

Voice-over Script

elegy, Lynn Marie Kirby - 17 minutes

(to be performed live while film screens)

Part I

AFTER B&W GONDOLAS

The cycle, this story, begins with a photograph of a woman in a gondola.

AFTER FIRST BELLS

The picture is from 1948, three years after the end of WWII—and the death of millions.

IMAGE OF DOLORES

1948 is the beginning of the Marshall Plan.

The Marshall Plan is the reason this young woman from Cleveland Ohio finds herself in Europe, in Paris. A Paris still under war rationing, the baguette is still made of mostly rye flour.

Her name is DOLORES, named by her Hungarian born mother after the 1920's Mexican actress Dolores Del Rio.

Dolores, our lady of sorrow.

She travels from Paris to Venice for her birthday, in October of 1948.

Dolores sits in a gondola.

ENDS AT IMAGE OF DOLORES

AFTER END OF FIRST WATER AND PHOTOS, IN BLACK BEFORE BUILDING REFLECTION

Her next-door neighbors in Paris have just fled the start of Apartheid in South Africa.

FIRST WHITE

The Venice Biennale starts again in 1948. Does Dolores attend?

SECOND WHITE AFTER STAIRS

1948 is a year of postwar efforts to create new global structures that might prevent a third world war:

BLACK AFTER HANDKERCHIEF

1948:

a universal declaration of human rights, proclaiming the autonomy of the individual

a convention against genocide, protecting the group against acts of state-run collective violence.

In 1948 The United Nations establishes the World Health Organization.

A general agreement in Tariffs and Trades is signed in 1948 to create open markets, and competes against the Soviet Union that has blockaded parts of Berlin under Allied control.

AFTER WIPING WINDOW

The Soviet Union takes over Czechoslovakia and Hungary in 1948.

The West German state is founded in 1948

The Olympic games restart in 1948.

OVER REWINDING BOATS

The establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 precipitates war with neighboring Arab states.

Palestinians are expelled or flee.

OVER STILLS OF STAIRS

The US military is officially desegregated in 1948. A decree is signed by Truman who wins re-election.

OVER WHITE

Earlier in 1948 Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated, he was on his 7th hunger strike.

FAST OUT BY MUSIC OVER FIRST MOSS

In 1948 Chairman Mao establishes the Northern China People's Government.

AFTER FIRST ANGEL FADE

Margaret Sanger founds International Planned Parenthood Foundation in 1948

OVER WATER IMAGE GOING TO SUNSET

“This photograph like any photograph is physically mute—it talks through the mouth of the text written beneath it.” And through the voice of the filmmaker.

WHEN PICTURE COMES UP OVER GOOGLE

On the back of the picture is written, in my mother’s precise Palmer Method script: Venice, birthday, 1948.

I want to understand her world, the shaping of my world, as I look at this picture of my mother from 1948, a photograph taken before I was born, that I found after her death.

Part II

BLACK

Mothers and Daughters

WHITE

Daughters and mothers, and the altered condition caused by death.

In the natural order of things, a mother dies before the daughter, but in tragic instances, the daughter dies first.

Time turns into water, no center.

BLACK AFTER FIRST MOSS. PACK OUR BAGS

Many religions and cultures give mourning a one year frame, but mourning spills beyond the frame.

BEFORE END OF CEMETERY MARBLE

My friend who lost her daughter finds meaning in kindness and grace.

And light.

BLACK BETWEEN ANGELS

In French one says, she has left us. Elles nous a quittés.

FADE TO BLACK ANGELS

My mother has left us, my friend’s daughter has left us

A LITTLE WAYS INTO WATER

Death gives us a grip on the present

AFTER MARBLING

A story doesn't seem like a story without a beginning and a proper end.

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in memoriam:

**Dolores Marie Kirby**

1926 – 2024

**Eva Newman Whitney**

2002 – 2024

CREDITS NOT SPOKEN:

Materials quoted from films and books: *Eva*, by Joseph Losey, *Don't Look Now*, by Nicholas Roeg, *Letter to Jane*, by Jean Luc Godard, *Ripley*, by Steve Zaillian, and *Time Lived*, *Without Its Flow*, by Denise Riley

San Francisco Girls Chorus Level IV performance of *somehow this related to love*, January 2019, under the artistic direction of Valérie Sainte-Agathe, chorus conducted by Anne Hege, libretto by Denise Newman and Lynn Marie Kirby, music composed by Jennifer Wilsey

Lynn Marie Kirby, 2025