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Category: Personal Essay & Memoir

Dancing With Words

In creative writing class my sophomore year, we were told to write about *nothing*. Here I am a few years later trying to encompass everything, in one essay. I keep going back to my ideas that depending on whom you ask, nothing is everything and everything is nothing since people think differently and prioritize different aspects of their lives. That same year, I was told that *my* everything was nothing; that my passion and dedication to dance would just amount to another line on my college application. Without my creativity, I would not be who I am. As a writer and a dancer, a key part of my identity is my ability to create and to think in unique ways. So, here I am a few years later, writing about “nothing” yet again. D

Having been put into dance at three years old, I do not remember life before ballet slippers and tutus, hence why dance is my everything. I did ballet for the first seven years of my dancing career and tap for the first nine years. These two styles of dance established my foundation physically, with strong arms and quick feet as well as my mental ability to learn just as quickly, to memorize choreographies, synchronize with both other dancers and the music. With this base, I was able to explore jazz by the time I was eight years old and then hip hop when I was ten, both of which gave me more creative freedom within the art and helped me to grow as a dancer and a person with more self-confidence. Although I stopped ballet, tap, and jazz, hip hop has powered through my need for change as I am constantly motivated to grow and get stronger, especially for competitions- which I have been doing since 2019. My passion for writing also began at an early age, at about seven years old. I loved writing stories for my English class, which helped me learn the language faster after moving from Brazil. However, the need for freedom with my creativity persisted as I learned about different forms of writing and eventually settled on my favorite in middle school: poetry. With poetry, I could forget the rules of grammar and combine beautiful words until they evoked any emotion I wanted to convey. Essentially, I could dance with words in finding the right rhythm and beat to match my mood, which is something magical.

Both of these artforms have extended beyond pastimes and essentially are my heartbeat. Each thump of those beats pumps the ink that is my blood, the perfect symbiosis laying the foundation for all that is me. Poetry and prose make up my DNA as its double helix performs pirouettes. Quite frankly, these two creative outlets give me life. As I compose with my feet and scribble with my arms, I am encompassed by euphoria on the dance floor. This feeling has become a necessity, only felt by either writing or dancing. A feeling that is only created by my creativity as my words leap onto the pages that make up my muscles which power my body to pop at the swirl of a pen.

The rest of the world seems to disappear when I am dancing or writing. Nothing matters in the moment that I dance or write except the emotion I am focusing on; both victories and losses have manifested in my artforms. No matter how many changes I have endured, whether it was moving from Brazil to the United States or losing my grandmother to cancer, I have been comforted and kept alive by my passions.

I did not want dance or writing to just be two other lines on my college application, because that would not reflect their importance to me and impact in my life, as my two passions have become everything. Because without dance and writing, I am nothing.