

STEPHEN BURT

Gymnastics Stephanie

element group requirements dismount cartwheel practice
practice practice practice

I am in at least two sorts of race with my body, where “with” means both “riding in and by means of” and “against, viewing it as a competitor”: what can I get myself to learn to do and to do as soon as possible in the competitive moment or minute or day or month or calendar year before its changes take the willingness or the supposedly fearless patience (whatever that means) or the ability away

practice practice practice practice look at me practice don't
look at me head over head over heels over head over heels
and practice practice practice practice practice now pretty
means pretty hard or pretty is as pretty does

is practice practice practice practice too pretty too difficult
now practice do it again now practice practice practice practice
practice practice do it again a backward somersault while moving
forward practice practice practice practice

whether any of the people watching me who have not done the things I
do know what I can do or what I have been trying to do or how hard it
can be or how easy it seemed before I knew what I was doing not that I
know what I am doing now

practice practice practice practice practice practice practice
almost lost it practice practice practice beyond the intermi-
nable practice practice might be the effortless practice prac-
tice practice practice or apparently effortless practice practice
practice practice practice practice or something like joy

only my peers understand me (if they do) maybe I have no peers

do not do any of these things for me do them for yourself
practice do them for me while smiling or practice practice
you may as well not do them at all

to prepare for years to concentrate for the entirety of a life

(short as it seems to adults) to see
eternity as a warm-up and a walk-through

for a minute and a half
in which to be and to show whatever you are

over and steady two hurtles flic-flac this is what you
had practiced practice practice practice practice practice
practice practice two folds one more

to have become someone who has to be
only what you show the world

that's what you are so soon it will be what you were
practice practice practice practice practice

the rotation the rounded arc the stick
that casual fans and families know

the return from infinite vertical space into human time

what is amazing to amateurs has to become
second nature no marvel a stopwatch to me

over and steady two hurtles flic-flac this is what you
had practiced practice practice practice practice practice
practice practice two folds one more

there used to always be a balance beam in my dreams
and the sensation of turning over and over
the pale blue and all too exciting wish never to land
to have become someone who has to be only what you show the world
that's what you are so soon it will be what you were