedded in each solo. My own epistolary poem is the physical embodiment of the most personal gestures from my movement vocabulary. I chose to select only those movements that felt the most true to my personal physical epistolary poem.

I wanted to present to the audience, in the most vulnerable and honest way, what movements my body recognized as sacred to this work.

(sacred but not precious...there is a difference)

When I started this solo, I was very adamant that I include an 8.5 x 11 square on the stage. Originally, I created a gestural phrase that had the spatial pattern of an 8.5 x 11 square, starting downstage right and tracing along the edges, starting by going upstage. However, this spatial direction drained out the gestures that are the essence of this particular treatment. After accepting this, my impulse was to kneel, stationary, in the center of the stage, only performing the gestures.

And perhaps, my lips would be moving too.

At this point, I returned to Trisha Brown and watched her solo “Accumulation”.

Performed in silence, the simplicity of this work inspired me to follow this impulse of mine to remain in one place, exploring gestures, fully. Brown repeats small gestures in a stationary place at an internal, consistent rhythm as an act of “kinesthetic calligraphy.”⁴²

As Brown was clad in red flowing pants, I felt especially connected to this work. I love the seemingly pedestrian qualities of Brown’s work that are actually quite difficult to execute. Though my movement does not necessarily accumulate, Brown’s solo informed the spatial choices and the rhythmic choices of this work, as well as encouraged me to not be afraid of sitting still.

by the metronomic

pulse of longing—

Did you love her? Are you anything?

...

dark map

of the body— Yes—

⁴² Rosenberg, Susan. *Trisha Brown: Choreography as Visual Art*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2017. Print. Page 124.

*(excerpt from "The Bones of August" by Robin Ekiss)*⁴³

MOVEMENT ANALYSIS:

This gestural solo is stationary in space. The beginning three gestures are presented as an accumulation. It has several screw-like, arching gestures often moving in the table or sagittal plane. The decision to kneel suggests either a meditative posture or one of supplication. The gestures are extremely personal and cryptic, recalling a few gestures that lingered with me throughout the process of the previous four treatments. Such gestures included the two pointed index and middle fingers bound together in the gesture pointing to "you" and the sewing gesture that led back to the pelvis. The choice to cover my face with my hands in the end, whispering the last line teetering on the words "edge," suggests that a poem often does not fully reveal itself, keeping secrets and shedding shadow.

SOUND DESIGN:

The choice to open my mouth and let words from the poem slip out like secrets that weren't supposed to be told was one I had not anticipated from myself. Originally, I had the idea that I would not open my mouth ever in this work. However, to go from a silent solo into a whispered one seemed quite appropriate for the progression of this work once everything was completed. The act of opening my mouth is a way of trying to reach across what vacated space the absent one has left to call their body back.

⁴³ <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/53324>

f. Treatment VI: (*nearer to the body than the evening*)

(nearer to the body than the evening)

part i (thursday)

Pear Sauce in the Grocery Bag

(I don't think so)

what would have felt comforting was discomfoting.

Incredibly sad.

(I did not think of the moon)

A BLUE JAZZ CLUB IN SHANGHAI.

(I did not think of the moon unless it was a painting.)

What curious subtext existed deeply within her soul,

Curious curiosity.

(I surf by moonlight each morning)

Introspection.

(The moon is a spotlight.)

A pair of pairs of pears.

A little sexual

(reflection)

fierce strong woman

(I thought of music waves)

l o n g i n g.

(to carry the moon. to sweep the moon)

growing up in Mexico.

sadness and pain.

(fertility

by the moon)

Sensual. Tension. Sensual. Distress.

Deep

Love.

Womanhood

((and who it belongs to.))

(very dark)

When you miss someone or something and they do not miss you back.

)crescents(

I remembered when I felt most beautiful.

crisp thought.

(the dancer was luminescence)

Lust = Exhaustion = Disappointment

(but the waves)passion.

A delicate memory.

(hunger and rebirth)

peace-full-ness.

beginnings.

(inactive moon)

Sweet Reticence.

I felt a loss when it was over.

A pear tree at a farm I went to every summer as a child

(being tired).

(I thought of night Time)

and the memory of studying French

in succulent, serene distress

while visiting a fruit market in Bolivia.

part ii (saturday)

Stuck in traffic, moon in blue light. Phases. Cycles. My grandmother loves pears. The moon affects how she feels and emotes. Growth. No. New York? Not often.

so much

l o n g i n g.

casts light on the earth below. (the emerald pear moving around her face reminded me of how the moon orbits earth.)

Romance. Anxiety. Femininity. Contemplation. Paris. No moony thoughts.

Hurt. Loss. Pulling. Sewing. (no moon.)

Reaching out for help in times of great need and finding I was not quite able to communicate what was

ailing me.

The memory of sitting in a windowsill on a rainy day.

Desperation. Sad(d)ness. Mental breakdown. Depression. I saw the shape of words.

(the moon was stretched between the illuminated pears and her...)

first love.

playground. gardens. paris. expectation. (it's always there but takes a different form all the time)

The emotional beating of the body. The expectation of females to be a certain way. (The moon's pull on the tides)

The Virgin Mary in her purest form,

DESIRE.

My sixth treatment, “(nearer to the body than the evening),” is a poem crafted by the curated collection of audience responses to the two following questions:

did any emotion(s) or memory come up for you during this work? If so, please share in one word or a short sentence.

did you ever think of the moon? if so, how?

The intention of these questions was to prompt personal, creative responses inspired by the performance to provide material for me to craft a creative work that would reflect the audience responses. The first question was inspired by Olstein’s poem itself and the questions that I often found myself asking. The themes of longing, desire, absence, nostalgia, searching, waiting, and loss all inspired emotions for me as I worked with this poem, and I was curious to see if the audience experienced similar feelings. Additionally, the idea of memory especially struck me in my physical research with Olstein’s poem. The concept of how memory morphs over time and how memory is what allows us to keep what is physically gone close to us especially influenced my work. I was interested in what memory emerged for the audience members while watching this work, and how it compared to places in Olstein’s work.

The second question about the moon may have seemed a bit out of place to audience members. However, I asked this question in order to extricate imaginative reflection from audience members that would provide me with curious phrases to work with in my final treatment. Moreover, the moon is an important element connecting with

themes in my work, such as fertility and memory, that is very relevant to my process. I was also inspired by the chapter “Poetry and the Moon” from Mary Ruefle’s series of collected lectures, “Madness, Rack, and Honey.” In this chapter, Ruefle mentions that while she was in China, in celebration of the September full moon, she found that “the Chinese look at the moon and think of some family member or loved one who is not present, and know that on the same evening, the absent one is reflecting on them.”⁴⁴ This recount of such a lovely tradition is especially appropriate for Olstein’s work and my process of creating “(nearer to the body than the evening): a suite of five solos.” I was interested in whether the audience members would sense this sort of practice in longing through the work and figured this question may potentially inspire them.

When compared to the themes found in “Dear One Absent This Long While,” audience responses were extremely similar. One word responses such as “longing,” “contemplation,” “absence,” “expectation,” “disappointment,” and “sadness” are all evidence that the translation of the poem into the physical did not lead the audience astray from any emotional themes. The memories that people had in response to the work were extremely personal, and often included a loved one or a physical place. This is also supporting evidence of the success of translation because the poem takes place in such private, physical places as the kitchen, the garden, and the driveway. The mention of other physical spaces such as foreign countries from audience members was most likely inspired by the literal translations I crafted for a sound score inspired by the poem.

However, many people who wrote about a particular country also mentioned that the

⁴⁴ Ruefle, Mary. *Madness, Rack, and Honey: Collected Lectures*. Seattle and New York: Wave Books, 2012. Print. Page 16.

particular place was either home or felt like home, which clearly indicates that the place holds a very specific nostalgia, which is also related to Olstein's poem. Both nights had similar responses and did not differ very much from each other.

Responses such as "sensual" and "passion" I accredit to the medium of dance. The challenge of translating a poetic work into a physical medium is that the human body that is on stage will influence the audience. Many audience members commented on the concept of femininity and sensuality. My movement style is quite sinuous and I consider myself a very passionate mover, which coats any material I perform. The responses that regarded the feminine body and the demands placed on women I believe to be heavily influenced by my body on the stage as the medium for this work. I embrace that I am a woman before I am a dancer, and I believe this is what people saw based on these responses. One of my intentions while performing this work was to allow the audience to witness the speaker, who to me is feminine, in her full vulnerability of missing a part of herself. This decision influenced my performance and seemed to be evident to the audience, causing them to reflect on the vulnerable female in a way that is still very relevant to Olstein's poem. The speaker, regardless of gender, in "Dear One Absent This Long While" is especially vulnerable in their searching. I believe that this vulnerability translated in my physical performance and was thus interpreted as the vulnerable female expressing desire. Additionally, the pears added significantly to encourage audience members to think of sexuality and the female body, which created an environment conducive to the concepts of fertility and desire to attain what cannot be.

Overall, though audience responses were mostly intended for creative output, the responses did prove that the translation was successful. The themes and words used to

express the emotive reaction and the types of memory inspired by the work were similar if not identical to words and themes of Olstein's poem. This proves that though the language may have been entirely different, the desired communication was achieved and understood. Therefore, the translation was as efficacious as any translation can be, for the purpose for translating one work into another is so that it can be understood.

V. Performance

PART I: Preparation.

I would arrive to warm up in the Schwartz Dance Studio before each performance at 5 pm. To begin my warm up, I would improvise for a full 20 minutes, the only rule for myself was to not stop moving. I used this time to become especially comfortable with the space without anyone else in the studio. After getting my heart rate up and finding my grounded weight, I slowed everything down and participated in an exercise that is especially meditative to me. I would close my eyes and investigate the desires of my individual fingertips. In this exploration, I rested in the places of conflict between the desires of my fingers. Sometimes my pointer finger wanted to quickly slice to the high diagonal, while my pinky really desired to spiral in towards my ribs. These conflicts led to an exploration in tension, distance, desire, and sensual embodiment of breath and flesh in one space and time. I would participate in this slow investigation for about forty-five minutes until the other cast arrived and then I would warm myself up using various techniques from class. Then, before I went downstairs to change, I would mark through the entire suite of solos. This preparation became especially crucial to my performance

and I knew it was important for me to have an introspective ritual as my rehearsals had become so quiet in the process of this work.

PART II: *Thursday, March 23.*

March 23, 2017. 8:15 pm

I feel especially humbled and grateful. I felt unusually calm. I felt a presence in every moment I was on stage, and I am convinced that presence was the poem. I found my shadow in the fourth treatment to be like the absent one...

Thursday's performance felt exceptionally good to me afterwards. The movement vocabulary was solid and I thoroughly enjoyed myself. I felt so complete after stepping off stage following a standing ovation I was shocked occurred. I found that I felt especially proud that this work was completely and authentic me. I also found that the presence of the poem followed me on stage and I was able to calmly access everything it had taught me over the year I had worked on this project. I was able to trust in the structure of my work to trust the experience. It was incredibly rewarding.

Part III: *Saturday, March 25.*

March 25, 2017. 8:10 pm

It's just another unrepeatably moment.

A poem changes every time we read it. A dance changes every time we dance it...depending on where we are in life. I am sad we can never repeat things. I am sad things have to become memories. I am so sad for this loss.

I left the stage on Saturday feeling especially sad. At the time, I thought it was because I didn't feel as liberated in the movement as I had on Thursday, though the execution of choreography was very smooth and solid. However, in retrospect, Saturday night was the night I was so present in the dance that I was able to have a dialogue with the sadness and myself. I was so present I was able to access my own feelings of loss I had researched in

the poem and now felt as my own. I was surprised when several of my friends who had seen the performance both nights told me that Saturday night seemed like it was even better than Thursday. And, in retrospect, it was. I was wholly present and true to what I was feeling on both nights, but even more so on Saturday. What I had learned and felt on Thursday only informed an even more mature performance on Saturday.

VI. Conclusion

Upon completion of performing the five solos, reading audience responses, and reflection, I believe that the act of translating a poem into the form of dance can be successful. The embodiment of poetry is not wholly impossible and though it may be a reconstructed sculpture of what the poem was on the page, the content is still made of the same substance. The content of my work, (*nearer to the body than the evening*): *a suite of five solos*, is wholly situated in the themes of Olstein's poems, exploring loss, expectation, disappointment, desire, sadness, and the act of waiting. It is evident that such themes were apparent to the audience, based on responses and feedback. The original substance of Olstein's work was reconstructed in a manner shaped by my perception and analysis of the poem. My hope to be a transparent vessel for the poem to shine through the physical language of movement was fulfilled. I know this is possible only because I spent endless hours investigating every angle of this poem and completely inundated myself in all that I could in the process of creation. For it was in the process of creation and translation, which required of me to completely deconstruct Olstein's poem to reshape it into a new language, that I learned what it means to be a maker.

Ultimately, this project has taught me how to witness, access, and experience the act of making. I have learned that the only way to create is to deconstruct inspiration in order to recreate material that is wholly complete and transparent. Whether it is in the act of translating from one language to another or in the act of creating from inspiration, there is nothing that can be shaped without chaos or deconstruction. Additionally, I have learned that there is no such thing as originality. As an artist, I fully accept that I am constantly breaking down and reshaping inspirations to present them in the form that has become my aesthetic. I do not believe that the nonexistence of originality invalidates the artist, for the artist who is able to ingest the inspirations of the universe, observe the sensuality of life, and bear the cyclical nature of creation by reshaping what arouses the desire to make is the true artist. And, if an artistic presentation is simply the reconstruction of consumed inspiration, then aren't all art forms simply of the same substance? Form is the vessel for the thought and serves the artist as the container for their arranged *mélange* of inspirations, but the content, the matter of the made thing, is always the same. Therefore, the dance inspired by the attempt to embody the poem is effective if the choreographer only used what was evident within the bones of the poem. If one takes the bones of a dinosaur and reconstructs it into the shape of a teepee, the bones are still dinosaur bones. If the (knowledgeable) mover takes the words of a poem and reconstructs it into the shape of a dance, the emotions and themes conveyed will still be the same, portrayed in various acts of making. Thus, I will continue to make work marrying my two passions of poetry and dance fearless of whether it is a possible or worthwhile act. I look forward to experiencing the wild and unruly experience that is *poiēsis* again very soon.

APPENDIX A: Promotional Flyer

The Emory Dance Program Presents
HONORS THESIS CONCERTS
 March 23-25, 2017

Dance Studio, Schwartz Center for Performing Arts

PROGRAM A March 23 & 25, 7:30pm

Clara Guyton

an investigation of the boundaries between dance and poetry

Julianna Joss

analyzing the body's means for communication & identity expression

PROGRAM B March 24, 7:30pm & March 25, 2:00pm

Rosie Ditre

translating a modern dance work
 from the stage to the screen

Cherry Fung

an exploration of personal
 identity in the context
 of a divided political
 relationship

Eliza Krakower

an exploration of the
 intersections of musical
 theatre, jazz, and
 modern dance



404-727-7266
 dance@emory.edu
 www.dance.emory.edu



EMORY
 arts

APPENDIX B: Concert Program (front)

The Emory Dance Program Presents
HONORS THESIS CONCERT

Program A: March 23 & 25, 2017, 7:30pm
 Dance Studio, Schwartz Center for Performing Arts

**Whispered Conversations:
 The Act of Making via Translation Between Poetry and Dance**

Choreographer and Performer: Clara Guyton
Sound Design: Stephen Fowler
Costume: Clara Guyton with Cynthia Church

(nearer to the body than the evening): a suite of five solos

I. broken whole

II. temporal

Music: "Glish" by deadmau5
Poem: "Dear One Absent This Long While" by Lisa Olstein
 Translated into French by Clara Guyton and read by Laura Briggs

III. penumbra

Music: "Model of the Universe" by Jóhann Jóhannson
Poem: "Dear One Absent This Long While" by Lisa Olstein
 Translated into Spanish by Clara Guyton and read by Viviana Coronado

IV. ellipses

Music: "Razones (A Capella)" by Bebe

V. relic

———— INTERMISSION ————



Concert Program (back)

The Moving Identity: Explorations in the Body's Capacity for Communication, Expression, and Understanding

Choreographer: Julianna Joss (and dancers for *To Be Seen*)

Costume Design and Production: Marian Austin

The Space Between

Performer: Julianna Joss

Music: "Enginn Vildi Hlusta Á Fiðlunginn", "Því Strengir Hans Vóru Slitnir
(Getiði Ekki Verið Góð Við Mömmu Okkar)" by Múm

To Be Seen

- I. each.
- II. to.
- III. other.
- IV. one.

Performers: Ruchi Ahuja, Hannah Gold, Sara Pengelley, Ben Stevenson, Alfredo Takori

Sound Design and Original Score: Tom Zhang

Lighting Design: Gregory Catellier

Emory Production Staff

Technical Director: Gregory Catellier

Light and Sound Technician: Luke Reid-Grassia

Stagehand: Sharon Carelock

Costume Coordinator: Cynthia Church

Dance Program Interim Director: Sally Radell

Dance Program Coordinator: Anne Walker

Music Coordinator: Kendall Simpson

Promotional Assistance: Nick Surbey and Emma Yarborough

House Management: Nina Vestal

Videographer: Hal Jacobs

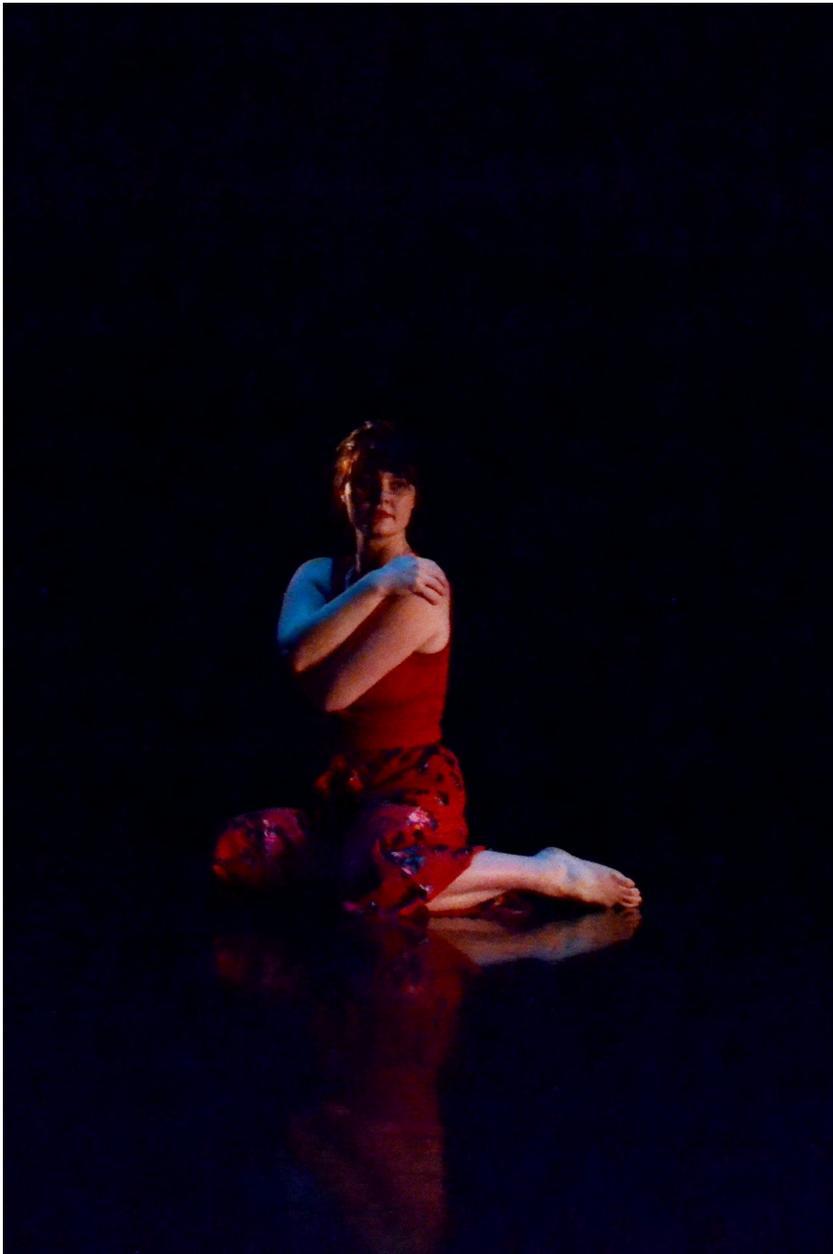


EMORY
arts

Emory Dance Program
dance@emory.edu
www.dance.emory.edu

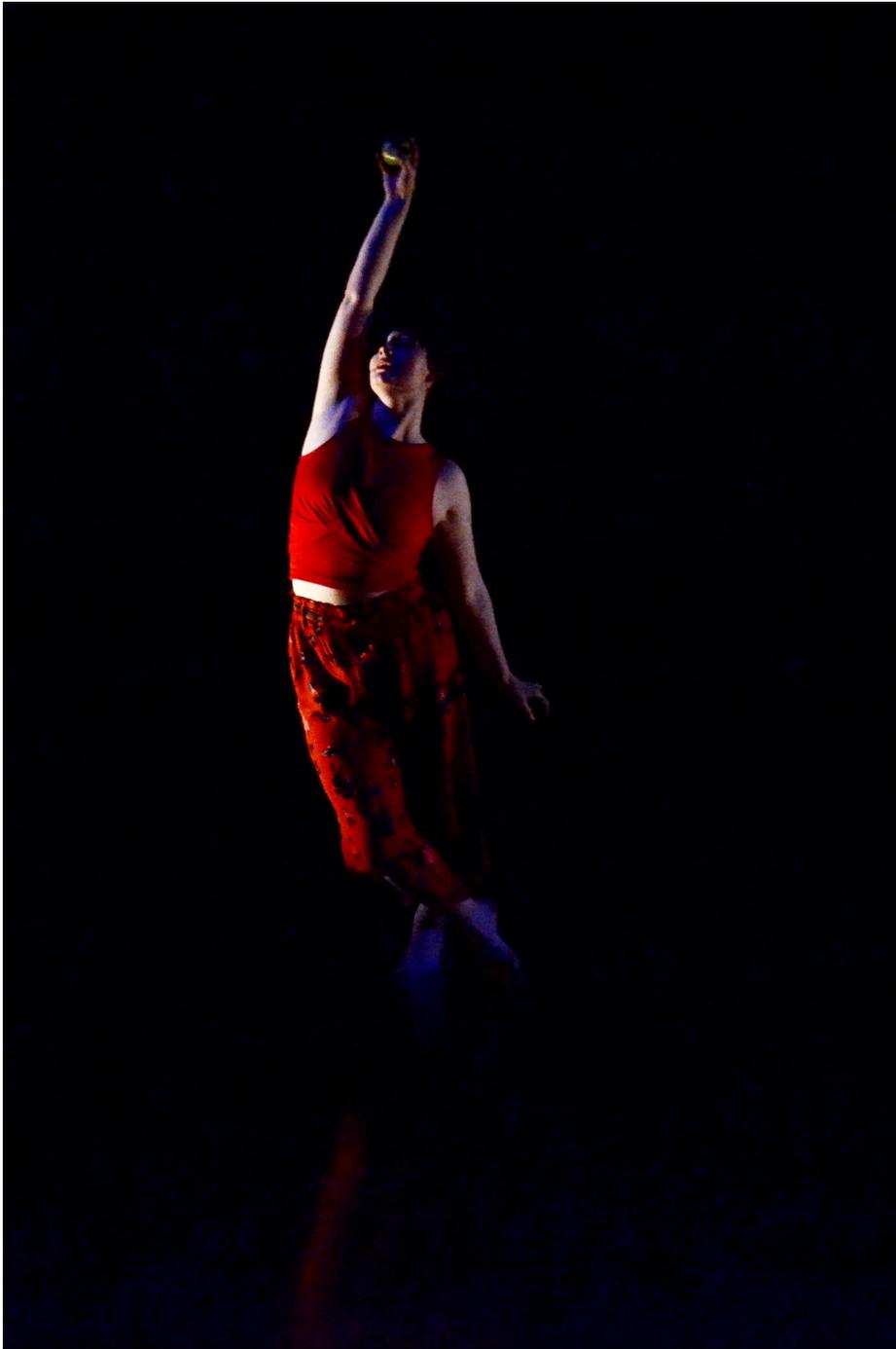
Appendix C: Performance Photographs (All Photographs By Erin Baker unless otherwise mentioned)

Treatment I: *broken whole*





Treatment II: *temporal*





Treatment III: *penumbra*







Treatment IV: *ellipses*



Treatment IV: *relic*



Photo Credit: Lauren Lindeen

Appendix D: Rehearsal Schedule

Assigned Studio Space

Fall Semester 2016:

Sunday 5 pm-7pm and Wednesday 3-4:30 pm, Rich Studio.

Spring Semester 2017:

Sunday 5 pm-7 pm, Schwartz Dance Studio and Thursday 1-3 pm, Rich Studio.

*Additionally, I spent several hours outside of these times physically and intellectually working on material.

Appendix E: Survey Questions

(nearer to the body than the evening): a suite of 5 solos.

please answer the following questions on the back of this card:

did an emotion(s) or memory come up for you during this work? If so, please share in one word or a short sentence.

did you ever think of the moon? if so, how?

thank you.

References

Alexander, Elena, editor. *Footnotes: six choreographers inscribe the page*. Canada: G+B Arts International imprint, part of The Gordon and Breach Publishing Group, 1998. Print.

Arnold, Craig. "Meditation on a Grapefruit." *Poetry Foundation*. Poetry Foundation, n.d. Web. 26 Mar. 2017.

Banes, Sally. *Terpsichore in Sneakers*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1987. Print.

Barbour, Karen. *Dancing Across The Page: Narrative and Embodied Ways of Knowing*. Chicago, IL: Intellect, The University of Chicago Press, 2011. Print.

Cage, John. *Silence*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, Special ed., 2011. Print.

Chevalier, Jean and Alain Gheerbrant, editors. Buchanan-Brown, John, translator. *The Penguin Dictionary of Symbols*. London: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1996. Print.

Cohen, Selma Jeanne, editor. *The Modern Dance; Seven Statements of Belief*. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1966. Print.

Dumanis, Michael, and Cate Marvin, editors. *Legitimate Dangers: American Poets of the New Century*. Louisville, KY: Sarabande Books, 2006. Print.

Ekiss, Robin. "The Bones of August." *Poetry Foundation*. Poetry Foundation, n.d. Web. 26 Mar. 2017.

Emerson, Ralph Waldo. "The Poet." *The American Transcendentalists: Essential Writings*, edited by Lawrence Buell. New York, NY: Random House, Inc., 2006. Print.

Frost, Robert. *Collected Poems, Prose, & Plays*. Edited by Richard Poirier and Mark Richardson. New York, NY: Library Classics of the United States, Inc., 1995. Print.

Greene, Robert, Cushman, Stephen, Jahan, Ramazani, Rouzer, Paul. *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. 4th ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012. Print.

Kostelanetz, Richard, and Jack Anderson, eds. *Merce Cunningham: Dancing in Space and Time*. Chicago, IL: Cappella Books, Incorporated, 1992. Print.

"Li." *Concise English – Chinese, Chinese – English Dictionary*. 2nd ed., 1980.

Maletic, Vera. *Body – Space – Expression: The Development of Rudolf Laban's Movement and Dance Concepts*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1987. Print.

Myles, Eileen. "The Honey Bear." *Poetry Foundation*. Poetry Foundation, n.d. Web. 26 Mar. 2017.

Neruda, Pablo, and Donald Devenish Walsh. "Odes and Burgeonings." *Love Poems*. New York: New Directions, 2008. N. pag. Print.

Olstein, Lisa. "Dear One Absent This Long While." *Poetry Foundation*. Poetry Foundation, n.d. Web. 26 Mar. 2017.

Ostriker, Alicia. "Nude Descending." *Poetry Foundation*. Poetry Foundation, n.d. Web. 26 Mar. 2017.

Palter, Robert. *The Duchess of Malfi's Apricots, and Other Literary Fruits*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2002. Print.

Rosenberg, Susan. *Trisha Brown: Choreography as Visual Art*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2017. Print.

Ruefle, Mary. *Madness, Rack, and Honey: Collected Lectures*. Seattle and New York: Wave Books, 2012. Print.

Ruefle, Mary. *Selected Poems*. Seattle and New York: Wave Books, 2010. Print.

Sariliot, Claudette. *Herbarium Verbarium, The Discourse of Flowers*. Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1993. Print.

Stone, Myrna. "From the Kitchen by Myrna Stone." *Poetry Foundation*. Poetry Foundation, n.d. Web. 26 Mar. 2017.

Verity, Kenneth. *On The Nature of Poetry: An Appraisal and Investigation of the Art which for 4,000 Years Has Distilled the Spoken Thoughts of Mankind*. London: Shephard-Walwyn (publishers) Ltd., 2007. Print.

Wilmes, Britney. "Pear Symbolism for the New Year." *The Pear Dish*. USA Pears, 30 Dec. 2010. Web. 26 Mar. 2017.

"Penumbra." Merriam-Webster.com. Merriam-Webster, n.d. Web. 24 Mar. 2017.

"fertile." *Online Etymology Dictionary*. N.p., n.d. Web. 26 Mar. 2017.

"miscarriage". *Dictionary.com Unabridged*. Random House, Inc. 26 Mar. 2017. <Dictionary.com

"Whisper." Merriam-Webster.com. Merriam-Webster, n.d. Web. 26 Mar. 2017.

"womb". *Dictionary.com Unabridged*. Random House, Inc. 26 Mar. 2017.
<Dictionary.com.