



The first thing heard is the ocean,
The second thing heard were rocks, and then gravel moved
A swarm of bees
A highway
An octopus being boiled
Feet being washed by someone else
A restless sleeper
Termites carving
A distant party
Lights being turned on
The rereading of a court transcript
The groan of an asthmatic
A description spoken into a dictaphone of an autopsy
The daunting beginning of a long journey by foot
Other feet joining the first pair, these are even more dirty,
And afraid
The two boys washing their feet are in love and they work
Together in a glass bottle factory in an impoverished town
A stream passes by their feet
They should have just put their feet in the stream to wash
But they carried the water to wash by hand
An aging champion rushing up and down a flight of stairs,
Frantic, as if she's lost something
Her heartbeat murmuring
The night sky viewed through a shaking lens
The glass breaks
Sixteen elder women who have been
Seated at pianos in a warehouse run by the catholic church
A massive explosion at the glass factory, all the pieces
falling, All the ringing in heads that follow for days
Echoes of slipping and falling with a vase of flowers in your
Hand
A blinking yellow light, trained to a modest click
An infection which spreads among livestock causing them
to Scream so violently that their gaping mouths become
Unhinged and cease to function
The whining of a deer
The silence of this strange rest
The boys walk home, their hands swinging, the wind

rushing Against their hands

The boys drink from one bottle, the wind sings in the bottle
Between sips

A skill-less montage of sounds recorded at a deli

People chewing meat and then mulch, their teeth crumbling
Painfully until they drop to the forest floor



"Where should the house be? In what kind of forest?"

"Well what kind of sound do we want?"

"Let's decide on the type of leaves we want as instruments "

"Wait first we have to decide if there should be leaves or no leaves at all"

"Well, what will it mean for sound?"

"If there are living leaves, the sound will be smoother and softer. If there are dead leaves the sound will be louder and leathery."

"I think it would be higher, sharper and brittle. No leaves would be the sound of friction that wind makes against bark."

"Sometimes in the winter, a tree spontaneously moans."

"Yes I've heard that. It's like it can't take any more ice in it's sap so it screams."

"Of those three things (leaves, dry leaves, no leaves) what do we want to hear?"

"Maybe we're doing this backwards, in reverse? There are two different ways we could be doing it backwards. We could be doing it backwards by not beginning with the sort of abstract sound that we want to find, and then developing conditions to produce that sound. Or we could be doing it backwards by not identifying the conditions that produce the most wind: seasons, geography, type of forest. I don't know which approach is better."

"Let's start with sound because I don't just want the sound of wind, when wind becomes overwhelming it is unspecific, we could be anywhere, on the sea, in the plains or desert."

"Okay sound. I think I want a kind of sound that comes from lots of

overlapping small sounds so your brain has more work but also becomes almost immediately confused by trying to locate an inundation of sources. It will be interesting when after hours our brains start blurring and recombining sound and trying to parse it.

"So then we need leaves?"

"Well, that or branches very densely packed together. We're looking for noise rather than merely sounds."

"I agree about complexity. If we want the richest sound possible we should have leaves and density. And if we have the top of our building open so we can hear the sound, it would be nice to have a moderate temperature outside."

"Yes, we'll have to be listening for a long period of time in order for this to work. So a dense forest in the spring or fall or somewhere temperate."

"There are too many animal sounds in tropical zones. We want the sound of trees."

"I'm thinking late summer. What do you prefer?"

"I think we should narrow based on storms or wind factors. Summer nights often go still in the heat and still nights are not what we want."

"I guess I was thinking there would be some late summer storms."

"But could we predict them accurately enough in advance of a trip? I don't think late summer is the time, too much insecurity of wind, unless we pick a forest where it is always windy."

"High elevation, near the ocean somewhere, but we don't want to hear

waves.”

”Maybe we need to be in some named wind phenomenon. Like the gulf stream or something? Maybe somewhere in the United Kingdom?”

”But that is an ocean current.”

”If we go too far north the boreal is not complex enough. Trees start growing farther apart, leaves don’t hit each other and diversity of sound needs many different kinds of trees. Besides we had just decided on somewhere temperate.”

”So, we are choosing my favorite.

Deciduous.”

”Deciduous in a slightly southern latitude probably, a mild spring or fall.”

”Right.”

”Deciduous and windy.”

”We need to narrow to a date and a place. We really haven’t come very far.”

”I think we should have something larger, some large-leafed tree for diversity. I’m not sure oak trees produce the best sound. Oak leaves are good in the fall for high tone crackle but if we want the delicacy and confusion of sounds from green

leaves, maybe it should be a forest with something besides oak and beech.”

”Maple?”

”Poplar.”

”Poplar is the best sounding tree! We need a poplar grove.”

”I remember a poplar with fat leaves and strange flowers.”

”I think of poplars as similar to Aspens, but larger, less delicate and without white bark.”

”I am quite sure that the tree I remember was some kind of poplar, and had giant leaves and green and orange flowers.”

”But that’s a tulip tree.”

”I will check. Oh! A yellow poplar is a tulip tree.”

”One tree is not enough, we need to find many together!” (There is an ancient tulip forest/yellow poplar grove in North Carolina on government land.)

”It looks windy.”

”Smokey Mountains. Yes.”

”Hello?”

”When will the Tulip Poplars flower?”

”April.”

A small triangular building is built in a tulip grove. Two daybeds are placed against the two walls opposite the door. The ceiling is a hatch to let in sound.

Every year, an early ear sculpture made by an artist who only sculpts ears is carried to the house and hung on the wall, beginning a night of listening to the woods.