*Bordering on Collapse*

Dr Linda Marie Walker

*The world stops, a moment at a time, forever. The dancer’s body folds time, we watch. Looking down, writing waits, urgent, anxious. She is still, she has not walked up these steps before, she’s on strange trembling ground. She’s far away. She trembles with the ground. There is only dance. There are floors walls ceilings-we take a step, each step a character, a letter, each floor a character, a planet. I step you step. I step to you. She steps, she steps she’s stepping. She’s stepping down she says: I’m stepping down, now. Look. I’ve already stepped down*. I am down. *Still standing, walking, I am off again, thinking of you, and thinking of you because you are known to me, like apricoy blossom-suddenly, the bare tree is full of sense and no/thing tell me what it means. A tree thinks of me. I skip a beat. My heart is thought. A first ‘oh’ (O).*

*There is a gulf, a deep hollow, a separation(X); eyes restless. And now to move(on), to move (off), to move (over), to move (under), to move (through), to move (past). To pass by. To locate the quiet force of tense. The body is the room, turning. It might even see you. It is watching you. Reaching out to grab star-dust, tiny flashes. See her. I mean, I see two dancers; I will never see them dance where you see them dance. The pendulums swing. I’ve seen them dance inside very small spaces, for long times. I’ve heard her reading writing that I love. She read (for instance): “If one says ‘sans’ (without blood), the ear does not know what the eye would say. At that moment one obeys associations. It is obvious that the pure cut demands or breathes blood. One could also say that, if there is a cut, it breathes a s’en aller, a going away.” [[1]](#footnote-1)*

*How to go on (I am moved), in writing, from one (move)ment to another. Writing tries to dance, but it has (always already) two left feet. And so it goes, ‘I will be music instead’. It wants to be what it isn’t, always. It sings out of tune. Now it wants to be a room, a staircase, a pendulum, you, her.*

*It’s no good, the movement (the moment of the dance) is over (the music remains, very low, the body leans forward, the ear leads the body, and the head shakes, dismayed; what is happening, why don’t you turn it up or off: “. . . it resonates, elsewhere, at a distance, in an exteriority that is spaced out in all the other directions and that ear hears along with the sound, as an opening to the world. Sound has no hidden surface. It is like a totality of space . . .”[[2]](#footnote-2). The skin, ask anyone, cries screams. The bones hurt.*

*You can’t know what she feels (what they feel). What thoughts does she think while she dances (as she is working)? “Such a stillness, which denies fixation, proposes an altogether different notion of itself. In that nowhere, in that un-locatable place both in space and especially in time, there a force initiates its quiet work. At that still point that is neither fixity nor motion lies the stillness that initiates dance-which is we are told only all. . . . what act, labour, or thought could such a vibrating stillness perform in the improbable but nevertheless quite possible eventuality of its un-locatable there becoming corporeal?”[[3]](#footnote-3)*

*You can’t stop dance. When it must continue-it is in duration. (‘The dancer will not ‘fall’, as this is what she is in the midst of anyway, she falls for us.) it endures. It is pushed, the viewer seeks more, another thrill, a trap. Speed demands motion, violence, damage. Look: stop that swinging! Oh. You are as you are. I am blind. You can’t dance unless I watch you. I am blind.*

*Stillness: force. The terror of memory. A blind spot. That is why I speak to you. “stillness is potential dancing, it is perhaps the primal source for dancing, but it is not quite dancing.” [[4]](#footnote-4)*

*There is architecture, only when someone moves. Only you, they, can activate the window sills, door frames, thresholds. They are not invisible, one steps toward them, touches them. They are there when you are not. They don’t need you.*

*Each move is deliberate, lie a shelf, a door knob, a power point. To dance is to labour, take air and space, flesh and surface; it is a type of touching, it touches upon (not only the body but the idea of the body as both space and time-an infinite extension of ‘making sense’, duration). Dance is permeable, it is always only momentary, lived, living, it gathers implication. It implies me. The stepping of thinking. There is no suspension with dance, it is stopping and stopping. “when a third man comes on stage during the woman’s improvisation, she does not see him, but senses his presence and stops. She assumes her beginning position profile to the audience . . . “ [[5]](#footnote-5)*

*There is no story, no dilemma (nothing to be resolved (it’s political then, sure). The disaster is over. Ruin remains. It looks as it was. Traces around the body. The body is never alone. She is the edge of form. A space, built. There is no reverence either (there is a world of ‘no’); please, walk on the floor, stare from the stairs, breaking down fingertips, toes, the outline of her, their, lips.*

*You can tell; the body is a plain; an extraordinary landscape. And this without the voice. This body, dancer, falls outward to where it imagines itself. Falling as an ordinary act, calling it walking (or love). Folding the legs, arms, eyes. The body is external, facing the world: a stranger. The internal stranger faces the internal stranger.*

*Each move is an act, a fate. Moving I becoming-a way of being, a way of attracting. The straight line awaits the curved line. The curved line longs to be cut: an architecture of ‘inherence’ (inclusion: OX, sorry, XO).*

*What ‘room’ is a dancing body, what arrangement of gradient intensities. No question, no answer, just a collection (a display) of words. The movement is baroque, and being so is folded, pleated, it invites all of us-all the names we can be named, from morning to evening, and in our dreams (musician poet, writer teacher, dancer teacher lover, actor): “Everything is folded in its own manner, cord and rod, but also colours distributed according to the concavity and convexity of the luminous rays, sounds, all the more strident where ‘the trembling parts are shorter and more taut’.” [[6]](#footnote-6)*

*The body dancing can only touch (or pretend to touch, like the scent of the blossom in the air). It leaves and returns (to surfaces), ad is touched. Up-on. It says nothing, breathing, it works ‘held’ (in the palm of your hand) between itself and you (your watching presence)- and is ‘concrete’ (flesh) and ‘fleeting’ time, yet contained, bordered (like a ship adrift). It might be the letter ‘O’, a tense and tension which could split (cut as the pendulum swings) and/or cross, and the letter ‘X’ -so disquieting, a single step to anonymity (no I cannot write (to you) I will sign instead). So, nothing ends. Nothing begins, and it (nothing) ends, and all the while continues; to not re-present, to overflow, to swerve over-board, to dive, to leap into a space (water), a land, unseen: no pre-sent, too much sense.*

*Trouble is still, as before: to dance someone watches. That is given. The performer performs watched. The watcher performs-even without interest. And makes sense too. To-ward, moving to keep, to keep being an entrance, a–far (and thinking of you).*

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1. Hélène Cixous, Foreword, trans. Verana Conly, in *The Stream of Life*, Clarice Lispector, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1989, xx [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Sense of the World*, trans. Jeffrey S. Libtrett, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1997: 85 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Andrei Lepecki, *Still: On the Vibratile Microscopy of Dance,* catalogue essay in Remembering, *The Body,* from exhibition titled *Stress* at M. A. K. Gallery Vienna, Hatje Cantz Publishers, 2000. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Ibid, 342 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Kate Mattingly, *Deconstructionists Frank Gehry and William Forsythe: De-signs of the Times,* in *The Dance Journal*, 31/. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold, Leibnitz and the Baroque,* University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1993:37. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)