

Artist Statement : "Movement"

I wish I could tell there is a lot going on here under the surface. But honestly, this piece is exactly what it looks like (I imagine you can tell which one is me based on the hair) – Duncan and myself dancing. Our night out dancing, where I truly felt I could let go and stop concerning myself with the types of thoughts that have bothered me for nearly 20 years, seemed the most fitting to capture.

Every one of my delights (not all of which are prepared in this PDF format, as I did write them long-hand in my journal and have continued far beyond the expected six), I realize now, has been impactful. Writing them out has been impactful. Thinking about moving through day-to-day life through the eyes and writing of Ross Gay has been impactful.

I admit that I have a hard time connecting with Gay at times – his joy is... excessive. And listen, I am not truly a pessimist or missanthropic, nothing of the sort. If anything, I am unwaveringly optimistic (read; apathetic but confident things will simply work out), but boy, Gay is OPTIMISTIC! Or at least, he reads that way. The times where I find myself connecting to his work the most is in passages reflecting on loss and grief, probably not much of a surprise. But particularly, I've come to find some peace in this overall theme of Gay's, that joy and grief have to exist in the same space. Everything we experience is inseparable from the whole, you can't pick out individual emotions and tie them to the wall for your amusement, walking away when you've grown bored. There is something to be said about feeling everything that comes your way. It's sort of funny, most of my therapy revolves around this idea of letting things come in, and letting them go right back out as they please. What a joy that Gay's work is much easier on the palate than one-hour therapy sessions are.

This piece perhaps doesn't capture everything I feel I've learned or reflected on in this experience, but it does serve as a sort of capstone. I'm no less in the midst of grieving now than I was five months ago, or three months ago. But I am also experiencing some joy, some other emotions at the same time. There is room for things other than that big, swallowing grief to exist. In a way, dancing is a sort of sign; reckless abandon, a total lack of concern, freedom. Weird things to feel in a mind and body wracked with trauma and sorrow.

If nothing else, I've come to enjoy picking out moments of good in a sea of ambiguity or worse. I like having to sit with those moments for a bit, writing about them, reliving them as an observer looking to the past. Fresh enough that there is no tint to the glass, no fingerprints to help you grip and hold on too tightly, as we are wont to do.