

Triptych with Flesh Frames

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Reflections on the mentored creative process for [TOMBO\(Y\)LA](#), written for South East Dance's [The Red Line](#). With support from the Pebble Trust Flourish Bursary 2017 and thanks to Liz Aggiss.

To hold one

A grippy body lock
Of muscle block
A tight fist of
History
Clinging on
In tissue
For fear
For trying too hard
For not having to feel
Or fall
Into lightness or
Ease or
Sometimes anything at all
In that numbed up
Subtle screwing up of flesh
Holding back
Bracing against
Sometimes with good reason
In the past

But
Still
Holding on for the dear life
Throbbing gamely anyway
In veins clutched by
A wincing heart
Is still a little squeeze of love

To hold two

I once cupped a human head
with the invitation
to know that space

was swelling away from
my hand back

also with the image
(somewhat absurd)
that the head I held
might know that space
as well

and spill
a sense of selfness
through scalp flakes and
hair locks
and my warm fingers
into a wider
openness
(seemingly miraculously).

So there's me bending to brow
thinking, silly to think open as I
enclose,
but heads, fingers
and the whole quivering thing
unfolded a touch
in me holding
him

To hold three: an auto frame-up

To be making a solo for yourself
Means:

To be inside the frame you hold for yourself and therefore dancing the dance you
make with your hands full

To be trying to define the edges of what is seen by someone else without fully seeing it yourself and so to be seeing by feel for a while
To be trying to hem in your own sense of careening chaos and urges to overreach or flail about in general whilst at the same time being the one to decide what of that is real content or is best left out
To be making a work within a work within a work, a solo that is part of your career and a window on your life
To be humbled and released incrementally in the knowledge that you can't hold that window open for very long, or even recognise sill, jamb or head without touching or holding the gaze of another