

TRANSCRIPT

The Parking Space

A site-specific, listening experience for top floor of a four-level parking ramp in downtown Iowa City

Created in collaboration by

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STEVEN'S VOICE – Intro

(Light ambience of footsteps)

Okay, quick story. Did you know that the early American parking garages weren't called garages? But motor motels. And that in the early days of the invention, parking garages were nothing more than single-layered buildings unrecognizable to the public. Sometimes they even used horse stables. Yes, the early drivers parked their horse-powered vehicles next to that of actual horses.

There were over 23 million cars on the road by 1929 and America's busiest cities began to panic on where to put them. That's when parking garages or parking ramps became a lynchpin for every hotel or shopping mall in the United States. From the multi-layer valet driving services to the automated elevators lifting your car to the sky, placing it in a neatly fit row to the most impressive style of Baltimore with the spiral of cars going down and another spiral of cars going up dubbed the "Double Helix".

Yes, we knew a parking ramp as a double helix before it was discovered in your DNA.

It can be argued that the urban eyesore that is the parking ramp is one of the most unappreciated invention of necessity of the industrial age. The slab of brick and concrete; these lines and layers were sparked out of a need for us to be still. Ambience cuts out.

We are all here, right now to reclaim it for that very purpose here on the fourth floor. We have re-imagined this as a place of rest and new perspectives.

(Ramin's music comes in, swelling electronic sounds with light percussion)

So come on, take your mind out of overdrive.

Pick a spot. How about space 418?

Put yourself in park and breathe.

There you go.

Welcome to the Parking Space.

STEPHANIE'S Voice - Space 444

(whispered)

Space 444

Place your hands on the wires. Look down and listen.

(Ramin's sounds. Sparse, percussive, metallic, multidirectional.)

STEPHANIE'S VOICE - Space 451

(ambience of street noises)

Trace your eyes slowly along the horizon to your right and keep going slowly. Slowly, until you've traced a three-hundred-and-sixty-degree perimeter. Did you see those birds that just flew above us with that dazzling swoop? Wow.

Feeling all this space around you, try taking a few steps backwards.

Is this feeling of walking backwards scary or exhilarating?

Keep going. Try. Backwards. Backwards. Backwards. There you go. Backwards.

Sense the wind around you and notice if that creates an impulse in your body to move one direction or the other.

Then turn around and walk to the corner, space 424 and peer over the edge.

Look over the edge

Look over the edge

What is happening down there. What is moving? What is not?

(Ramin's music, a gentle introduction of faintly luminous tones and drones)

Can you see your house from here?

How far away is your house?

How far away are you from yesterday? How far away are you from tomorrow? How far away are you from this moment right now. music ends after this last question.

STEVEN'S VOICE – Space 424

When I was a child, I remember lying in bed one-night staring at the ceiling petrified.

I was six years old and entered a new moment of self-awareness. I learned I could breathe. You see that day in science class, I learned what the lungs were. The way they filled and expand in cohesion with the lift of the diaphragm. I was determined to make sure I was the best breather and kept an eye on my body to make sure I was doing it properly.

(Sound of breathing)

I stared down at my belly, watching it rise all the way to the top and pushed my breath out until it passed well beyond my ribs. I did this the whole day until bedtime, where I reached a dilemma. If I go to sleep, how will I breathe? We're all like this in a way.

As we become older, we become obsessed with control. It's in our make up as Americans, as lowans. An effect of humanist thought that puts us in the center of the world that doesn't exist unless we're having constant doing or effort.

In truth, my body never needed me to breathe. In the same way, the sun never needed my permission to shine. Or the river below you, does not need your permission to flow. It just does because it is.

(sound of water, a trickling stream)

When I prompt you to breathe, in essence I am asking you to return to the simple. To the awareness of just being as you are. To relinquish trying or doing, but just be.

Try this just for a moment. See what happens.

Close your eyes and breathe.

Notice any tensions you might have in your shoulders or your lower half. Release your glutes. Make sure there is a bounce in your knees.

Listen for the cars driving by or people talking. Perhaps you can even feel the flow of the river as it hits the rocks below you.

Just be. *(Ends in silence.)*

STEPHANIE'S VOICE

(calm but bright electronic sounds generating a rhythm with the tempo of a walking pace)

Walk with me up and around the bend.

Towards space 481. As you walk look up to the balconies of the hotel. This hotel is new, but what was here before this place and what was here before that place? And the place before that place?

And what was here before pavement and roads? And before that, what was before the dirt paths?

And before? And before, and before, and before, and before when the earth was younger?

Walk with me

Towards space 481.

(music ends)

STEVEN'S VOICE – Space 480

(Ramin's music, deeper tones and drones brightening from time to time. Abstract and electronic)

Here we are Space 480

We are all familiar with the word ego. It entered into the American lexicon right around the time of Freud, and it has been quoted everywhere from classic literature to rap songs. But in world of mindfulness, the ego is more than just blind narcissism, but an issue of identity. An existential crisis of self. Ego could be fear, or guilt, or victimization. What our ego fears most is what most humans fear, and that's death. Your ego is a living breathing thing. It is your false sense of self. One that defines you by what you have, or who you know, or what has happened to you.

Look at the golden capital right in front of you. Notice the flag. Look at whether its drifting, blowing in the wind, or still by the air's idleness. If this flag was full of ego, it would question itself if it isn't in its full flare and flow. It would feel less than in stillness. We humans do that. Notice how we respond when we are not busy, if we aren't on the go. How we question our own self-worth, but regardless of whether this flag is rested in the arms of a soldier's widow, or if it is draped over the soldiers of an Olympian, it is still a flag. And you are still you. Regardless of your accolades or possessions. Take a moment, breathe, and understand that you are perfect just the way you are. Integrate the music that you have at the ending into Steven's speaking. SO that the speaking and music end almost at the same time.

STEPHANIE'S VOICE - Space 502

(ambient sound and light wind)

Thanks for joining me here. I am over here at 502.

You know, I came up here to get some fresh air and to be alone, and to just see the sky. Do you see that very tall tree sprouting up on the horizon? Look over to 414 and you will see it. I love that tree. And honestly, I came up here to dance. Because, you know, no one is here, but I can still feel like I'm a part of the world, but nobody cares if I'm dancing, so I put my headphones in and you know, just let myself loose.

Would you care to dance with me? It'll be really easy I promise.

(Music by Carlos Gardel, a tango from the year 1911)

Take a deep breath and feel your feet on the ground music starts here-ish, and just sway side to side. Step side, back, step side, step front. Right side, back, left side, front. Step back, side, front, side, back, side, front.

You're doing so well.

Yeah, go for it, freestyle! You look great. It's so nice up here.

(Music continues for another 1.5 minutes and fades away)

STEPHANIE'S VOICE with STEVEN'S INTERMINGLED - Spot 515.

Spot 515. Rusty bolts on a blue railing. Cigarette butts, an exit sign that has been crumpled and folded. You can hardly read that it says exit. Chips of paint gathered in corners. The dried surface, cracking surface of the sign that reads compact only, looks little like a desert landscape. Bits of the concrete wall that have worn off to expose some darker rocks. What looks like rust, rusty deposits in the concrete.

Telephone poles and wires. Let's walk past 516, past 517, over to 518 and walk towards the arrow pointing to the right, and I see an arrow pointing to the left. Yellow concrete with a bite taken out of the slab. And I keep walking and my eyes follow the big blue light post all the way up. Four circular lamps. Straight lines and curved. A far away painting of a bright red flower.

As I walk around the light post, I notice a sticker on the side, the western side, that has a number four on it.

And the paint of the sticker is chipping off and there is a very rusty rectangle above it, and it makes me think about the weather this place endures. Days of sun, rain, and snow. Sunset after sunset after sunset after sunset. *(layering of multiple voices in repetition)*

It's almost five today.

What time of day is it for you?

STEVEN'S VOICE – Space 530

Make your way up to the top. Space 530. I will tell you a story while you walk.

A therapist told me once, there is a difference between transparency and vulnerability. A transparent person is like a water hose on maximum ready to spew out all their secrets, their confessions, and short comings, but no repercussions. But a person who is vulnerable is like the mouth of a river. Both ready to give and to receive. Look down at those two arrows below you. They point in two directions. They live in a flow of exchange, of sensitivity and accountability.

I want to ask you, when was the last time you allowed yourself to receive? Was it a gift? Was it love? A shared moment?

When was the last time you allowed yourself to be moved by another person?

Or allowed yourself to be inspired by the mundane?

Reach out and touch the concrete edge in front of you. Grab it. Squeeze it. Receive from it. What does it have to offer you? Is it knowledge? Is it a warning? Is it history? Now just breathe. Receive.

(Ramin's music, an easy crescendo of tones and drones building into something pulsing and bright)

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