



Hit Play Transcription

Episode 14: In Our Hands

[Episode 14: In Our Hands](#)

[Show Intro](#)

[Play 1: Brooklyn Pioneers \(1:32\)](#)

[Play 2: It Doesn't Repeat Itself, But It Rhymes \(5:03\)](#)

[Play 3: This Week In Good News ASMR \(9:33\)](#)

[Play 4: piano lesson\(s\) \(12:16\)](#)

[Show Outro \(15:36\)](#)

Show Intro

Alien-sounding electronic instrumental music plays underneath.

Julia: 14. In Our Hands. I'm Julia Melfi—a New York Neo-Futurist. While our on-going, ever-changing, late-night show, *The Infinite Wrench*, is on hold for the foreseeable future, we wanted a place to keep making art for you. And thus, *Hit Play* was born!

If you're already a fan of The New York Neo-Futurists, or any of our sibling companies, hello! We can't wait to ET phone home with our fingers. If this is totally new to you—welcome to it!

We play by four rules: We are who we are, we're doing what we're doing, we are where we are, and the time is now. Simply put: we tell stories, and those stories are our own. Everything that you hear is actually happening. So if we tell you we're recording while lying off our bed upside down, we're really recording while lying off our bed upside down. Like I'm doing right now. Maybe you can tell... because of how I am speaking.

Julia: And now, Kyra will Run the Numbers!

Kyra: Hey y'all! I'm Kyra, a New York Neo-Futurist.

In this episode we're gonna bring you 4 plays by Cecil Baldwin, Annie Levin, Katharine Heller, and me—Kyra Sims.

That brings us to 59 experiments on *Hit Play*. How about that? Enjoy!

Music winds down.

Play 1: Brooklyn Pioneers (1:32)

Cecil: Brooklyn Pioneers. **GO!**

Background kitchen noises. Public domain recording of "The Prisoner's Song" by Vernon Dahlhart plays in background. Sound of shuffling something out of a drawer. Sound of peeling carrots and music continues as underscore.

Cecil: Every day I walk outside. Every day. Every day that the weather permits, let's say. But every day, these days. Days held to the earth by tent-stakes. And those stakes are ritual. And every day on my walks to the water, East River to the west, Newton Creek to the north, all I see are rainbows, and all I think of is bread.

Yes. Bread. Yes bread. Wow bread. We make the bread. We bake the bread. We want to break the bread with our friends. But. We snap the bread and 'gram that bread. Cause we cannot break the bread with our friends. At the grocer, we stand outside for bread, at a cautious 6 feet we stand outside, for bread, in bread-lines. American breadlines for American bread. Glove-up. See if you can't hunt down activated yeast. Not for blood or money, buddy. Not in North Brooklyn, pal. Bake your bread old buddy old pal. I recognize you. You're one of those pioneers, like me, out on the prairie. Nothing but uncertain days and uneasy nights. And pioneers must be fed. Fed with bread. Like carrot bread.

Every day I walk outside. Every day. Every day that the weather permits.

And Rainbows. Not the flag, which I do see thank god, but rainbows. Child rainbows. From a child's hand. That simple horseshoe from a cloud or two. They're in all the windows. That's not true, not in all the windows, but many and more. Or maybe, they were there before. No way to tell for sure, but I notice them more that's for sure. These rainbows on the windows. Drawn by hand. There's a child behind that window. Stuck. Like me or you maybe. Stuck inside. But not AT school not IN school. Stuck with their parents while they work, not AT work not IN work, so... draw something. There is so much daylight to fill these days, unlike before. So, draw something they do. Something hopeful. A rainbow, then. The glory after the storm. The promise from God that the worst is over. And you lived long enough to attend the party. At the end of the storm, not the rainbow. The end of the rainbow is a pot of gold. Everyone knows that. I don't know. If they do... Or if there is... Or if there is...

More peeling and music plays out.

Play 2: It Doesn't Repeat Itself, But It Rhymes (5:03)

Annie: It Doesn't Repeat Itself, But It Rhymes: World-Crisis Time Travel via Excerpts from My Grandfather's 90-Year-Old Diary. **GO!**

Annie I'm holding the diary, which I found in my parents' basement last week. It's a loose-leaf notebook, bound at the top with two metal rings. The cover is dark brown, the pages are yellow. It has old book smell. (*Annie inhales and makes a happy noise*), and it's in my grandfather's handwriting. He died 25 years ago, and last week was the first time I had seen this. Ready to travel? Let's go...

Piano music underscore and sound of shuffling pages.

Annie: July 24th, 1930. Since my last entry, I have finished my first year at McGill University and passed in everything except German. Dad sold his business in 1928 and put everything in the stock market and lost everything in the disastrous plunge that the market has taken in the last year and a half. So we moved to Windsor, Ontario about two months ago to try our fortunes here. Since we have come here, I have worked one week at the Kenilworth Race Track as a checker of tickets, for which I received \$70. Besides that I have done nothing, but am hoping to get a job within the next two weeks.

Sound of turning the page.

July 30th, 1930. Today I had an appointment to meet Uncle Eli in Detroit. He says I am sure to get a job soon, but I must be patient. I have been patient for the last few months, and it is becoming rather difficult. Sunday I wrote a letter to my best friend Eddie, addressing it: The Biological Monstrosity residing at 12 Windsor Avenue, Westmont. Mother advised me against sending it addressed that way, but I did it anyway.

Sound of turning the page.

July 31st, 1930. Today we received word that Mother's best friend since childhood, Bessie, died on the 29th at the Montreal General Hospital. I was deeply shocked. After Dad lost his money and it became generally known, most of Mother's relatives just did not seem to think of calling us up anymore or having much more to do with us than was absolutely necessary. But Bessie became kinder than ever and took such a genuine and heartfelt interest in us that it restored a good part of my faith in human kindness, which was at a pretty low ebb, and which is none too firm even now. She was a woman of such amazing vitality and energy that it is difficult for me to realize that she is really dead, especially since we left her in apparently excellent health. Whatever it was, it manifested itself very suddenly and carried her off in a relatively short time. When I consider all that she has done for us and that I shall never be able to repay, my heart feels that it is ready to burst at the thought of my human helplessness. I have often thought how futile the whole thing seems to be at times. I look at fresh young girls full of the vigour of life and think that in a century, they will have passed from the face of the earth forever. For what? Who can tell? Having lived only eighteen years, I do not consider myself qualified to form an opinion on the matter. But this I know: life to me at present is very dear, very dear indeed.

Sound of turning the page.

August 2nd, 1930. Today I spoke to Uncle Eli. During the course of the conversation he pressed a dollar on me which I accepted because I really need it.

August 11th, 1930. Received a letter from Eddie. He is always twitting me about not yet having had coitus. One of these days I may remove the cause of his kidding; I feel that I would benefit by such an action, but there is no hurry. Yesterday, I took a bath.

August 17th, 1930. Sol came over for a while. He says that he is going to get me a job with a friend of his. Well, I certainly hope I get hold of something: I am mighty tired of doing nothing.
"Of doing nothing" echoes around, and the music fades into record player static.

Play 3: This Week In Good News ASMR (9:33)

Katharine: This Week In Good News ASMR. **GO!**

Katharine speaks in her ASMR voice.

Katharine: Both Sweden and Austria just closed down their last coal plants in exchange for renewable energy to stop pollution. I like that. Mokay? Mokay. Here's the sound of my mouse clicking onto another piece of good news.

Sound of mouse clicking

Mm. Molly, a 9 year old therapy dog from Colorado, is making home visits to those who need cheering up. Do you know what it sounds like to have a happy dog sniff your ears? It can sound like this.

Sound of sniff, sniff, exhale. Sniff sniff, exhale

Mokay? Mokay. Next, Tom Hanks sent a letter to a boy from Australia named Corona who was being bullied because of his name, with the message, "you've got a friend in me". This is what I think it sounds like if you open a letter from Tom Hanks.

Sound of envelope slowly being torn open

I have some good news about me, do you want me to share? Mokay. My building had no gas for 4 days, but they finally turned it back on. Here's the gas working on my stove.

Sound of gas "tick tick flame" going on

Mokay. Mokay. That's nice. Finally: I'd like to say I'm very grateful to have a home, family, and incredible friends during this time of quarantine. Here's me calling a friend now.

Sound of the phone buttons being pressed, phone ringing. When Courtney picks up, they both use regular speaking volume and voice.

Courtney: Hey Katharine!

Katharine: Hey you, how's it going?

Courtney: It's good, how are you?

Katharine: Oh, I miss you so much.

Courtney: I miss you too! Oh my god.

Katharine: I would like to do this in my ASMR voice right now, but I can't cause I miss you too much.

Courtney laughs.

Play 4: piano lesson(s) (12:16)

Kyra: Piano lessons. **GO!**

Kyra: Picture a keyboard on a piano. Look at the black keys. A set of two and a set of three. Imagine putting your index and middle finger on the set of two and playing this:

Sound of piano keys playing the same two notes back and forth.

Good. Keep it going.

Sound of piano keys playing the same two notes back and forth continues again, as underscore.

This was the first song I ever learned on the piano. As a kid, I had a piano teacher named Ms. Sharon Dobbins. She was one of the strangest people I've ever known and will possibly ever know. A light-skinned black woman, skinny, with a shock of curly light brown/sometimes blonde hair. As a teacher, Ms. Sharon wasn't about that participation trophy life. If you sounded bad on the piano, she let you know, and she didn't give a single fuck about your feelings. She made me cry on multiple occasions, but I always waited until I got in the car with my mom to let the tears fall. I was too proud to do it in front of her.

Piano continues, with chords underneath.

Ms. Sharon introduced me to my first operas, talked to me about political activism, was open about her past traumas. Ms. Sharon did whatever she wanted to do, which was an amazing thing to see while growing up in a city where most of the population, especially the affluent black population, prided itself in social mores.

When I was 11, Ms. Sharon told me I should play the French horn in school band, that it would "give me a challenge." So I did. And to this day, I marvel at how that decision has impacted my life. It shaped it in a really dramatic way. I still play the French horn. That skill has taken me all over the world. I've played horn on Greek islands, in Italy, on the Great Wall of China. I got to perform with Lizzo this year. What?? I am the person I am today largely because of Ms. Sharon Dobbins.

She died a few years ago. It was sudden. The last correspondence we ever had was a comment she left me on Facebook telling me how proud she was of me. I wish I had taken the time to tell her all the things I'm telling you now. I wish I had taken the time to thank her.

Especially in the world we live in now, I think it's important to know your roots. To know where you come from and who helped you get to where you are now. To know who's on your team. I want you to know that I wouldn't be here, in New York, talking to you, if not for having known Ms. Sharon, and that you probably wouldn't be here, listening to me, wherever you are, doing whatever you're doing, were it not for someone in your life. If that's the case, and you still can, give them a call and thank them for me, ok? Thanks.

Music plays out.

Show Outro (15:36)

Alien-sounding electronic instrumental music plays underneath.

Julia: Thanks for Hitting Play and then listening to *Hit Play*. If you liked what you heard, subscribe to the show and tell a friend! If you want to support the New York Neo-Futurists in other ways, consider making a donation at nynf.org, or joining our Patreon—Patreon.com/NYNF. Patreon membership gives you access to bonus content like video plays and livestreams. And if this episode gets over 1,000 downloads, we'll order one of our Patreon supporters a pizza on us. We'd really appreciate any support in these difficult times. Contributing to our Patreon helps us continue to pay our artists.

Take care of yourself, arrange some paper clips in a pleasing way, and share it with us on Instagram, Twitter, or Facebook.

This episode featured work by: Cecil Baldwin, Annie Levin, Katharine Heller, and Kyra Sims. Our logo was designed by Shelton Lindsay. And our sound is designed by Anthony Sertel Dean. Léah Miller is our associate producer. *Hit Play* is produced by Anthony Sertel Dean and me, Julia Melfi. Take Care!

Music fades out!