

Perpetual Drift

Dramatic Radio Art work, 2021

Written, performed, and sound design
by Colleen Keough

The full version of the *Perpetual Drift* radio art work can be found at the link below:

<https://colleenkeough.com/artwork/4866447-Perpetual-Drift.html>

“Perpetual Drift” takes place in the not too distant future. The earth has undergone drastic climate changes. A crew aboard a lost ship at sea struggle to adapt to an uncertain future, and the psychological and emotional trauma created by a series of tragic events. The crew of the ship are, *the Captain* (ship’s captain), *Ether* (a time traveler), *the Robot* (a depressed robot poet and ship’s navigator), *Echo* (the mythical nymph), *the Specialist* (Botanist/Scientist), and *the Ship* itself. The story embodies environmental concerns we face as a collective human family, and signifies the death of old structures giving way to new life forms, systems, and organizations. For this work, I composed an electroacoustic soundtrack comprised of analog and digital synths, musical instruments, and original field recordings. I performed each character’s voice using a vocoder and other electronic effects to give each character a distinct sound and personality.

Excerpt from Perpetual Drift:

The Robot:

I’d like to talk about our dilemma
Nobody wants to talk anymore
The scene
The scene plays upon my memory
Loops of unforgiving light

My system buckles under the duress.
A burden I carry
A burden I own

Speech and tongue fuse saying nary a word
Silence breaks bleak and the nymph replete
Repeats our words

Woe, are the winds through these sails
Woe, are the unfamiliar tones

The mistress swam rogue
Reckless beloved limbs
Liquid suspension turned dim
And dialed under
The breadth of whims

Reflections bare witness
As lonesome sight
Holds her tongue
And bares delight
The mystery does not reveal

The tender bloom of morning woke
And Echo whispered,
In muffled chokes
And I aware of circling birds.

Her garment blew of flower scent
And there she float benevolent
A twist of hair and water weeds
Her gaze cast to the depths

Spun from disbelief
We, our lips beset with grief
The cause of our affect unleashed
The frail face hangs
As does the leaf

Now water

Now air

Now sun

Now drift

Now decay

Ether and the Voice: an Electronic Media Opera

Multi-media performance work, 2010

Written, directed, performed, video, and sound, by Colleen Keough.



Another Sun, Act 3: The Bright Side, *Ether and the Voice: an Electronic Media Opera*, 2010

Ether and the Voice: an Electronic Media Opera is a feminist experimental hybrid media and performance work which fuses literary and performative genres with video art, sound, music, creative writing and interactive new media. The narrative explores the phenomena of the disembodied voice and the fragmentation of identity and language through electronic modes of communication and identification.

Writing excerpts from the opera's libretto are on following pages.

Documentation of performance:

<https://colleenkeough.com/section/498604-Ether-and-the-Voice-an-Electronic-Media-Opera.html>

For more info about colleen's work please visit:

www.colleenkeough.com



Overture, video stills, Act 1: Extreme Roamer, *Ether and the Voice: an Electronic Media Opera*, 2010

Overture

The Dreamer:

A voice is roaming, the evening sky
With dislocated mouth and eyes
The words are making there way around
Silent hosts for perfect sounds

A flirt of images breaks through the grain
The waves consume then birth again
She is and is, the mask she is
Where foreign tongues are relatives

The day dream froze
And Ether chilled
Reversed time jumping
What future filled

A boat, a home
No telephone,
Transmissions cease
She drifts and roams

And then a fall
Into a world
With siren calls
With sinking girls

A different shore soaks
Another sun
And holsters carry
Crystal guns

Debris turns gold
And lips grow legs
On the bright side
The nights are days

The sirens air
Their curly tongues
A bedlam roar
From iron lungs

The frequencies
They shift the sky
To constant light
And trick the eyes

From bliss to plight
From here to there
The future spins
Unsure of their

Movement towards
Something pure
The stars align
In equal score

And tele-vision
Tells us more
Until the scene decays

And where the story begins to end
Is where we'll start today..



The L's, the I's, the P's, Act 1: Extreme Roamer, *Ether and the Voice: an Electronic Media Opera*, 2010

Ether:

Don't misinterpret the text. It can't read your mind. It's static. The breath just hangs. It waits at the end of an exhale gathering strength. A foreign body. In foreign lands. I press the buttons and turn the dials, but I have no control over what you think. And what you think is vitally important. I want to patrol your fantasies. Take this out. Replace with that. Stick my head on a creamsicle or Aphrodite's lounging form. I can adapt. I can shape myself accordingly. You won't know the difference. You won't differentiate between where you begin and where I end. You see, it's all a mosh of information and sensation. It goes pop, pop, pop, inside the culture. A crackle of circuits and instant gratification. There's no time to process what was said. The words come in shock waves. Always like lightning. No rest in between. Don't think I am some kind of cyber slut because of what I said. Because of the letters, and words, and images. The images speak of themselves and not necessarily of me. I don't know what they say to you. They could be conjuring an unpleasant memory. Something deep. Buried. Dead but alive. I have no way of knowing what flickers, who dances, or what other correspondences you are stringing along, but I have to believe this is something real. The images change as they mix with my blood. I'm no longer who I was a moment ago. The images. I am wearing them. You can see layer upon layer, living, moving, shifting. Nodding to a timeless rhythm. Opening the flow, and then letting go. I have to ask myself, am I giving it my all? Are my words lazy? Do they plunk down in a haze of afterthought? Do they assume the missionary position and just lie there?

Are they staring at the ceiling thinking of other words? Better words? Sexier words? I thought it was an appropriate response to distance and desire, but I can see now I was merely creating a scenario in which I was using you to satisfy my own need for connection, emotion, elation. I have nowhere to put all of this emotion, and so it dribbles down the front of me and pools round my rolling chair. I streak across the floor, back and forth, back and forth. Each track a measurement of space between our last contact. The tracks are getting wider. I'm having trouble finding the L's, the I's, the P's. My tongue darts out into ether, tasting only past events. So where is the future? Will we be connected in the future? I set my time to your time so I know where the sun is, and imagine it streaking gently across your face in soft licks and dull patterns. I am the one who's been disconnected. Surely there must be something wrong with me. I'm slowly losing feeling. I thought it would be a good thing for us to avoid inevitable disconnection, but you had other ideas. Ones that were sane, You had a plan. a strategy for survival.

So, where is the future?

And Now the Dead Shall Speak

Ether:

I picked up the tone, turned on the phone
I locked the screen, but they found me anyway
I'm over the seas, and roaming apparently
I'm roaming apparently

It's cold out here, way out here
Ether chokes the day out here

It's bold out here
It's old out here
The waveforms cluster close out here

I'm breaking up, your waking up
I'm waking up, your breaking through
Another night, a voice askew
Another day when words won't do

I go tap, tap, tap, and space, space, space
uh, uh, uh, and ay, ay, ay

You go, slash, slash, slash, and dot, dot, dot
Ay, ay, ay, and ah, ah, ah

So many signs are transitional
Ephemeral, until the gaze
Chases them up and away
Chases them up and away

An echo of you, a memory slip
Static and time, a voyeurs last trip
I'm winding myself around an old friend
Who's been dead for years, a voice at the end
We've been dead for years, our voices pretend

You're missing the part that's mostly you

You're missing the part that's mostly you



And now the Dead Shall Speak, Act 1: Extreme Roamer, *Ether and the Voice: an Electronic Media Opera*, 2010

Link to *And Now the Dead Shall Speak* video excerpt:

<https://vimeo.com/194175073>



Coin Toss, Video Stills, Act 2: A Boat, A Home, A Future, *Ether and the Voice: an Electronic Media Opera*

Coin Toss

The Vegan: I'll say it once, and then again. What is this space she's roaming in? I see her change from day to day. The masks, the grain, the overlay. A flipping coin that does not rest. Which side of chance will claim her flesh? A ruby throat. A bellow call. From deep within that tremors tall, and reverberates the skin in waves. A ripple crawl. A tuned delay. What fire heart beats uncontained, in such a place that's void in name? This is where a choice is made. When the past disintegrates, and tears a hole collapsing time. The weighted brow is now benign. Here, she's not who she was or what she'll come to be. She's in-between the realm of knowing, and mistaken identity.

Link to *Coin Toss*: <https://vimeo.com/47676921>

Vessel

The Dreamer: A vessel heaves from side to side. Ether holds her breath and rides. Contact is lost and power stalls. A boat, a home, a future calls. The whirl and buzz, a failing star. Losing power is not by far, the worst of what would happen next. What will she do? She cannot text! She cannot text, she cannot call, overboard her cells awol. And now her power is at stake, adrift in this forgotten place. Where the nothing is all you see, and roaming voices sigh. The words they sing a melody, lulling closed her eyes.

Rocket Science

The Vegan: Let's get real. It's not rocket science. The gadgets which we become reliant, take what's left of our attention. Leaving us with soul infections. The pool has woken and is gazing back. Who knew a pool could act like that? Narcissus has unleashed a drone. A roaming voice for a telephone. Is there intelligent life out there? Some sanity, must we beware, and wary of our future selves? This brings us to a point in time where Ether stows away. Sinking through the stuff sublime where sirens are at play. Naturally, we're curious, will she survive the fall? Where nothing, touches nothing, touches nothing, touches all.

