

WE ARE HERE

**Claudia Rankine wrote the text with
Helga Davis and LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs,
with sound by Jeremy Toussaint-Baptiste.**

The installation's audio consists of a spoken text against
a progression of repetitive, complementary motifs.

Sunken Overlook at 17th Street

Here we are
here you are

here is not there
here is not then
When we were here

Sweetness in the air
We are here
You were there

there where we were
you are there

we went there
to find you here

here where we were
you are here

hear that we were
in the air

Were in the air
Either here or there

In the air

Whose here is now
How long is now



WE ARE HERE

In the air

in case you are here
use we were here

unless we are here
otherwise you are here

wish you were here

whose here is now

Sweet everlasting

we have never been far behind

Here here
Hear hear

when we were here
you were where

Now you are here
Now we are here

How long is now

there where we were
you are there

we went there
to find you here

here where we were
you are here

hear that we were
in the air

here
are here



WE ARE HERE

hear hear
heard you are here

in case you are here
use we are here

unless we are here
otherwise you are there

wish you were here

who here is now

Not everyone is here

you have never been far behind
always near here

to be clear
in all the interims

you were near

here you are now
hear hear

let's be fair
share here

hear hear

you are here
share here

Whose here is now
Dear dear

hear he said to her
hear that we are here

in case you are near



WE ARE HERE

don't wish to hear

who goes there

hear

we were here

near here

here

here he said to her
here she said to him

in the memory of the yard
in the steps lost in hallways

in the sweep of streets

in the rear of rail yards
in the alley inside

Soon never to hear
We were here

Whose hear is now

At the end of the day
Cant but hear it

is there a there there

Here
Don't step

Whose here is now

Here he said to her
Here she said to him

There there we are here.



WE ARE HERE

23rd Street Seating Steps

what does it mean
to not want a call (what if)
for imagined change (what if)
to change
and yet, also,
to feel bullied
by the call (what if)
to change (what if)?

how is this creative call (what
if) to change (what if) named
shame, named penance,
named chastisement?

how does one say

what If

without reproach? The root

of chastise is to make pure.
the impossibility
of that—is that
what repels and not

the call (what if)
for change (what if)?



WE ARE HERE

Coach Passage at 30th Street and 10th Avenue

A

what if over tea, what if on our walks, what if in the long yawn
of the fog, what if in the long middle of the wait,
what if in the passage, in the what if that carries us
each day into seasons, what if in the renewed resilience,
what if in the endlessness, what if in a lifetime of conversations,
what if in clarity of consciousness, what if nothing changes.

B

what If what I want from you is new, newly made (I was doing
nothing by sitting), a new noise in response to all my repetitions
to the white noise. a swerve in the thoughts and the words
they carry, the care that carries them. I am here attempting
to understand without the shrug how what I want and what
I want from you run parallel—

the justice and the openings for just us. You say and I say
but what is it we know, what is it we are wanting to know
about here? Here, I am here.

what is it we are wanting to stay conscious, to stay known,
even as we say, each in our own way, I so love, I know, I shrink,
I'm asked, I'm also, I react, I smell, I feel, I think

I've been told I remember I see I didn't I thought I felt I failed
I suspect I was doing I'm sure I read I needed I wouldn't I was
I should've I felt I could have I'm sure I ask...

what if what we don't do for each other is take our minds
off things?

