

### Three quotations from Edwin Denby (1903-1983)

Renowned dance critic, and poet. Denby was my father's first cousin (Evansville Indiana families), born in China, educated in Europe, rooted in New York. We visited him now and again, in his austere Chelsea walkup in the 1950s when I was about ten. A shy, modest man of subtle charm. My parents explained to me, in hushed tones: "Edwin is a homosexual." (I had only the vaguest idea what they were talking about.) Denby took his own life at age eighty when he felt his mental powers waning. --JC

\*

(ballet)

But the action of a step determines the ramifications, the rise and fall of the conscious momentum. You begin to see the active impetus of the dancers creating the impetus moment by moment. They step out of one shape and into another, they change direction or speed, they erect and dissolve a configuration, and their secure and steady impetus keeps coming. The situations that dissolve as one watches are created and swept along by the ease and the fun and the positive lightness of it. They dance and, as they do, create in their wake an architectural momentum of imaginary weights and transported presences. Their activity does not leave behind any material object, only an imaginary one.

--from "Forms in Motion and in Thought" (1954)

\*

Cunningham

presents

what a man dancing  
alone on a stage  
may

with some dignity

be seen  
to be occupied  
in doing.

--a (reformatted) sentence about Merce Cunningham

\*

Note left for a housemate shortly before he died:

PLEASE WAKE ME. I MADE A RESERVATION FOR TWO TO FLY  
ACROSS THE SOUTH POLE TONIGHT. HAD FROGOTTEN. EDWIN