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## Untitled

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## Untitled

I was born of a rhythm. Since the moment of my conception, the climactic crescendo of a passionate dance, it has surrounded me, bringing me comfort in times of good and times of bad. It mirrored my development, dividing time as I divided, from two into four to eight, and yet always one, just as it was always one with time. It lived in my mother's heart, and taught me to sleep, and taught me to dream. Then, it had measured out enough time, and moved through her body, contracting, moving me rhythmically into my next world.

My rhythm knew only time, and not of place, and not of hunger. The place it brought me to was one in which the people's existence had become dissonant with the song of nature. They tried to take only what nature provided, but soon took more than she could give, and the food did not replenish itself. When the women went to gather, they had to travel further away, and still found less each day. When the men went to hunt, they traveled for days, and still found less game. The people would gather around, for the distribution of the meat, and the share would be small, and there would be no celebration that night.

We moved from place to place, my aunt carrying me on her strong back, for my mother was still too weak, with only the strength to hold and feed me when I cried. We looked for lost harmony — opportunity for synchronization. They called out with their hearts, through their voices and their drums, but nature would not answer, and their calls echoed into silence.

The people knew they should meet then. The time had come for long migration, to leave this place far behind for many years — allow for rightful revitalization before our return. And all could not make the long journey. The next water hole could be distant — uncertainty haunted the elders — they knew that the strongest among them would lead us, and behind the rest would stay.

My mother, from my birth, had not recovered. She had brought me into the world with weakness in my bones. For a time we both were ill, and my father cried out: "take one or the other, (if you must), but for the sake of love, not both." So the energy flowed between us, and gradually my life grew stronger, and they knew I would survive. Her rhythm sustaining me, making me healthy and this made my way. And she had taken my sickness, drawn it into her so I might live, and carry her rhythm through time, for she knew through wisdom or simple instinct that such was the way of the world.

My father swore never to leave her. So there they remained in that barren place, hoping that even the ill and the oldest might find a way to reach nature and call her back. But they never found us again, many years passed, and we saw no trace and now only their story remains. It often moves the spirits inside me, and I begin to sing, and to play.

My teacher first gave me a drum, and it frightened me as it shone in the sun. I was too young to help with the food, so he told me to play and he told me to learn. And the Music moved through my hands, and I knew not how and I knew not why, but I

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began to feel my purpose, and to feel my power for the first time.

But the drummers with me would not play, I'm the child of darkness and caused the famine and killed my parents, they say. They told the teacher to take my drum, and not to show me the way. And aunt says "it is not for a woman to do these things — you must learn to find food and cook it well, and earn your respect in this way, so that you may have a husband someday."

But this path was not for me. And the elder saw this and took me away and instructed me secretly. A drummer, hearing the rhythm and melding with time is what I am here to be. Playing the drum is when a human can touch universe with palm of her hand. And teacher told me there in that place, of the rhythms of the other planets, how each one moves in never ending circles, playing its own rhythm in the same circular patterns that we play here on earth. And the time that we touch is a force that flows between all these planets, and all other stars, and all the universe — Time! a creation of the gods that governs all the planets and all stars, not just the ones we see in the sky, but the ones even further away, in huge rhythmic that all weave in and out of one another, meshing together to form the great dance of the existence of all around us. And then he told me that I had an ability, and to touch a force of nature, need only discover it's rhythm.

So I sat in that cave and I played, not stopping to eat, not stopping to sleep, trying only to recapture that one rhythm — that I had heard so long ago before I was born. The visions soon came to me, the shapes of the planets, swirling about in a dance that had gone on for longer than I dared imagine, and I began to feel it — slowly — moving into me — so that I was nothing but a vessel — this feeling, this force moving through me, moving my hands on the skin of the drum as I stared on laughing in rapturous disbelief — and I knew that I could touch mother nature — call to her, and she would answer, for I could begin speak her language now. And a beautiful language it was is and will be, one that is far too great for any human to ever understand — but we must content ourselves and rejoice in the opportunity to try.

*David Kendall '96*