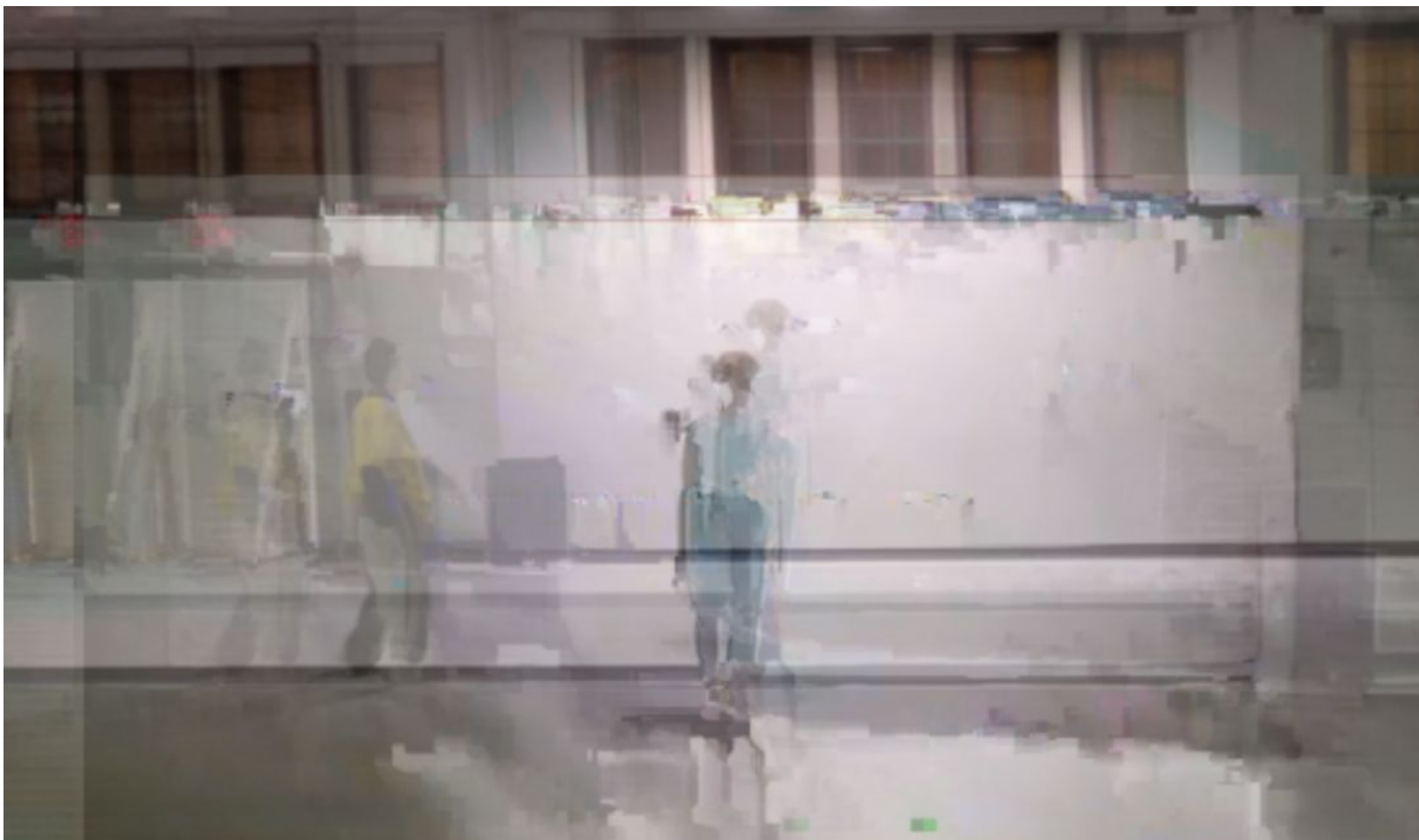


The Mist and Shadows and Everything Else

Collection of Writings



Imani Butler, Kaijo Caggins, and
Emma Mulvey-Welsh

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Artist Statements

“i’d like to start by saying that i have really ‘bad’ vision (in society’s terms of course), and my natural way of seeing has been like this for as long as i can remember. i am privileged enough to wear contacts each day and glasses when i prefer. i have various lenses to see through, that make me chameleon-like. there’s this moment when i wake up in the morning.. i open my eyes to see what the day is offering. i see the room that i fell asleep to in another hue of light. this morning, the blues were a bit more blue and the sun rested on my skin -- my brown -- in a way that highlighted the veins in my hands. they were dancing. with life and courage. i remember that the way in which i am seeing this room, this space, is exactly how my eyes intended. without barriers. or artificial lenses. something so human. so personal. this is the current image to describe myself as i approach art and artmaking. the seeing is blurry and vibrant and different each day and dark and invisible and sometimes feels like my 9am alarm that i really hate and chocolate chips pancakes that i make with my mom and my dog when she decides that my lap is her resting place and my legs falling asleep because of it and drinking tequila with my brother even though it’s way too strong for me.. and the light that flickers and waves through the blinds of my room and long showers and days that it’s nice enough to dance outside and dreaming about my last dance in terra and the day that i get to be there again and my clothes that still need to be folded and the tears that i cry for-- and and and and and .

-----” - Kaijo

“On April 7, 2020, the work was all of the birds. Remembering that they each sound different. And then watching the crow go back and forth between front lawns all afternoon, and thinking about what that meant for us. And it was Emily showing us her forsythia her parent’s neighbor gave her, and me wishing I was back home, 3, or 8 homes ago. And it was me seeing my cat hear thunder for the first time. And it was looking at the largest supermoon of the year from the approximately 8 or 9 inch tall bathroom window. Trying to imagine how big the moon really is outside of this miniature picture frame. On April 10, 2020, the work was fear. It was a ghost, scanning the room. And it was me realizing things don’t change this way. And it was me re-re-re-re-re-reading a poem I wrote months ago that went like this, ‘The gaps between each of these steps is listening to me/Will you go underneath them?/I see you from the hole in my floor/Will you seep through it?’ On April 15, 2020, the work was forgiveness. On April 20,

2020, the work was trying to remember love. And it was thinking of blue duffle bags. And it was stress sweating while giving a virtual room tour to Katie's class, in a bedroom that has never been mine, with none of my things in it, only me and a few things I love, and some swords and books I am very afraid of. On April 24, 2020, the work was me thinking about the work. And it was missing splinters from park benches. And it was missing walking out of dance class sweaty into the warm sun and soft breeze. And it was imaging hope. On April 28, 2020, the work was seeing Jupiter sitting next to the moon right before sunset. And it was looking at trees in the distance between two houses. And it was thinking about simulation theory, and wondering how anyone could think this world is not real." - *Emma*

Imani Butler



(hanging as a writing)
.holding on to the top of this ladder from underneath..
is this bad luck?
my feet arent touching the ground
does it still count?
does the fact that im hanging subvert the superstition?
like black cats
why are things that are black generally equated with negativity?
why are black bodies always hanging?
im tired of this
im tired
im..
its hard to breathe
i think im panicking again
this isnt fair
why do i have to feel frantic but look calm?
this is an impossible task
you are asking too much
..but im doing it anyway
id like to see you try to do the things you expect of me
why dont you try hanging for a while
how do we always end up in this position?

i guess hanging doesnt subvert the superstition after all..

does anyone listen when i speak?
am i invisible to you?
should i repeat myself?
id rather not
am i not essential?
i know i am
but do you?
seemingly not
its not worth my time
i refuse to waste my essence on your ignorance
thank you for waking me up
and good luck

i have been thinking a lot about black love

our capacity to love

and the overwhelming amount of hurdles we've had to conquer in order to keep that capacity all of the times in our history (including recent) that that ability to embrace and share and caress and adore and cherish and honor and respect and accept and support and protect and encourage tenderly passionately and unconditionally has been attempted to be stripped from us and failed.

and rather has pushed us further into an admiration for each other, a way to remind us to fight for each other, always advocating and cultivating each others dreams, allowing space for each other, room for self always. worship and better each other, be a light for one another, be courteous and selfless towards each other, be proud of one another's accomplishments, help each other in our downfalls, get angry and forgive each other. see the beauty of each other.

LOVE each other.

with all of the opportunities we could have forgotten these principles we continue to persevere and show care at a level that only we can understand. we have created a secret language of love that we couldn't let others in on even if we tried.

and for that i am thankful.

our struggles have made us stronger

an impenetrable spirit of love

we will never let you break that.

its time to jump
here i go.
jumping through the air
its cold but not the temperature
just the wind hitting my self (but really it's not)
... (it's really just wishful thinking)
am i going to land?
im coming down now
i missed the edge
fuck, that's embarrassing
shake it off
hopefully no one saw
(no one did)
i stand looking in awe of all the things available to me..
i stand looking in awe of all the things unavailable to me..
there is so much before me
there is so much nothingness before me
what should i do in this expanse of time?
this expanse of space?
I guess i'll just sit here some more
i guess i'll just exist here some more
maybe my sister will want to have conversation
oh, she's on her phone again
..maybe another time
i don't know if this music is chaotic or calming
should i be headbanging or sleeping?
i think i'll try both
i continue to tip toe around the things other people see fit
maybe i should think about myself..
..maybe another time
for right now its time to jump
here i go..

Kaijo Caggins



Folding socks (yep i should fold socks)

1. Walk to the dryer
2. Take the socks out of the dryer
3. Carry basket to the couch
4. Start folding socks
5. Repeat until...

I've noticed that as I am in this practice I become very focused on the rhythm of the task. I think that folding socks is a 3. Even though there are 5 parts to the task.

I am thinking about my mom and my shu shu and my grannie.--maybe the socks they've folded/are folding the socks i'm folding/have to fold. I don't know how long I've been doing this. but i know that i'll be doing it forever.

and now i'm washing my hands or something in my hands.
or something that's already clean
or something that will never be
to never be
do they want to be?
why would i want to be?
contained
controlled
constricted.
folded socks

I'm still kaijo despite my surroundings.
I still wake up and dream of worlds that will never exist.
And hold my hands wide open to the sun. in hopes of --

I think I'm here to write and I think I'm here to love. Synonyms if i truly think about it. They are endless actions. And multiple. And constantly in motion. I'm interested in writing as a dance. Loving as a dance. That there is no start or finish. Maybe no one sees it. There's just a within and inside space. That there is a tracing of lines and curves to then amalgamate a web..a collage. A being. That is breathing. And that is alive. And that thrives on the liveness that it radiates. The hues of yellow and turquoise and peach form this circular happening of honesty that it cannot escape. It is a constant. An always. I'm interested in what it means to be always. To maybe be definite. Transparent? One of a kind? This writing..this loving..this writing loving dance is important and true and proof of my existence. Human existence. If i imagine it..it tastes like a sunrise in july. The grass is a little wet. And my toes are touching the cold kitchen tiles. I'm in mississippi (yes i sang mississippi when i spelled it) my papa is dressing for church. But first he eats a bowl of cheerios. His white and grey chest hairs tell me good morning when I give him a hug. We sit together until morning turns to day.

It's a duet. It is fleeting. We're just dancing.

The liveness that I am experiencing is tactile. It always is.
Functionality

Gravity

And

Speed .

The touch is slow now. The pace is

f l e e t i n g .

A loop. A fleeting loop of time traveling. To where? To there? And
back and forth \\\\/\\/\

\\/\

The clouds are a site for me. The sunsets. Both at the same time.

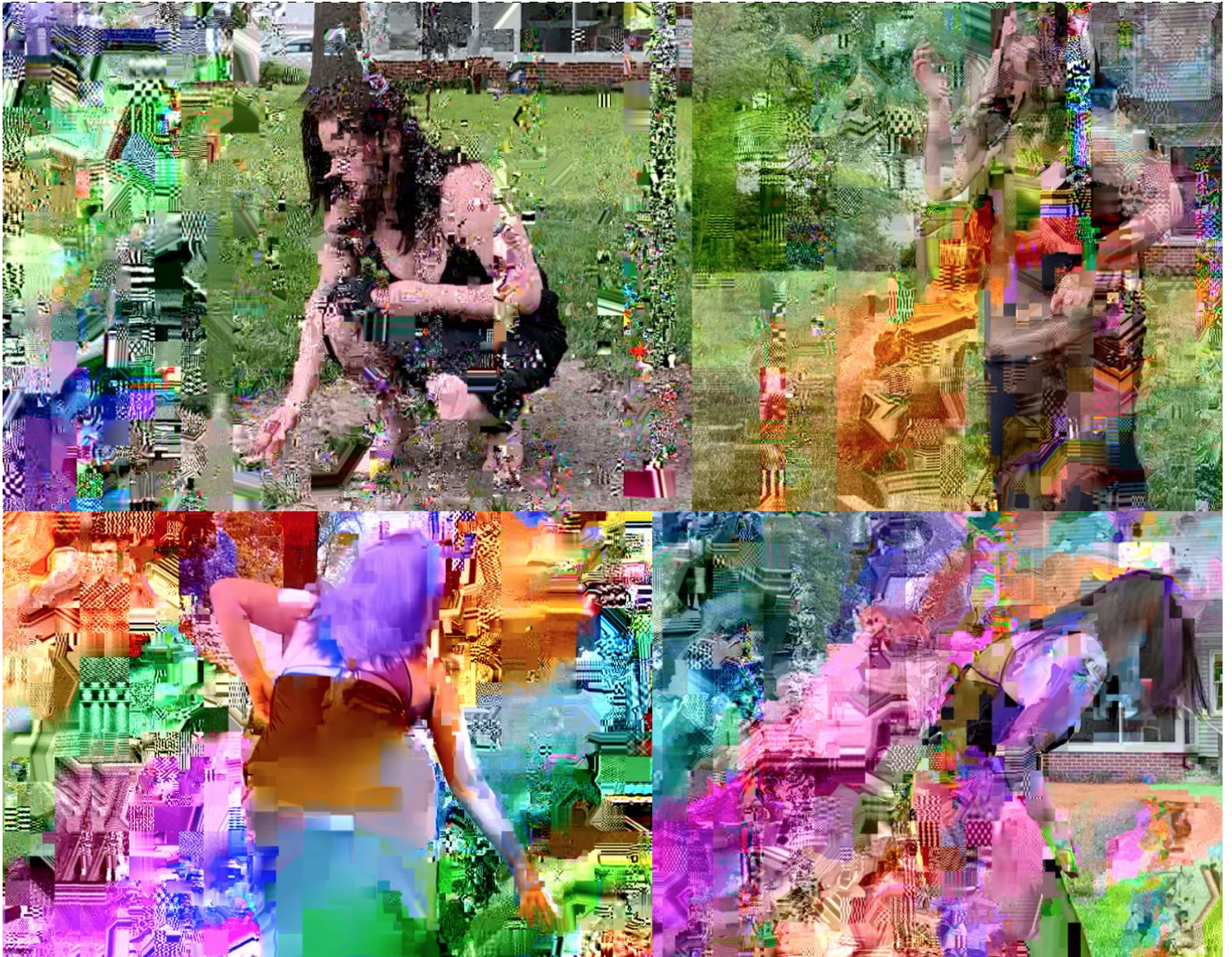
The time of the rising and falling is a constant.

Tactility in isolation. To imagine beyond these walls and this roof.
How to bring the clouds to my hands or my hands to the clouds....

Notes from Jesse's class -

worldbuilding... breath as an extension... as all we have... something we must do... a necessity...
a need... dancing from this place of roundness... other... outside of my locality...

Emma Mulvey-Welsh



I think a lot about how dance is so much more than I can imagine it is. It is so far beyond itself in ways that seem impossible to understand. I feel dance in everything I do/see/hear/feel(it goes on)...I'm so consumed by it's wonder, that I can look at a stack of CD's and convince myself that they are dancing. Sometimes I think, "yeah Emma, you're Bipolar, of course you think CD's are dancing". But I don't think it's fair to the CD's to say that, because what if, somehow, they really are dancing? I strongly believe that everything is dance, and dance is in everything, and anyone can dance, and anything can be dance, and any combination of things and words imaginable, is dance. If someone says they are dancing, I believe them. If a movie were able to come off the screen and whisper in my ear, "I am dancing", I would believe it (I think this has happened before).

"Dance", for me, is everything that shapes it. It is everything that shapes the people who shape the dance. It's the "choreographers" and the "dancers" favorite colors, the first time they scraped their knees, everything they have ever done/thought/learned/dreamed/imagined/heard/(it goes on again)...I believe the same is true for rehearsals. Everything that happens in rehearsal shapes the work. At the beginning of our process for this thesis, we had talked about wanting to have synthesizers and microphones in the final performance to manipulate the sound/space/dance/(on, and on, and on, and on). But, I got to a point a few weeks into our process where I kept thinking, "Well, they are the synthesizers. They are manipulating the sound score just by being in the space". And we let the idea of physical objects in the space go, and we agreed that they were still in the work, even though they weren't, because we had imagined them to be, and we had talked about them being there, and that was enough for us to believe they were in it. I think of Simone White asking, "why isn't poetry enough for you?"...I love to crossread and ask, "why isn't dance enough for you?", but I don't think cross reading is always necessary, because poetry is dance, and dance is poetry.

I remember our first rehearsal. Approximately 2 or 2 and half hours of me repeatedly saying "You don't have to dance if you don't want to. Do you guys want to dance? You can if you want but you don't have to". I wasn't ready to tell people what to do with their bodies and not feel guilt. I also wasn't sure how to explain that I don't care about "dancing". I knew from the beginning that for me, it felt wrong to use my thesis as a way to showcase myself or my research through other bodies. My own research is so deeply personal, I didn't know how to share that. I wanted to create a space for other, younger people in our school to have a place in the setting that is "Senior Thesis Works", because it is so often filled with older students. And we talked about this together, a lot. And we talked about who always seems to get casted and why, a lot. And we talked about all the problems we see in our community, and how we try and do our best to hold each other accountable, and how disheartening it is to see certain things happen from certain people. And we laughed together about these things, a lot. And we were angry together about these things, a lot. And we talked about how grateful we were to have this place, and our

teachers, and our peers, a whole lot. When I say a lot, I mean, every single one of our 3 hour rehearsals we had in terra was 2 hours of talking, 30 minutes of dancing, then 30 minutes of more talking. Sometimes we got an hour of dancing in. But it was necessary work. Talking is necessary work. And those discussions are in the work, because they became a part of us as, “Imani, Kaijo, and Emma making our Senior Thesis”.

I went into this process knowing I wanted to continue my research of noise and industrial music and how it relates to dance. I first started researching the relationship between the two in early/mid 2018. I have a deep love for noise and industrial music, and of course dance, so I desperately wanted them to meet (or, dramatically crash into each other and explode in front of me). Once we started shifting into a virtual thesis, I knew the next step was to work with databending and glitch art, since they inherently go hand in hand with noise and industrial music. I was so excited to start using glitch art and databending as a way to further our work together. I’ve been interested in utilizing glitch art in dance for a while but I never felt like anything I was working on was right for it. I think it felt right for this project because it was an easy way for us to still continue to collaborate and try new things, and respond to each other while being so far away. I’m interested in the idea of glitch art as a collaboration between person(s)/image/text/(going on), and technology. Glitch art subverts expectations of how something is supposed to work, which makes it so exciting. When you databend something, you manipulate the coding to create something new. But, within that human manipulation, the computer responds, and begins making its own decisions on what the final product will become. The application of digital materiality to material materiality, desirable short comings, beauty in brokenness, unpredictability, the implications of not being able to see everything clearly, asking a machine/image/text/video to do something it wasn’t meant to do...crossread?; Asking a dance/audience/space/performance to do something it wasn’t meant to do...

This isn’t “The Work That Never Was” or “The Work No One Will Ever Get To See” or “The Thesis I Never Got To Do”. This is the same work, the same thesis, except now it is able to exist so far beyond itself, and beyond the restrictions of “performance”, and beyond even my own wildest dreams of what “dance” is “allowed” to be. I think this work might be The Mist. In one rehearsal, I was describing The Mist to Kaijo, to give a feeling to the slow walking forward at the beginning of “the piece”. I said to Kaijo: "Make yourself a giant, like a giant monster of mist and shadows consuming the audience so they aren't only forced to see you but they feel you cling to every hair on their body, you have the power to do this just with your eyes, your breath, your presence. Your staring can be a hiss in the audience's ears." I get to the end of this quote now and think maybe this work is The Hiss. Or maybe, Imani is The Hiss and Kaijo is The Mist. Or maybe it is everything. Here is an example of what I think the mist and shadows that Kaijo manifests as looks like:



Dalbit-Moonscape, Lee Jaesam, 2014, From the collection of: National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea

I didn't mourn the live performance of this work until the day it was supposed to premiere. I yearned for Imani and Kaijo to have the opportunity to completely demolish the confines of the YGym, and disrupt everyone's preconceptions of them/dance/performance/security/(still, it goes on). We talked so much together about who would make up a large portion of the audience for our section, and how excitingly hilarious it was that they would have to watch this and think "what the fuck is going on in here".

May 1, 2017 at 7:56 PM

Freshman Project Reflection

How has your participation in this project changed your understanding of yourself as a dancer, and your sense of this community?

During this process I was able to look from the outside for a long time which made me recognize what everyone in this community is capable of, which was a really exciting experience. I had a long time to be able to watch everyone in my section and really learn how they work and move which is something that I really appreciate having the privilege of knowing...when I began entering the piece towards the end of this whole process it was very exciting and I was very grateful that I got to be a part of it with everyone else even though it was only a small moment of time. I feel so inspired by every single person in this community and I am full of bliss watching each and every single person dance and I am so BEYOND EXCITED to watch everyone grow and develop and create and inspire and CONTINUE!!! I think constantly about how lucky we all are to be surrounded by such amazing creative minds and it's incredible

I found this in my notes today. I read it now and thought, "Oh Emma, if only you knew". My whole time at college I have had constant feelings of almost paralyzing amazement by everyone I am blessed to be able to work with/around/near/(it will always go on). To share spaces with such incredibly talented, and overwhelmingly intelligent, and magical people, I can't put into words what that has done for me. I think often about what my high school called "shared values", we would say them in the morning, rather than the pledge of allegiance. We had 4 sayings; "Community with Social Responsibility", "Diversity with Respect", "Passion with Balance", and "Vision with Integrity". I carry these with me through my life because I feel they are so important to remember and continue to discover.

To the girl I was as a child, from the person I am now. Trying to reimagine love,

I believe in time

She hates the smell of salt and sulfur,
the way the soles of my shoes smell after
I sit dangling above the water, watching
the dead jellyfish crash into the rocks beneath me.

I saw my first dead jellyfish with her
when I was 4 years old, and I knew
it was dead. I didn't talk to her yet
but if I had I would have probably told her,
I think it doesn't matter.

Instead I tell her, look closely at your bed
and see my freckles,
ingrained in microcosmic threads of my skin
I peeled off and stitched together to make this blanket
for you.

All of my worlds drape around her.

I want to tell her,
I sink oceans, I shatter winds when I think of you.

Thank You

*To all infinitely possible versions of;
mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, cousins, aunts, uncles, grandmothers,
grandfathers, ancestors, past lives, friends, best friends, old friends,
future friends, peers, coworkers, classmates, teachers, professors,
roommates, books, songs, artists, people, dirt, grass, bushes, trees,
flowers, lakes, oceans, rocks, mountains, bugs, animals, fish, Mother
Earth, love, compassion, empathy, openness, time, space, the universe,
God, not God, Whoever, Whatever, all of it, everything,*