

O Stecina

Creative Nonfiction Workshop: Beginner

Julia Borcherts

9/8/19

Inspiration from Experience

The Body Kinetic

I decided to force myself out of my comfort zone on Saturday evening. I put on heels (the shortest pair I own), a dress that I love with little cacti all over it, and even some hastily-applied makeup. I was late again. What a surprise! I arrived by bus at the Center on Halsted about 5 minutes after the scheduled start time for Counter-Balance, and even then had to ask for assistance in finding the theatre I was looking for. The universe decided that I was worthy on this day, and it was proud of me for sitting on a bus with my toes showing, so it left me a seat open next to some very beautiful girls and allowed me to slink in before the lights had even dimmed.

The performance itself was an astounding show of artistic conquest. Dancers, both with a disability and without, cooperated to form an excellent show of strength and artistic passion. I reveled in the passion, the determination, and then suddenly realized all at once that I cannot keep telling people I can't dance.

I am, I suppose, at a point where I have Schrodinger's Disability. I find out on the 18th whether I am on the autism spectrum, as well as what my IQ is and any number of fun facts about my mental health. I never committed to dancing for various reasons. It was too social, I wasn't flexible or athletic enough, it was too expensive, I was embarrassed at my lack of spatial awareness. I did, however, develop a deep love for the ballet after I dated a ballerina who permanently skewed the course of my life. Thanks, Rachel, you ass.

Seeing dancers decide that nothing was going to stop them from doing what they wanted was what truly inspired me. Even if I discover that I am autistic, or manic, or any other thing from the fruit basket of mental disorders, there are people who want to see me succeed. Dancers, who are the people I have always been envious of, who want me to succeed. Today I am inspired by the fact that this place allows you to try, regardless of where you come from. I can be a dancer. I can audition for the renegades enpointe with my only ballet experience being from sitting and watching on the padded floor of a small studio that still did feel like home to me. The body is not set in stone, not molded in plaster, fortified with rebar. It is a clay thing that can take on any shape it wishes with enough kneading. My clay is dried, cracked, but not yet cured and glazed. There is still time, thank God, for me to force myself to contort into new shapes. The shape of the Artist, the Writer, the City Slicker, the Dancer, the Expert. The One Who Contributes Confidently To The Conversation.

I am driven to take these next few weeks to score my edges so that they are more pliable and adhered to the shapes of others. To mark myself with hundreds of tiny lines meant to make me more compatible with alteration. One mark, the high heeled shoes. Another, the bus. My only hope is that I do not lose enough mass by attaching to new loves that I cannot fathom who I originally was to begin with, until I come home and my family presents me with a fresh bucket of clay saved in a corner of my old room.