

This Way: David Horvitz (Audio Transcript)

Hello. You are listening to David Horvitz. This is an audio recording created for This Way, a series of artist-designed walks organized by the MIT List Visual Art Center.

From wherever you are, walk towards the ocean. Locate the closest ocean to you. This could be one mile away or 1,000 miles away. Point to it with your finger. Orient yourself with it. Turn your body in its direction. Look towards it across whatever distance.

Now walk. Walk directly towards it. Follow the path of shortest distance. Keep walking. Keep walking.

If you're close enough to reach the ocean, walk until you are there. Walk to the furthest possible point of land. Stop and encounter the water. If it is too far to reach by foot, walk until you feel you have walked enough, then stop.

There is a story my grandmother told me some years ago while we were having lunch in Ocean Beach, San Francisco. Looking at the Pacific Ocean from where we were sitting, she remembered something from her youth, from the time she returned to northern California after living some years in eastern Colorado in an internment camp. It was the only time in her life she did not live near the Pacific Ocean.

Uprooted and taken by force from her home on a farm in Sonoma County, she and her family were left in the Eastern plains of Colorado. This is what she remembers. After returning to California, she had a desire to see the Pacific Ocean again, to be reunited with the water. She was living in the Buddhist temple in San Francisco with her sister. One day, the desire grew so strong that she could not wait any longer. Whether by foot or trolley, I do not know, she traversed the city of San Francisco and found herself standing in the sand, unable to walk any further, staring into the body of the Pacific Ocean.

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