



Nodin Press

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# The Way She Wants to Get There

*Telling on Myself*

Mary Moore Easter

The author traces her development as a dancer during of the decade between 1968 and 1979, a pivotal era in Black/white relations, women's rights, and other significant developments in social traditions. The sanctions that thread through the American fabric to limit black lives can be seen in the description of her journey, which looks forward to her eventual success but focuses more often on her difficulties in balancing the aspirational needs of her "trickster body" with the responsibilities of family life on a small-town campus. Meditative interludes take us back to Easter's upbringing in Petersburg, Virginia, in the midst of a highly talented family of musicians and educators, and the recollections of her elder family members take us back to the era of slavery and abduction. Dance enthusiasts and anyone familiar with the highly charged emotional climate of a modern dance troupe will enjoy her descriptions of joining, managing, and creating dances for such a group.

Born during segregation, in Petersburg, Virginia, to parents on the faculty of Virginia State College (now University), Mary Moore Easter was as immersed in their artistic and intellectual interests as she was in the limitations that segregation imposed on her Black world. Her adult career as an independent dancer/choreographer and founder and director of Carleton College's dance program overlapped with writing as a Cave Canem Fellow at the foundation for African American poetry. Her awards include: Artist Initiative Grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board (2020), Pushcart Prize-nominations, Bush Artist Fellowship in Choreography, multiple McKnight Awards in Interdisciplinary Arts, The Loft Literary Center's Creative Non-Fiction Award, and residencies at Ragdale and The Anderson Center. Easter holds a B.A. from Sarah Lawrence and an M.A. in Music for Dancers from Goddard. She retired from formal teaching with the title: Rae Schupack Nathan Professor of Dance and the Performing Arts Emerita.

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