

Speaker B

Artists: Theatre Replacement and Vanessa Kwan
Event Date: October 2021

Installation description: Speaker A is situated in a public pedestrian breezeway at the busy corner of 2nd Avenue and Main Street in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. Three speakers are installed in the ceiling panels approximately 16 feet above the ground. Inset into the concrete below is a small brass letter, A, B or C, making the exact spot that the listener should stand to hear the voices and accompanying music.

The stories fall into three 'streams', each broadcasting from a distinct speaker: A: Restless Futures, B: Speculative Pasts, and C: Instructions for Care. In each, the narratives explore diverse perspectives on what it means to imagine the future, to mourn a loss from the past, and to describe, here in the present, how to care for something you cherish. Texts were written by 14 different writers and performed by 14 distinct voices, and have been programmed to play in randomized orders along with an audio soundtrack by sound designer Antoine Bédard – each time you experience them, the accumulated narrative will be unique. This transcript represents one pre-recorded 46-minute segment of Speaker B.

More information can be found here: speakerA.ca

Transcription by Arthi Chandra & Jamie Loh

[ambient track fades in, low rumbling]

[Vanessa:] (deep, mellow voice) Around the East parking lot by Kings Gate Mall, to the right of the bottle depot, under the concrete overhang, that is the spot where the tree once was. Soaring 45 feet into the air. It was the tallest on the lot. And before the school was built, before the mall came to be, before they sold sequined t-shirts and knockoff sunglasses in the store by the lottery kiosk. The tree imagined itself a resting place and laid itself down.

[music fades out]

[James:] (low voice) He saw the British band “Doves” at Richards on Richards, and the bartender kept giving Marie water because he knew exactly what was going on.

[calm electronic track fades in]

Richards on Richards was razed some time later to make way for condos. The new condos are called Richards, and they’re owned by the same guy who owns the hockey team.

[Whess:] (deep, clear voice) They began peeling back the layers of Granville street in 2005 to bury a passage beneath the earth.

[music echoes out]

As they peeled back each layer, secrets seeped out into the air like weary sighs, though they were rarely heard over the machinery and traffic. Once completed, the soil went silent again, listening for anyone who realized that now sunk beneath the surface and hurtling through the darkness in a tin can –

[soaring note stretches out]

that this was the closest they’d ever be together.

[Donna:] (high, firm voice) It was a church and then it was a community center. It might have been a bank for a little while, one of those micro-loan ones, and then a vegan soup kitchen of a kind run by people with amazing intentions but absolutely no capacity to keep things organized. The food was food,

[music stops abruptly]

but never warm. And the guy serving it was present but never friendly. What do you do with something like that? When the intentions are bang on, but the execution is garbage? Say something or just take what you can get?

[pensive music starts]

[Aryo:] (deep, strong voice with a slight Persian accent) Look for a point around you where the light shines or reflects in a way that is pleasing.

[music continues softly]

[Lorna:] (round, low voice) All of the blueprints were pulled from their tubes, unrolled and pinned, shingle fashion to the sunlit walls.

[eerie electronic notes echo out]

[Donna:] For 13 years, little sister's bookstore was located on the upper floor of a time-battered residential house at 1221 Thurlow Street. In 1992, Little Sisters was bombed for the third time, a percussion grenade was detonated in the stairwell.

[echoes continue]

No one was hurt physically. But the emotional harms of anti-gay terrorism were felt by many.

[Norman:] (deep, gravelly voice) Dandelion made the trip from Denman once a month up until legalization, except when harvest was on. She chunked the corporate gig in Vancouver in the 80s.

[track stops]

Maybe you knew her as Judy back then and moved back up the island, bought the shack and five acres for like, 11 grand, all in.

[eerie echoes fade in again]

Anyway, she do her round of regulars in the city and have a good chat and smoke with everyone.

[echoes grow louder and suspenseful]

Some were the kids of her first clients by the time she wrapped up biz. Weed from a bot online? Wanted nothing to do with any of that, lost all interest in the industry.

[echoes quieten]

Dandelion somehow made it on CPP, what she could grow in the garden, and kept some chickens. Little side hustle here, topping and trimming. Kids sold that gorgeous place and walked away with a cool half million each, plus a substantial cash stash in the greenhouse.

[Speaker chuckles] According to talk around the island.

[Donna:] When her mind started to go, it was kind of funny –

[track stops abruptly]

how she forgot little details of the week before or what she had been talking about. When the collapses started occurring mid sentence, it was less cute.

[unsettling music fades in, almost like pounding]

That's when she stopped leaving her apartment. But her sisters would still come for her, sometimes knocking for 10 minutes, whispering her name until she let them in.

[music grows louder and cacophonous]

[Lili:] (low, slightly hoarse voice) She had suffered in ways that she didn't tell her children. Yes, she was careful about that.

[music drops off]

It was only later that she realized that her blood knew the story better than she did and that they, her children, were her blood, after all. All that had happened to her had happened to them.

[music starts and grows louder]

It lived in their marrow and grew in their cells. My babies she said, I never meant for you to know me so well.

[music plateaus and continues]

[Norman:] She kept the photo of him and his mom holding piglets at the PNE. He didn't deserve that or anything else.

[music fades out]

[James:] He was shorter than most of the people surrounding him. And it gave him a bit of an edge. He didn't go out looking for trouble. Exactly. And it didn't always find him but he had

one of those swaggers that said he knew you were watching. And if someone did happen to stare a little too long, he would look back and well ...

[music fades in and grows urgent]

and someone would feel they had to say something. And inevitably, the trouble would always fall on him.

[Conor:] (deep voice) Take your pulse, hum to the beat.

[music continues and gradually grows louder]

[Gina:] (calm, stable voice with a strong British accent) It was called The Allison and came in a kit. It was painted pepto pink with white trim, because that was all they could find in the basement. Eventually, they saved enough to buy tiny breaks to glue on to the chimney.

[music fades out]

[Lorna:] Newspaper ink was soy based in those days, whereas previously it contained petroleum products. When removing it, you needed to consider the age of the newspaper and the stained item whether silk or skin,

[music suddenly rings out]

and begin with the least aggressive method first.

[Vanessa:] The monument was enormous, great bronze thighs burst from tiny short shorts. The net tube-top barely wrapped the writhing torso. Is that a headband? The ears were most certainly pierced, twice on one side, once on the other. A nipple ring. Sweat socks. Gender undefined, this Colossus –

[music stops]

once stood legs astride the region's largest waterway, a giant queer harbinger of euphoria, of tears, of wanton affection, of breakups, of potlucks, of summer, of non-monogamy, of taste, of tenderness –

[electronic rumble]

of dynasties too sweet and chaotic to have lasted.

[Conor:] He couldn't recall if the hot jazz club had been on second, fifth or eighth. Development had so confused his orientation on Main Street. But he was convinced that the club's presence had been distributed throughout the area, what with the ghost trumpet, rushes on high hat, ice tinkling high balls, a sonic phasing that broke through traffic noise.

[track echoes ominously]

[Aryo:] Look at it. This used to be my watch. My father gifted it to his father, Quartz Seiko, matte silver, thick glass on the face. Five years after grandpa's death, I wore it for a year. It's heavy, pulls down the wrist. You always know it's there. I'll put the watch away.

[music continues]

[Maiko:] (mid-range, breathy voice) A white poodle on a stick.

[Vanessa:] She was a 15 year old witch. On Monday's in English class she would sometimes recount how she turned into a ghost cat on the weekend. The details were precise. It is painful to grow fur through your human skin. And your spine moves differently when you walk through walls. She was alone, always smoking clove cigarettes in the woods by the soccer field.

[music stops abruptly]

Turns out she disappeared. Left her house one day after graduation and never came back. Left a pile of broken twigs on the kitchen counter and a ribbon tied to her bedroom door knob. Where are you?

[electronic track plays]

[Donna:] See if you can taste anything in the air.

[James:] Every weekend he waited until the crows flew back to Still Creek.

[ambient echoes join in]

He'd put his umbrella up and sit there practicing the sounds they would make, the low ones and the short ones in particular. In winter, he would start earlier and wear an extra sweater.

[Quelemia:] (gentle, hoarse voice) He pedaled so hard he felt like his legs might give out.

[music stops]

The metal bucket from under the kitchen sink hung from the handlebars of his bike, hitting his knee with every pedal. He knew that would cause bruises, but he couldn't slow down. He was already late; the tide would be coming in soon. He pulled on his breaks when the dirt road turned into white sand and skidded to a stop.

[ominous track fades in]

The tide was out so the table was set. A few kids were already out there with buckets in hand. He ran past them to an area they hadn't gotten to yet. The sand was full of eulachon that weren't fast enough to keep up with the tide as it pulled back. He rolled up his sleeves, put down his bucket, and got to work.

[music fades out]

[Lorna:] There was once a large mountain in a coastal setting. A mining company came and slowly mined away that mountain until it became a large crater. That mountain became schools –

[ambient music starts]

and apartments and storage lockers in a faraway city.

[music continues]

[Whess:] During the winter of 2010, there was an influx of reports of ghost sightings along the SkyTrain line. It wasn't only the stations. In fact, those manifestations were easier to miss, especially during peak periods. It was the in-between stretches where people noticed most.

[music stops]

A scientist was hired to investigate. They went and recorded the sound levels around the tracks as the trains were approaching, passing and departing and determined that there was a correlation between the addition of new track and infrasound that caused the appearances of ghosts.

[ambient track starts again]

Either the infrasound attracted the ghosts or caused hallucinatory visual and audio experiences. After the Olympics, the sightings lessened in frequency but have not entirely dissipated.

[Maiko:] Estuary. Where water was both sweet and salty. The tide rose and the muddy inlet filled in, filled up. Briny. How the mountains mixed in with the sea. All that life.

[music grow in and out of intensity]

Before concrete. There was water.

Before concrete water soft shoreline lipped, licked the promise of return. Day and night. Moon. Dark and light and all that rain.

[music stops]

Roared down mountains, how water fell, beside giant trees. Cedar, fir, between big leaf maple, pacific crabapple, ocean spray, salal, moss...

[long, drawn out notes echo]

Sturgeon longer than a canoe. Dreaming slow circles, a pattern, a spiral galaxy that rippled across time. Estuary was here. Here all around.

Camas gardens. Berry bushes. Fish traps. Swamps.

[notes stop]

Horsetail and rushes. Sussurus. The tide came in swam the fish. Sole. Perch. Smelt. The best of both worlds. A middle that rose and receded like breath. Estuary provided food, medicines, stories, life. Sacred.

[unsettling music fades in softly, almost like pounding]

Goodbye, Snauq, Lee Maracle wrote. "Snauq was the garden where all the plants came from," she said. Estuary fed everyone.

Silt. Salt. Sweet. Soft. Slide. Slick. Suck.

Dredged. Shaped. Filled. Walled. Cut. Toppled. Crushed. Paved.

“The road to progress”, settlers said. Industry is booming!

[music stops]

Clang! Clang! Clang!

Estuary buried. But not forgotten. The land remembered. And water. Water remembered everything.

[music fades back in]

Water was even older than land.

Everything that was buried would return. In nightmares, dreams, hauntings. Water was shunted down storm drains into a system of pipes. Settlers always trying to control what wasn't theirs. That's why floods happened. Every time water remembered where it should be. Estuary was buried but they weren't dead. They waited. Like a turtle in the mud during a long winter.

[music grows urgent]

Sometimes Estuary seeped a thread of water to a horsetail root tendrilled between a pavement and a metal plate. “Tell me what is happening in the above”, Estuary would ask. Horsetail obliged and snuck up, up, through pinched circumstances, toward the light. “Not yet”, Horsetail said, down, down, to where Estuary waited. Not yet.

[music fades out]

“Ahhh, not yet”, Estuary repeated. Closed their eyes and took a deep breath. Soon...

[silence for 2 breaths]

[ambient music fades back in softly]

[Lili:] It had that old well-loved feel to it. The stairs made creaking noises with each step he

took, as if they were saying welcome home. He had to pull on the door before twisting the knob. Some called that broken, he thought of it as an added safety feature. The smell of burnt cookies was stuck in the kitchen walls though the oven hadn't been used in years. The window in the upstairs bathroom never fully closed all the way. But he liked the cold anyway. Old memories collected dust on the walls,

[music grows in intensity]

reminding him of those that filled his heart throughout his life.

[Whess:] When the first photocopier arrived in Vancouver, it was immediately haunted. It took a while for the ghosts to figure out the right settings.

[music fades out]

And they spent about two years laughing about the ghastly spectral images of their own faces, hands, and butt cheeks that they produce during the night and left for the office staff to find in the morning. But after that they got to work. They tried to write on paper, get the paper to the machine and get it to copy but no one had the best penmanship without a corporeal body. The ghosts gave up for a while, but eventually they got it.

[ambient track starts]

They asked the oldest one what they'd been trying to say in the first place. They had to go back and catch the thought, but then remembered and remembered so strongly that they shouted it, "You need to learn how to live away from your land without going wild."

[James:] One time he dug an old Toyota Tercel out of the mud of the farm. It was red. He drove it down to Vancouver on New Year's Eve with his girlfriend.

[music fades in and out]

They stopped in Kamloops for the night, as it was dark and the forecast said snow. That was the last time. They were never really together again. The next morning he dropped his girlfriend off at YVR to get a plane to Montreal. He drove the Tercel around town until one night, an angry cop at a road check accused him of being drunk. He blew way under the legal limit. And this angered the cop even more. So he went after the car and said he needed to get it fully checked out and get everything fixed within a month or they would impound it. He drove it for 29 days and then gave it to a wrecker out in Langley.

[Fumiko:] (child's voice) Let your eyes and tongue relax, soften.

[Norman:] They called her the Mystical Sanctuary.

[music stops]

People sought her out to find what was lost. And remember what had been forgotten. With every retrieved memory and unearthed object.

[music fades in on a soaring note]

The edges of her body began to disintegrate. Her perimeter eroded until she became misplaced and eventually erased.

[music slows and fades]

[Su-Feh:] (higher voice with a slight Malaysian accent) He built a tall building made of lemon candy, hard surfaced, and sticky. A father to three children, he divided the building into three high ceiling stories and distributed them among his children. When he retired, he taught a critical course on King Lear at a university for the rest of his life.

[Lili:] He wanted very much to know her, but she refused.

[music starts softly]

She was far too used to men with expectations. Expectations she knew that gave room for one answer only. Good or bad intentions all seemed alike to the closed place in her chest, where she held her heart underwater, its anchor rusting in her gut.

[music continues]

[Norman:] He came to pick her up in his Toyota echo. It was green. When she exited through the smoke glass doors, he was waiting for her. He was wearing sunglasses, yellow bunny ears, and a black suit that was two sizes too big for him. He held up a piece of paper with her last name on it.

[music stops]

It was a cinematic moment. They were 25 and 28 years old. She could see him simultaneously

embodying the fragments of Donnie Darko, Pulp Fiction, and Dazed and Confused.

[bright electronic track starts]

She wasn't sure if he was serious or not. It didn't matter.

[James:] The last time she saw him, he kept whispering at anyone who would listen. "Just tell me what to do. Just tell me what to do."

[Amber:] (bright, clear voice) The very first Similkameen Valley grown Ambrosia Apple was picked on September 2.

[music fades out]

Early to ripen that season. By mid August the nights had already turned cool. Fat dew flecked the orchard each morning. The air smelled like cider and honey. Wild bees stayed all day. It was perfect, this first apple.

[music fades in, looming and suspenseful]

Orange skin washed with pink, crisp, free of pesticides. Sweet.

[Whess] Back when dad rock first began, a Carrier Indian from the north gave up on overtaking the Rolling Stones in the charts after hearing an interpretation of Scriabin's Mysterium.

[music stops]

They thought, "What does some old Russian guy know about opening the world to chaos" and they fell hard into the post-punk scene. They were getting pretty political then anyways, so it seemed like the right thing to do after the electoral ad nauseam of Pierre Trudeau.

[eerie music looms in the background]

The purpose: they were going to find the frequency to tear the world open and whatever happened, they'd surrender to the mercy of it. They had some unexpected success with it during the 1994 Canucks playoffs riot, but they've yet to replicate the formula. Who the 2011 playoffs riot can be ascribed to is thusly unascertained but they've hoped to find them and compare notes.

[silence]

[Fumiko:] Press your thumb into the center of your palm for five seconds.

One. Two. Three. Four. Five.

[calm electronic track builds in intensity]

Do the same with the other hand.

One. Two. Three. Four. Five.

[music lingers for 2 breaths]

[Maiko:] They would gather here in the early morning hours and walk a path on the concrete platform that surrounded the kiddie pool. Conversation was a constant hum of activity –

[music stops]

as groups of four would drop to two or a single walker would morph into a trio. At a certain point, they would find themselves standing in a semicircle, shaking out their arms and legs. Eventually, a few of them would head back towards home, somehow aware of the time although no one wore a watch, or carried a phone.

[suspenseful music starts and echoes softly]

[Whess:] For a brief period during the early 90s by the old sugar factory, if you dropped a piece of paper on the ground between the hours of nine and 12 and left it overnight to soak in the cold coastal mist, the ground would send back messages. The writing was always spindly and soft like it had been engraved by a spider's web. But it never said anything too gentle: Turn down that racket. The chicken factory stinks. I can't hear my children speak anymore, but I know that they're crying.

[music stops]

[Norman:] He saw a young woman in a Blondie shirt that definitely used to be his. Confirmed by the constellation of burn holes and bleach stains. She told him to get lost. He thought she'd be fascinated that he bought it when the Eat to The Beat tour came to town.

[Donna:]

[ambient track starts]

They were Boulets, cowboy boots, bought in a moment of some confusion when he still couldn't figure out what or who he was exactly. He remembers pulling them out of the box and wearing them for just the one night. The same night he wore this bright white sweater he found in his brother's closet. Not a good look for a kid who used to wear army pants and hoodies.

[Maiko:] They would travel by alleyways with their rolly carts or large plastic bags flung over their shoulders like Santa's sacks.

[Gina:] He came to pick her up in his Toyota Echo. It was green. When she exited through the smoked glass doors. He was waiting for her. He was wearing sunglasses, yellow bunny ears, and a black suit that was two sizes too big for him. He held up a piece of paper with her last name on it. It was a cinematic moment. They were 25 and 28 years old. She could see him simultaneously embodying fragments of Donnie Darko, Pulp Fiction, and Dazed and Confused. She wasn't sure if he was serious or not. It didn't matter.

[eerie music fades in and out]

[Donna:] Take ten "bee breaths". Inhale. Exhale with a buzzing sound between your slightly sealed lips. Inhale Exhale and buzz. Long inhale slow buzzing exhale.

[Gina:] They named him Paganini. Although Niccolo would have been a more appropriate name for a cat with a tail that organizes itself into a loose spiral. Niccolo would have offered much more in the way of nicknames and cute diminutive forms.

[Fumiko:] They would gather here at dusk on every day but Saturdays, which were always too busy with tasks for the family. Before they had the portable speaker,

[music fades]

they would sing together, out loud, to keep the time. Some of the exercises were less about keeping rhythm, more about a free flow in the body that often led to eyes closing, faces turning upwards towards the sky.

[music fades in, low rumbling]

[Quelemia:] He sat at her feet and played while she wove on her loom. Her hands moved through the wool so effortlessly, like water gliding over rocks on the shore. He liked watching her. He liked the way the light spilled through the warp and created lines on her face.

[rumbling gradually fades]

[Lili:] They would watch Survivor and eat tacos every Thursday night, and they enjoyed it, always. When she was eight or ten, she once said to her mother, “We have a good relationship, don’t we, Mama? Don’t we?”

[bright track starts]

[Vanessa:] The town was full of twins. A Google search will tell you nothing of this phenomenon, but according to firsthand accounts, there was a period of 10 years when a startling number of twins were born. The woman who ran the community center reveals that in her daughter’s kindergarten class, there were no less than six pairs of identical children. On Sunday mornings, the townspeople would wheel their double wide strollers through the neighborhood. A third child, the outlier, perched on the rails, eyes steady between his parents pushing hands.

[Gina:] Listen for rhythm around you.

[pensive ambient track continues]

[Lorna:] There was a small town near a large forest that burned to the ground in a single day. All of the people left and never returned.

[Maiko:] There was a special place, in a long-ago time, where a young girl would go to escape when things stressed her out.

[music stops]

The Land of the Seven Snakes was her imaginary world of slithery and spelt beings, who would wrap their long bodies around her small frame and provide comfort and friendship. She’d run to the edge of her family’s property to sit on a grand throne and be worshipped by those slithery beings.

[bright, vibrant track]

When her family moved away from that home, she would never forget the kindness of those snakes. Those memories carried that little girl throughout her life.

[music lingers for 2 breaths]

[Lorna:] It was not until after his death in 1894, that he became known as the Hanging Judge. There are three mountains in British Columbia that bear his name, along with two lakes, a creek and an elementary school. Several statues stood in his honor around the region, although two were removed in the early 21st century.

[music continues and slowly fades out]

[Su-Feh:] There is a version that they never forget. Beautiful, competent, and full of emotional intelligence. They remember that every time they feel ugly.

[calm ambient track]

[Lorna:] There was a canoe that had made so many journeys, that it was laid to rest, to decompose into the forest. There were so many people who traveled in that vessel, and it carried their spirits and their stories through calm and turbulent waters. The family who laid it to rest sang songs to its spirit, songs of love that would make you cry with your soul. The forest creatures are now making homes in that canoe. Lichens and other fungus grow in the crevices, nurturing the next generations of life that will be fed by soul and spirit that carried not so ancient ancestors from their homes to other shorelines.

[track continues to echo]

[Maiko:] There once was a special creature who could follow his favorite humans through dream time. He was orange and white. His whiskers were very strong. Those whiskers made him feel things that other creatures couldn't. He could feel the tiny mice who attempted to evade his pounces. He could sense when birds were hopping about in the grass and gravel, and it was delightful for him to enjoy eating what he killed. He lived for a long time in a city before retiring to a farm, where there were endless amounts of tiny creatures for him to kill. One day, after many years of living a blessed life,

[music builds in intensity]

he followed his spirit to the other side. His kind soul and strong hunter spirit is still finding his way into the dream times of his favorite humans.

[music fades]

[Quelemia:] She loved the way the snow looked at night. The way the moonlight glimmered on it like a blanket of jewels covering ground. It had brought her peace. She swayed in the rocking chair of the nursery, with her little one on her chest. She stared out the window, watching snowflakes fall gently from the sky and hum songs that our grandmother sang to her when she was a child.

[pensive music plays softly]

[Lili:] Grandpa had been on the front lines on D-Day. Many many years later, the youngest of his four children would interview him about it. Give a container for these stories he had held for so long inside his body. Slowly at first, softly, he spoke of wading through saltwater deep enough to reach his cigarettes snug in the breast pocket of his uniform.

[music fades out]

Of their guns held high above their heads because rust or waterlogging would mean death. And he spoke of running, running blindly into heavy fire. And he spoke of blond young men, once Anyan perfection, now twisted and grisly. Of how their bodies intertwined with his dead friends across the blasted beach.

[soaring note stretches out]

[Quelemia:] The key under the mat was gone. An insurance policy for coming home. An open door. A secret trusted friend it was no longer. There was no choice but to break in.

[James:] Look for something that might be broken, but also aesthetically pleasing. A crack in the concrete. A person.

[note fades out]

[Conor:] Angelique never knew what she wanted and never really made a point of finding out. Maybe that's why she always seemed happier than most folks. Zero ambition. That's what our parents always said, nonstop critique from her cradle to their grave. She seemed to thrive after they got tucked in six feet under and it was curious she harbored so little resentment. No ambition in that respect either.

[track starts and quickly fades]

[Quelemia:] The banners spanning the bridge halted traffic to a stony silence. The city stopped moving, breaths held in hoarse throats, the great humming of feet and electrical signals stopped all at once. Under helicopters, pixelated and mid-flight, the last person standing suddenly was not. Knees on the ground. They placed palms and then cheek to the asphalt. Listen, footsteps coming from far away. And beneath that, the water rushing on.

[suspenseful electronic track starts]

[Lili:] They sat together for hours. The calm before the storm had a sense of ease, and they wanted to stay together in that moment. Both felt the weight of what was to come. It was as if clouds gathered above them,

[music halts]

but they didn't know when or how. Once the sun shined, then as if out of nowhere, the skies darkened.

[music slowly resumes]

The clouds threatened with thunder and promised rain. They waited for the first drop.

[music continues]

[Donna:] Leroy Louie cried when The Giant Dipper was torn down. He didn't blubber, that's for darn sure. Seeing the girls at school weep and wail made him tear up a little. Sympathetic tears, you know. All summer long, he bust his butt working alongside his older sisters at Purdy's factory. He gave one third of his paycheque to his parents.

[music fades]

One third he squirreled away at the Merchant's Bank on Hastings. And one third he spent on himself—mostly at Happyland. It cost twenty-five cents to ride The Giant Dipper, which meant he often spent two whole dollars taking different girls on the roller coaster. The first drop sped down like crazy. Wild girls threw their hands in the air. Timid girls clutched onto Leroy for dear life. A couple of times he got lucky enough to kiss a girl as they dropped. But his favourite part was the momentary pause at the top of the hill lift when he could see the whole park; The Octopus Ride and the ferris wheel, ice cream and hotdog stands,

[music starts]

horse stalls and roaming clowns. It made Leroy feel like a tiny god looking down on his Paradise of Play.

[music gradually wanes]

[Amber:] Daria moved to Vancouver in the summer of 1989, joined a feminist poetry collective and promptly came out of the closet. She wore Doc Martens and anything leopard print that she could find at the thrift store. Her first girlfriend wore white t-shirts without a bra and worked at a dusty health food store on Commercial Drive. At night, the new couple slept on a mattress on the floor and tried not to think about the cockroaches. Together they attended many potlucks. Daria thought every lesbian household smelt of fried garlic, nag champa and cat litter. Daria thought every lesbian owned the Indigo Girls' album *Indigo Girls* on cassette because they all knew the lyrics to "Closer to the Fine" by heart and could spontaneously sing it together, in its entirety, at any moment. With some effort, Daria decided that eating vegetarian chili from a chipped coffee mug was oddly comforting despite the cumin always tasting old. Back home, her mother muddled whole cumin seeds with a marble pestle and mortar with sharp circular turns of her wrist. That pestle and mortar was passed down through three-generations. Daria would never inherit that pestle and mortar now.

[ambient track starts]

[Su-Feh:] Full of skulls and bare bones there was a wallpaper, which contained all you needed to know about death, disease and disintegration of life. Sold for cheap on every street corner in every city in the country, you could easily buy it without showing any proof of age. They came in child sizes too.

[music continues]

[Whess:] In 1913, a newly transplanted tree in the recently built railway yard began growing thick black hair instead of leaves. It incited terror and was promptly removed.

[Amber:] A pit of mud and water resided between the two-block radius at Keefer and Pender and Abbott and Taylor streets for the better part of the 90s. Three old men from the neighbourhood gathered on the hill in Andy Livingstone Park to look down at the garbage collecting in the pit.

"They're going to build a shopping mall there," the first old local man said. "Soon as they get that water pumped out."

“I heard they were building condos,” said the second.

“Condos! ‘Round here? That’s rich,” said the third.

The old men laughed together and passed a cigarette between them.

[track reverberates for 2 breaths]

[Quelemia:] The air had that salty smell.

[music stops]

He knew the tides, but everything was different. When he closed his eyes he could visualize how the water moved, where the salmon would run. He dropped his net in the water – nothing. Maybe a few, but nothing compared to what it used to be.

[uplifting, soaring note]

He was told there was a time when people could walk across the river on the backs of salmon.

[James:] There were woods behind the house in Lynn Valley. Unsupervised children could run and play there for hours, until it got dark and cold. It smelled like wet moss and cedar. There were creeks that ran through here and here, underground now, and nestled in the waters were slow moving crayfish. You could catch them in a bucket.

[silence for a beat]

[Lorna:] Glancing quickly out the window, find the brightest, most bitter green.

[calm ambient track builds]

[Lili:] As a child, her grandma’s house on Hornby Island was her happy place. At night, she could hear the mice skittering in the rafters, and the sound held a funny kind of comfort, there at the edge of the ocean. There at the edge of the world.

[music continues]

[Lorna:] The SS Empress of China; The Talthyuis; The Kaio Maru; S.S. Empress of Canada; The Amoy; The Caribou; The Lady Kindersley; The Mirzapore; The HMS Discovery; The James

Bay; The Phyllis Cormack; The SS Makura; The Troopship Missanabie; The SS Beaver; The Comox; The Cape Ducato; The Indomitable; The Empress of Russia; The Victor Schoelcher; The Jeanne d'Arc; The Melanope; The Edgewater Fortune.

[Norman:] She boarded the Greyhound at Pacific Central. Her sister would jump on in Kamloops and together they'd travel home to Prince George. It was something of a Thanksgiving tradition in their college years. She had a Y-adapter so they could listen to the same music on the yellow Walkman, cuddled together through the night just like when they were kids growing up out in the sticks.

[music fades]

[Lili:] Imagine a little feather is tickling your neck. Wherever it touches, it melts tension. Feel this release.

[suspenseful track starts]

[Conor:] That truck got four miles to the gallon and he was proud of the fact. Went like stink. Original engine took him 246,000 miles before she seized up mid-winter on a logging road in the Interior. Dropped in a rebuilt, did the work himself, but there was no comparison, totally gutless. Hung onto the truck though. In fact it's still rusting out back. In those sentimental moods, he'd attach the battery cables and sit out listening to the radio on blown speakers.

[silence for a beat]

[Lorna:] Because of its straight grain, distinctive colour and resistance to decay, Yellow Cedar (*Chamaecyparis nootkatensis*),

[gentle calming music]

was used for watercraft, paddles, masks, dishes and bows, and its bark was processed for woven blankets and clothing. As the world warmed, protective snowfalls were fewer and shallower, exposing the roots to the effects of freezing soil and bringing about its extinction.

[Maiko:] They would gather in the hot tub, positioning their bodies in front of the jets. They would contort their bodies and embark on an awkward float in order to hit just the right spot. That sore shoulder. The tight hamstring. The lower back. Tender. No one spoke, for fear of having to yell over –

[energetic music cuts in]

the jets.

[James:] He carefully saved a t-shirt that he bought at Expo 86. He tucked it away somewhere. Years later he remembered it, and thought, hey, I bet that would be cool to wear. He found it in his mother's basement. He tried to pull it on and realized that the size of t-shirt he wore at 14 was very very different.

[music fades out]