

Danse Russe

Danyelle Pullens

“I am lonely, lonely.
I was born to be lonely,
I am best so!”

Danse Russe by William Carlos Williams

She stood in the center of a small circular platform. Her feet, which were encased in silky white ballerina shoes, met at the ankles, and her toes pointed outward. Her violin was held loosely in one hand, and her bow was held in the other, both held at her sides. Her hair was pulled back neatly from her face, and her white dress looked brand new. The smile that graced her face was natural and genuine as she gazed out at the endless Blue that surrounded her.

After a count of three, she lifted her hands and began to play. The music seemed slow and gentle at first before growing into a whimsical tune as the platform beneath her began to turn. Completely at ease, she shifted her feet wider apart and lifted herself onto the tips of her toes, and at the end of a long note, she paused.

The world around her seemed to freeze.

With a deep breath, she began dancing as she continued her song. Around and around she would leap and twirl. Never once did she miss a note. Never once did she lose her smile. She looked to the world like a bird about to take flight, but never once did she step off the platform. She was in control, and no one could take that from her.

My name is... Amelia.

She was back to the center of the platform. Her ankles touching, her dress new, and her smile in place. Her violin and bow were held to her sides. With a smile and a breath, she began to play. The Blue that surrounded her seemed to dance with her, leaping and twirling with no end in sight. There was a feeling in her chest; it felt like millions of tiny bubbles that wanted to escape through her mouth.

Laughter. Happiness. Contentment.

She was where she was supposed to be.

She never stepped off the platform.

My name is Amelia.

The Blue was always with her for every dance. Lifting and holding her with warm hands, never letting her fall off her platform. There was



bubbling laughter and unstoppable smiles. Sometimes, if she listened really hard, she could hear gentle chimes in the background that weaved themselves through the sounds of her violin.

She never knew where the chimes came from, but they were beautiful. She tried asking the Blue once, but she never received an answer. The Blue didn't seem to care, but she did. Who was out there? What were they doing? Did they want to dance and play with her too?

Days passed. Dances were danced, and songs were played. Some days were a light gray, some were Blue, but they were always filled with warmth. It never rained, and she was never sad. No, never sad or lonely, just curious about the chimes that she could still hear. The sound would curl around her ear and hold her hands. It danced under her chin and beckoned her forward, away from her platform and the warm embrace of Blue.

She didn't know how long the Chimes played. They were always there though, dancing and calling. Asking her questions and singing her stories. They were such fantastical things. Sometimes, if the Chimes were feeling playful, they would spin a tale around the notes of her chords, bringing pictures of horses and knights and something called love.

My name is Amelia!

It was on a Gray day.

The Gray was marbled with black and white, but it didn't bother her. It never did. Her dress was new, and her hair was neat. Her toes were pointed out, and her ankles were touching.

The Chimes didn't dance with her music that time. They waited until she was finished, so that they could play a song for her. No one had ever played a song for her before. The Blue was gone, and the Gray did not dance and twirl with her. The Chimes, they called to her. Asking her to dance and twirl with them like the Blue did with her. They had never had someone dance with them before. They told her about how lonely they were, but they never answered her questions.

Where did the Chimes come from?

Why were they lonely?

Would they show her what love was?

She stepped off the platform.

My name is Amelia! Can you hear me?

She was back in the center of her platform. Her dress was new, and her smile looked genuine. Her ballerina shoes were white, and her violin was in her hand. The world around her was Gray, but that didn't bother her. It never did.



With a deep breath, she spread her feet shoulder-width apart and rolled to the points of her toes. Then she began to play. The music was slow and gentle with hints of whimsy. There were no Chimes anymore. They disappeared, drowned in the howling of the Gray around her. She hadn't seen Blue for a while now. The Blue didn't like it when she stepped down from her platform that spun beneath her feet. It was too dangerous, too unknown.

She wasn't sure she believed the Blue. There wasn't anything out there that could hurt her, and she was only going to the Chimes. They were going to hold her hands like the Blue did.

She had tried to leave the platform other times too, but she never got too far. The Blue would always catch her and guide her back to where she was supposed to be. Its warm hands would touch her back and brush her hair away from her face, and she would know that she was safe.

My name is... Amelia?

The world around her was dark.

It wasn't the warm Blue and Gray that she was used to. There was no warmth here anymore. There was no light. It was as if the blackness—no—the darkness had gathered all of the light that was left in her world and had hidden it in a box. It seemed to breathe around her, a constant reminder of its presence. She hadn't seen the Blue for a long time.

She was dancing and playing, never straying from her platform when she heard it. There was a gentle chime, just one note. It curled around her ear and tapped under her chin. It wondered where she had been, why she had stopped laughing.

The Black never paid her attention when she stopped playing songs.

The Chime continued, urging her forward, begging her to come closer and take its hand.

She looked at the Black around her, took a deep breath, and began to run.

My name is—is...

She didn't know how long she was running. Her feet were throbbing like she had never felt before, and she had dropped her bow somewhere behind her. Her hair was no longer neat, and her dress was torn. Behind her, the Black roared and loomed like an angry beast.

Something touched the back of her neck. She screamed and tried to run faster.

The dark ground underneath her rippled as her feet continued to move. One of her feet sank beneath the surface, and she struggled to pull it back out. She succeeded, but lost one of her shoes. Another roar from



the Black made her look back. It sounded closer. Her heart picked up its pace, and her breathing grew strained.

Then, her body ached as she ran into some kind of barrier. She struggled to stand back up as the ground clung to her like tar, pulling at her hair and staining her clothes. She dropped her violin.

She finally managed to stand, only to be confronted by a glass wall. It looked thin, but it stretched up and to the sides in an endless sheet. Beyond it, she saw a light. It looked so beautiful after so long with the Black. She banged on the glass with her fist, yelling for help. Chimes leaked through the glowing light, but they could not reach past the glass either.

A breath from behind her ruffled her hair.

Black arms wrapped around her legs, waist and shoulders. A hand covered her mouth. There was a jerk, and then the light was shrinking and wind was howling in her ears.

When it was over, the arms laid her on the ground. In front of her stood a small revolving platform, and on it lay her bow and violin. She continued to lie on her side, not moving. The Black grew impatient.

Warm hands picked her up and carried her to the platform. They stood her up, brushed back her hair and gave her the violin back. She did not smile, and her fingers refused to hold the instrument. Black vines sprouted from the floor and threaded themselves through once white shoes to keep her in place. More moved up to wrap her fingers in a tight grip to ensure that she had ahold of her violin. The warm fingers pulled her hair back to make sure it was neat.

Still she did not smile.

Vines curled up over her shoulders and around her neck. They hooked themselves into the corners of her mouth and pulled them up.

She was smiling again.

My name?

She stood in the middle of her small revolving platform. Her feet touched at the ankles, and her toes pointed outwards. Her dress was white and brand new. In one hand she held her violin, and in the other she held her bow; both were held down to her sides. Her smile looked calm and serene as she gazed out at the Blue around her.

She had no name.

