

13 Minutes:

Subliminal Car Music for Sarah (sound sublimated into signs) a resonance radio text
by Julia Lee Barclay

“The submission to experience is a work of meticulous description...” Georges Perec

The sublime is precisely 13 minutes long.

There are car horns involved in the sublime, believe it or not.

You can feel free to add sound effects as you see fit.

[you can feel free to add sound effects as you see fit.]

There is breath.

In spite of it all.....there is breath.

Perhaps I should breathe?

[performers breathe audibly into microphones. If any performer/s know any specific yogic breaths (pranayama), they can feel free to play with them here and throughout the piece]

Ahhhhh.

She and He are dancing.

They have always been dancing.

Stimulation and Integration. Surrender, resist, surrender, resist.

Expand, contract.

Expand.

Contract.

Just like the heart. If it just opened and never closed, we'd be dead.

Watch the footsteps.

Hear the footsteps.

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Car music?

Yes, like waves. Like the sea.

Listen.

Listen for a moment now.

[long pause.]

Listen and see if you can hear a sound before you label it. Right now. Wherever you are.

[pause]

There it is.

What?

The sound of one hand clapping.

I didn't hear it.

Oh well. Listen again.

I did.

Just then?

Yes.

Well?

Well what?

This can't possibly be the Sublime for Christsakes!

So?

So, it's supposed to be.

Oh.

Maybe I should breathe again.

Maybe.

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[performer/s breathe.]

There is a whistle. There is car music. There is a child somewhere next door gurgling. There is mist coming off a lake in the mountains. There is a war going on somewhere. There is someone giving birth, someone miscarrying, someone having an abortion, someone dying in childbirth, someone dying of a heart attack, someone crying because a red tulip is so beautiful and she's never seen that color of red before, not so brilliantly. There are a lot of creatures breathing.

For the first time. *[attempt a breath as if it is your first.]*

For the last time. *[attempt a breath as if it was your last.]*

There is crying, sobbing even. *[attempt this]*

There is laughing, quite wildly. *[attempt this]*

Listen.

Listen.

Listen.

Dance around the room! Dance now! Dance to the Car Music! *[performers can feel free to do this if it's possible and let whatever sound happens with that happen]*

There she is: flying! Energy coming off of her cat, as she tries to put medicine on her face. It pushes her back and back until she's off the floor and flying. She is incredulous. This can't happen! She brings herself down onto the floor and he holds her there.

You can't dance like that.

No. It's true. You can't dance if someone is holding you onto the floor.

He and She are dancing though.

Yes. They are. They are Always Dancing.

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That's all they Do?

Yes.

Wow.

Yes.

Just Dance?

Yes.

Wow.

Imagine it for a moment. A life like that. Nowhere to go. Nothing to do.

Just dance.

Right.

Right.

Right.

And singing?

Could be. Yes.

[Performers here can sing: whatever and however you want...you can sing literally, metaphorically or symbolically, you can chant, hum, whatever...sing in whatever way makes you happiest right now, and you can dance too...in whatever way you want....]

[This should complete with the performer/s simply breathing audibly for a few breaths]

But this isn't Practical! When will we ever get Anything Done?!

Who said life was supposed to be practical? Who said that?

Well, my Mother for starters.

And-

And?

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Is she Happy?

Well, she wasn't then, that's for sure.

Well then.

Well then, what?

Maybe she was Wrong.

[pause]

Maybe she was. Yes, in fact, maybe she was wrong.

[sounds of crying and laughter and any other type of non-verbal audible emotion can mix here.]

But my father was not practical and he just split. So, Who Takes Care of the Kids When Everyone's Off Just Dancing?

Good question.

Yeah.

Maybe the dancing isn't literal.

Yeah?

Yeah.

Maybe you can Dance with the Kids?

Yeah. I think so. I Know So. You Must Be Able to Dance With the Kids! They dance so much better than us anyway...have you ever actually looked at a little baby? They're Always Dancing.

Right. Just one dance after another....one breath in, one breath out, one sensation in, one sensation out...eyes dancing too, not sure yet what to Make of it all...haven't decided for or against anything yet. Haven't laid down The Law.

Meanwhile,

She is in bed alone and in the dark laughing. *[performer can attempt a 2:00 a.m.-in-the-dark-in-bed-laugh here or somewhere in the vicinity of here.]* She is laughing because it has occurred to her as she has mulled over one decision then another, and another and their ramifications and the ramifications of those ramifications, that it doesn't Matter what decision she makes. She is being taken care of.

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And Meanwhile,

Across the ocean, in the morning, he is walking through a cemetery and begins to laugh aloud to himself. *[can attempt alone-in-a-graveyard laugh here or the vicinity of here]* He is laughing because it has occurred to him: all of these people are Dead.

And he is alive. And so is she.

And they laugh about this together over phone wires or satellite signals or whatever which way that voices crisscross large bodies of waters these days.

They are dancing.

They are alone and they are dancing.

They are alone and they are together.

She is alone and she is with Him.

He is alone and he is with Her.

There is a dance which knows no boundaries....that allows the soul in to play...that has no truck with perfection or the sky gods.

When will you let the cocoon take shape? When will you let the caterpillar Be and not try to Help it or Fix it? Perhaps one night at dusk, when you least expect it (and you're five years old and you live in the little town of Gorham, Maine on Flaggy Meadow Road), you hear on your windowsill in your plastic insect box, a light but insistent fmp fmp fmp sound. Something is moving inside the box. You can see its shadow. And you can hear it. And even though it's past your bedtime, you get up and you see a Butterfly. The cocoon has cracked open and there it is in your plastic box, a Butterfly. And you yell down to your parents in the Garden, who are smiling up at you, their heads surrounded by a red halo created by the last rays of the setting sun (because it is Maine and it is late and it is summer), "A Butterfly!....my caterpillar turned into a pretty Butterfly!" And you let it out of its plastic box and it's wings are orange and black, a majestic Monarch She is, and your chest opens so wide you feel the whole universe could fit into it and yes, this is it, this is the first time you feel it:

Shudder and Rapture.

[any sounds or movements that make sounds that seem appropriate here, performers, go for it.]

Shudder and Rapture.

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Shudder and Rapture.

[pause]

It saves your life.

You know that now.

It saved your life for years until you could remember that moment again, waking up as if you had been asleep for thousands of years. You had been dying and for some reason you were allowed to live. You had been killing yourself and for some reason were given the grace to stop. You stopped long enough to remember the butterfly and being five. To remember that for that one moment in your life the world had seemed unspeakably beautiful.

[pause]

And now?

What?

And Now? Where is shudder and rapture *now*?

Right here.

Here? Even now?

Yes.

How do you know?

You know.

But How?

Usually you're crying.

Crying? Why?

Because it's like you're melting. Like your heart has been frozen and is thawing out and it hurts like that. Like you're coming home after a very, very long absence.

Like maybe your whole lifetime?

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Yes, like maybe your whole lifetime.

Sometimes, it happens when you're laughing.

Yes, it does.

Like you're laughing at a joke you heard a long, long time ago but hadn't heard told until now.

Yes, exactly.

No soap, radio.

What?

It's like that joke. The one you tell as kids. Something like, what did the elephant say to the other elephant when they were in the bathtub and one elephant asked the other for soap?

I don't know, what?

No soap, radio.

What?

Right, that's what the other kids say and then a few others laugh, because they know that's it: That's the punch line.

I don't get it.

Precisely.

I Still don't get it.

Precisely!

You mean, there's Nothing to Get?

Yes.

But then where Are we? What's the Point?

Precisely.

Is that Enough?

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It's all we have!

13 minutes later.

Almost 13 minutes later.

Here we are.

Here we All are.

Listening to the Car Music.

[pause, maybe with audible breathing]

Perhaps the sublime never ends, but if it does, at least here and now, let's say it is with a blessing. And, let's say it's this:

It is. Thank you.

It is. Thank you.

It is. Thank you.

[here perhaps audible breath and a silent prayer to whatever or whomever you believe in that is a power greater than you (could be Nature, a God/dess, gravity, Lenny Bruce, your cat...whatever).]

Now.

Can you still dance to it?

[As a suggestion, you may want to end this with the song from the American classic movie "Singin' in the Rain" that begins "Got-ta dance....Gotta dance, gotta dance, gotta Daaance..." and I believe a bunch of dance steps follow, the sound of which would be great to hear! And, even if you can't find this exact song, you get the idea.....Ending it light and easy, with the essence of effortless effort, like soft-shoe, etc.]