

From the Horse's Mouth: Deborah Jowitt

14th Street Y, New York, NY

By Ze'eva Cohen

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I first met Deborah at Jeff Duncan's studio on W. 20th St. in the late '60s soon after Jeff and Jack Moore decided to create Dance Theater Workshop as a collective for young choreographers. For a period of 10 years, we performed in each other's work and explored new ideas.

I remember how impressed I was watching Deborah show her work in progress to her husband Murray, with whom she regularly exchanged ideas, and I thought how fortunate they were to have each other.

One of Deborah's first choreographies was a solo she created and performed, called Green River Road. The dance is named after the street in Alford Ma. where Deborah and Murray built their country home in the late '60s. For a while, they spent long weekends living in a tent overlooking a luscious field and a long winding road that led to their home.

Deborah danced to a soundtrack of softly playing guitar layered with her voice reading from an old book recommending the use of herbs and spices in cooking and house-keeping. As I looked at this dance, I could feel its earthiness, breathe its space, and smell its fragrant air.

Soon after, I asked Deborah to teach me her Green River Road. That solo was one of the five works I performed at my first repertory solo concert at the Cubiculo Theater in 1971. That was the concert which happily launched my solo career.

I thank you Deborah for your generosity, for your friendship and for your honest, insightful and sensitive writing about my dance work over many years.

Yes, it was sometimes uncomfortable to have you as a friend while you were a major critic, but – how can I forget your coming over soon after I gave birth to my daughter Keren, bringing along Tobi's crib and cradle and teaching me how to bathe my tiny baby with no fear?