

**Untitled**  
**Jordan Bartee**

***Untitled*** is a narrative piece based on an out-of-body experience I had during the fall of 2007. I've been a longtime practitioner of a discipline called lucid dreaming that involves forcing consciousness of the dream state while in a dream. After becoming aware that one is in a dream state, the dream can be rationally manipulated and controlled, and the dreamscape logically charted and explored.

Usually a lucid state can only be entered from within a dream after some period of non-lucidity, but I had read about an exciting technique called Wake-Initiation of Lucid Dreams (WILD) that I wanted to try. The technique has the dreamer enter a state of self-produced sleep paralysis while still conscious. From this state dreaming can be entered freely and, because there is no break in the stream of consciousness, a lucid dream is achieved immediately.

After several months of failed attempts I finally managed to produce a state of sleep paralysis while counting backwards from 500 to 1 during a nap one afternoon. As I felt myself lose control of my body, a strange side effect began to emerge: my tinnitus, barely noticeable under normal conditions, was now deafeningly loud and continuing to grow louder. Additionally the beating of my heart was several times louder than normal. It was as if some filtering mechanism usually used by the brain to tune out low-level noise had shut itself off.

Soon after this initial period of paralysis the steady ringing and thumping was joined by a series of strange, more musical sounds layered on top of the brain/body noise. I assumed that this was the beginning of a hypnagogic hallucination of some sort as I began to enter the sleep state. But instead of entering the sleep state, I suddenly found myself ripped out of my body;

my perceptual node was literally dragged into a dark corner of my room, and then blackness. When my vision returned I was flying above an expansive forest, gazing down upon an evolving plane of fractal-like train tracks. Later I flew around a highway in Seattle that I remembered from my youth.

The most striking thing however was the audio that accompanied these astral flights: a fully orchestrated symphony of noise in which my heart turned war-drum and my tinnitus turned glorious drone formed the backdrop for all kinds of screeches, whines, blips, bleeps, and explosive floods of white noise.

Towards the end of the experience I returned to my room and began a descent back into my body. During this slow fall the music became serene and slow, floating along the overtone series and converging on a point of tonal resolution. I snapped back into my body and woke up immediately, stunned. The first thing I did was jot down several long notes about the music I had heard, and over the next several weeks worked tirelessly in my studio attempting to reproduce it. I rarely compose programmatic works anymore, but the experience left such a strong impression on me that an attempt at capturing it seemed necessary.

Since I was convinced that the experience involved, at least in part, a kind of neural feedback in which several “wires” got crossed in my brain, I wanted to make feedback the central process in composing the piece. The result is *Feeder*, an instrument I constructed in Reaktor 5.