

Act One

—**Slow fade up** (projected imagery)...A Sound That Calls People From Afar (attached by ropes) appears seated atop a mountain of rubble, volcanic rock, and debris (all of which are projected). a large book is on her lap... ambient light flickers across the walls of the theatre casting shadows, enough light we can make out the young woman as she begins reading—

Epilogue

The Bering Strait

In our destruction lie the seeds of our creation.

And he hoists his pack to his back, as he has done, what, time and time again, time before and time when, throughout his life... throughout his long long life, a life as long as the continent itself, the land stretching east to west, water to water, rail to trail, and he begins walking, as he has walked, once more, here, along the coast away from Wales—how he misses her soft and blubbery warmth—walking along a stretch of beach... walking... the wind blowing and his feet moving, though when he stops his walking, the wind continues, swirling about his bearded face, bristly little bushes, along the coast, the only vegetation visible. he walks and walks along the curve of the earth. he walks to where he can see across the Strait. his eyes narrow. even with the wind it is a clear day. the few clouds hang like alabaster, thick swirls of custard frozen in place, nothing exposed, and yet, everything feels exposed—an expanse of white, ice, snow, sparkle, sun—stark against the immaculate and vast cerulean sky. he walks along a snow covered bank where the earth curves and Wales are no longer visible, though the smoke from the spouts in their huts curls as it rises into the firmament, and he steps upon the frozen sea. he can feel its hardness beneath his feet. still water... it is still water beneath a thick crust of ice. he continues... walking. small twigs placed in the ice guide him along a primitive path leading away from the village and toward the Strait and the sea across the ice. the water moves beneath the frozen film. he walks until the sun begins to set. it is low, just above the horizon. at this time of the year the sun is always setting, hanging low just above the horizon. it never climbs high in the sky. it seems to move forever sideways. tick tock. there is only so much... tick, only so much, tock, things left undone, tick, words never uttered, work unfinished... tock, tick tick tock, he walks...

I had no idea when i took the first strokes and left the Odawan village along the Maumee, leaving my lover Magdalena, i would be in such a place. i had heard about a place like this, when i was still quite young, well before the massacre, a mystical place hung with ice, and covered with snow, desolate and bleak, home to the Ayaškimew:

Topan-akpinep

Wineu-akpinep

Kshakan-akpinep

Thupin-akpinep...

a rhyme we children sang around the campfire, and when the storyteller got to a certain point in the story:

Their home was icy

Their home was snowy

Their home was windy

Their home was freezing...

Topan-akpinep, wineu-akpinep, kshakan-akpinep, thupin-akpinep, we would sing, all through his interrupted childhood, singing now as tears drip down his cheeks, the weight of his pack lighter and his body feeling youth once more coursing through his musculature. topan-akpinep, wineu-akpinep, kshakan-akpinep, thupin-akpinep. the children in that Odawan village along the Maumee River, were happy, he recalls, seeing himself crouched within the bushes, hidden, observing their every movement, enthralled by their play, unable to keep his eyes from them, peering invisibly from within his recondite hideaway, observing their precious world, their ball games, wrestling matches, the tender ways in which they touched each other and peered together at things, their investigations of the natural world. he turns... and a strong gust of wind blows against him scattering his memories across the vast expanse of ice. he feels the urge to rush headlong across the floe and pick them up and return them to their repository, their place of rest within, but he refrains, and continues his walking, the tears forming a crust in his beard.

Father Time, Father Time...Thunder_bird...so quiet here where i walk, a deep and utter silence. it is there in the ice all the sounds of the world are held, within the vast, thick ice, contained within the ice, the ice, the ice...no longer can i see my breath floating across the frozen water. clouds once white now clutch the earth blocking the sun, a gray bell shaped cloak through which i make my way. i stop and bend,

placing my ear to the frozen water which stirs beneath the fell, scar tissue, the ice a skin of frozen water, and i listen for the sound which has brought me, the command i heard decades before atop the Great White Mountain...the sound of breath, the sound of the universe breathing...

Across the ice_d world etched with scattered memories, within its cold snow covered clutch, flakes of snow upon his fluttering lashes, crystalized tears finding cold and curly hirsute niches within his beard. he walks eyeing his way...

Tears of sadness streak and stain my face, as i cry. the sheen of the sky is smeared gray. my hand shakes without my knowing why. and in my walking i consider the child udAch'k'uqAXA'a'ch", A Sound That Calls People From Afar. she will speak the language of the earth; yes, she will practice the ancient ways; shoulder the traditions; plunge her hands within and grasp the most secret organs of the earth and revive the spirit of life. under burden of solitude the weight of the world is forever love, and she will carry this load. perhaps she will be the one to unbind the Sacred Bundles and Scrolls from the Ironwood log, and lead her people?

My destiny is further, further along...and further, further still, where the mind ceases its thinking, mingling with the white fluid world my body finds itself within, a realm of milk, a magical place covered thickly with ice, crystalized snow, and silence, glistening above and below, where earth and sky merge and all sense of proportion is lost, the entire world an enormous mirror; walking through towering heaps of clouds, like hills, masses of white rocque, clūd(s)...gloutos, like buttocks. i see them as i move across an icee skye into what appears an endless white opaque funnel, a wall of milk_fat frozen, a narrow rimy corridor leading me across the Strait. i am unperturbed; i am enraptured. my feet no longer touch what lies below. they move from habit. below, is a mass of vapor, suspended, sky and earth converging, bending toward one another, no longer distinguishable, one from the other, no longer separate. and within this cotton chambre, i hear a sound...a familiar sound...

Is it the sound of ice melting?...is that what i hear? nushhükòwën, ice_icles? dripping...the sound of a glacier melting?...long sculpted tapers hanging like clear frozen bats, touching one another, clinking, like glass, blown by the bitter wind?...no. no, it is not a tinkling, it is not the sound of ice melting. it is too cold. the wind, the wind blows...it is dark within my blanket i have pulled up to my eye-s. the smell of sheep_s wool father traded for beaver pelts, a thick blanc_et huddled closely, no words, just breathing, each of us breathing...separately struggling to maintain a semblance of warmth, holding hands under the layers covering us...sound of the wind, the wind, the sound of the wind intensified by the silence...our breathing keeps time with the sound...the warmth from my nostrils fills the blanket...around my face the air leaves my nose cold...leaves...leaves, yes. left, right. the sound of feet crushing frozen leaves lying upon the cold stiff ground. yes. that is the sound, that is the sound...and i turn...

As he turns, he can feel the weighty breath of Thunder_bird, the sound of its wings coming together in measured motion...spreading...then flapping with an increasing fury, faster and faster accompanied by a sound from within the core of the mountain Thunderbird is perched atop, a bellowing, and in an instant the chain of volcanic mountains along the curved trench of Tanam Unangaa, the Land of the Aleuts, their roots deep within the earth inextricably linked with the mountains along the southern Alaskan Coast, together, in unison violently erupt, spewing great balls of fire from out the belly of Mother Earth, filling the air with a gaseous vapor, a dark cloud that mushrooms as it rises and expands...rising and expanding, hot lava spilling over the sides of the phallic cone and across the broad snowy shoulders of the mountain range sweeping away in its wake whatever alpine villages there were: all along the Pacific, the entire chain of coastal mountains in one monstrous explosion shake the west coast from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego, even as the ocean along the Atlantic Coast, the earth now tilted, begins rising: tumultuously rising and rising, steadily, and as it rises it sweeps across barriers, engulfing the land, water overwhelming all coastal habitation, carrying them away, an entire infrastructure crumbling, swept away: so in the heartland of North America, and along the Gulf Coast, rain, an endless rain, an inundation, an entire year's worth of precipitation in a matter of hours, weeks and weeks of rain in minutes, a rain of biblical proportion, flooding, swamps where there were none, the dry world utterly submerged. and Menton stares, his mouth open in disbelief, the magnitude far beyond what he had imagined—a global cataclysm—and the wind whips up carrying the sounds of the catastrophe, and embedded within are the faint sounds of colonial strain...a wistful, nostalgic, yearning; a longing...a regretful, melancholic, mournful apologia, the sound of pipes, not unlike the plaintive cries a gaggle of geese make crossing a body of land in search of a new place to call home...one final look he takes...and when he has seen all he cares to see, he returns to his pillow, and rests his head...in sleep...as in dream...passing from the blows he has received (within his tent.)

“How long did i lay? was it years, or a day?”

—**A Sound That Calls People From Afar’s** voice sounds watery as though coming from afar, from the past, watery, as though her voice is coming from the sea. this phenomenon continues through the next section—

“I am dreaming...am i dreaming...”

—**A single incidental cough**...another and another...lingering coughing...until the entire chorus is coughing...the coughing grows violent, uncontrollable, extreme. it is an unprecedented coughing and takes over the entire theatre... and then, **Silence...Blackout**—