

# Whitaker Ponds Park

## : Ase

Ase is a fantastical expression and reflection of life, love, death, and the eternal nature of being.

Ase means "so be it", "it is done" in Yoruba . It is often said after prayer. The Soundwalk explores the boundless legacies of nature and living spirit within all things.

Ase is a tribute of personal and collective existence, reckonings, revolutions and responsibilities.



## Soundwalk

by Amenta Abioto



# The Loop 0:00

Existence is a loop  
Infinite departures  
Countless returns  
Cosmic solstice spin

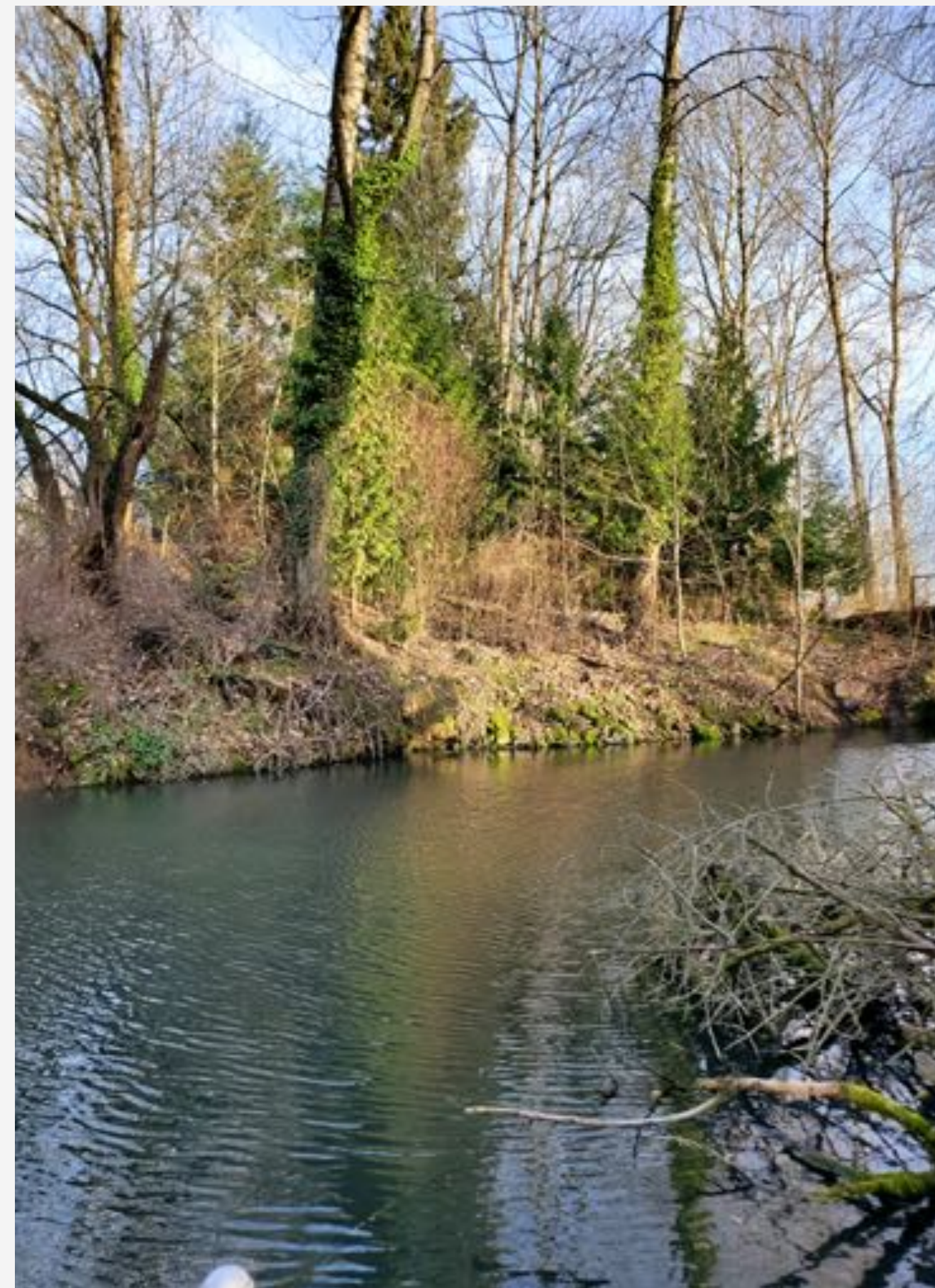
Wait 365 days for  
Earth to revolve  
'round  
the sun

Year after year  
Burgeoning flowers  
Carnations

Life after life  
Dying leaves  
Reincarnations

Come again

"This nature park is home to two ponds, a ½ mile loop trail, an ecoroof covered gazebo, and a canoe launch into Whitaker Slough. The two ponds are surrounded by a black cottonwood forest which has been enhanced over the past 15 years with thousands of native plants. A wildflower meadow near the entrance on NE 47 Ave supports local pollinators in summertime, and the Lewis & Clark Garden near the gazebo highlights plant communities from the western United States.."-Portland Parks and Recreation







**My hat falls off head and  
tumbles down hill toward  
Whitaker Ponds.**

**As luck would have it it lands at  
the very edge of land on twigs  
and leaves**

**pondering by  
pondering ponds  
i wonder**

**what's wandering in my mind?**

**Pondering Ponds**

**09:12**



May comes  
Witness seeds exchanging  
January numbs  
See them changes

# Them Changes

13:11



Shining Geranium May 2020



Hawthorn January 2021



Goat Willow May 2020



What if Harriet Tubman had conducted an Underground Railroad to Oregon. I imagine her at Whitaker Ponds. What discoveries would she have made? What new forms of freedom and heteronomy would she experience here? If Oregon had been Harriet's...?



# Harriet's Hearth

## 19:50

In 1844, Slavery was banned in Oregon territory.

In 1849 exclusion laws stated "it shall not be lawful for any negro or mulatto to enter into, or reside" in Oregon, with exceptions made for those who were already in the territory.

Additional exclusion clauses were made in 1857 that prohibited Black people from buying lands, voting, and signing contracts to further discourage residency. The clauses were repealed in a vote in 1926.

The 1860 Oregon census no more than 130 Black people were reported. The total population being 52,465.

By 1944, the Black population had reached 22,000.

In 2017, 91,000 Black people called Oregon their place of residence.





Ribbon of Agua Mural was painted  
at Whitaker in 2012

# Ribbon of AGUA

26:30



"The park and its facilities are the result of many collaborative partnerships involving the City of Portland, Metro, the Columbia Slough Watershed Council, and many community members. Portions of the park were used as a junkyard before they were acquired, and over 2,000 tires were removed in the process of restoring the area to a nature park." -Portland Parks and Recreation"

"For the community by the community"



The Ribbon of Agua .  
wrapped around lands  
listen it's the ripples  
ribbons of water  
bundles of agua

The Kalimba aka mbira &  
likembé is traditional  
instrument of the Shona  
people of Zimbabwe. It's  
sound is like Ribbons of  
Agua.





# Familial Synchronocities

## 30:20

My first visit to Whitaker Ponds was in May 2020 with my two sisters. Within minutes of arriving my sisters and I got a phone call from our father. We chatted as we began walking and reached the bridge entrance. Off to the side a bird stood motionless. It's belly protruded out as if pregnant. The bird looked at us as we looked at it. It stood looking at us for almost five minutes. We began moving closer to bridge and it eventually flew away. Soon after we ended our family call. My sisters and I came across a cute family of mallard ducks wading in the pond under the bridge. A few moments we spotted a lone beaver swimming closely by.

Coincidentally beavers are symbolic of family.

Special feature by my father Ekpe Abioto.





# Credits

Music performed, recorded and mixed by Amenta Abioto  
excluding familial synchronicities (flute song)  
performed by Ekpe Abioto.

Photos and visuals Intisar  
Abioto & Amenta Abioto

Concept, Poetry, and Costuming by  
Amenta Abioto

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