

Dear

Hanna

Thank you so much for this wonderful letter you sent me. I received it just when I was about to take the metro to catch Arlanda Express and my flight to Berlin (or should I say to Berghain?) where I was going to for the weekend. I start to think that this was not coincidental at all, that there is some kind of force that binds your invitation to make a c.along with you with what keeps me going back to Berlin as much as I can since I left this city that became my home town, one year ago and after ten years living there. At the beginning of your letter, you speak about our first meeting to start this process: you mention that we were both kind of hung over, and that I was just coming back from Berlin. I was telling you about my weekend in Berghain, about this incredibly hot guy I hooked up with and this unexpected swimming pool after party. Some weeks later I received your letter, just before going back to Berlin. Today, I finally find the time to answer you and I am actually flying again to Berlin tomorrow morning. It is Easter weekend, which in Berlin means massive partying. It is during the Easter weekend that every year in Berghain there is this party called SNAX, a “pervy-party, men only” as stated in the club program. It is followed by the usual Klubnacht, which is open to everybody (who is successful at passing through the door selection).

This is no coincidence to me. Especially after reading your letter again and thinking of what we talked about during this pasta lunch. PS: I did notice I had some pasta sauce in my beard while I was talking to you, but as I didn't know for how long it was stuck in my hair, I thought *what's the hell! Let's finish saying what I am saying before I sweep it off.* Anyway, what I want to say is that in our conversations and meetings, several topics appear, bluntly or just beneath the surface: deviations (or *desire lines*, as you say in your letter, quoting Sara Ahmed), heterotopic spaces, the body, dance and sex. I tell you about my years of dancing topless to techno in Berghain, my enjoyment of being surrounded by other topless and sweaty bodies dancing to the beat, the sexual vibe that comes along with it, or should I say the smell of sex, and this incredible feeling of freedom. Embodied freedom. You tell me about this feminist dance party you ran over six years, and about this summer in 2007, your ecstatic experience of your naked and sweaty body surrounded by hundreds of sweaty, naked and ecstatic bodies. I tell you about how normal it is for me to see a blowjob next to me on the dance floor, about this guy I was making out with for four hours while dancing at the same time and how this was an incredible sexual experience. You tell me about this girl with whom you are sex-bonding in Los Angeles. You quote Lita Pertá who speaks about “the joys of having holes and fingers and filling them and fucking them”. I tell you about when I got kicked out by a security macho-style guy from a club in Stockholm, which was hosting a queer feminist party, because my friend and I were dancing topless, and about how angry that made me.

You tell me about the fact that you rarely dance anymore.

The soil of the garden slides between your teeth, your saliva moistens it, you feed m/e with it your tongue in m/y mouth your hands on m/y cheeks holding m/e still, I am transformed into mud m/y legs m/y sex m/y thighs m/y belly standing between your legs glutted with the smell of the vaginal secretion rising from your middle, I liquefy within and without. The mud reaches the muscles of m/y thighs, it touches m/y sex, it coats m/e cold and slippery, m/y labia retracting it spreads to m/y abdomen m/y kidneys m/y shoulderblades the nape of m/y neck which is circumvented in its turn, m/y neck bows, you still holding m/y cheeks in your hands filling m/e with saliva and earth your tongue against m/y gums. M/y muscles separate from each other in sodden masses. M/y entire body is overwhelmed. First to fall is m/y anus. Some glutei soon follow. M/y biceps abandon m/y arms. The arms themselves fall entire to the ground. Only m/y cheeks remain intact. A very strong smell of moist earth spreads around. I see plants rooted in the fibres of m/y muscles.

(Monique Wittig, *The Lesbian Body*)

I think it's wonderful we're talking about all this, considering that we barely know each other. I am rather comfortable with speaking of these kind of things, and I must say, the more often the better. But I am also very much aware that it's not something I do with everybody, especially with someone I barely know. I am not so happy when I actually feel a restriction to speak of these things, or more precisely to speak of these things the way I want to talk about them. This feeling of restriction usually happens when someone in front of you or a context put you in a closet. You might shut up, but it's actually not your choice. Someone, something, forces you into that. I guess I immediately felt comfortable to speak of all this with you although we are not intimate because of having experienced one of the c.along. I remember receiving the invitation in the form of a beautiful letter. I was just coming back from Berlin (AGAIN!!!!) with the last plane that lands around 23:00. I always take this plane when I come back. This plane is so perfect and fitting my schedule: I usually go to Berghain on Sunday afternoon, stay there until Monday morning, then go home and sleep a few hours or if my lucky, spend the day having sex and cuddling, and finally come back to Stockholm for a well deserved sleep before working again on Tuesday. So I arrived home like at 00:30, and opened this letter. I remember that I was too tired to read all of it at that time, but just skipping through the letter very briefly, I got so excited. I knew this was definitely something I wanted to attend. I was recognizing all the signs that were telling me that this would be a very special place, and as it showed when I finally attended it, a place where I would meet sisters and brothers in crime. Exactly what I am mostly missing in Stockholm, and what I keep on going back to each time I travel to Berlin. A place made of *desire lines*.

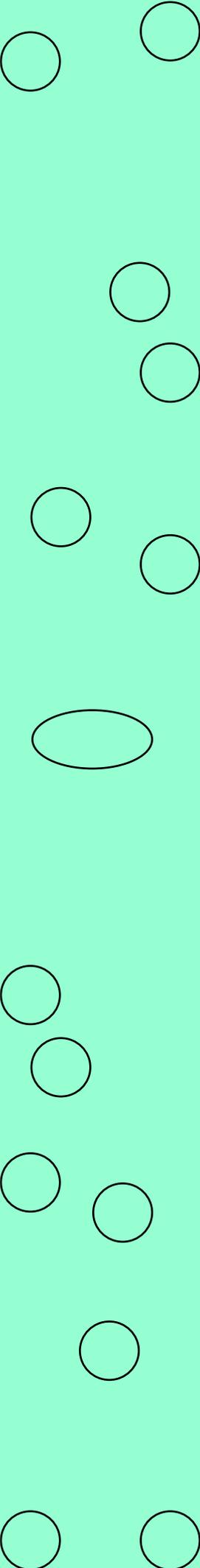
So... Let's keep on talking about our bodies, dance, sex and desire lines! I feel that it is so important to speak of this, about the kind of

experiences we have. It is a political action as much as these experiences are. I also feel that not speaking of it just makes our language poorer, like we are missing words that can describe the experience. This is just because we don't speak of it enough and lack of spaces where to talk collectively about it. We just have to practice speaking of it and create collective spaces for speaking about it in order to expand our language. Which words could I use to describe these hours of making out and dancing with this beautiful guy, the way it felt, the quality of his touch, the way our tongues were exploring each other, the way we were offering ourselves to each other, the sexual and the spiritual dimension of it, the way my lips were swollen and kind of stinging for two days after it?

I also feel like we are missing a practice of speaking about dance, about movement qualities we witness or experience in ourselves, about what we feel when we dance or watch someone's dance. How could I describe the dance of Gavin, my favourite dancer in Berghain?

I want to change this.

I have long been prepared for this phenomenon by various palpitations traversing m/y body at every instant. An urgent wave descends emitted by m/y brain under the touch of your fingers on m/y shoulders. M/y back opens between the shoulderblades to release the fan-shaped membranes compressed by the ribs. Violet and translucent they at once unfold and begin to quiver. You excite a new wave, your fingers arrest it at the level of m/y carotid. Now there is the gentle sound of a circular wing in process of beating, it surrounds m/y opened neck round to the nape where it is attached. It extends over m/y breasts its black veins visible in the deep mauve of the stretched skin. The unfolded beating wings brush against you not preventing you from drawing near, one of them passes over your cheeks, another makes you close your eyes. M/y brain assailed produces increasingly rapid waves. The wings are born incessantly with ever-increasing speed. M/y arms are attached to m/y sides by two gigantic wings of a black colour, once folded they are no thicker than a knife-blade, their substance is identical with that silk flags are made of. Their shape is comparable to that of the wings of bats. Each of m/y ribs is the shank of a newly-created wing. Arranged in parallel the closed wings seen in profile resemble the antennae of a lamellicorn. Outspread they begin to rustle exposing the dull gleam of their indigo pink mauve violet colour. You stand opposite lashed by their rapid flapping your arms protecting your face eyes open. The multiplication proceeds the wings now extend as far as m/y hips, at m/y feet two membranes arise and open at once diaphanous violet palpitant transmitting waves. A quiet hissing issues from your throat while I stay motionless body petrified before you wings all outspread traversed throughout by vertiginous movements which at this moment make you cry out,



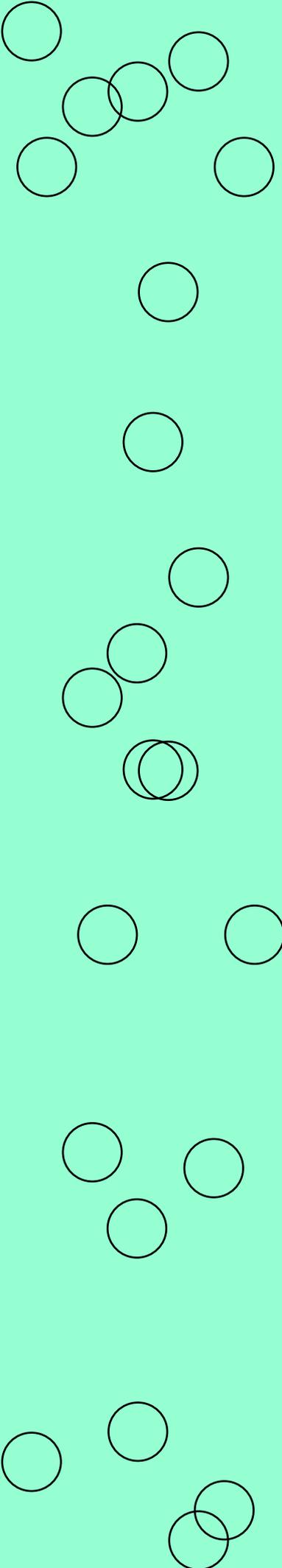
while sombrely m/y so desired one I enfold you.
(Monique Wittig, *The Lesbian Body*)

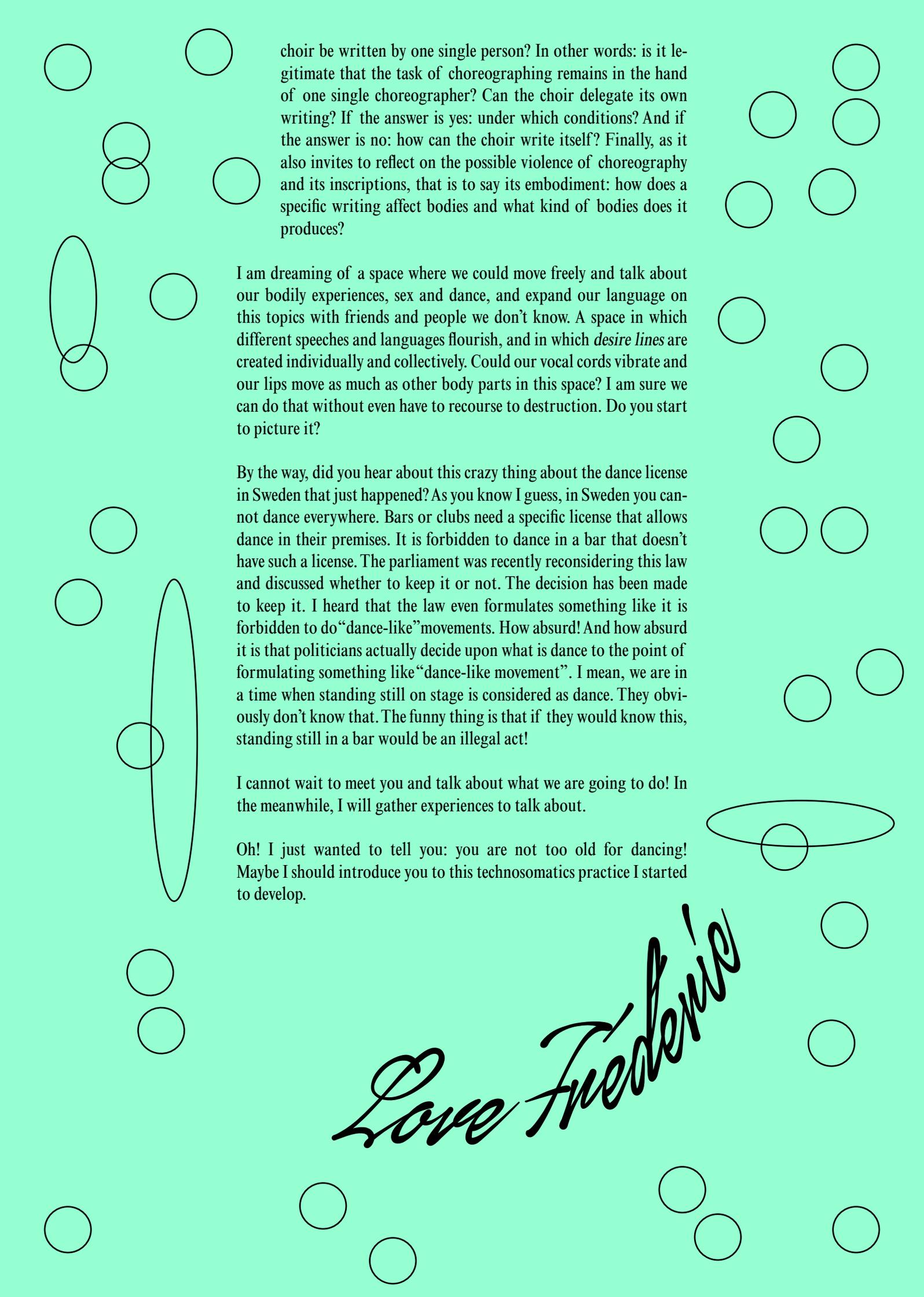
Last time I was in Berghain, two weeks ago, I had again one of these amazing nights. The music was so good and the dance floor not too packed so there was enough space for taking space with your dance. The day after, I remember telling to a friend: *I want to be surrounded by topless people all the time! Why isn't it always like that?* Topless or not, I just think that what I enjoy so much is to be surrounded by people that in their way of being present seem to say *Yes, I have a body! I am sexual! And I enjoy it!* I was also thinking of the conversations I have there, with friends and with people I absolutely don't know. I often find myself speaking with people I don't know about very intimate things. Somehow the place is a very safe environment for that. Maybe because it is a place for *desire lines*, and because the techno music envelops our voices. There's also a lot of caring for each other in this place. There's a *dispositif* that allows for that.

I think I told you about this during our pasta lunch: I was preparing this public conversation together with Victoria Perez Royo about my research project "Bad girls practices: un-writing dance, the body and the choir" and because of a game she proposed to facilitate our dialogue, I bumped into a wonderful picture of a destroyed theater as I was googling the word *heterotopia*. I loved this picture, because for me it was like the destruction of a heterotopia – the theatre – was opening up to a possible new heterotopia. There was no way to use the theater as it is supposed to be used. Somehow, to make a link to what we have been speaking of, it is like this destroyed theatre only allows for *desire lines* as all the other lines have been destroyed.

As you know, I ended up having quite some issues with the word choreography and with the act of choreographing, which is quite funny as I am a choreographer and a senior lecturer in choreography. These issues have always been subterranean within my whole artistic pathway, but they came to light so clearly throughout my research project. To shortly give an account on these issues, I will just quote a text I wrote in which I introduce my research:

Etymologically, choreography means writing the circle dance, the choir dance. If one understands the choir dance as the choir, as what bodies do together and as how they move collectively, then there is a political issue at the core of the task of choreographing. Interestingly enough, the word made its first appearance in 1700, during French absolutism, to name a dance notation system created by Raul Auger Feuillet, who made his career at the Royal Academy of Music in France. As the dances it concerned were constitutive of a form social control and of the representation of the absolute power of the king, the word choreography is originally bound to the political system in which it emerged. Looking at choreography from both the angles of its etymology and its genealogy, the link between choreography and politics appears clearly. It poses basic questions, which are entangled – I suggest- with the task of choreographing: which political agenda does a specific form of writing serve? Can the





choir be written by one single person? In other words: is it legitimate that the task of choreographing remains in the hand of one single choreographer? Can the choir delegate its own writing? If the answer is yes: under which conditions? And if the answer is no: how can the choir write itself? Finally, as it also invites to reflect on the possible violence of choreography and its inscriptions, that is to say its embodiment: how does a specific writing affect bodies and what kind of bodies does it produce?

I am dreaming of a space where we could move freely and talk about our bodily experiences, sex and dance, and expand our language on this topics with friends and people we don't know. A space in which different speeches and languages flourish, and in which *desire lines* are created individually and collectively. Could our vocal cords vibrate and our lips move as much as other body parts in this space? I am sure we can do that without even have to recourse to destruction. Do you start to picture it?

By the way, did you hear about this crazy thing about the dance license in Sweden that just happened? As you know I guess, in Sweden you cannot dance everywhere. Bars or clubs need a specific license that allows dance in their premises. It is forbidden to dance in a bar that doesn't have such a license. The parliament was recently reconsidering this law and discussed whether to keep it or not. The decision has been made to keep it. I heard that the law even formulates something like it is forbidden to do "dance-like" movements. How absurd! And how absurd it is that politicians actually decide upon what is dance to the point of formulating something like "dance-like movement". I mean, we are in a time when standing still on stage is considered as dance. They obviously don't know that. The funny thing is that if they would know this, standing still in a bar would be an illegal act!

I cannot wait to meet you and talk about what we are going to do! In the meanwhile, I will gather experiences to talk about.

Oh! I just wanted to tell you: you are not too old for dancing! Maybe I should introduce you to this technosomatics practice I started to develop.

Love Frederica