

Sound Transcription: *Watershed*

Linda Stupart *Watershed* 2020, video, 11:06

Sound Transcription by Aubree Penney

A warm, welcoming voice off-screen:

Ok, so, everyone close your eyes. Ok. So, now that your eyes are closed I want you to really think about the spit that's in your mouth. So like everyone has spit in their mouth. Just be really aware of that spit in your mouth.

Ok, so you've got the spit, it's there, it's in your mouth. Now what I want you to do is imagine that there's a cup in front of you. You've got a cup, it's empty, maybe it has some water in it. It's in front of you. Now, I want you to think and imagine spitting that spit out into the cup in front of you. Ok. Cool. Now that you've done that, I want you to pick that cup up and drink that spit back into your mouth again.

Splashes of water accompany each of the figure's steps, as the chitterings of birds mix with the rush of passing traffic and the light whisper of wind.

The voice off-screen clears its throat, which echoes slightly, before beginning to sing. The pace is slow, lingering, sung in a rich middle range and lending a haunting air. The song clings to your skin, subtle but insistent. The sounds of the riverbank continue in the background, the twittering of birds lightly piercing the darkness of the sung melody.

The voice sings:

Ba, ba da nuh nuh, duh nuh nuh, duh nuh nuh, ba ba

The gurgling of the river replaces the sound of birds as the camera dips into the water.

The voice continues to sing:

Reflex in the sky-y warn you you're gonna di-ie
Storm coming, you better hi-ide from the atomic ti-ide
Flashes in the sky-y turns houses into sti-ies
Turns people into cla-ay, radiation mines deca-ayyy

The voice emulates a guitar interlude, the sound becoming increasingly sharper and more insistent:

Dee da na now, de duh na now, do do duh na now, dee dee nuh nee, duh duh da now, dee dee nuh nee,
Bow bow buh na now, duh nuh nee

Robot minds of robot sla-aves
Lead them to atomic gra-aves
Plastic flowers, melting sun
Fading moon falls apart

Dying world of radiation

Victims of mad frustration
Burning global oxy'n fire
Like electric funeral pyre

A light splash joins the sound of the figure wading as they throw a stick that was in their way behind them in the water.

Duh da na now, de nuh na nee, ba ba da nuh, dee nuh na nee
Ba bow duh na now, nuh nuh na

The voice transitions to the rhythmic, airy flicking sound of a tongue flicking the top teeth, steady as the second hand on a clock. The rhythm continues, now comprised of gentle, insistent tapping sounds that have the steady rhythm and assuredness of a warm rain on skin.

As the camera dips under, the gurgling rushes of the river return.

The high-pitched bird songs return as the tapping fades.

A voice cries out.

A deep, startled exhale as a branch snaps, followed by a slow splash.

The airy rhythm returns, a ticking made of breath, tongue, and teeth, quickly switching to the drumming of flesh against a surface. The drumming grows louder, softens, and then abruptly halts.

A soft voice, the slight kiss of breeze brushing past is audible around them:
Thank you

All sound ceases.

The off-camera voice speaks:

Scum on the top of the river, skin on the top of milk, skin on the top of the river, scum on the top of milk. The River Cole is constantly threatening to flood like I am, like we are.

[a deep breath]

The limb, the Cole's River limbs flailing upstream towards her mouth and her teeth. When you drink a glass of water you also drink its ghosts. When you piss in the mouth of the river, your wastes embrace her pasts. Do keep body movements minimal. Do move and gesture slowly and naturally. Do maintain eye contact by looking straight in the camera. Bodies and the law are diametrically opposed. And the power of the police and/or men comes from somewhere else from flesh or bone or viscera, rather from unwoundedness, calcifications, non-porous materials. The virus sits on these materials but does not penetrate them. Rather, she waits. Scum on the top of the river, skin on the top of milk, as the river flows it picks up sediment from the riverbed, eroding banks and debris in the water. The river mouth is where much of this gravel, sand, silt, and clay is deposited.

The haunting song interjects:

Turns people into cla-ay.

Immediately the singer transitions back to speech:

The police hate water because it does not obey the law and because they cannot swallow or incorporate her. Kill the cop in your head to lose your tongue and exit language, swim in the blue lagoon now dyed black, let algae stick to you and stop holding hands. Cling to the viscera in your head, kill the cop in your high-wage, high-skill, high-productivity economy.

The Prime Minister says he does not care if you die, but that is because he does not understand that the dead are still a threat to him and to the law. When you drink a glass of water you also drink its ghosts. When you piss in the mouth of a river you also come in her pasts.

The haunting song interjects, gaining speed: Rivers turn to mud, eyes melt into blood

The water rushes in the background, a gentle but ceaseless torrent of sound.

The mouth of my mouth and the spit of the river, I am meters away from you and in the river holding my breath and still sucking up your sediments discharging foam and teeth. Foam on the water, sign of life and death.

The virus and the river water slither down policemen's teeth or cheek, resides there. The mouth becomes the source, becomes the rapid and the edge. You find the bones of children sometimes, soft hands on necks or weeds tangled between toes and mud and stinking flesh. Amniotic fluid often spills before it breaks, and sometimes fishes also die, she said, as eggs come tumbling onto scales and gills and mammalian hair on legs. Eggs are always a disaster or a triumph, like the river and your viscera, or the virus and the sea. Do keep minimal straight body naturally across the path to keep the other and the virus safely out and maintain body and maintain eye appeal to the warm contact camera contact nature keep slowly looking straight into the body.

The haunting singing emerges from the background, so soft as to be nearly indecipherable. It hovers in the back of the mind of the video. It sings:

And so in the sky shines the electric eye
Supernatural king takes earth under his wi-ing

The speaking voice off camera continues, edges of phrases and sentences blurring and piling upon each other in a near breathless torrent of words:

There caught in the elbows of fallen trees are curving mounds of white foam. Police are called about a water in the body and a body in the water or the river found dead across the edge or bursting skin cells multiplicities and masks and balls at the end of your arms at the end of the ball at the end of nothing. Rehabilitation of the riverbanks are getting better, but what if we never get better or go freckles forward, but what if we never get better or go forward but circle around rather in and out.

The volume of the song in the background swells. It progresses still at a slow, haunting pace, but feels bolder, more confident, less content to linger:

Heaven's gold chorus sings
Hell's flap their wi-ings
Evil souls fall to hell
And they're trapped in burning cell
Da na now, da da na now. Doo duh da na now, da na na now. Da na now, da na na. Duh nuh nuh, Buh buh na na,

The sound of rushing water in the background abruptly ceases, leaving only the singing voice to continue with its interpretations of Black Sabbath's guitar.

A beat picks up, both in time to the rhythm of the syllables being sung, recalcitrantly deviating at others.

Doo doo do-do, doo doo do-o
Buh buh buh, buh buh-a
Buh buh na na
Duh Duh duh now
Buh buh buh, buh buh-a

The beat increases in speed, becoming a frantic heartbeat for a few seconds before disappearing entirely.

The song continues softly:

Buh-a. Duh na. Duh na.

Barely audibly, the voice concludes, still on pitch and beat with its song, leaving us with a gentle, hovering syllable:

Mmm