attainable.” The trick is to find a sense of freedom in the art, she says, and not fight against its impossible ideals. Then she adds, with a laugh, “It’s the love of my life, so…”

This trajectory seems to have defined her idea of choreography’s essential joy: “You envision how you want to dance, or how you think dance should look, and you’re provided with bodies that can achieve what you can’t.” When Schreier went to college rather than conservatory, she found kindred spirits in the undergraduate ballet company and contemporary dance ensemble: unsure if they wanted to, or could, pursue dance professionally; unsure what they would do instead. “I got to work with these dancers who were—fearless, in a way that I can only truly appreciate now. It’s part of the Harvard mentality,” she continues. “You just go, go, go, go.” Her classmates were energetic and unjaded, and they trusted her enough to take physical risks and test out her ideas.

Through the Harvard Dance Program, Schreier took classes that exposed her to modern dance technique and training. They stoked her interest in exploring moves outside the ballet lexicon: heaving chests, undulating backs, hips turned in a different way. The challenges of her in-between style became most apparent last spring, she says, when she crisscrossed Manhattan each week to choreograph at the Ailey School and Ballet Academy East. The Ailey students all had ballet training, but gravitated toward modern material, and had to be reminded to hold themselves up and their cores in. On the flip side, with the classically tutored BAE students, “I had to kind of take them on this journey through realizing that I wasn’t trying to undo their ballet training. I was just trying to use it in a different way.”

Pieces like “Harmonic” torque ballet’s usual geometry. The shapes look familiar, but the way the dancers get into them seems less placed, and more organic. The rhythm is deceptively loose. At the same time, Schreier’s work often seems governed by a sense of cool rationality. At times, the dancers look like marionettes testing the hinges of their bodies, systematically measuring their range of motion. The way she arranges them in space is reminiscent of Muybridge photographs, breaking down a horse’s gallop or a bird taking wing. Because she never danced professionally, Schreier told an interviewer in 2015, she hasn’t felt confident creating partnered dances. But when she was

Harvard Business School has a venerable tradition, anchored in its general-management unit, of drawing on the humanities to illuminate problems in capitalism (see “Questions of Character,” July-August 2006, page 12). Now Mizuho Financial Group professor of finance Mihir A. Desai, an expert on taxation, aims to “humanize finance” through the Wisdom of Finance (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt), is an effort to rescue the field from excessive focus on self-enrichment; along the way, Desai also applies financial tools to the humanities. Recalling from the villains like Theodore Dreiser’s Financier and Gordon Gekko, he makes this discovery, from the final chapter of O Pioneers!

...Willa Cather’s portrait of Alexandra Bergson is the story that truly belongs in every finance textbook. Alexandra is a first-generation immigrant from Sweden living on the plains of Nebraska, responsible for a family farm and three younger brothers at the turn of the last century. She is a model financier who employs many of the lessons of finance without slipping into the traps that those antiheroes do.

Consider Alexandra: just as her brothers exhort her to sell their land at rock-bottom prices during a crisis, she proposes...using leverage to go in the exact opposite direction by buying more nearby land....Her complex financing plan, which involves mortgaging the homestead, features debt service payments well into the future that will only work if she’s right about the future of land prices. ...How does she assess the risks? She samples. She and her youngest brother, Emil, take a trip to explore all the neighboring counties and “talked to the men about their crops and to the women about their poultry....She learned a great deal.”

She discovers option value in the nearby land. Other properties hold limited risk and limited return. “Down there they have a little certainty, but up with us there is a big chance.”...

Her brother Lou seeks certainty about her prediction: “But how do you know that land is going to go up enough to pay the mortgages?” Alexandra knows that the risk is insoluble and replies, “I know, that’s all. When you drive over the country you can feel it coming.” Experience and imagination allow her to confront the uncertainty....

Finally, as Alexandra contemplates what to do with her land and the legacy of her success after she is gone, she considers gifting it to her nieces and nephews....”The land belongs to the future,...; that’s the way it seems to me. How many of the names on the county clerk’s plat will be there in fifty years? I might as well try to will the sunset over there to my brother’s children. We come and go, but the land is always here. And the people who love it and understand it are the people who own it—for a little while.” She understands herself to be a steward, a link in an ongoing chain, charged with taking care of resources....

For Cather, there are ultimately only a few stories that all of our lives end up resembling. Some of them, as we’ve seen, are tales of hollow accumulation and insatiable desire. Some are tales of heart and hard work. It is up to us to choose amongst them wisely. I recommend Alexandra Bergson’s story.