

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Wake

Sarah Elgart · Wednesday, January 13th, 2016

Filmed in what looks to be the beautiful New England countryside amidst a plethora of multi-colored autumn leaves, we find the dance short **Wake**. Two strong and dynamic young dancers – Victoria Daylor and Gabriel Lawton – perform choreography that asks the question (according to the film notes): “*How does one cope with someone disappearing from their life?*”

Shot with a moving camera and lush Fall colors against a blue gray sky in natural light signaling the approach of winter, the dancers roll on, lift up from, and dig into the leaves and earth till they are covered with it. The dance is visceral – so much so that I felt I could nearly smell the earth – and each shot is clearly choreographed *with* the dance, and specifically for the camera, which is not surprising as it was both directed and choreographed by Holly Wilder. And while there was a little too much camera movement and I would have loved some stillness therein, the short is lovely and the color and camera work is beautiful.



A moment remembered from “Wake”

Given that **Wake** is a dance film about loss – “*each person dances a solo with the memory of the other*” – the setting and the dance’s relationship to the earth is perfect. Although with the music (appropriately entitled “A Treehouse in Heaven” by Dylan Cantu & Elliot Skinner) there’s a little too much on the nose melodrama for my taste particularly towards the film’s end, I do love how the dance itself ends. While I’m not sure if Wilder meant this to be exclusively about loss from a broken love affair or from death, the closing shots show Daylor, arms up with hands full of leaves, her back to camera further walking away from her lover and further into the pastoral horizon. For me the scene begged the eternal question of where a loved one goes, if anywhere, in death.

Wake is an intelligent and moving short film that is beautifully rendered.

[Enjoy.](#)

[embedvideo id=”nFQMJpZ_3XQ” website=”youtube”]

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