

Writing as a form of dance
Writing as expression
Writing as movement
Writing as discovery
Writing as destructure
Writing as messy
Writing as freedom
Writing as disrupting
Dancing as releasing the disruption.

ECHO

Does It get louder? Is it different? Does the Echo end? Can the Echo become useful? When do we heed the voice of others? What is the function of others in the stories we tell ourselves?

The only way to write about witnessing this show is by acknowledging the disruption that happened before going to see the show and after because that is what Alegna's story has taught me. There is a strange kind of beauty to be found in all our experiences; the ability to push past our discomfort, give new meanings to old feelings and create a new story

Disruption isn't always destruction. Sometimes, we are uprooted from the ground to be transformed into something new, to gain new perspective, to find new meaning, make new connections, find ways to be okay with our discomfort, forced to look at ourselves and accept who we are.

April 5th, 2022

"I can't believe how long it took to believe myself worthy of my own imagination. So many ideas get stopped that way—on the way to that belief."

-Eloghosa Osunde

I wanted this essay to be profound like I want everything I write to be. I wanted people to read it and marvel at how brilliant my mind works. I wanted it to be read as complex, meaningful, exceptional, unique, and intricately crafted because everything I write represents me, defines who I am as a writer, if I am worthy to call myself a writer at all and if writing is a gift, I possess at all. This is always the beginning of my problem. My strive for perfection. This is how imposter syndrome crawls its way into my brain, inhabits my mind and cause misalignment in my spirit. Then its sister anxiety follows closely, starting first from my toes to my knees, then to my shoulders and finally to my head causing my whole body to shake and explode into tiny, shattered pieces waiting to be picked up and put together again.

This afternoon as I head to the Young lung studio, there is chaos already brewing in my spirit that is slowly turning into war. My imposter syndrome is rearing its ugly head again, stretching out its neck and feeding me lies about myself.

Entering the studio, I feel disconcert. *What if I do not have anything to write about? What if I cannot deliver? What if my writing sucks? What if I have nothing to contribute? What kind of questions should I ask? What if these questions are not nuanced or intelligent? Then everyone would know that I am a fraud. What if I fail the person who trusted my writing enough to recommend me for this project?* I find something to do with my hands like I always do when anxiety threatens to make my body it's home.

I enter the studio, there are 5 chairs and 4 strange new faces that know nothing about the internal battle currently emerging. The smile I wear on my face is how I mask my sweaty palms, racing heart and anxious feet. I sit on the only empty chair in the room right beside Emily who is also wearing a mask. There is something warm about their face, something soothing about their presence that relaxes me a little. I am glad the empty chair isn't in the middle of the room; I tell myself as I sit. Nothing stops when my body shivers as the cold metal chair shocks my skin. The conversation continues like the room hasn't been disturbed by my presence and I am comforted by this because it doesn't draw attention to me. It feels like I have always belonged here. I fit neatly into this puzzle; 5 old friends having a conversation.

The person presenting says something about Echoes, words start jumping out of my mouth filling the room. I don't even realize I'd started speaking until I am quiet again. This shocks me! "In alignment comes stillness" Angela says next and something about that line registers deeply, so I write it down and taste it on my tongue 3x on my way home. I needed to know why out of everything that was said, this was what my brain was stuck on.

In alignment comes stillness

In alignment comes stillness

In alignment comes stillness

My body became still in that room, and I didn't even notice it until those words fell out of Angela's mouth. My anxiety had been quelled by the presence of these strange others, by how welcoming they made me feel, by Angela warming my body from the inside with the raspberry tea she handed me in a white mug. (*What is the function of others in the story we tell ourselves?*) We all sat there in harmony, asking questions, figuring out details of this dance show I wouldn't exactly be part of, yet my contribution mattered enough to be considered. There we all were, sat in a circle, bearing our souls out onto 8 white sheets held up to the wall with colorful pushpins. The space felt safe enough that my anxiety and imposter syndrome had nothing else to do but rest quietly on my feet.

They knew I was coming, and they made room for me I whisper to myself.

In alignment comes stillness

In alignment comes stillness

In alignment comes stillness

"Trust your intuition to guide your next step. You know so much more than you think. You hold more power than you realize. You already know what you must do because you hear the words echoing in your heart. Do you want to carve out your own path? To create your own story? To do something you've never done before? Then don't be afraid of the wealth of wisdom that flows

through every cell of your being. You have answers. You possess the understanding. You just have to trust yourself.”

-Zanna Keithley

April 6th, 2022

Journal entry I am hoping to start writing today.

ECHOING

The madness taking over my body was started by a simple question *Can I really do this?*

ECHOES

There is a full-blown war happening in my mind now

I was there seated in the dark wishing this thing will leave me alone.

Why must it be me every time?

Me screaming at them

Them screaming at me

Both of us fighting each other in this dimly lit room. Raising voices, throwing hands, wanting to gouge each other's eyes out and draw blood. Even though one is spirit, and the other is human.

I want to take its long hands and drag them on this brown, ugly ass old rug. I wanted them to watch their body burn and leave bruises on their skin. This is how I learnt to stay away from things I knew would hurt me. I remember not learning how to ride a bike, too afraid I was going to fall and fail. That fear taught me a lesson. I never learned how to ride a bike.

Yes! I want to leave them with scars

Maybe that way they would pack their shit and go. Leave me the fuck alone for once.

Maybe that way, they would see that I can't take it anymore. The screaming, the fighting, the resistance...I can't take any of it anymore.

It gets too loud in my head sometimes.

I have asked them for peace and quiet so many times, yet they remain loud, rowdy, and unruly like school children walking in herds after 4pm.

I want peace!

I need everything to be quiet!

Aren't there others whose peace should be disrupted? Why must it be only me?

I am fighting too many things right now I tell it.

April 7th, 2022

** Journal entry* I need to start writing today!!*

I am listening to the recording I made when I went to studio searching for themes to write and questions the work is asking me. I come up with question around Beauty? Isolation? Echo? Acceptance? Agency? Boundaries? Imperfection? Perfection? The self? Self-inventory? Our relationship with our body? Looking glass self? Alegna's relationship with herself, her body, and the land? Internal and external voices? Re-Vision: Realizing that scars be appreciated? What masks help us shield? How growth arm us with tools that help us respond differently then we would've in the past? What stories does Alegna tell herself about her experience and how does that change when she begins to embrace the beauty in imperfection? What is the function of others in her story? Alignment?

How do I put all these together in a way that makes sense to the audience who reads my work?

I don't start writing because I am crippled by my own fear of failure. I need this to be perfect. I need this to be good. I spend the whole day questioning if I am fit to write this, that I write nothing at all. **I hear voices that do not belong to me telling me lies about my abilities**

April 8th, 2022

**Journal entry* I must write something today!!*

I have written 4 rough drafts detailing what I initially intended to write but they don't feel right.

I delete them all.

1:00AM: *Blank page...*

April 9th, 2022

Journal entry* (panic mode) **OMO!! I HAVENT WRITTEN SHIT!!!*

Alegna was not perfect. She did not live happily ever after, but she was fine.

“In alignment comes stillness”

I did not know that being a part of this show was going to be this transformative. This how I know I was meant to experience it exactly the way I did, holding both my imposter syndrome and anxiety in my hands.

I was comforted when Angela talked about the echoes in her head like she could hear those in mine or how her therapist taught her to differentiate the internal vs the external noise.

Alegna’s story is not perfect but there is a revision and a rebirth that happens when she saw the imperfection in others and stopped worrying too much about her own which resulted in her taking charge of her life.

Her story isn’t about getting rid of any imperfections, it is about understanding them and revolutionizing the thought she had of herself now that she saw things differently. Once she was able to do that, the internal and external stop fighting each other then came alignment and in alignment there was complete stillness

April 10th, 2022- Endnote Roundtable Discussion

10:30am: I am not sure this is what wanted to write about. I am perturbed by how imperfect this feels. I am greatly concerned that I haven’t delivered. I am worried that no one will understand why I wrote this essay this way. Did I understand the assignment?

11:00am: I reread Jill’s message “I am looking forward to hearing and experiencing your words no matter how loose and unedited

12:00pm: I am not sure I am satisfied with what I have written I say to myself. I am not sure that I ever will. It is oddly comforting acknowledging this truth. I wouldn’t have in the past. I close my laptop.

12:30pm: **scribbled in my journal** Remember that perfection is unattainable. Imperfection is what makes the natural world so uniquely beautiful. *I listen to that.*

1:00pm: I head to the studio again. This time I could tell difference the between the noise of my heart and the noise of the car outside. I was sure the noise wasn’t going to drown me. I smile. I feel empowered by the work of these artists.