

UNCERTAIN MUSIC

I've come to realize that if anything happened, there was probably music.

Now I lean in close to listen.

It has come back to me in variations, in music I don't recognize. Memory can defragment, but it never resembles the original experience.

The image itself is fairly uncertain. I'm small and standing in front of a record player. The receiver is silver and covered with dials. There are tiny tuning meters in little glass windows filled with yellow light, stacked like apartments in a building. The needles wobble back and forth, showing the science of the music. In this image, I'm not sure what the song is. I'm staring at the record spinning on the turntable. The label hypnotizes me, creating a swirl of colour in my head that didn't exist before. The grooves orbit past me like black oil, smooth and perfect. I'm just discovering my relationship to the substance of vinyl. This record doesn't have any scratches. The arm bobs as the record turns. There's a slight warp. I want to see the

needle up close so I pretend I'm tiny and jump onto the turntable in my mind. You might say I haven't come back since.

As soon as I land beside the arm and admire the boy-sized diamond tip at my feet, I begin to feel I'm not alone. There's a presence behind me. Don't ask me what the clues are: shadow, body heat, breath on the back of my downy neck. For whatever reason, I don't want to turn around. Maybe it's because I know the music will stop.

That's all I have at the moment.

Now, certain music gives me certain feelings.

Uncertain music gives me uncertain feelings.

When I speak, it comes out like a weird kind of song-making.

I don't always understand myself, the same way I don't always understand lyrics.

This is where we stand for now. I wonder what this all means. In the meantime, I open my mouth. Play every song I can find, full volume, and backward. Pronounce every word, no matter how it comes out.

I listen and try to remember.

I speak.