

We see our city before the sunrise.

Lights rise on JAMES.

JAMES

Berkeley, California.

It's that time in the middle of the night when you can't tell if it's too late to be up or too early to be coming home. Late Spring. Unseasonably warm. Earthquake weather.

We hear the sound of a trumpet as it begins to blow.

This is my house, built in 1907. That's a lot of time passed between then and now, here and there. The weeds creep. The paint peels. And the brush becomes so dry you fear that starting your car will set off a three-alarm blaze.

My family used to live here. What is left of this block if folks can't afford to live here anymore? The dead don't know. The living neither.

There is a creek in my back yard, wanna see it? It's hidden behind a fence and about four feet of ivy. The creek enters my back yard through a pipe that guides it under various streets in Berkeley. In the creek I've found everything-- salamanders, crawfish, boots and broken pottery, beer bottles, baby clothes. It cuts my neighborhood in half, cuts Berkeley in half, separates and unifies us. The water used to flow freely, now it just trickles by the time it gets to my house. My creek. My Berkeley. It's not perfect here, but you sure do get the sense that it's better than anywhere else.

We hear music. THE COMMUNITY emerges out of the shadows.

COMMUNITY

FRED/SUZY

Berkeley is history, proximity and circumstance. *

TIM/TESSA

Berkeley is a mystery, a muse to me of movements past. *

MANUEL/KRIS

Berkeley is community, it's knowledge is collection. *

ANNA/CELIA

Berkeley is unity, Utopia's extension. *

SUZY

Berkeley is a bowl, the safest way to Monterey,
a corner store and farmer fresh, we're heads of kale above the rest.

CELIA

Berkeley is a fault line. It moves to mark the time.

TESSA

Made the mountains/made the coast and molds our western frame of mind.

*

JAMES

Berkeley is a creek run underground it winds and flows
It's submerged but it resurfaces
the purpose is to go.

TIM

Berkeley has some friction, and confusion and illusion.

MANUEL

And exclusion,

ANNA

And inclusion,

KRIS

But it's past its revolution.

FRED

Berkeley is radical,

JAMES

Berkeley is the past,

TIM

Berkeley is just an idea and ideas never last.

JAMES

You're missing the whole point. Ain't nobody in this city gonna tell you the
truth about Berkeley.

BEE

That's cause there ain't no one truth, like their ain't no one Berkeley.

*

MANUEL/KRIS

Berkeley is ...

*

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| | | |
|--|--|---|
| | TIM/TESSA | * |
| Berkeley is ... | | * |
| | FRED/SUZY | * |
| Berkeley is ... | | * |
| | ANNA/CELIA | * |
| Berkeley is ... | | * |
| | FRED/SUZY | * |
| Berkeley is ... | | * |
| | TIM/TESSA | * |
| Berkeley is ... | | * |
| | ALL | * |
| Berkeley is ... | | |
| | SUZY | * |
| ... a commune, a village. Berkeley is ... | | * |
| | FRED | |
| ... the University. Berkeley is ... | | * |
| | CELIA | * |
| ... late nights, looking up at the stars. Berkeley is ... | | * |
| | KRIS | * |
| ... tiny. You can drive across it in like 5 minutes. | | |
| | <i>The COMMUNITY keeps the chant "Berkeley is ..." going beneath the following text,</i> | |
| | SUZY | |
| If there's no traffic. | | |
| | ANNA | |
| Berkeley almost ran me over. | | |
| | SUZY | |
| Were you on your cell phone? | | |

ANNA

No, Berkeley was.

*

JAMES

You're all missing the point. Berkeley is a tangle of streets that run back and forth through time. We sit on the east side, the inside of the San Francisco Bay, *la contra costa*, and most of the fog that rolls through those Golden Gates usually ends up on my doorstep. There is no map that exists that can tell us exactly what it used to be that we are sitting on right now. Shell mounds leveled to pave roadways. Creeks bridged and buried underground. Key routes turned to pathways. Freeways representing what used to be the shoreline. All the black bears gone. And we sit here sifting through the rubble as if we aren't going anywhere.

*

SUZY

It's a sprawl that has you imagining where farm lands used to be.

TIM

Has you wondering what it used to look like before we came here.

FRED

Before the University.

CELIA

Before the students and the professors.

SUZY

The hippies and the panthers.

*

MANUEL

The refugees.

ANNA

And all these new parents who cross the bridge seeking sunshine and good school systems.

BEE

Berkeley is layered, like time, like earth and history, like t-shirts over long sleeves under sweatshirts.

JAMES

Best women. Best weather. That's what I say. That's why I stay.

A light hits BEE as she enters into JAMES' world.

JAMES

That's my grand daughter, Bee. Beatrice. Today, a high school graduate. Tonight she's out there. Tomorrow we're moving out of this house. Who will remember us when we've all moved away?

Music as the lights shift.

We see BEE, a young lady on the precipice of what's next, about to take that first step into the unknown 'rest of her life'.

BEE

Berkeley, California.

A house party in the hills.

It's that time in the night when I should be heading home but I just don't want to.

CELIA joins her.

BEE

It's hella hot. Feels like there's about to be a earthquake.

CELIA

We should go.

It's late and the party has that 'been busted by the cops but my closest folks came back when the coast was clear' vibe.

In the corner is a small group making music, drumming, jamming, free styling. BEE makes her way to them-- listening, watching. After a moment,

DUDE

(to BEE)

You want to join in?

BEE

Maybe.

DUDE

You sing? Play something?

BEE

I rap.

DUDE

That's hella cool. Here, we'll give you a beat.

Someone makes a beat on a drum or bangs on something or beat boxes. When BEE feels the beat, she jumps in.

BEE

We come from Northbrae, Westbrae, South Berkeley
H2O to Elmwood we speak free
Ain't no such thing as East Berkeley
Run Telegraph into the UC
We run Shattuck Ave. so what do you see
4 different schools make up the 3G
Downtown living just like the Gaia building/
Break through your glass ceiling/So watch me be me

That's B-E-A trice, with no tricks
You're D-O-A, with this I dont miss
It's all beer pong and blunt hits / your family on long trips
You can sit and lie/I'll stop but don't frisk

Born and bred I had no reason to leave
From the halls of Alta Bates I got the reason to breath
I lived on Curtis at Cedar Street
Blake Street and Jefferson
A quick stop in Antioch then landed back on Gilman
MLK to Ellis Street
College at Ashby
Derby, Dwight, Durant, Dana, Delaware and Beverly.

Damn talk about the architecture
Lived in so many places I should fucking lecture
East Bay protector/Bart line intellectual
No one here will tell the truth
Cause we all think we special

...And that's real
I ain't moving even tho' three strikes got repealed
Attack that see I'm sharper than a pencil
Talk till the sunrise like the Berkeley City Council ...
Talk to your boy 'bout stop being an asshole
You can say you from the town but you college at Vasser.
You say you break it down but you better hustle faster,
One thing is for sure: on the mic I'm the master.

CELIA

You killed that girl!

BEE

Thanks!

DUDE

Damn, girl, where did you learn to rhyme like that?

BEE

Practice.

CELIA

She free styles everyday.

BEE

Not every day, but as much as I can.

DUDE

You definitely got skills MC. Don't I know you?

BEE

Maybe?

DUDE

You go to B-High right?

BEE

Used to.

DUDE

Yea, I totally remember you. You were in my drama class for like a week.

BEE

...

DUDE

Mr. Winer's drama class. Freshman year. Yea, it was you. We had these visitors come in to do some workshop and they brought cookies. And you were like 'excuse me, are these cookies gluten free?'.
...

CELIA

That sounds exactly like you.

BEE

That was hella long ago.

DUDE

It totally was you. Yea, they asked us our names and you said Gina or something and then said it wasn't your real name.

CELIA

Ok...

DUDE

I said my name was Peter and that I wished dragons were real. We used to fuck with people when they came into our class room.

BEE

We were friends? My bad. I guess my memory sucks.

DUDE

We were hella cool with each other. Not everybody was cool but I remember you.

CELIA and BEE look at each other. Maybe they laugh. Maybe it's just an awkward silence. CELIA thinks he's cute.

BEE

Okay...

DUDE

So what are you two gonna do now?

BEE

I don't know.

DUDE

We could head to my boy's house. He's having a little party and he has a studio.

BEE

That sounds cool.

CELIA

(to BEE)

Or we could mob to Pano like we planned.

DUDE

Yea? You got 'dro?

CELIA

We got a little.

DUDE

So we gonna hook up?

BEE

Sounds good. But only to smoke. I gotta head home soon.

DUDE

Ok. I'll try to make it up there, then.

They start to go.

CELIA

See ya Peter.

BEE

That's not his name.

CELIA

I know but I don't know what his name is.

(As they exit.)

He's cute.

The girls leave the party.