



the economic survival **rite of passage**

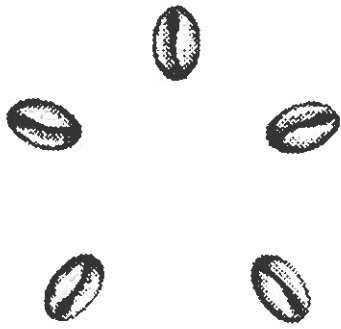
an integrated media performance

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script/score

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In most societies, rites of passage are named as such, and marked explicitly. Here, students are prepared to get absorbed by the economy, but the implications of what we give up are not discussed. No logic is presented, other than, "that is the way the world is." Why is the world that way? The purpose of this piece is to give us a space in which to collectively think and feel about this. Since no one else has given use one, we can make our own rite of passage.

Cast of Characters

the student

mom

the representative from j.p. morgan

the diviner -- shaman of the oracle of the 16 cowries

Oshun -- the goddess of the river / the goddess of love

Environmental Zones

the vision pit

a green scaffolding downstage right, with painted tree suspended on top. inside here, the student is sheltered.

the graduation area

we reserve a corridor house left for performance. at the top of that area -- in the back of the house -- are 2 seats, for mom and the student.

the game show torture chamber

3 purple stools and a green chair, stage right, mid. where the student is tempted and tortured.

the ancestral ground

a shrine of purple scaffolding, upstage left. the skeleton sits here., 12 feet up, behind the window.

the musicians' performance square

(offset by 45 degrees) in the center of the circle

the musicians' waiting area

when they are not performing, the musicians sit on the floor at the periphery, downstage left. the musicians, as shamans, are always present, part of the action, even when not playing music.

Act 1

22:00

graduation (pompous circumstance)

5:00

*mom and student, seated on an elevated platform**bassist, drummer, cellist and 1 violinist in musicians' square; other musicians seated in musician's waiting area.*

crowd sounds - looped samples

strings, snare & kick drums: distended segments of pomp and circumstance

lights on musician's square only

as the music fades out, the lights crossfade, illuminating mom and the student on the graduation platform, and darkening the musicians' square

mom: its time for you be responsible and choose a career now. Something stable and responsible, a profession. Your father and i have worked so hard to give you opportunities. What are you going to do with your future?

The student turns toward Mom; she wants to answer the question. They exchange glances, then Mom pushes the student, who rolls to the vision pit.

The musicians exit from the rear faces of their square. They move clockwise to the musicians' waiting area, where they sit on the floor.

going out into the bush



1:00

student in vision pit, arms hugging knees, rocking from fetal position.

voice: You are out in the bush all alone. You sit in the vision pit, a hole dug into the side of a hill. Only twenty, you still have your child's name. The nearest human being is many miles away. Out in the bush all alone, each moment may feel like a long, long time. See your visions, find your path; only then will you return to your people. When you return, you will no longer be a child, but an adult.¹

The vocalists move from the musician's waiting area to the musicians' square, circling clockwise. When they pass near the student, they do not interact.

¹ The impetus for this line comes from *Lame Deer of the Sioux*, as transcribed by Joan Halifax in *Shamanic Voices*. 1978. New York, Dutton. The notion of a sacred space where the initiate goes alone for visioning may also be found in other cultures.

haa aa uh (1) -- simple statement		4:00
<i><<invocation of primal interconnectedness -- first stage: finding connection with self.>></i>		
 <p><i>bright light fades in very slowly onto suspended cowries 30 seconds in</i></p>	<p>1 6 bar cycle. 1 cycle solo 1 cycle duet. remaining cycles trio, continuing until</p>	<p>student explores themes of fear and strength within the confines of the vision pit. She climbs the scaffolding, feeling the prison of her own mind. Explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a time when you felt afraid, maybe paralyzed by fear. • a time when you felt secure on your own. • a time when you were lost. you needed to get some place. no one was accessible to give directions. • a time when you knew your place, happily. • a time when you stood up for yourself. • a time when you wanted to stand up for yourself, but were afraid.
<i>this process continues until the student is satisfied that she has found herself in this place.</i>		
<p>student arrives in front of her chair and freezes in preparation for raise hands</p>	 <p>vocalists stop at the nearest 8-bar cycle boundary.</p>	<p><i>lights on student cut as she arrives. Oshun emerges from musicians' square. Other vocalists move clockwise to musician's waiting area.</i></p>

Oshun's soliloquy

1:30

Oshun is emerging from the river and preparing to go out.

Conga player accompanies with solo.

Oshun: From my home in the river
from the sweet swirls of clear warm water and
sienna silt streaked with sunlight,
from the thick, flowing braid of currents and eddies,
I will go . . . out . . . in style of course -- that is
my way. Give them a taste of my beauty and charm.
Oshun. I am Oshun, Orisha of the river.
Consort of Chango and Elegua, still I am my own woman.
I am Oshun, the desirable. They will want me. I will
go.

Oshun returns to the musician's waiting area

Cellist, violinist, drummer and rainstick player move from the musician's waiting area to the musicians' square.

statement of breath/decision

5:00

Soft light re-discovers the student, still standing in front of her chair.


The student performs "raise hands" from Tai Chi as as slowly as possible.




malleted cymbal rolls flutter like birds in a Chinese painting
cello and violin sustain a 5th
rain stick
leave lots of silence

to end the 5 minutes, concluding the scene

student: when making a decision i try to slow down.
no, i dont try, i let myself
let go
become aware of my breathing
being filled and emptied,
filled and emptied
emptied and filled
i try the possibilities on, like robes.
Silk or polyester?
i breathe to sense which feels lighter

gong hit, coinciding with bell player enters w 1 2/8 Ewe bell		<i>blackout</i> <i>then light immediately returns to cowries</i> <i>String players return to musician's waiting area.</i> <i>Vocalists, conga and 3rd shekere player move to the musicians' square.</i>
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casting of oracle² with traditional afro-cuban guiro³ **6:30**
student is still in front of chair.
enter diviner,
who alluringly convinces the student to have her fortune told by the oracle of the 16 cowries..

 gankogui bell:	1 2/8 Ewe bell pattern											
	1	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	3	4	2	3
voice 1:	tin		go		go	go		go		go		go
shekere 1: (minimal support, with improv)	fu		ture	fu	ture		fu	ture		fu	ture	
	x		x		x		x		x		x	
	fu	ture		fu	ture		[— 4 —]	can	tell	your fu ture

² The 16 cowries divination is a traditional Yoruba divination form associated with the Orisha Orula. It is related to the more popular Ifa divination. The story which follows is adapted from a tale told by a Nigerian diviner, then transcribed and translated in William Bascom. Sixteen Cowries: Yoruba Divination from Africa to the New World. Bloomington. Indiana University Press. 1980.

³ Guiro means gourd in Spanish. This traditional Afro-Cuban form accompanies songs of praise to and invocation of the Orishas. Orisha is the Yoruba word for deity. The Yoruba people are based in Nigeria. Many of them were taken by force to slavery in the New World in the 17th - 19 centuries. In spite of intense persecution, some of these people held onto their spiritual practices. In Cuba, their religion is called Santeria; in Brazil it is called Candomble. Directly traceable elements can also be found in the Afro-Haitian form, Voudon.

An even more sacred form of Afro-Cuban Orisha music is played on Bata drums at a ceremony called *bembe* or *toke*. The *guiro*, which we play, is less holy, but still spiritual. We use the traditional *guiro* ensemble here, with 3 guiro's, or as they are also called when dressed in a net of beads for shaking, shekeres.

voice 1:	fu	ture	fu	ture	fu	ture	fu	ture
					[----- 4 -----]			
	fu	ture	fu	ture	can	see	your	fu ture
	fu	ture	fu	ture	fu	ture	fu	ture
					[----- 4 -----]			
diviner:	fu	ture	fu	ture	can	read	your	fu ture
								i can tell your
voice 1:	fu	ture	fu	ture	fu	ture	fu	ture
diviner:	fu	ture					student	
					[----- 4 -----]			
voice 1:	fu	ture	fu	ture	can	tell	your	fu ture
diviner:		are you	willing?					

when the student assents to having her fortune told,
the diviner pushes her into her chair.

enter conga with burning lead (1 minute, while diviner shakes, casts, and reads cowries)

diviner takes basket of cowries,

shakes them,

casts them and

peers to interpret them.

conga cools off and comps rhythm part which will support Oshun dance, when Oshun enters

diviner: 5 cowries. 5 cowries face up.
Ose. Ose. This outcome, 5 cowries, this Odu -- Ose.
Student, I read your future.
The cowries conjure Oshun.
5 is her number. 5 for Oshun.
Sweet Oshun. Goddess of the River.
Orisha Oshun, with the honeyed breast.
Orisha Oshun. Goddess of Love.

voice 2: Long ago,
our people,
the ones who cast the oracle and invoked the Orishas,
they were making war on the Other,
an unsuccessful war that they could not win.
The king called upon the Sixteen Orishas,
He said, "Orishas, go and capture the Other for me."
Chango, orisha of lightening, went, he failed;
Babaluaeye, orisha of sickness and healing, went, he
failed;
Ogun, the blacksmith -- spirit of iron molten in the
forge -- Ogun went, he failed.

<<Oshun enters from the musicians' square.>>

Oshun: Perhaps I may be of some assistance?

voice 2: Ha! A woman? Never!

Oshun: Well, Chango moves me, but perhaps we need an approach more . . . powerful . . . than lightening.

voice 2: Oshun, they are dangerous.

Oshun: I am dangerous, too. I am not afraid of the Other.
I will go.

to diviner

diviner: This war that I am going to, what should I do to win it?
Oshun

Oshun, offer

10,000 cowries on the right side;

Offer 10,000 cowries on the left side;

Offer a pigeon and a cock;

Oshun should offer a calabash;

Offer a coil of thread.

conga lead 40 seconds 2nd & 3rd shekeres enter shekeres intensify	Oshun collects and offers sacrifice
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diviner: Oshun has appeased the gods.

Oshun: Now, I am ready to enter the town of the Other.

Oshun: **bima Oshun ba ilele**
ochu-o ache bo le ure
bima Oshun ba ilele
ochu-o ache bo le ure

diviner starts coro, which is then thickened at each iteration of the full coro part by
the student (who rises from her chair)
vocalists & shekere players

coro: **bima Oshun ba ilele**
ochu-o ache bo le ure
bima Oshun ba ilele

Shekere players, Diviner and Oshun process singing around space, and exit
The student starts to join them, then hesitates, and is left behind.

Act 2

53:30

game show

4:00

<<reverse game show format, 3 interrogators -- Mom, the rep from J.P. Morgan, and the diviner. The student is interrogated about career plans, goals, possibilities & compromises>>
lights to suggest hollywood glitz

no music all musicians except the drummer sit in the musician's waiting area

Game show blocking. Realism/surrealism.

The 3 interrogators stand on their stools, stage right, perhaps outside.

The student sits in the interrogation chair, at 1st base.

rep from JP: Hello, and welcome to, *What are you doing?*, the game show with the biggest prizes and the rudest questions. I'm the representative from J.P. Morgan, and with me today in our studio to interrogate our contestant are Mom and the diviner.

<<applause>>

Now, joining us today, from Mainstream, USA, on *What are you doing?* is our contestant, the student.

<<applause>>

Student, before we get started, tell our audience, do you have any hobbies?

student: Well, I like to take walks.

rep from JP: Walks?! Very nice. We'll return with today's first question on *What are you doing?* after this commercial message.

<<corporate icon din segment -- 20 seconds>>

rep from JP: Welcome back. Now, the format is simple. Mom, the diviner and I ask the questions. Answer correctly for big money and prizes. Answer, incorrectly, ... and face the consequences. O.K., student. For \$100, what is your major concern, as you graduate?

student: A secure future.

<<applause>>

Mom: That's my girl/boy.

diviner: For 200 remote plant species, what happens when you think of your future and the future of the earth at the same time?

student: Sometimes, I get overwhelmed. I just wanna think of me.

rep from JP: That's good for \$200!

<<applause>>

For 300 dollars, what is most important about a career path?

student: Work that will make me happy, that will give me a feeling of satisfaction.

rep from JP: That's o.k. so far. We'll give 50 dollars, partial credit. For 400 dollars, now, what will make you feel happy?.

student: Well, that could include many factors. . .
<<buzzer sound>>

rep from JP: No, I'm sorry, the correct answer is, financial security. You just lost a job offer.

<<ohhh>>

student: Oh, I see.

rep from JP: Now, the daily double.

<<applause>>

Tell us Mom, what special prize do we have for the student if s/he can answer this next question?

Mom: From Transworld Airlines and American Express tours, you'll be flying to Europe for that post-graduation summer trip you've always dreamed of. Five days in Rome, 5 days in Paris, 5 days in London. 5 days in Prague, the city of Vaclav Havel. You'll be exposed to new diverse cultures!

rep from JP: Now, here's the big question. Suppose the boss asks you to minimize the costs of relocating Natives whose homes will be flooded by the firm's Amazon hydroelectric project? What's your initial response?

student: Yes, of course. Factors analysis to minimize relocation costs? Sure, boss, I can do that. Very interesting.

<<applause>>

rep from JP: Right on, student! We'll be right back.

corporate icon din

5:00



an assembly of samples from the commercials of very large corporations

the student remains seated in the interrogation chair. she stares blankly out the window, as if watching a normal sequence of television commercials.



visual: cycling of walk and don't walk

All the musicians move together to their places in the musicians' square.

violins start
10 seconds
before icon din
ends



voice 1: The objective of a resume is to present your qualifications clearly and succinctly so that prospective employers will want to interview you.

haa aa uh
interlude
violin
duet



voice 2: The objective of the cover letter is to impress the employer with your qualifications, motivation and interest in the job so that he will want to interview you.



voice 3: Dear Student:
Thank-you for your interest in the position of administrative assistant. You were among many qualified applicants, We will keep your resume on file for consideration in the event of future openings.

the student rolls out of the chair and back to the vision pit.

haa aa uh (2) -- intermediate statement

3:30

student, in vision pit again continues to develop her theme.
dancers enter other zones and, in paralell, explore the same themes
cello and violin with sustained vocals
then add electric bass
call and response

haa aa uh
holding pattern
continues in
background

childrens' games



<<call and response>>

1:30

J.P. rep: london bridge is falling down,
falling down, falling down
student: london bridge is falling down,
my fair lady
mom: you must pay the rent
student: i cant pay the rent
J.P. rep: you must sign ze papers
student: i will not sign ze papers

the musicians return to the ancestral grounds.

sign ze papers

4:50

funky with all dancers expressing conflict. the student finds different alignments.



pre-sequenced rhythm tracks with live vocals
samples include whip crack, and various convolutions of a baby's sounds

i just wanna
think of me
i just wanna
think of me

in
turn
al
ize

the pressure is squeezing
the pressure is squeezing my brain

you must sign ze papers
i will break both of your arms
i will break both of your legs


break break break hold on let go
break break break

as sign ze papers is ending, the drummer returns to the musicians' square



transition with battering
whip crack solo

the vocalists return to the musicians' square
Mom and the dancers exit.

j.p. morgan presentation 7:00 The rep from JP is presenting to the student.  a tightly structured improvisation, with well-defined time structures. instruments: percussionist, the 3 vocalists, and the rep. from J.P. timbres: triggered samples of telephone, office, kick drum.	
voice 1: (7 beat cycle) see through the eyes. see through the eyes see through the eyes of analysts see see see through the eyes see through the eyes of analysts see through see through see through see through the eyes of analysts see a wide range of functional areas see how these units function together your strengths and the strengths of the firm have been identified.	voice 2: (9 beats) the bank is looking for someone with analytical skills. communication skills are essential. strong decision-making abilities must be project-oriented. must want to be a team player.
voice 3: (off beat phrasing) corporate finance global markets management services audit assignments global technology audit assignments masters in accounting address strategic management issues	

*the string players return to the musicians' square
the rep from j.p., by starting these lines, signals the musicians to end.*

musicians decresendo,
preparing to finish



rep from jp:
At J.P. Morgan, constant on-going training never ends. Diverse opportunities for personal growth.

all layers finish except
the rep from J.P., who
then flows naturally out
of time structure into
game show lines.



Analysts use a statistical behavioral model to determine your behavioral classification. Using this information, work with peers, managers and subordinates to form better relationships.

job interview torture chamber

2:30

Student in job interview chair (1st base, stage right).
Mom and the rep j.p. on the side ledge.



loosely structured improv
discord. drummer plays angular rolls.
strings play squeaks and grunts.
Make the time as odd as hell.
Leave a lot of space at first and let density
build very gradually.

Throughout this scene, movement intensifies.
Consider repeated job interview gestures, and torture.
Build into a constrained frenzy.

with accelerating pace. Except for the one question which is repeated from the previous game show, the student creates her/his own answers.

rep J.P: Welcome back to America's favorite game show, *What are you doing?* For \$100, can you master a technical subject?

student: <<_____>>

rep J.P: You're getting your masters degree at night and on weekends while you're working full time. For \$200, what about your time management skills.

student: <<_____>>

Mom: To avoid repossession, how are you going to make payments on your car 6 months from now?

student: <<_____>>

rep J.P: What personal strengths can you offer the J.P. Morgan investment bank?

student: <<_____>>

Mom and the rep from j.p. morgan loop on movements which close-in on the student, and threaten her.

<<The structure intensifies. Mom and rep J.P. repeat the following questions, and the demand, in a barrage. Any order. The pace accelerates until the questions are flying faster than the answers. The student must try to keep answering.>>

the vocalists sustain a primal moan/wail/scream/sob that starts very quiet, and builds in intensity. the other musicians continue to build.

rep J.P.: what is your major concern, as you graduate?

student: A secure future.

Mom: What about your future?

rep J.P.: Are you ready to take the urine test?

Mom: How are you going to make payments on your car?

Mom: Yes, sign here.



rep J.P: Now sign here.

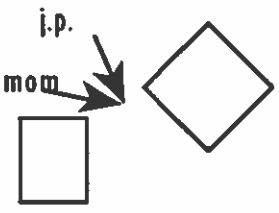
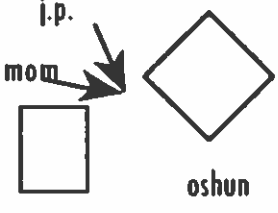
Oshun leaves musicians square, dances in waiting downstage left, unseen by the student.


The student reaches the breaking point.

In the midst of the voices, student starts to sing coro for Oshun's song.

She sings tentatively at first, but with growing power.

<p>student: bima Oshun ba ilele ochu-o ache bo le ure bima Oshun ba ilele ochu-o ache bo le ure</p> <p>bima Oshun ba ilele ochu-o ache bo le ure bima Oshun ba ilele ochu-o ache bo le ure</p>	<p><i>Everyone must be sensitive to the student, for when s/he starts to sing, transformation commences.</i></p>  <p>A wave which moves all emanates from her gesture.</p>	<p>The bell player joins, broadcasting the time base.</p>
<p>student: ochu-o ache bo le ure</p> <p>coro: bima Oshun ba ilele ochu-o ache bo le ure bima Oshun ba ilele (Anu, Amy, Monica, David, Andruid)</p>	<p><i>as the student's song grows full and strong, she finds support (make her assert it)</i></p> 	<p>Oshun, flanked by 2 entering shekere players, meets the student.</p>

<p>traditional afro-cuban guiro (2) with song for oshun 5:00</p> <p><i>traditional dance for Oshun, with procession of Oshun, student, diviner and Mom and the rep from J.P., left in the torture chamber, constitute the Town of the Other, which is transformed.</i></p>		
<p>Oshun and the student take refuge in the student's power spot, the vision pit, where they embrace. The diviner enters and climbs the vision pit scaffolding.</p> <p>diviner: The place of the Other was at the bottom of a hill. Far away, they saw Oshun.</p>	<p>Meanwhile, Mom and J.P, change their angle as they continue their threatening gestures.</p> 	<p>Amy takes over lead singing. 3 shekeres, bell and singing continue</p> <p>singing pauses when diviner reaches her highest point</p>
	<p>rep from JP: Ha! This one is a woman! This one does not come to fight. She is moving sweetly.</p>	
<p>Oshun, angry at being trivialized, emerges from embrace and vision pit, to focus point at front of musician's square. When she is ready, she suddenly looks JP in the eyes and begins to sing lead.</p>	<p>conga and bass line enter</p> <p>Oshun: bima Oshun ba ilele ochu-o ache bo le ure bima Oshun ba ilele ochu-o ache bo le ure</p> <p>Amy and Anu join coro</p>	
<p>Oshun seduces J.P. Morgan representative, from afar. He is drawn into her dance and song. He comes forward to join her. He tosses his jacket onto the student's chair.</p>	<p>diviner: They dropped their weapons on the ground.</p>	
<p>Mom is seduced, analagously.</p>	<p>All danceActors join the coro.</p>	
<p>diviner stops singing, climbs down from scaffolding, and says</p> <p>All of the Other, all of the others, all of the Other, they moved with Oshun. With Oshun.</p>		<p>singing continues a bit quieter, without diviner.</p>

<p>They moved with Oshun. It was Oshun who moved them.</p>		<p>Student emerges from back of vision pit to lead clockwise procession of danceActors around the musicians square, followed by Oshun, Mom, J.P., & Oshun. The diviner waits at the bottom of the scaffolding.</p>
<p>Oshun arrives at her place in the musicians' square to sing the transition. Procession continues. Dancers simultaneously enter from all 4 corners, joining the circle.</p>	<p>bell pattern holds time, shifting to cymbal as drum set enters</p> 	<p>danceActors drop out of coro.</p> <p>ilele ilele ilele ilele ilele ilele ilele ilele eber eleko ache bo le ure ilele ilele ilele ilele ilele ilele ilele ilele eber eleko ache bo le ure eber eleko ache bo le ure eber eleko ache bo le ure eber eleko have a heart, have a heart</p>

paths that have a heart (12/8)

6:00

all dancers use the big space

the 3 vocalists

2 violins and cello

electric bass



trap set


have a heart have a heart have a heart
 have a heart paths that
 have a heart have a heart have a heart
 have a heart following paths thatz
 you will find, you will find visions
 you will find them
 you will find, you will find visions
 you will find i cannot give them to you

make it new make it new
 cast a spell
 you will find what you need in yourself
 stir the cauldron
 draw from the well
 you will find the trust you need in yourself

do not stray from paths that have a heart
 do not stray from paths that have a heart

diviner:
 elegua, the trickster,
 stands at the crossroads.
 ask him with respect,
 he may show you the way.
 which way will he show you,
 anyway?

statement of breath/decision		1:30	
Drummer plays signal. Other musicians drop out. Drummer shifts to haa groove.		danceActors and dancers arrive in circle around the musicians square, with student at focus, in front of her chair Student dances signal of arrival spinning down 3 times. <i>lights cut to special on student</i>	
Bass, then cello & violin join haa aa uh holding pattern. <i>lights on full cast</i>	student raises hands three times very slowly, as in first statement of breath; circle of dancers and danceActors raise hands with her, in unison, all raise hands a fourth time; now before lowering, turn them over and outstretch them.		student: i don't know the way but i have glimpsed the feeling. i need your help. Let me carry what we make here through the turbulence ahead
vocals and instruments kick hard into root, giving impetus and motivation	haa aa complete	 uh (3) statement	<i>house lights up</i>
musicians form scheme		10:00	
root holding pattern bass and drums duet	dancers jam, flooding the audience space and the musicians square. mayhem breaks loose. cast moves into audience and invites them to floor to dance.		
root vocalist 1 solo (other vocalists comp) cello solo vocalist 2 solo (other vocalists comp) violin solo vocalist 3 solo (other vocalists comp)	ensemble of dancers circle in simple, basic movement around musicians square and front dance space. Solo's or duets take turns in the center.		

root	the student returns to the vision pit and climbs around within its confines, echoing haa aa uh 1 choreography. Other dancers echo haa 2.	
holding pattern (8 bars only)	The other dancers exit. After they exit, the student climbs the vision pit scaffolding.	
lull	student: i am called the student. because my orientation is toward learning. i hope i am always the student that i never close my mind. i hope you are the student, too, always.	
musicians conclude		<i>lights change to illuminate only the musicians' square, as in the opening.</i>

graduation

2:00

(pompous circumstance
as before)



*mom and the student move to the graduation platform
vocalists and 2nd violinist return to musicians chairs.*



light crossfades, darkening musician's square and discovering mom and student, back in their seats.

mom: i'm asking you a question.
what are you going to do with your future?

freeze in suspended moment

blackout
