

Inter-Composition No. 1

By Tsitsi Jaji

I first came to the Re-PLACE-ing Philadelphia project in the spring of 2015, just as I was starting to feel like, after seven years in the city, I was finding my place, finding my people. The Painted Bride had a wonderful program called “Community Table,” and I’d brought my class from Penn there to organize an event with the help of Lisa Nelson-Haynes. When Lisa invited me a few weeks later to the first discussion of Re-PLACE-ing with artists, educators, and community members who would help envision its unusual ambitions, I was thrilled. I was part of three planning discussions where I was impressed with the creativity and braveness of the group in figuring out how to do something really new, by allowing Philly folks to reflect on what makes this city one we love.

It also happened to be my last few months in Philly, as I decided to take a job elsewhere. So now, looking at the amazing collection of field notes is a window for me to remember Philadelphia with fondness, and I think, with sadness, that I never really discovered the city, I never let myself fall in love with it because I never saw its many faces. I picked the three notes here because they express a nostalgia I feel, and they are a mix of newly-arrived and old-time Philadelphians.

Anna Kroll's River Note "Alluvium" reflects on her experience moving to Philly. She starts with some video memories of the bodies of water that were never more than a few minutes away and comes to treasure the rivers that sandwich Philly. Her note portrays homesickness, or remembering our past, as a way to orient us in our present futures... just as she remembers growing up near water in Florida, and she comes to find Philly's Schuylkill and Delaware orienting her thoughts as well as her physical orientation through the city.

River Note:

"Alluvium" by Anna Kroll

Water is rarely truly
stagnant. It flows. It
steams. It seeps. Slight
disturbances cumulate
out across its surface.
It can adapt and it
can destroy.