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Notes on Socket
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There are lines that are always with me.

Just now as I read that sentence again I saw: There are lines that always run through me. I thought of first arabesque.

“Then practice losing farther, losing faster.”

That’s one of those lines. It’s Elizabeth Bishop, “One Art.” I’ve been thinking of having it tattooed along my right side. I live in Williamsburg now. Everyone has tattoos. They take them out for walks.

“And look! my last, or / next-to-last, of three loved houses went.”

That’s another one of those lines, from “One Art.” It’s starting to feel like I move a lot. I guess that’s why I think of it. I lived in seven houses before I moved away, at age twelve, to train as a dancer. When I recall childhood, I think of gazing out a car window, everything—blue mountains, black sky—falling behind. In New York, I’ve lived in seven apartments in eleven years.

Moving—dancing—is about letting go. It’s about what’s lost: memory, ability, steps, time.

This dance is about how we are afraid of losing.

When you read that line again, read: This dance is about how we are afraid of death.

Last spring while I was getting ready for a showing at the Cunningham studio, my dancers kept asking me to video our rehearsals on my phone. I hate doing that because then I watch my phone and that little screen and not them and the room they are in. They focus on how they look rather than what they’re doing. That’s a kind of performance I don’t care for. I like my dancers to be engrossed in what they’re doing, their senses. I want my audience to feel what my dancers feel—that high that comes from an awareness of your body and your senses and the space around you.

My dancers kept telling me they wanted me to video rehearsals because they were afraid they’d forget the work. They keep telling me that. But that’s not what they fear. They fear how they danced—who they were—in those moments of rehearsal will be lost, forgotten. They are afraid of the constant deaths we experience as dancers: the deaths of the body and its movement and its memory. They are afraid that next week they will be fatter, incapable, no longer beautiful, knowing, and clear. They are afraid of losing.

Dancing is an attempt to combat that losing, an attempt to hold time.

In September, I met the dancers at a studio in Brooklyn, and we began working on what would become *Socket*. I recorded them coming into the studio, getting ready to rehearse. Nathaniel was the first to arrive. I think he thought rehearsal was an hour earlier than it was. He was eating an apple, his legs wide apart. Fiona came in next. We talked about how she was moving back to London. She did bizarre things. I miss her.

“Lose something every day.”

Joshua came later. He danced some Stephen Petronio phrases, talked about the cute boys at the gay cowboy bar that we’ve grown fond of. Mara came last. She’s very nineteenth-century. She’s that piece of tulle caught in the heel of my New Balance. Jenna wasn’t there for some reason. I

think she was traveling, somewhere glamorous. I filmed them for nearly an hour, and then we set to work learning exactly what they'd just done, from my phone. In the following weeks, Fiona moved, and Jenna learned Fiona's part, and I combined their material and made them one dancer. Then we sped up all of the movement and set it to a four-and-a-half-minute Tricky song, "Time to Dance."

I was feeling lost. I began writing an essay for *Ballet Review* about lost and found things in dance. I was really writing about my divorce. It's still not final.

"—Even losing you (the joking voice, a gesture / I love)"

I took up smoking again and listening to Depeche Mode. My therapist reminded me that we are more permissive with ourselves when we're going through something like divorce. I was very permissive. I thought it would be good for my dance making. I created new material thinking I'd set it to DM's *Violator* album.

"Words like violence / break the silence. / They coming crashing in / into my little world."

In the mornings, when I awoke, I started making videos of my bedroom. I began a solo, too, for my room, twelve-feet-by-twelve-feet. During the holidays, I saw my family in Virginia and put together some movement in my sister's small office. I didn't record it on my phone. I kept dancing it, though—first in silence, then to a recording I made of my radiator, then to a New Order song, "True Faith."

I called pianist and composer Craig Baldwin when I got back and told him I was thinking about death and creation. He said I should listen to Olivier Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time*. I knew in the first several seconds of hearing it that I wanted to use it, though I wasn't sure how. In March, I danced my solo to the Messiaen at Rima Rabbath and Serge Jureidini's place, in an alcove against a bare, shadowy wall with an electrical socket. Staring at that socket every afternoon before yoga, I realized that dancers and dances are like sockets; we, dances also, receive and hold energy and ideas. (I am a bony hollow in the body into which another part fits. I am the hole that receives the light bulb.)

It was then that I decided to change the group work again. By chance, I met Aaron Kruziki and told him I wanted to alter the music to have an echo effect, a kind of shadow. (For some time, I have been interested in making my own sound and music from existing scores. In 2009, I rewound Hunter Johnson's *Letter to the World* score for my solo, *Solitary*. That same year, I made a recording of keys dropping for my quartet called *Split*.) And I called Nicholas Houfek and asked him to light the dance.

Now I want to remake *Socket*, again, for five other dancers, untrained movers, and perform it as the second part to this dance. A new dance will come from that work, I'm sure. Dance exists in the state of rebirth. So does life: it's a series of memories, feelings, and events repeated with subtle, sometimes beautiful variations.