

C. Reider
Listening After the End

2017
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Part 1

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The ceiling fan blows on the angelwing begonia plant. As the long stems dance around in the wind, the leaves scrape against the 30 inch frame drum. Carrie does dishes in the other room. Lily plays with a plastic jingly ball.

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It's just one brass rod, struck with the tip of my finger, but wow, so many different harmonics.

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Two citronella candles burn while we sit on the porch. Carrie sneezes. Mosquitos everywhere.

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We put up plastic window covers at the beginning of Winter. We have a drafty house. The taught plastic is a drum. It sticks to my fingers, and as I hum at it, I can see the moisture in my breath condense on it.

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Several things in my hands: two jingle bells, a baoding ball, many pieces of 10-24 all-thread cut to an inch and a half. Two rusting steel strips with holes drilled in the center slide along a corroded brass tube.

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The tine instrument I made sits on the chair. The door is open. A storm is approaching. I've been thinking a lot about the great flood of 2013, not knowing that more damaging storms were on the way for me. I play the tines with an ebow. Lumpy is sitting with me, we are both plump and happy. Later, when I listen back to the recording I will hear him snuffle and I be terribly sad because I miss him so very much. I will recall that when I made the recording, it was about a year before we each got sick.

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A warm evening. Burlington Northern Santa Fe freight passing by, kids are outside walking with their bikes. I hang a stainless steel mixing bowl from a wooden dowel with some gardening twine. I let my body figure out the rhythm, I don't think about it too much. The solder joint on a contact mic comes loose, filling my headphones with a loud 60 cycle hum. Three more stainless steel mixing bowls, each has a different fundamental, even though they're all the same size. The bowls come from a Christmas themed carousel that we used to make at the sculpture factory where I work, they've been unused and gathering dust since the '90s. The night progresses, I find an old cymbal that a former owner crudely cut into a roughly roundish shape, I like the way it sounds. I hold it with a single finger in the center hole, and hit it with my other hand far away from the mic, then bring it close. The shake tine instrument I made is hard to mic, I still haven't quite gotten a satisfactory recording of it. I break another contact mic. Carrie suggests, since I'm recording metallic percussion, that I should try out a lamp that came from her Aunt's house. She's right, it rattles very handsomely when struck.

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Sitting cross-legged on the ice, pointing the microphones into an opening where the stream is exposed. Carrie's brother Alec and our niece Nina are sitting closeby, remaining very quiet so that my recording will come out alright. Later, we go up to the house and drink tea and I pass the headphones around so we can hear the sound of the water.

Part 2

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Sitting cross legged on the floor, winding up a spring-loaded toy top and turning it loose again and again. Sometimes the top grinds against the wires leading to the contact mics that are taped to the floor.

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My arms ache as I hold the ebow above the open strings of Carrie's autoharp, trying to get the string to sound out without getting too close so that the magnet grabs the string. I don't always succeed. Sometimes I get too tensed up while doing stuff like this, I need to remind myself to relax my body.

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Carrie's grandparents left us a collection of bells, including some very tiny ones. About eight of them are very, very small, under an inch in diameter or even smaller. There are a few that are about the size of a peanut out of its shell. In order to play them, my arm has to make repetitive, short, sharp spasms. I focus on trying to not allow the little bells to collide with the microphone while still keeping them in

the sweet spot. These fast muscle twitches are somewhat erratic though, and I marvel at how unpredictable my own body can be when I'm making it do something specific.

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A blustery Winter evening. It's windy enough to make our rustic windchimes sound out. The bells hang on metal chains, and it's all so heavy that it really takes some energy to get them moving, so they almost never do. It's one thing I like about them, that hearing them is a rarity. It's hard to record in the wind. I keep moving the mic around and attempt to shield it with my hands while still pointing it at the windchimes. I am probably bending and bobbing around in the wind just like the plant life in the yard. I consider that perhaps it is like I am dancing with the plants and the wind and the chimes.

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Another cold, windy day. I open the windows in the blue room and sit, very slowly turning the handle on a music box.

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I've got the big frame drum, the same one that was played by the begonia. I'm holding it upside down like a big bowl. I put some copper BBs in and shift the drum around so that the little balls roll around on the skin of the drum. I notice that the BBs are collecting - rolling up - dusty old spiderweb that had accumulated there. I should have cleaned out the drum before trying this idea. Later I will roll the BBs around a frosted, ornamental glass bowl that used to belong to Carrie's parents.

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In Pinewood Springs, same night as before. The stream water flows through a more constricted channel in the ice, the sound is more percussive. I'm very excited and pleased to be listening.

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These recordings were made at the prompt of my friend Cody Yantis, who said I should make an acoustic album. I avoided electronic sources, but I did use ebow on a couple of tracks to get some things to vibrate. Most recordings were made in 2016, except for the recording of the tines, that was in the Autumn of 2014. Most things recorded at home, except for the stream recordings in Pinewood Springs.

Mics: Zoom H4n, contact mics, CAD Equitek E-100, Audio Technica Pro-37r, SM-57, unlabeled vintage lapel mic.