

water signatures



Dana Venerable



From the *green_space* reading:

“Inspired by my relationship or lack of relationship with my bodily awareness in graduate school, I made an effort to become more aware of my body over the pandemic. I also was thinking about the form of the interview, um which there’s a debate about what an interview is and can do um people have debated whether it’s different or the same as a conversation and so the experience of being ‘interviewed’ for the first time got me thinking about how interviewing could be a form of deepening connection and finding a shared movement through language and connecting through our bodies (and other known bodies), in the form of being asked the same questions. I was thinking about the pandemic and how far apart we are um and how we have sound. Sound connects us. So for these interviews I asked...people that I either spent time with or I thought about very much during the pandemic...I will read what questions I asked and I will explain how I’m going to move forward. In my mini sounded interviews, I asked the questions one by one and I asked people to respond via voice memo, so on iPhones, Androids there’s a utility where you could just record your voice whether it’s in the message bubble (iMessage) or if you’re using the actual recording device and I also asked the questions via voice memo and so the questions are:

The first one was: What body of water from your life matters to you and why?

The second one was: Do you dance when you’re alone? If so, describe how you move when no one is watching or if you dance in the mirror, etc. If you think you don’t dance alone, where do you dance and what are your go-to moves or moves you feel comfortable with? Attempt to describe them.

And the third question which is a little longer: Thinking with both of these questions concerning bodies moving or flowing in ways, do you think your body of water you described moves or could move like you do? Why? If not, how would you imagine it to move? Attempt to notice how it moves in your experiences with it. You can think of this physically or imagine a texture or fabric it’s like. Or what song comes to mind when you look at it, or perhaps played when you saw it, or would play during another encounter with your body of water.





So this is a concept I've been carrying for a while. And over break, I spent a lot of time thinking about bodies of water that surround me or my own body of water because we are bodies of water and so I interviewed asking those questions and I was so pleased with the responses that I got that I, with keeping in mind Butoh-Fu um those questions when they come together created a signature... because of the way they responded to their body of water and the way they dance when they're alone. It just kind of coalesced in that last question into their own I'm going to read three of the poems that I brought together, and they're really notations of those signatures."





Signature movements based on being bodies of water. Signatures involve the moving hand in your own way, signing your name. The hand in cursive moves like gentle water waves. Handwriting them could be your mind dancing.

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CALLIE: There is a bridge over a river on I-95
A lot of driving back and forth
Became very important to me
Community around it
High cliffs
Strange houses
Orphanage from del toro film, about to tumble down
Right off of the cliff
Sort of private affection for this moment in the journey
Relieved or revived
Part of the Chesapeake, thought it was
But it's actually the susquehanna
At the mouth
Most formative attachment

DANA: Yeah that's a wonderful response in thinking about this place
on the journey for you
in the different times of your life
when you were driving,
whether it be from in between school to family in all realms
and also like this image of the land around the Chesapeake and the Susquehanna
um out along with the bridge
the way you described it
and then also alluding to the Del Toro scene
and thinking about this house on the edge of a cliff
that's about to crumble into the river
um is definitely grounds for a sense of comfort
and it's like your own personal landmark of sorts,
so in thinking about the river and thinking about how um
how things change in our lives
and you know still finding this place
and finding like pleasure and fascination
and you were an observer of the mouth of um
which I find interesting that it's called the mouth,
um in thinking about the relationship between the Chesapeake and the Susquehanna
um but yeah that's a wonderful um
and I'm like very, it's getting me to think about um
as like a new driver,
the things that I notice and bring comfort
or like a private affinity that I notice about myself
in listening to what you said
it's got me thinking about like not only physical bodies of water
but like the land that surrounds it
and the kind of surreal image of these houses on a cliff
um they are kind of like characters (laughs)
um alongside the river
and like the bridge itself as like a symbol of connection and of fear
you know people always,

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and I'm like very, it's getting me to think about um
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the things that I notice and bring comfort
or like a private affinity that I notice about myself
in listening to what you said
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but like the land that surrounds it
and the kind of surreal image of these houses on a cliff
um they are kind of like characters (laughs)
um alongside the river
and like the bridge itself as like a symbol of connection and of fear
you know people always,
you know whatever that saying is
if you lift your feet up in the car it's like good luck (laughs) or something
when you go over a bridge
um you know it's something I think I heard
when I said I was afraid of going over bridges as a kid.
I hope to one day see this part of the world.

c: Haven't heard of lifting your feet when going over the bridge
We were told to hold our breath
Maybe I'll try to do that
I do sometimes dance alone in my apartment
Especially if I have music going
House cleaning energy
Task doing energy
With music blasting in the background
While cooking
The way that I move
I move to perform the way that the song was
My mom did musical theater
My dad was a pastor
I did theater
I grew up with these hyper stages of performance
Focus on voice instead of just the body
Like a lip-sync type of situation
Dancing is part of it
Moving for the imaginary audience
Outstretched arms
Twirls
Struts
Shimmys
Big theatrics

c: At least in some ways they are different things
When I think about driving over that bridge on the river
The sensation that comes to mind
Is self-awareness
On car rides it's easy to forget where you are

Everything blurs
You lose the sense of where your body is at
You kind of mind meld with the scene in front of you
The road drops, there's nothing below me
The cliffs, the houses on top of the cliffs, it's like driving into a hollow space
Which made me attached to it
This brief moment of being brought back to where I am
I am in my car
I am on the bridge
This is a river
I have some sort of existence in the world
I am at a specific place
Dancing alone, always in private
I never dance in public spaces
I am at my most comfortable
Un self-aware
I am not thinking about where I am located right now
I have given over to feeling / to emotion
I have given over to some physical process
At the same time
When I think about what a river does
Or at least what I imagine a river to do
This idea of sort of making its way
Through the world
Slicing through land
Carrying things in it
Information, source of material, energy
And it does that by sort of impacting and moving within the things around it
When I think about my associations with performance, that feels similar to me
Moving what's already there
Moving energy
Making an impact
Communicating
Yeah, so if you think of a river as some sort of moving energy versus static spaces
Any sort of dance or expression really could be considered a way of doing that also

DANA: THE SUSQUEHANNA SOLITAIRE

Move like the Susquehanna
The mouth
And the bridge that goes over it too
Driving your body back and forth
Gathering community around it
Relieving private journeys
Reviving affection for a classic game
You have all the cards
You play already and often
Moving with ease
Through titillating task doing energy exhaling
Lifting your feet and learning how to hold your breath
For release for letting go

try to do that
Your body is a hyper stage performance site
Make the mouth move your voice out
stretched sleeves strutting with twirls
Let everything blur
Mind meld with the road behind
Like riding the subway backwards
Eyes rush fast side to side then center
Retracing and repeating
facial steps
Do you now experience more of the thing
The further away you move from it?
Make your own way
Dare yourself when you're alone
Slice through land
Draw dig lines in soil
With each seed growing a world
Carry your body like a voice carries

DAN: The Atlantic Ocean
But specifically
The Atlantic Ocean
Where it meets north 8th street in surf city
Long Beach Island New Jersey
I have a strong familial connection to that area
That is where my mom's side of the family is from,
where my uncle was,
always spent summers there
Specifically at my aunt and uncle's beach house
My uncle who is no longer with us
Reminds me of my childhood
And a whole number of people who are no longer living

D: I only dance when I'm alone
And it happens for a few different reasons
Most often when my dog is staring at me washing dishes
And he stares at me expectantly and stands/sits near me and he never sees it
coming it seems to excite him it breaks my day up and that is quite good
Probably most often
There will be times when my dog
When I'm doing dishes
And he comes to me and stands expectedly
He never sees it coming
And it breaks my day up
I do dance in the mirror
The best way I hope to describe it is like
If you had 30 seconds to memorize like how a hip hop dancer dances
But you'd never seen it before
That's what I look like when people look at me
I like to deliberately try to have all limbs moving kind of independently of each

other

Each limb doing its own thing for my amusement
I don't have a good sense of my body in space, so as a defense mechanism,
I parody the idea of me dancing without knowing what it looks like in earnest
In a wedding, I will be made to dance as little as possible but that's always like move
the body you know little side to side a little two step kind of thing, upper body stays
completely still it's like an American river dance

D: Yeah I mean

Maybe it's a bit of a contrivance
But those are the same types of movements
Does the ocean know that we're watching it? A question of consciousness
A body sort of, where all parts are moving independently
But they become a whole thing, they never stop being part of a system or a series
of systems the ocean is a series of systems
It's sort of like this sea state of static
The same can be said about oceans, a series of systems
I walked very nicely into this third question
I don't know about
Dancing for the dog
And does it relate?
Because then you get into the unconscious
I don't know if we have the time to unpack that
We are kind of limited in our ability to perceive things
Narrative constraint of perception
The ocean is a sea of static
There's a rhythm to it
If you take a bird's eye view of it, zoom in
But If you go far enough into it
It becomes a state of complete chaos
Things swimming and churning and eating other things
Similarly If you saw me from far enough away
You wouldn't recognize the chaos of me moving
As you would close up
I feel that is plenty

DANA: THE LBI LULLABY

Move like specific waves
Familial stomping sands
Mom's side summers
A waterside satisfying shack
That only plays Frank Sinatra
Or Beach House 24/7
A whole school of fish that were once alive
And now live on through you
It's ok if you are alone again
Dance among dirty dishes and your dog
is grateful for your standing waves
That you practice in the mirror
Each day believing

You've never seen yourself dance before
Parody dancing without knowing what it looks like
Stills of upper bodies
At bars at clubs at weddings
American rivers flow out independent limbs
A series of systems with unendings
With sea states of static rhythm
Gesture like you're unfurling the unconscious
Like ideas churning, marinating, eating
Become a seagull viewing the chaos and realize
The ocean knows you're watching it

NATE: So I think this is a really good question,
and like you know I grew up in Louisville
so like I instantly wanna say like oh the Ohio River right
or like I'm Black I should probably say the Atlantic Ocean
but I'm also a bitch who like can't swim (laughs) and still hasn't learned
and for me the first thing that came to mind as a body of water that is the most
important to me
I think are my tears
because I'm someone who feels things like really deeply
but like rarely cries
or like rarely cried when I was like younger
like before the age of 20
like rarely cried
because I thought crying was too vulnerable
and now that I feel like I am more vulnerable myself more honest with myself
like I cry more easily and more often
so for me the body of water that is really important to me is my tears
and allowing myself to cry
and just allowing myself to shed water.

N: I like this question it's like a little random but I like it.
I mean I feel like the way I dance in private is pretty much the same way I dance
in public
um so like (laughs) a lot of lip-synching a lot of like head bobbing neck rolling
hips swaying
of course like a copious amount of twerking
um but like mostly just like vibing
just like feeling the music
but like definitely a lot of hip swaying, a lot of grinding, a lot of pussy popping,
but to answer your original question
yes I dance alone and like often (laughs) like a lot.
I think I dance more alone than I do in public
I mean that's like hard to gauge
cuz we haven't been outside in a minute
but like yeah I definitely dance by myself
and definitely like a lot of vibing and grinding,
mostly that.

N: So I really like this question
because I feel like I answered the first question in a non-traditional way
and it's really made me think and rack my brain
for like the last 20 minutes
because I'm like my tears do move like me
but if we're talking about dancing
like I might sweat a little bit right
but I tried to find a song that hit that note of like crying but like dancing
and I couldn't find just one
so I'm gonna give you like a mini playlist
which I'm sure you will enjoy.
And if you don't I'm sorry.

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So the first song that came to mind is "Never Let Me Go" by Florence and the Machine
Cuz it's like really beautiful about letting go and being like obliterated by emotions,
and it's actually kind of danceable um
the next song that came to mind is "Rain on Me" by Lady Gaga
because like it's like I'd rather be dry but at least I'm alive
and it's like a pop song but it's also like kinda about self-destruction or unraveling
that's pretty cool um
the next song that came to mind was "Waves" by Mr. Probz
because I love that song,
it's also like really fast but kind of vibey um
then I thought of "Ocean Eyes" by billie eilish
and then I thought about "Ain't No Mountain High Enough" by Marvin Gaye
Cuz like "ain't no river wide enough for me to get to you baby"
and I just feel like I always come back to myself um
and then the last one I thought about was "POV" by Ariana Grande
because there's literally just like the sound of water coming together
and I just feel like ah my tears love me for and better than I do sometimes
so um yeah I that is my answer.
I'm sorry it was super long.
I love you and if you need clarification reach out.

DANA: THE TEAR SWAY
Move like your tears
Cry now easily more often
Allow yourself to shed water

Move like a public dance made private
Synching, bobbing, rolling
Lip, hip, neck swaying
Like non-traditional tears of joy
Like the sound of water coming together
Move like your tears do
Sway and twerk and
love you better

Repeat (1) Move like your tears love you

ELI: Born in Seattle, grew up in Miami
Parents moved back to Washington when I was in high school to a small island town
called the Olympic Peninsula
A town that edges on the wilderness surrounded by water
Ocean on one side, lakes and rivers all throughout
One river in particular—Elwah River
15 years ago the town decided to undam this river
The river went from being calm cool collected body to being raging, it tore out roads
with its power
Beautiful river, several points at which you can access it—each point is different
One point looks crazy because the water is churning so hard
Churning up sediment from its bed
In parts its this beautiful deep clear blue in other parts its green almost turquoise
jade green depending on how the light hits it
Spent a lot of time at this river swimming with friends alone thinking
My mom did as well that was the place we spread her ashes
I no longer live there, but every time I go back I go to this river to say hello
I can go wherever on this river and feel like she's there, water flows
When we spread her ashes, she became every bit a part of the water

E: Hell yeah I dance alone
Depends on scenario certain types of aloneness
I love dancing in the shower
Full body experience where you're feeling the water, heat, maybe music playing
Moments full of sensations
I dance when I'm eating, when it's good
Shaking my like shoulders
Back and forth, maybe bouncy
Bouncing my head up and down
If I'm standing, I'll do a two step dance before bed
Shaking out the energy of the day
Unwinding slower movement
Inventory of bruises
I dance alone when I've worked through something mentally
Dancing out of relief
Reaching giddiness in solution cycle or problem
I dance around others but when I'm alone I dance more seriously, more connected
to my body
Own enjoyment
I dance goofier around others, silly alone, moving in ways that feels good to me

E: The river moves in a way I aspire to move
Ferocious in some moments and calm and gentle in others
Rapid and graceful in others
In all moments, moves in ways that's true to its nature
It never pauses, it never falters
Never holds back from moving in a way that allows it to move in its essence
I try to move like it
It is a moving home for me

DANA: THE ELWHA ESSENCE

Like the Elwha River
Caressing the Olympic Peninsula
Move like a town that edges on the wilderness
Where the ocean is like skin
And lakes and rivers move
Throughout like waves of hair
Or shimmering veins
Undam your rivers, all of them
Know when to be calm cool collected and when to rage
And when to tear up the roads if need be
If you need to unleash your power
Two step throughout the points of Elwha as if you're connecting the dots
Maybe your favorite game as a kid, maybe it still is
Churn up sediment when you get out of bed
Become a liquid chameleon
A gradient of gray
A deep clear blue
A green almost turquoise jade
Move like the light above is grateful to have your presence, your angles
Be silly alone, as if no one is near the river, at night
Move like you are the entire river, feeling every sensation
You are in a sauna feeling
Every drop of sweat collect
Move like the river is finally feasting
Digesting and shaking out
The energy accumulates and prepares for more
You are
Slower movement
You are an inventory of bruises
Never falter falling forward ferocious
Fearless angel
A moving home of rapid grace
Until we meet again

IAN: First body of water I've ever felt an emotional attachment to is Lake Erie
Before 2021, I never felt anything when I looked out into a body of water
Ever since I fell in love there, I actually understand why people love the water so
much

r: Hmm that's a wonderful question

I would have to say I dance all the time,
Obviously I go dancing out with my friends
on the weekends when we're able to
But I primarily dance when I have a little accomplishment
and it could be the smallest things
Like have coffee in the morning or
I made myself a really good dinner and I'm really excited
I do a little shimmy
I'm never afraid to show my terrible dance moves
and they're pretty good too

I: Ok no I don't think I'm like Lake Erie
as a form of a body of water
I think if I could choose anything
I would be a lazy Sunday river,
something that's focused and moving steadily
Something where you can,
appreciate your surroundings
You can like hear me in the same area
And obviously for the music I would pick
it would be "Playing Your Game" by Barry White
where you just have sunglasses
and just really appreciating your day

DANA: THE ERIE COALESCENCE

Okay now dance like its the first time you've ever
Latched to your own emotions
Like you finally recognized
They were always there and you didn't have access
Like someone finally said your name correctly
Not like pronunciation, but like
They understood its cadence and echos
And how you've contributed to its history
Awake move like love falling over and over
Do it a little and then do it a lot
Move like a really good dinner
That you share with only one other, a flow of intimacy
Seasoning the air where
Such air is guarded and now
Like I can hear you wherever you are and I don't mind
Repeat (1)

HUAN: Hmm this is a good question um I'm just gonna go with my first thought
Or instinct which I feel solid about which would be Loch Lomond, I don't know why,
I mean I know why but
It was the first lake, it's the Scottish Lake that
I went on a six hour hike with the Glasgow FSP (Foreign Study Program)
I just remember just hiking up Loch Lomond
and watching the water
This sense of I don't know

I had so much fun during the FSP that like
Walking up this hike and seeing the body of water in front of me
And always that song about Loch Lomond always like makes me cry
So I would have to say Loch Lomond um
I think it was mostly because it was during the formative years of my life
And I felt like it was such a long hike
But I guess
the simple way to put it
I just felt like
a cliché but like
There was like so much in front of me
Like it was a moment in my life where I felt
The future was like limitless
That entire FSP, but kind of
One of the most memorable moments of the FSP being
Hiking Ben Lomond next to Loch Lomond.

H: Ooo this is a great question
Currently made me want to dance
Cuz of course I dance when I'm alone
Generally I yeah grooving, I'm currently in the kitchen
Trying to make pasta while dancing a little bit
But yeah like I guess you um
A lot of the times when I'm exercising,
I have a mirror in the living room
A lot of the times I guess yeah
If I'm like lip synching and dancing (laughs)
Between as a break in the mirror
A lot of arm movements
a lot of like stage presence
Which I like to do when I'm alone
Just like full on commit
Not like a full on commit
But like yeah
Perform for myself I guess
I don't know
It's fun
I think a lot of it has to do with the fact
I haven't been to dance class
Since before COVID
So that's something
One of the things I miss the most
About pre-COVID is being able to take dance classes
I could but
A lot of it is just
I don't feel safe covid-wise
You know
Perform for myself
channeling that energy

H: First off, I love these voice memos
it's giving me James Rice "Speaking Voice for the Stage" voice memos (laughs) vibes
Ok so I just clicked record so I could just
Kind of think out loud
After hearing your question
Which I think I understand
And could the body of water
Loch Lomond like I said
Move like I do
And I think it could but
I mean kind of my relationship to that body of water is
Almost like counter to how I move in many different ways
When I'm by myself and dancing
The water itself
Loch Lomond
I really like it because of its serene nature, its kind of calmness,
And its like expansiveness and being able to see it from so far
Or kind of spanning such a great distance while hiking alongside it
But also still being able to see a lot of the shimmers and glimmers,
and just the scale of it
Which at the same time
Like the water is both calm
But also like calm in like a quiet way
Just incredibly powerful in that scale
I think yeah as a dancer but also someone who is dancing by himself
I guess that's what dancing is for me
It's like where I feel the most powerful actually
In terms of like a body in space
Dancing, or at least the idea of myself dancing is like
When I feel the most powerful, the most confident
Even when I'm not confident
It's an activity
It's something that
I love just to do
And it's something I can't really find in other physical forms
Of activity or movement or things that I've done
Throughout my life
That have been physical and embodied
Could the body of water move like I do
And how would I imagine it to move
I mean like even though I said it was different
I guess it would still it would move in a way
That was very commanding
I don't think of it as the water as being kind of like overly wavy or stormy
Or something like that
If I were to imagine the body of water
Moving like I do
Yeah just like expansive

I think that's the main word that comes to mind
Like just kind of like expanding
and kind of taking up space
Really kind of also just embracing
Just the kind of light that is reflected on the water
Almost kind of like ah
like a tinsel or some type of armor
These are kind of like fabrics or materials I'm thinking of
That come to mind when I think of this memory
Of being on Loch Lomond
The day being incredibly sunny and just very very expansive as well
That's just the word that keeps coming to mind
Maybe because I looked at the lake for so long
Hiking for like six hours

DANA: THE LOCH LOMOND LINGER

Dance and dance
Like you're in your formative years
And you're certain
As you take a long hike,
Almost on one of Saturn's rings
Rounded ice and
So much in front of you
Command and command
A serene future is limitless
When there's a mirror in the living room
Your stage is present
Lochs do commit to being themselves
Perform for yourself
Channel and channel
Under shimmery glimmers
Expand and expand
Think out loud in tinsel light
Spinning and spanning
Armor a just embrace
Look at the lake for as long as time

SOPHIE: My favorite body of water is Twin Lakes in Shohola, Pennsylvania.
Twin Lakes is the backdrop of many cherished childhood memories and a place where
I can still return to and feel whole.
Twin Lakes is made up of one large lake and one small,
which are joined by a small perhaps 10 foot wide channel
passing underneath an old foot bridge.
The lakes are separated by a mild hiking trail called Between the Lakes road.
The lakes are surrounded by small lakeside beach communities
including my aunt and uncle's called East Cove Woods.
As members of this community, they and their guests are welcomed
to enjoy this body of water and its beaches year round.
I spent my summers playing in its waters with my cousins,

and if we sat really still,
we could see the tiny fish navigate around our adolescent feet below the surface.
In the spring and fall, we would kayak to the “Big Rock,” as we called it,
that protruded proudly above the water only a short paddle in.
Out of our boats, we would hop onto this tiny island
and feel like sea birds
untouchable by the visitors along the shore.
In the winters, we would challenge fate
as our parents would tie saucers and toboggans
to the back of their four wheelers
and whip us around on the frozen lake.
A thrill better than any roller coaster ride.
Campfires would burn year round
as stories old and new were shared.
Since my times of childhood,
I have shared this place with many friends and still make new memories with family.
In some ways, Twin Lakes feels like entering a time capsule,
as I travel down its narrow driveway.
And in other ways, the lakes simply feel
as if they are waiting to make new memories,
which it will also keep safe and untarnished by time.

s: I find that I dance exclusively for different emotions,
like I imagine most people do.
I dance for joy, for anticipation, for celebration and for love.
I dance at weddings to embrace the jubilation permeating throughout the room.
I move with my entire body.
Occasionally, I will dance with someone,
but only for a short time
because often I feel
that their partnership limits my potential on the dance floor.
I like to twirl when I feel a twirl coming,
I like to move in zig zag patterns with my feet and hands.
I like to match my facial expressions with each gesture,
I look forward to people forming circle,
so I can erupt
into a spontaneous jerk or twist or slide,
I feel fulfilled and powerful.
I dance also for anticipation, usually alone.
I like to swing my hips and my belly from side to side
and move my arms in a wave motion
side to side while moving my head similarly.
I do this quickly and in short increments.
When I am excitedly anticipating something occurring the next day,
later that day, or in just a few minutes.
Perhaps before taking center stage at a school event
or leaving for vacation the next morning,
or wrapping up with cooking my favorite meal for my husband and me.
Other people may see me dance like this from time to time, but I don't see them.
My favorite though is dancing for love.

Sometimes this is slow,
like when my husband missed me after a long day and holds me,
sways from side to side while resting his head on my shoulder
with or without music,
but sometimes dancing for love is
when we watch our favorite music videos in the living room
and dance around in our socks,
sliding across the floor with our best friends without a care for tomorrow.
And sometimes dancing for love is teaching my two year old niece
how to shake her booty to the Backyardigans.
Whether it's slow or fast, dancing for love is best.

s: For movement, I describe dancing for celebration vivaciously.
Dancing for anticipation spastically
and dancing for love as often as I can and in many different forms.
I imagine that Twin Lakes made dance for celebration
but at a much slower pace than me. for instance,
I picture the joy the lake feels when a kayak passes over its surface,
and the V shape ripples that follow its path
and that seemed to permeate to all its shores.
I imagine that Twin Lakes dances for anticipation,
perhaps when a lure of a fishing rod hangs below the surface
and it waits to see if its fish will foolishly grab hold
and perhaps the lake now dances in spastic yet minute eruptions
as the fish rises and eventually frees himself
of the eager fisherman's tool.
I also imagine that the lake dances for love.
I think of wading in waist deep delightfully warm water
as my dog, then a puppy,
swims out to me for the first time,
and she swims in an orbit fashion around my body.
I felt the water dancing in tumbles
after my puppy's motoring pause.
I imagine that Twin Lakes moves or dances in many other ways,
for many other emotions and reasons
that I may never know.

DANA: THE TWIN LAKES TWIRL
As a cherished childhood would,
Go on and pass underneath and over
Weaving your dreams with your memories
one large one small
Navigate and protrude proudly
Feel like sea birds entering
a time capsule untarnished
Twirl in your socks
Creating V-shape ripples on hardwood
To match the airwaves and the drapes
Wade into unlimited resting on shoulders

Save some for me

KRYSTLE: Hey girl, alright so
I think the most important body of water that matters to me in my life is MY body
because my body IS water
and it's important to me because it creates life
and it has done so twice now not to brag
so yeah I think that's why it's the most important body of water to me.

κ: So it's not often that I find myself alone dancing anymore.
Usually if I'm dancing in my house
it's because Israel has put on some music
and then he invites me to dance with him
and I'm usually pretty clumsy and like fall over him
all the time (laughs)
and um if it's not with Israel, then it might be with Naia,
and I'll usually pick her up and carry her around and dance with me
usually if it's in the middle of cleaning or maybe while something is cooking
I'll do that,
but I have to say the last time that I had alone time where I was dancing,
or not even the last time but generally when I had alone time and I was dancing,
I would wait for like a really big rainstorm in the summer
because we didn't have any air conditioning
so it would get super hot and eventually
the humidity would have to break
with a really big thunderstorm
and I would take that opportunity,
if it was nighttime
to run outside, undress, and then dance in the rain because it's very refreshing
and that usually involved a kind of twirling around
um arms swaying in the air and kinda just coming to a stand still
letting the rain fall to the point where
I felt refreshed enough to then go back inside and relax
and hopefully fall asleep because I was no longer overheated.

κ: Since I already said that my body of water is my body,
it would definitely move like me
and I'd have to say that when I look at my body
a song that comes to mind is "Barso Re" by Shreya Ghoshal
because that song is pretty much a celebration of water
and I like could vividly remember playing it over and over again
when it first came out
and doing like exactly what Aishwarya Rai is doing in the video
which is like frolicking around in the rain
and celebrating kind of what the rains bring
and what they do
so for me I would say that that's the song that I would pick
because it's like both like joyful and celebratory
but also somehow like after dancing to it you also get that same feeling
of like being refreshed or calmed



(plays song/video excerpt on recording: <https://youtu.be/asw-wTDzGUQ>)

DANA: THE BODY REIGN / RAIN
Move like the water celebrating
Already inside of you
A bodily Niagara Falls
Coming down and out and into
another one / you
have the condition of the undressed
Reaching refreshed
Calming clouds and doubt and finitude

JWON: I accidentally deleted my first message but um (laughs)
so the body of water that matters most to me is ah the surface of the ocean
like specifically through the window of an airplane
so there's just you know that airplane window
it's like a border and it's like the ocean, just very calm ocean from that view
because it's just been a huge part of my life moving from country to country
be it because of my dad's job or because of my own volition
I guess of choosing to be in a country outside of my own
um whatever that means kind of stupid you know like citizenship and stuff like
that but
ah yeah so it's like important in the sense like
it's such a huge part of my life and it's always really, I know that people associate
like
traveling as something exciting but for me there's always just a sense of sadness
because getting on the plane most of the time meant literally uprooting my whole
life to
move to a new place which also meant parting with places that I love
and with people that I love so
and you know now it's just the ocean is literally between the country that I'm in
and the country that I am considered a citizen
of where a lot of my friends um are where my family is um
my culture all of those things so yeah
it's a beautiful view um that is also just kind of packed with so much sadness.

J: Alright so I don't know if this is dancing alone
I don't think I dance when I'm actually alone but I do dance to my birds
um just I don't know
when I feel excited I guess or when I'm listening to fun music
and they're just kind of like staring at me um
I like try to have them dance with me which doesn't work
but I'm trying ah I usually just bob my head,
how do I describe it?
Like ah like move my shoulders ah do things with my arms
I can't really describe it.
I try to shake my booty um but yeah
I usually just do it in my room when my birds are awake
and they're looking at me and we're listening to music,
but I don't think I mean I dance like when I'm drunk

I guess but yes sober that's the only time I think I dance
alright that was a long answer peace out.

J: Yes I think so
um so basically the body of water I see is the ocean
the greatest deepest profound body on earth um
but it looks very confined around the frame of an airplane window obviously
so I think that for myself
I've lost a lot of confidence while moving to new places
feeling like a sense of belonging everywhere I go
but not fully belonging um anywhere,
not even in the country of my citizenship
so I feel like I've like confined the movement of my body
to a very limited space.
I used to love like just moving around and like running around
dancing and like being silly with my body as a kid
and um I've lost that part of me
even though I know that freedom of movement
is like somewhere within myself.
So basically it's like complicated but um kind of like the ocean
that I see even in the restricted frame of an airplane window
like the ocean is still bound to like a lot of movement
depending on the weather um
for example if there's a storm right ah
and I feel like it's kind of similar with my body despite it's confinement.
There is like the possibility an actual happening of lots of different movements
including like dancing and like different ways of like different emotions
like sadness, happiness excitement and things like that.

DANA: THE AIRPLANE VIEW UPROOT
Just as the surface of oceans do,
Blur out borders
Uproot deep divisions
Move from country to country to you again
To one shoulder to the other
A volition or two
To be like birds awake
Afraid yet profound
Be the beaks bobbing
With restricted wings

TAYLOR: I think the most memorable or most important body of water to me is the
Atlantic Ocean, the ocean by my home
um it's home to many childhood memories
a gathering place for friends
but also a place of solitude even if I'm surrounded by people.
I find comfort in knowing that it's always there even though it's constantly changing
and it's something that stands the test of time even through all the destruction
and something that gives me comfort.

You look out and realize that the problems you have in comparison to this powerful large body of water makes you feel like there's something bigger out there something you can take comfort in.

t: I dance and I usually don't even know that I'm doing it when I'm alone um
I'll dance with my cat in the morning because I play her jazz music before I leave for work so she listens to her lazy cat jazz from Spotify
or I dance with my patients to motivate them um
or I dance when I'm cooking or I'm cleaning or when I'm playing music
or sometimes driving from patient to patient
I'll play some dance music to energize me to just keep my spirits up
and I'll find that I'm bopping along um
so I usually don't do it where I'm so present as to how my body is moving
but in settings that are more structured
like exercise classes where you're focused on form and you're moving to a beat,
I'd say that's when I dance as well, but of course more structured because I love a
good structure um when it comes to moving my body freely it's hard to describe
because I don't really,
I'm not tapped in and I'm not as present as I'd like to be, now that I think about it.

t: The ocean moves with such power and rhythm
and an ebb and flow
and even though it's known to also be dangerous
and you have all of these people lost at sea or pulled out into the ocean
it's powerful but I feel like people are in awe
in the power of the ocean
it's also soothing and calming that rocking sound you know
you can sit and listen to the ocean move
and you can experience it with all of your senses
you can smell the ocean breeze
whereas the movement that I feel coming through my body is you know less mo-
mentous
less powerful less intuitive
it's there and it feels good but it doesn't flow like you know the ocean flows on sand
and it's more self aware and not as self assured and definitely not as magnificent.

DANA: THE ATLANTIC BREEZE ROCK

Be a gathering place
That's constantly changing
Who drives patients
to the state of patience
Creating water shelters
Everywhere you go
Inhale and know
Momentous breath also ebbs and flows
Follow those who are found at sea
Self-aware, self-assured, magnificent
Rock with the breeze
Because it feels you, too

Self-aware, self-assured, magnificent
Rock with the breeze
Because it feels you, too

MELISSA: hi honey
It's so good to be speaking to you
Even in this strange way
My most important piece of water
Is the Aegean Sea
My mother was an artist and she was Greek
And a lot of her art was based on it
And even if it wasn't of the ocean
It was infused with Greek and ocean light
And for me, being in salt water is a real necessity of life
And I begin to feel physically depleted if I can't get into it regularly
I think if it as doctor Ocean
That's been one of the worst things about these last two and a half years
Not getting to the ocean

m: I do dance when I'm alone
When I'm depressed I dance until I feel better
And I usually just I think
take the cue from whatever part of my body needs
to stretch or move or get warm

m: I don't really think of the sea as moving
Though of course it does
But I think of it as perfectly clean and clear
Though again of course it can't be
I remember looking down
20 feet
To see pebbles
Through the gorgeous aquamarine

DANA: THE AEGEAN SEA NEED
Move like a mother moves
Create a clearing
keep your appointment
With Dr. Ocean
Acknowledge and repeat
the cue cards
You made again

ASHLEY: The body of water that is the most important to me or has the most meaning is actually Lake Erie and Niagara River.
Being from Buffalo, I felt like that body of water made it so that I was connected to the rest of the world um
like I wasn't land locked but that I lived in a place where I could drive up to this water and look out and imagine the whole rest of the world on the other side of the horizon. so yeah that's the body of water that's the most important to me.

A: I definitely dance alone um primarily in my car (laughs) so it's like limited, it's a limited form of dance because I don't want to get into a car accident but it's this fun kind of on the edge um trying to be one with the music while still you know paying attention enough not to die, so that's kind of an exhilarating thing but when I dance alone otherwise it's at home but also when I'm dancing in front of people it's at home with my partner and usually it's just you know bodily sways and my attempts to represent how the music makes me feel in my movements. I'm not trained enough to know what my go-to moves are to be able to even name them but so therefore it's really like raw and kind of natural and I just feel like there's no thought whatsoever put into it it's entirely expressive um just trying to get out of my head and into my body and exist with the music.

A: For me Lake Erie is wide and free and calm and yet it builds towards this tension and pressure and um speed and like a life of its own as it builds towards the Falls, in the Niagara Falls, and for me dancing is like I'm right on the line of I feel like I'm going to go too far, like I'm going to expose too much of myself and dancing for me is a state of vulnerability and I feel like that's very present in the Niagara River, I mean just how dangerous it is as a place but also just water in general how dangerous it can be so yeah I guess the connection for me between the body of water and my body is the line between security and insecurity and between um you know wanting to free myself and feel vulnerable like one would in water.

DANA: THE ERIE EXHILARATION

While on the edge,
Connect to the rest of the world
Be one with the music
And exhilarate all things like at home
Attempt bodily swaps and swoops
Represent raw remedy
Entirely expressive enveloping
In and out of body
A quick dip and dampening
Like a life of its own
as it builds between two extremes
And a freeing security

ALLISON: Ok you know what's crazy is

I kind of have an answer for this already,
or maybe not
but my friends, me and some of my friends
just have a running question of like what's your favorite body of water
so I think I always answer either

I think I say river um but that's not actually the answer to your question so for me I think that's a tie between pools, a pool, my parent's pool, the many pools in which I grew up swimming in Phoenix just because I spent the most amount of time in water in pools um and I don't know that like for me it goes with a hundred and ten degree heat um which I feel like is in my bones um so that or ah Lake Erie because that is ah where I was living for seven years, seven important years and um you know ah sorry I'm thinking and talking at the same time um I don't know because that sort of most radical sort of weather like culture life shift that I've endured thus far been through thus far so yeah pools in Phoenix, Arizona and the surrounding suburbs or Lake Erie. Also, excellent question.

A: Ok I hope you can hear me I'm sorry I'm on a roof so forgive the wind um but I definitely dance alone ah often in the shower, although I don't know if I've been doing that that much since I moved to Vermont um but if I put on dancey music or even not dancey music I'll still move. And it's definitely like mostly in my hips and then my shoulders will like you know pretty regular hip loops you know. I'm also stuck on body rolls from like when I learned to dance when I was a pre-teen (laughs) um so there's definitely some of that and uh yeah.

A: (records running water, tub or faucet, for 16 seconds)
texts: I mean it's just like the kinda water that I'm thinking of either Lake Erie or pools in Phoenix, AZ, if they're moving rhythmically it is bouncy.

DANA: THE PHOENIX INFINITY POOL
Dance like the many pools in your life
These places of predictability and pause
Of varying depths and shades of blue swimming
Up to a hundred and ten degrees
Motion is born in your bones bouncing
Motion is born in your bones bouncing
Infinity hip loops
Rhythmic running rolls
Like when you used to make your own whirlpools
Running around the edge of the aboveground
With friends family forever
Well forever means until
The pool pulls you around
In its force
Or until your legs tire

H FOGARTY: Hi Dana, sorry this is so late.
To answer your question what body of water from your life matters to you and why?
Um the body of water that matters to me would be St. Mary's Glacier Lake in Colorado.

I went there when I was visiting my sister
when my brother and I flew out to see her um
and so it's important to me for a few reasons.
First it was a really great spending time with family
the day itself was really nice
in terms of just doing a hike
and being there with my sister and my brother
um but the experience of the lake itself was also very unique
so it was the middle of the summer, very hot,
um the hike up to glacier is quite steep in a lot of parts
so um we're all sweaty and exhausted by the time we got there
so of course ah you know the most attractive thing at that moment
is just to plunge right into the water
but the Glacier Lake of course, because it's melting straight off of the glacier
is just above freezing, it's very very cold um
and so wading into the lake was this really strange experience of something
that seemed like it would be refreshing that was actually um physically shocking
ah in how cold it was and um
it was a really interesting experience of feeling something that cold like it felt life
threatening you know you could feel when you were in there that if you stayed in
too long
um your temperature would drop too much and you would just die ah
so it was definitely not the sort of casual, refreshing swim that it seemed like it
would be,
and the kind of aftershocks of the temperature lasted for a long time,
um even when we were back out on the beach
so it was just a really interesting experience in terms of like
very rapid changes in the experience of embodiment in that moment
and that's why it's important to me.

H: Good morning Dana, please excuse my voice
my lingering Covid cough from when I had it a couple months ago is acting up so.
Do I dance when I'm alone?
The short answer is yes um but I can give you a longer answer as well.
I mean I think you know it kind of depends on how we define dance.
If you were to actually observe me at home, a dance expert would probably be
horrified, but if we're talking about rhythmic movement um often accompanied by
music
um then yes in many ways.
I think the standard way of course is you know kind of dancing in between tasks
or while you're doing tasks, while you're brushing your teeth or cooking dinner
um anything like that (coughs) um
but I think one kind of I guess practice that I've developed that I like
is I've just tried to like set aside times in the day
just to make sure that I am moving in a dance-like kind of way
um like I'll just put my headphones on (coughs) sorry,
so I'll just like put my headphones on
and then just move any way that my body wants to move
which is often kind of just repetitive
like swaying side to side or turning or sort of like moving from one foot to the other

as a like a kind of emotional processing
like just kind of like shaking out
all of the feelings or like anxieties um
or anything that's kind of been building up throughout the day
um so yeah that's the practice I've sort of been trying to do.
It helped a lot last semester so um yeah that's it I'll wrap it up there.

H: Ok so the connections between the movement of the body of water and my own movement um I would characterize in terms of pliancy, melting, and the flow of energy that these enable
um so the Glacier Lake is um obviously from the name
is created from a melting glacier um
so the lake itself is in this constant state of um renewal, of becoming,
and is always sort of shifting in form from the ice of the glacier
into the liquid form of the lake itself um
which ah goes along with the movement practice that I was describing before
in terms of just thinking about ah sort of renewing the body
of letting things flow through through motion
ah sort of thinking about um the ah exchange and circulation of energy
um even in terms of temperature right
like uh changing from ice to liquid is like an exchange of energy um
generating heat in the body through movement is in exchange of energy
um so there are a lot of ah sort of um ways in which
the physics align as well on that level um
and then in terms of describing the experience of them both um very contrasted
experiences
and quite a few ways in terms of thinking about like the sort of shock
and like sort of stiffness in retreat that ah was initiated by the coldness of the water
versus the um kind of flow and pliancy of um just moving on my own um but in
terms of,
I know you and I have talked about proprioception before,
in terms of proprioception um they are very similar they're both,
they were both experiences that made me very aware of the um the boundaries of
my own body and of the way the connections between body and the world
whether that was feeling the cold of the water,
feeling the lingering cold even after getting out of the water
or sort of feeling the movement of air around me um
my feet on the floor um
so both of them um really are experiences of coming back into the body
um of really feeling what it is to actually inhabit a body
and one that is like immersed in the world in various ways.

Attaches picture and texts: Here's a pic of the Glacier Lake too
in case you were curious!

I've also been re-reading the Tao Te Ching
and thinking about both movements
makes me think of this chapter:

“76

Men are born soft and supple;
dead, they are stiff and hard.
Plants are born tender and pliant;
dead they are brittle and dry.

Thus whoever is stiff and inflexible
is a disciple of death.
Whoever is soft and yielding
is a disciple of life.

The hard and stiff will be broken.
The soft and supple will prevail.”

DANA: THE GLACIER LAKE GLIDE

As ice freezes over,
Move like the interlocking shaking crystals
And you're self-steeped tea
Physically shock the atmosphere
Just above freezing
Aftershocks of tempered ripples
Moving one foot to another
That define your dance
In-between baskets
Help you generate heat
Shifting forms
Into a melting flow of softened energy
Exchange emotional processing
Drop your location
In repetitive-like swaying
Practice the pliancy
Created from an unyielding glacier
Renew in your becoming aware

JESS: So this is not a really straightforward answer
but I think that different bodies of water matter differently to me
because when I heard the question and I was thinking about it
a few things came to mind,
I mean I thought about how the Atlantic Ocean matters to me
because that was my first experience of you know experiencing you know a big
body of water, experiencing an ocean,
going to the beach when I was a kid,
but um also Lake Michigan comes to mind for me
as a body of water that matters to me very much
because it sits on the shores of Chicago and um
that's a very important city for me
and so Lake Michigan in that way feels just as much as a part of my like love for
Chicago
as the city itself
so but then I think one more thing that comes to mind for me

is um the Caribbean Sea and
you know I'm not from there
but whenever I have encountered that sea
those waters
it always feels kind of like ancestral waters,
it feels like I'm coming home,
it feels like water that I belong in
that is comfortable um that's kind of calling me back
so that's that's really kind of how I thought about the question,
I'm sorry it's not really straight forward,
I kind of had to attack it at different angles but I hope this helps.

J: So I definitely dance by myself,
I never dance in the mirror because I judge myself really quickly
and I realize I don't dance as fast as I think I do um so (laughs)
I just slow myself down and then I get self conscious
and I lose the beat and it's just not fun
but um yeah I do dance by myself
and I love dancing to like 70s disco um or
I mean any kind of upbeat music really and
like when I'm in the experience,
that's when I feel like if I'm trying to do a body roll that maybe
I feel too stiff to do around people that like when I'm on my own I can do that freely
like maybe I can like move my hips a bit more freely than I would
if someone were looking at me
so I guess overall I feel like generally my body is kind of stiff
I think like when people can see me doing anything
like even if I'm just standing but like definitely dancing,
but when I'm by myself I can be free
and it's almost like I really feel as though like my body movements are unlocked
and I'm just like moving and and body rolling and shaking my hips
and like doing all kinds of things and it's probably not what's really happening
but I feel free, and so I think that that's what makes a really big difference.

J: I'm trying to fucking record this and I'm having trouble with saying something
(laughs)
so I had the realization after the other bit that I talked about movement and like
dancing,
I realize that something that kind of comes out for me when I'm dancing specifically
alone
is that there's this kind of joy that emerges from me
so I kind of start dancing around as if like I'm in a musical or a play or something
like that,
or in a Disney special, I know it's super corny but like that's the you know,
a lot of times that's the kind of experience that I'm having
and so and it just feels like this sort of burst of like light and joy for me
which is not something that I always experience
and so thinking about that, the body of water the bodies of water that mean some-
thing to me
I can really think about the Atlantic Ocean

and feel as though that kind of aligns with my movements
because the Atlantic Ocean, I mean, there's no it's almost like no beginning and
no end um there's no restrictions to the ocean's movements,
sometimes you know the ocean is very calm,
other times you know it's loud and it's aggressive and um
you know and there are huge waves and it's super choppy you know
I also like imagine like these huge waves hitting the rocks
but like in a joyful way like not you know like a bad thing like capsizing a boat,
but just like hitting the rocks again like in in joy,
these large sort of displays of like joyfulness in nature, um
and that's how I think that you know that's how I see myself moving like that,
with the ocean, and the Atlantic Ocean in particular
and I also think because of my time in the ocean where I
it's almost like you get into a trance when you get into the water
and you suddenly feel as though you surrender yourself
and you feel the power of the water, you feel the depth of the water and you
you feel the endless respect and I have felt that level of connection with the Atlan-
tic Ocean
that for example like I've been in the Pacific Ocean
and I always feel like the Pacific Ocean it just like threw me around
and like I almost died and drowned (laughs)
so the Atlantic Ocean was much more um
in all of my experiences in it you know um whether like in Florida
or up in Massachusetts or in Delaware,
I always felt like I was it was embracing me
and um and it moved with me and it was joyful with me.

DANA: THE LAKE TO OCEAN SHUFFLE

Move like ancestral waters
Waters that you belong in
Dive, float, and unlock
Trances emerged from joy
Hydrate the air
In a musical play
An endless surrenderer
Respect your body
Through its internal chemistry
Embody embrace all of its wild life as one
No restrictions, no beginning, no end
Watch and emulate
Nature's laughter in longing lights
Stars and their stunning sunstar

WOOGEE: Hi Dana um hello I'm so sorry for sending this to you so late.
I hope it's still ok um and I promise my next responses will not be as late.
I'm almost ending work so I will not be on my computer.
And I also wanted to say thank you for asking this question.
I think it's one that I've been thinking about,
and especially since I've moved to Seattle a few years ago so
and just being surrounded even more by water or having water so like in walking

distance um and I have a few answers which I hope is okay to share um
and feel free to just cut out whatever doesn't work
but the immediate answer that came to mind of a body of water that matters to me
is the Puget Sound here in and around Seattle.

I live in Edmonds, which is about 15 minutes north of Seattle
and I of course feel really lucky to live really close to the water
um and although I don't face the water

if I stepped outside and I looked right behind me
and it is in such clear view

and I think what is so special and beautiful about this particular area of water
is that I think that in a lot of other places in Seattle

your view is kind of obstructed by like skyscrapers or city lights or cranes
that are all over the city. And here really it is just the islands across the way
and then just water and the horizon

and on a very clear day you can see mountains.

But I don't know I think having always lived near water in some way
but finally living near water that doesn't get interrupted I guess for lack of better
word.

Made me realize well I noticed how calm this particular view made me
and how being able to stretch my eyes and my sight and see so far into the distance
um was something that I needed that I never recognized that I needed.

I think as an air sign, and a heavy air sign,

as someone who definitely holds stress in my body of course
but also I often feel unable to clear my mind or just be mindless for like a second

I was able to notice when I'm looking out at this particular view,

I do feel mindless for a bit and I do feel as calm as I ever have.

I feel um How do I word this.

I feel the calmest I've ever felt in my life,

which sounds like a dramatic statement but I think is true.

Anyway yeah so I think it matters to me on the level of like caring for myself
and really like releasing all of the burdens that I both willing and unwillingly,
knowing and unknowingly carry.

So there's that body of water and then I also think of um in Busan in South Korea
there is a more popular beach called Haeundae

but there is a less popular beach but also still popular beach Gwangali

and I often think about that beach and that water

and if I'm remembering correctly,

because Busan is located at the very southern part of the peninsula

it is also an unobstructed view

but then there is a bridge that runs across from one end of the beach to the other
and it gets lit up at night.

but there is a less popular beach but also still popular beach Gwangali

and I often think about that beach and that water

and if I'm remembering correctly,

because Busan is located at the very southern part of the peninsula

it is also an unobstructed view

but then there is a bridge that runs across from one end of the beach to the other
and it gets lit up at night.

I don't know what it is about that beach, but I think I just felt so home there,
especially when being in Korea made me realize how not at home I felt there

and I don't know if partly that's because it's my mother's hometown,
I wanted to connect to it or yeah I'm sure there are many reasons
but I think it just matters to me because of my wanting to connect to it
and because it felt like a way to really feel my mother in a way
that we have never or know my mother in a way that we never exchanged through
words
like it feels like an energy connection in a way with my mother
who I am still learning about um
she is very much alive but you know not had the kind of relationship
where I could ask her and that she willingly shares about herself
so it felt like it brought me close to her and to her family
and to her sisters and to my sister
who I was visiting there at the time
and I love that body of water
then please feel free to omit this one, or do something fun and experimental with it.
The final body of water that I was thinking about if this is one that counts
is a, was a bathtub in our apartment in Atlanta, Georgia, when my sister and I lived
there
when we were younger and when we were younger
we would take baths together um when we were really little
and I think because we lived in an apartment complex and didn't have a pool
and couldn't always go to the beach, and Georgia was so hot and we were kids and
imaginative that we when we would take baths and our mother would leave us alone
for a bit
we would throw some of the water out of the bathtub onto the tiles
and pretend that it was a water slide or that we were at a fun water park
and we would literally slide across the bathroom tiles
um and it was probably so bad for the bathroom floors and the bathroom
and I'm sure we left a mess behind after we moved
but I don't know it was a fun way, it was a way for my sister and I to play and be
imaginative and like make for ourselves what we had been missing, or that we didn't
have access to
or that we couldn't enjoy um and
so I know it's not technically a body of water maybe
in the sense that one would interpret that term
but it is a meaningful one to me um so yeah I hope these answers are ok,
ok thank you for listening to my eight minutes, I didn't realize I rambled but yes
thank you for this question.

w: You know I actually do not dance alone um
or at least I don't notice if I'm dancing alone
but most of the time I'm not um yeah I don't dance alone
but I do sometimes dance in the evening with my partner
we do little movements together I think just to shake off all the energy of the day um
or to reenergize ourselves
and really what that looks like for me in the moment
um I think because it is more casual and intimate or um that it ends up being a little
goofy.
It's not like there's often or at least always music involved.
What it looks or how I would describe it is a duck waddling

or like if a duck were to come out of the water and onto the shore
and kind of ruffling their feathers to shake off excess water.
I would kind of describe the movement like that um and let's see
I wonder what else yeah I think that's all I can say about movement.

w: Hi Dana, thanks for that final question
I think it's so interesting and maybe I should have put two and two together
that they would be related
but for some reason I think maybe because I responded to them so far apart
but I just didn't make the connection.
So uh thank you and another really great question does my body of water move like
I move?
I would say yes I would say that the bodies of water
or at least the very first one the immediate body of water that I described
and why it was meaningful to me
I think it does move like I move or at least how I want to move
how I changed in my movement
and whether that and not necessarily like a physical movement but even just how
I've tried to move through the world or through different areas of my life now
as opposed to where I was before and I think the bodies of water that I described
from the past, the one in Korea I think I last saw in 2015 and the one when I was
little
was of course like over 20 years ago
so yeah that's so interesting.
I think where I'm trying to be and how I'm trying to move
and maybe not necessarily physically right now
is to be slower and um to move slower
and I think that's been a common thread in the past years
of how I wanted to or tried to or
tried to remind myself in approaching a lot of things so
and I think it just liked pinged in me suddenly after you asked that question.
I think why I love the Puget Sound so much is because at least in the area that I'm
in, it is it's like softer waves and it's calm and I never really um.
I think that's kind of what I'm aspiring toward.
The beaches in Korea, um and the bathtub you know,
the beaches had more waves but definitely the bathtub like
we would literally splash water out of the bathtub
and yeah it's such an interesting way to think about transitions and life
and transformations in life and how um different I feel now as a person
who is trying to be slower yeah and also quick in a way like
I rushed even in a way that I had wanted or that I had been, even up until a few
years ago
so I don't know if any of that makes sense but um I hope it does,
and I think as far as like texture goes, you know I almost think of it as um like
I think of maybe a little cheesy but a feather kind of as it's falling off of a bird
and it's light and it's doing the little pendulum swing back and forth down onto the
ground
and how it has this kind of softer um movement that's with you know
the wind kind of ever so slightly through the feathers
um that's what I thought about immediately as a texture,

I don't know if that really works, but that's what I think
and then um I don't know even like the softness around ripples
I think about that kind of texture um yeah
I feel like I wanna say more but I can't at the moment
because I'm just more stunned by that question and connection that I didn't make
so let me know if I should expand on this. Ok thanks.

DANA: THE PUGET SOUND SLIDE / THE BEACH BATHTUB-ING BUBBLE

As you're surrounded by even more water than you,

Dance within walking distance

Of grounding views

Unobstructed by bridges

This type of connection is internal interruption

Erupting horizons

Stretch your arms and sight and see

How far you've come

How far you've gone

Recognize what you've always needed

If you still hold your stress

Hold your head high

Soar like all the air

Signs signal mindless behaviors

Caress the calmest second of your life

Release dramatics and drudgeries

Make for yourself what you have been missing

Turn up the lights over there

Will the mother of all energy connections

Throughout and beyond a familial peninsula

Merge with your bathtiming

Pretend its halftime

And it's yours to shine and play

On watered magnetic fields

Splash liquid out on tiles

And slide as far as you desire

Leave a movement mess behind

For your sister and your sister's sister

Thread together what's in common

Two and two together in tow(e)

Be a feathering kind

Casually as one falls off a bird

Light doing its intimacy

The little pendulum swing

Reenergize self-hypnotize

back and forth beings

Goofy rufflings in intimate excess

Waddle until you can relate

to how you want to move to change

Slow now steady and then pop

VENERABLES:

R: The Atlantic Ocean
because it keeps me peaceful
throughout life's ups and downs.
A great place to collect your thoughts.

KAREN: Block Lake
because I learned how to ice skate, fish, and swim.

R: We both dance alone or together,
and look in the mirror
and move everything
on our bodies that we can!
Get down!

K: The Lake is like me—calm most of the time.

R: I say the ocean
is more
like me with the ups and downs of life
making you calm and peaceful when life is good,
but unpredictable at times
when life brings you challenges.

S: Our lake because we grew up around it literally
fishing, ice skating
and feeding the ducks/geese when they were there.

K: Body of water?
Our backyard lake is my favorite body of water
because it reminds me of fishing
with Shawn and Richie from day one!

DANA: It's a tie between Block Lake Park
a town lake and park that is near our backyard
and the Atlantic Ocean,
which could be the backyard of the Jersey Shore
I also love Lake Como in Belmar
because of the swans that collect and swim there
during summertime
and how it's next to the ocean.

S: Lmao I really don't dance ever!
Even alone.

D: Would you consider lawn care / landscaping
as dancing?

S: Lmao yes!!

K: Lol sometimes.

The movement does not matter to me.
It's usually after a long good day of work
and the beats were flowing nice all day.
That energy is continued when I get home from work,
fire the music up while I'm in the shower
and then while L is sleeping
I turn it lower and fire out more stuff around the house
while making up dance moves as I go lol.
The moves feel good because they're my own
and I have nothing to prove to anyone.
Only God can see.

D: I dance alone all of the time.

I mostly dance in my room while listening to music,
or sometimes I like to move my body in repetitive movements
to do or prepare for some other action,
like swinging my hips before going for a jog or while washing the dishes.
When there's no one home at my apartment,
I dance in the living room and play music so it fills the space.
As someone who studied dance for many years,
I miss the feeling of creating energy with myself and with others,
so I like to improvise dance moves and try to remember certain combinations
I put together with a particular song,
so like a secret choreography.
I still have visions and imagery of dancing in my head when I listen to music,
ever since I was a young kid.
I usually let go and do moves that I might not be able to do yet, "technique-wise,"
but I like how it feels in my body.
I marinate and play in jazz, modern, and tap,
even tapping in my bare feet or whatever shoes I'm wearing.
I like the surging rush of not knowing and maybe almost knowing how I will move,
or how a song can move me to be intense or to be soft.
Sometimes I do one particular move for a whole song, over and over,
going slow and then speeding it up.
I like staying with a movement for a while
and seeing how it feels a little different each time.
When I was a teen living with my family,
I used to practice my dancing school pieces in the basement and garage,
while trying to make up my own dances in-between.
I love music so I dance alone to my favorite songs,
no matter how fast or slow.
I like the challenge of getting my body to organize even in chaos.
Even though I danced in front of many audiences growing up,
I now get embarrassed showing others,
so dancing alone is helping me work my way up to performing in some capacity
again.

s: Flow like water

D: Like cash flow, flow-state, meditation!

K: Yes it does because
the life under the surface of the water is juicy,
but above the surface no one can see.
Only when you catch a fish do you find out!

D: Yes, maybe both.

I feel surges of intensity, with spontaneous patterns
and new sets of patterns, like the ocean.
The Atlantic Ocean has spots when you go far enough out
under some heavy waves,
where it calms down and you can float.
It's still quite deep, so you have to stay above water
and be confident in your swimming
and ability to relax and rest within chaos,
but once you get there and get the hang of it, it's divine.
It's still one of the best experiences of my life.
I'm reminded of a similar blissfulness
when I think about the rhythms I repeat with my body,
when I land on a combination that feels so good to do,
that I do it again until I feel like I got it and ride it out more.
I like trying to find calm spots in the ocean after traversing many heavy waves
and then get myself floating.
Even waves approach while I'm floating, but they are usually smaller,
so I just let them carry me.
I also use the entire space for my dancing, or at least try to,
so I stride wide, turn, leap, and don't hold back.
The ocean, too, is vast and moves across space, more powerfully than I do.
I admire the ocean's confidence so much and I aspire to be like it.
Also, when I did/do dance alone,
I'm usually in one of my home spaces at the time,
and I feel like my body moving is an extension of a wholistic home
my roots and my flowers.
It all reminds me of Block Lake, with it's consistent, familiar calmness.
I like how in lakes, I can see the other sides or its edges,
whereas I also like how with oceans, you can't.
I can connect that to how I improvise
a satisfying, simultaneous knowing and unknowing.

D: The Lake and Ocean Duet

It takes two and more to collect your thoughts
Move in a steady pace of regulation
Firm your cells of strength not strain
Learn from their ups and downs
Both build with frames of land
Think sky mirrors and worldly puddles
Move everything sometimes

Spill over simultaneous sides
Adapt through skating swimming
Fishing the unpredictable
Get down and grow out
Feed the ducks the geese
In backyards of swans
Create endless summertime flows
Follow fire's fearlessness
You have nothing to prove so prepare
When there's no one else home
Fill the space
Perform secret choreography
Visions that dance in your head
While you marinate and play
Tap dancing bare foot
Almost knowing no matter can block you
Get your body to organize
Become life under the surface
Catching a fish with your hands
Be so juicy you can float after
And ride rhythms' bliss
If waves approach
Dance with them

SEAN: Growing up, commuting back and forth
between Staten Island and Brooklyn, and then living in Manhattan for a while,
I would say the New York Bay and more specifically the Narrows.
Is the body of water that matters most to me.
Lately, it's represented the distance between New York City
and where I live so there's something about it
that speaks of home to me
but also of an obstacle in the same breath.

s: I 100% dance when I'm alone (laughs).
I don't know if there is necessarily a specific place or specific way.
I think it kind of just depends on my mood.
Um I'm definitely a shower singer,
I guess I bop around in the shower a little bit more than that,
um if I'm at home in the living room, or maybe in the kitchen
if I'm cooking if I'm listening to some good music.
And the kind of, or in the car.
I spend a lot of time driving so sometimes
you're kind of limited but you can bop around to the beat
or when I'm home, if I'm home by myself and I have some good music on.
Um maybe it's musical theater, maybe it's disco.
Maybe it's RnB or pop or something I don't know.
I listen to a lot of different kinds of stuff um
and I guess when I'm not afraid of anyone watching
I'll do whatever comes to mind even if it's twerking.
That's the fun part about dancing when no one's watching.

But no I wouldn't say that my go-to move is the twerk.
I would just say I just try to feel the beat.

s: When I think of the Narrows, I think,
I think of a gap that's bridged literally um.
And until now, I never really considered how the water moves.
I've seen it, I've seen it in the stillness of morning sunlight,
and I've seen beautiful orange sunsets over it.
And sometimes at night I've seen the white crests of gentle waves,
but I've always thought of the Narrows as more of
just a barrier between me and different parts of my life,
one being where my family is from, out in old Brooklyn
and the other being where I want my life to be in,
I'll call it new Brooklyn and New York City,
so for me, the way the Narrow moves, the Narrows moves
have always just been sort of out of way
in keeping me from, keeping me out of the way.
Whereas the way I dance,
it's always just for fun and whimsical.

DANA: THE NARROWS NUDGE

In the same breath
Be a shower dancer
Not afraid of a gap that's bridged
Move as a stillness of mo(u)rning
Over orange sunsets
Where the barrier between you and you
Gives graciously

ZACK: The body of water that matters most to me is the Great Salt Lake.
It's one of two significant bodies of water for me.
I was born in Utah ah but I grew up more in California right,
so it's just a short drive from the Pacific Ocean.
Both are important to me, but I'd have to go with the Great Salt Lake
mostly because I don't think it gets enough love.
There's a sense of being held by the landscape in Utah.
The mountains circle in all directions
but they're most pronounced in the East.
It's as if one could start at the top of the Uinta Mountains in the East
and roll all the way down through the city into the lake in the West.
The water is thick with salt.
As a child, I tried to swim in it and then over dramatically cried
about the stinging salt all around my skin for hours afterwards,
but I think I appreciate it.
It's not easy to love in the way that the Pacific Ocean is,
it's not as welcoming, more resistant more reticent.
But you know like a cat that ignores me
or something or is more hesitant with affection than other pets,
but they're still waiting for me when I stumble home right,
sort of secretly excited to see me again.

I think of the Salt Lake that way,
it loves in different, more subtle ways than the Pacific Ocean.
In the 19th century a railroad was built running through the northern part of it.
Cutting off the northernmost section of the lake
caused an even higher salt and bacteria concentration that turned the water red.
It's really an amazing thing to see
and that's at least partially why Robert Smithson chose to build his Spiral Jetty
there.

After getting invested in experimental art as an adult,
I traveled back to the lake for the first time in many years.
Being surrounded by the landscape, swallowed up by it, it really affected me.
The stinging nose of the red salt water, it's always there in my body.
I remember feeling at the time that there is really no leaving this lake.
It would always be with me somehow.

z: Ah yes I dance by myself constantly ah in some ways
I'm actually more comfortable dancing by myself um.
I do also dance when I go to shows or clubs or you know any space with music,
I definitely dance there.
But I you know I have no formal training in dance or anything like that,
so I'm certainly not dancing in the sense of like something that has a structure
or something that might look nice for someone to see
but um ah I guess more dancing in the sense of you know like
having a certain energy and feeling like I need to release it you know,
I need to let it go through a sort of embodied movement,
and even more so when I'm by myself,
like really just dancing, moving around, even sometimes jumping
definitely definitely a lot of air guitar.
I played guitar for most of my life, which I think definitely affects how I hear
music,
just often thinking about it from the perspective of you know how I would play
along to it
even though I don't actually have a guitar with me at that moment.
And my dancing you know often incorporates some way of imagining how I
would do that,
you know including air guitar or just dancing in other ways.
But yeah I mean I think there's something really special to dancing by yourself
ah I enjoy dancing with others a lot as well of course, but there's something
kind of to that kind of private space of movement that can happen
when you're you know dancing late at night in your room or something like that
which I do all the time.
I guess special maybe because it makes sort of certain feelings, impulses feel real,
like I choreograph them and put them out into the world,
like so that I can yeah make them real
in the sense of put them out and confront myself in that way.
I guess it's not so different from journaling or has a connection to it or something
like that um.
I used to journal when I was young but haven't kept up with that at all.
But definitely never stopped dancing by myself or elsewhere um
but you know I'm dancing all the time, by myself you know,

z: Oh ok so I really like this question ah
but mostly because it gets me in trouble for my choice a little bit,
or at least makes things complicated but in a good way, um because you know
of course one of the first things that most people think of when they think of bodies
of water
is their movement, the sound, the look,
the rhythm of the waves crashing on the beach ah
which is why the question makes more sense
except that I chose a body of water that pretty much doesn't move at all,
I mean there's like little ripples and things like that
but there's not waves or anything like that,
it's a very static lake um which mostly as I understand it
it's just cause it's not very deep relative to even the Great Lakes
and certainly to the ocean um.
This question actually did inspire me to do a little research into what's possible for it
and apparently although it's very uncommon to get waves during certain rare mo-
ments
with the right condition like the right kind of storm
it can get smallish waves um
but probably a thing people are most likely to say about the Salt Lake
is that you can float it in um because it's so salty
swimming in it is less like swimming and more like floating
actually right um so in that sense it's not really like my movement much at all
since I would say my dancing is very fast paced and erratic,
which is the total opposite of the subtle calm of floating in the Great Salt Lake.
But you know I was thinking about it and somehow maybe there is a connection
to being in the Salt Lake, you know there's there's the water all around
and there's the Salt Flats which is this sand,
it's a very unique kind of sand that's so salty, there's flies everywhere, these buzzing
flies weirdly there's bison there on Antelope Island
and it just all spreads out to the horizon,
but on the horizon there are these giant mountains
that it makes me think that even if you're floating there,
there's this real like sublime immensity to it
and I was thinking that that might be something that actually would connect it to
my movement. You know when you're there
it feels like you're resting right on the limits of everything right where everything is
so enormous it feels like you're swallowed by space and time,
in that sense I guess maybe the dynamism of my dancing is mirrored
not necessarily by the waves but by the implied movement of the landscape
the rolling folds of you know the peaks of the mountains
and the flat depths of the lake, the Salt Flats.
I think that movement is similar to my approach to dancing.
Not necessarily very graceful or structured,
but these big kind of passionate dynamic movements
the rise and the break, the build and the drop right?
The big mountain down into the flat salty floating ocean,
so now when I think about it in a weird way
despite the water being calm,

there actually is a connection to being in that landscape
and to the way that I move to music or by myself even.

DANA: THE GREAT SALT LAKE STORM

Be enough love held by landscape
With mountains that circle thick
Use your stinging salt skin
To enhance resistant reticence
Dance like you're initially hesitant
with outward affection
Wait for you to stumble right home
Then secretly store a reservoir
Turn the waters red
Spiral there and swallow it up
Your stinging nose
Is temporary
Do not leave
Release rolled motion
Through watered air guitars
Fold and fold as you imagine a private space
Where impulses keep the lights on
Journal in places it wouldn't make sense to
Move one way or another into what's possible
Become the right kind of storm where you can float
When unique sandscapes are mirrors resting
On the limits of everything

2. Repeat (1) . A small, white paper flower has bloomed on your right forehead. Petals curl up from your hip to the right thigh. Another petal curls up on your left thigh. A flower has bloomed underneath your chin. As a result, your knees shake a little. Thus your body has now become a flower.

3. Repeat (1). Draw a small star in the air with your right elbow. Your body has a spine of a peacock. You start standing up. A flower has bloomed underneath your chin. Trace the tears flowing from a girl's crying face which has appeared in the air. The flower blooms as you stand.” (2015, Yukio, butoh-kaden.com)

—Sheila Heti's works

—Group Chats, a.k.a. “textual theaters” as I call them.
kind of movement.

—Conversations with and lectures from Kenning J.P. Garcia, mostly about diaries and Street literature.

Dana Venerable (she, her, hers) is a writer, educator, co-editor of *P-QUEUE* journal (2019-2022), and a SUNY-UB English PhD candidate living between Buffalo, NY and the Jersey Shore. Her research addresses methods of the archive through compositions and intersections of Black performance, dance, notation, social choreography, and sound. Dana has performed within artist collectives at UB Arts Collaboratory, PLAY/GROUND and UB's Choreolab and MFA Dance Concert, and is a teaching artist at Just Buffalo Literary Center. She is the winner of the 2021 Academy of American Poets Prize at UB. Dana has written for *Peach Mag*, *Rigorous*, *Snail Trail Press*, *Free Your Soul & Mind Inc.*, *P-QUEUE*, *The Journal of American Drama and Theatre*, *VIDA Review*, and elsewhere.

COLOPHON

What Happens: in the grasses is a semi-annual publication series seeking works that specifically address theater's ability to transcend political and geographical limitations. Taking its title from Gertrude Stein's "In the Grass (In Spain)," this series investigates within and without boundaries of genre while focusing on works whose poesis involves the transformation of the social. For more information visit whathappens.world

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