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Dance Essay Contest
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Physical Poetry: or What Dance Means to Me

Dance has been a valuable part of my life for the past 12 years. Over these years I have had many experiences that have shown me the nature of dance and have revealed the value of lessons to me. Although it is impossible to put these things into words, I will try my best to explain what I believe dance is and why taking lessons in important to me.

I believe that dance is the purest form of self expression and that it is physical poetry. I find this to be true both when I dance and when I watch others dance. When I dance, I strive not to dance mechanically but instead to give meaning to my movement and channel the mood set by the music. I try to infuse emotion into my dancing, much the way poets attempt to weave it into their words. The poetry and emotionality of dance is also readily apparent to me when I observe others dancing. When I watch a person dance, I am able to understand what they are doing and what feelings they are experiencing simply by watching how they move. Sometimes when watching an abstract dance I am unclear as to what may be occurring. I find that this too supports my belief because, just as in a poem, the meaning of a dance may be purposely ambiguous.

I find that by taking dance classes not only does my technical mastery of dance increase but my sense of happiness and well-being does too. In regard to improvement of technique, I owe nearly all of my knowledge of dance to the lessons I have taken. All of the steps and combinations I perform well I have perfected in dance lessons. Returning to the feelings produced by dancing there are few things in life that lift my spirits quite as fast as attending a

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dance class. Even when I am overloaded with work, I still make it a point to attend my dance

lessons because of the calming and revitalizing effect they have on me.

I love dance because of its pure expressiveness and because of its intensely physical language. Because of my love of dance I love taking lessons and these lessons provide so much for me. Lessons are forever expanding my knowledge of dance and giving me a true outlet for both my creativity and my feelings. This is what I believe dance is and what the value of my lessons are.