

Scores for Dancing Across Distances

Lee Su-Feh

Openings and Obstacles

A set of tasks to dance with, alone or with others.

A set of tasks to solve problems with.

A set of tasks to fight with,

To love with.

Start with your body.

Follow openings.

“Openings” are pleasure, curiosity, or desire.

Follow openings.

Yield to or soften around obstacles.

“Obstacles” are pain, boredom, or resistance.

Yield around obstacles.

To yield is neither to push into nor to pull away,

But to soften around the obstacle

The way your palm might soften around a cactus

In order not to be hurt by the spines.

Yield so that the obstacle is not ignored,

But is acknowledged, held with care.

Observe the consequences of each action.

(One little movement in one part of the body

Connects to every movement in the rest of the body;
One little flutter of a wing in one part of the planet
Is related to earth-shifting events in another part.)

Notice the changed shape of you.
Notice new pleasures, new obstacles.

Repeat.

Apply to everything.

(Start with your body.)

Touch Me Hold Me Let Me Go

An algorithm for dancing with the planet.
An algorithm for dancing with your beloved.
An algorithm for dancing from enough-ness.
To practice love in the midst of distress,
To practice care in the midst of distress.

You may replace “me” with any part of the body that requires your attention.
Use Openings and Obstacles as your basic operating system.

Example:

Start with your body.
Follow openings,
Yield around obstacles.
While following and yielding,
You might find that your neck requires attention.
You might then say,
(To your beloved, say,)
“Touch my neck.”

Let your body receive this touch.
Let your body reorganize around this touch.

Notice your breath change.
Notice your weight shift.
You might then realize your head is tired and wants to rest.
You might then say, "Hold my head."

Let your head be held.

(Let the planet hold you.
Let your breath have its way with you.)

Notice the changed shape of you.
Notice new pleasures, new obstacles.

Repeat.

(Start with your body ...)

Apply to everything.

Touch Me Hold Me
Can be repeated in any sequence
According to the needs of your body in time and space.
This can potentially create rhythm, repetition, phrasing.
This can potentially measure time.

There is time.

Let Me Go is a moment to listen for.

When does it happen?
Have you been touched enough?
Have you been held enough?
Do you need more space?

For variation, or if you need to, you may also say,
“Don’t let me go.”

Let me go let me go don’t let me go don’t let me go.
Let me go let me go don’t let me go don’t let me go.
Let me go let me go don’t let me go don’t let me go.
Let me go let me go don’t let me go don’t let me go.

Find rhythm.

Repeat.

Apply to everything.

Scores for Dancing Across Distances came out of my three-year residency at Dancemakers Creation Centre in Toronto, which I completed in July 2020. The residency had initially begun in pre-pandemic life, when physical, close, and in-person participation had still been possible, but two years later, with COVID-19 in our midst, the residency went online and was subsequently conducted via Zoom, messaging apps, phone calls, sound files, video files, and packages sent through Canada Post. For much of 2019, I had pondered on what it meant to dance with love and longing for long-distance lovers. In 2020, almost everyone in my life became a long-distance lover. — Lee Su-Feh