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Why I Don't Dance What I Write

I'm a dancer and a writer. I use my muscles, bones and joints to express myself exactly as I use words, comparisons and expressions to create new worlds. I read books as I watch others dance. I notice their technique, their limits, their creativity. I imitate, and I grow. Just as one cannot be a good writer without practicing every day, one cannot be a good dancer without training the body.

As a writer, words are my instruments. I sharpen them if I need to attack, and I make them soft and mellow when I need to console and heal. The more words I know, the more ways I know to put them together, the more ways to use them I discover. Like a painter who knows which colors to mix together to get the desired result, I know which words to mix to get what I want. The more flexible I am, the further I can go. The stronger I am, the longer I can hold a position. The more I know about my body, the more movements I can use and the more sequences I can invent.

I know exactly what I do with my words and body.

“But you can always have dancing as a hobby,” I hear again and again and again.

Like it would be possible to say everything I want to using only words. It's not.

I've read many detailed descriptions of movements. You look at the illustration and read again, but are still not sure if you understood. When a dancer does the movement, you get it within seconds. You don't memorize it yet, but you see and understand. The description of other artwork can be stunning, but it's always only a description. It can never have the same effect on you as the real thing has. I don't want to say it has never been done before- it has, and very masterfully. Without ekphrasis we wouldn't have “The Picture of Dorian Gray” by Oscar Wilde nor “Goldfinch” by Donna Tart. In both of these novels, the painting is not just a description, but has become a character in itself

I struggled to find a way to unite my writing and dancing until my friend, an ambulance worker, poet and artist, told me, “There are ideas I paint, and there are ideas I write poems about. Some things I can only express with colors, other things only by words.”

And even though his poems have lot of colors also, I agree with him.

In art, form and meaning are inseparable. As a child, I always had to explain the meaning of a poem, and I noticed how dull it was, how without form there was no poem—the whole thing fell apart. I hated this assignment and furthermore didn't see any point in poetry. Now I see that we can't separate form and meaning. You can only ask children about their feelings about the poems or thoughts a poem provokes, but never what the author meant by it without using form, because poets don't write the ideas of their poems down without the form. That would be silly. The idea comes to a poet already formed. It's exactly how you can't ask painter to explain his work without colors. He can never deliver you the same message by words. That's why he paints. And that's what makes different mediums great. They give us possibilities to express different things.