Something to Keep Me Vertical

A Choreopoem…Excerpt

By Monica Prince

Mine

*Kathryn sits in the back of the audience, like a regular audience member. She should engage with the audience as members file in around her. Specific seats within the audience are marked reserved, and she sits in these seats all night. Lights up. A large bed is set up far stage right. Actors and dancers rush in from the back of the room, running through the aisles and audience, shouting “This one is mine!” over and over. Kathryn gets up and joins them. They all climb on stage and begin poem together. Dancers speak with actors and Kathryn on lines labeled “ALL.”*

**ALL**

This one is mine.

**ANDRE**

This body,

**NATALIE**this vagina,

**LUIS**this penis,

**JAISA**this height,

**CARL**this mouth,

**ANA**this voice.

**ALL**

This one is mine.

**KATHRYN**

This is a story about me. And you. It’s a story about love, the horizontal and vertical kind.

**MAXWELL**

Vanilla skin doesn’t mean vanilla love.

**BRYNN**

I’m looking for someone to think of me, then say, *Mine.*

**ERIK**

I didn’t wake up one day and *decide* I was in love. I just woke up…and loved him.

**ANDRE**

Falling in love is like reading the warning label on your lover—and choosing to ignore it.

**NATALIE**

No, it’s more like a land mine buried beneath a ballroom floor during tango lessons.

**TIMOTHY** *(grinning)*

Or like a meth lab—

**ANDRE** *(jabs Timothy, shakes his head disapprovingly)*

Dude. Come on.

**TIMOTHY**

Too much? Sorry.

**ALL**

This one is mine.

**KATHRYN**

This is how you learn where one body starts and another ends.

**LUIS**

Remember my full name: it might be yours someday.

**ANA**

Civil rights means being her girlfriend, even if I look like a boy.

**CRYSTAL**

I choose to share mine, not spray it all over the first girl to wink back at me. *(winks at audience member)* Hey, you.

**SABLE**

I’ve learned to keep this to myself, to train my heart not to palpitate.

**ERIK**

I’ll know he’s mine when he isn’t afraid to introduce me to his parents as his boyfriend.

**BRYNN**

Sometimes you have to choose.

**NATALIE**

I love you.

**CRYSTAL**

I love you, too.

**JAMIE**

I like boys, but I really wish I liked girls.

**ANA**

Distance is a bitch.

**JAISA**

Love is dangerous; tread lightly.

**MAXWELL**

Especially when surprising her with breakfast in bed.

**CARL**

Watch out for her gluten allergy.

**TIMOTHY** *(grinning)*

Or if she’d rather eat *your* sausage… *(All shoot him dirty look)* Too much? Sorry.

**ALL**

This one is mine.

**KATHRYN**

This one, me. All mine.

**JAMIE**

Love is learning your mama’s sweet tea recipe even though he grew up making egg nog.

**KATHRYN**

Or maxing out your credit card on an all-inclusive cruise just for yourself.

**MAXWELL**

It’s running full speed into the arms of someone special and praying they catch you.

**ANDRE**

It’s saying *I will love you my whole life*—and then doing just that.

**KATHRYN**

It’s learning tree pose so you can remain vertical.

**ANA**

It’s rain and popcorn and black and white films.

**BRYNN**

It’s letters from Brazil, the Philippines, Senegal, Spain.

**JAISA**

It’s reciting poetry in bed,

**LUIS**

copying the key to my apartment,

**CARL**looking at our son knowing those lips are yours but that nose is mine.

**ALL**

This one is mine.

*Actors and dancers exit. Kathryn stands and moves around the stage.*

**KATHRYN**

I’m Kathryn. I’m addicted to Netflix and spicy chai, and I’m allergic to blueberries. I’m single—by choice at this point. You’ll see why. Let’s start from the beginning, with first dates, first nights together, DTR talks and exchanging Trojans for Magnums. Remember: consider the word “date” loosely. The formality is insulting.

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