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Mixed Media Artist
SUNY Purchase
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Reflection on Caramoor

Piano Garden

We arrived close enough to see the whites of the piano keys sitting slanted at the edge of the forest when a car zoomed up the gravel path to our right, causing the publicist for the center to gallop awkwardly out of her path. The window rolled down to a refined older woman with a delightful New Zealand accent, (Annea Lockwood). She parked and joined us as we approached it. The piano lured us in with its' fantastical placement. As I encountered it, I immediately reached out to feel its' coarse exterior, the shine worn past the point of imagining its' return. Feeling my hand over it, the surface had returned to the uneven texture of tree bark.

It returns a memory of when wild animals, after being nursed back to health, take one look back to their helpers, and then disappear into the green of the wilderness. The piano was uneven, partially sunken into the ground, like it'd tripped and had to take a knee. Some of the keys still worked, and the ones that didn't would thump resistantly. One of the students started aggressively pounding the keyboard, trying to make it emit its' familial sound. I immediately felt a sense of empathy for the piano, and anger at the sight of him bashing at the keys, trying to do something it's not capable of doing anymore. It's become something different. The keys that still played were the ones chosen to stay, and the others will hand their sounds to chorus-like chatter of the forest.

Inside the mansion, the tour guide offered me the opportunity to play a grand piano, sitting suspensefully at the front of a small music hall. The notes didn't play like my piano at home. What I have is an electric piano. Its sound stops at the wall it sits in front of, and the furthest it travels is to the other side of the small room, 5 feet behind me. Each key on this piano fills the room like it had unleashed a lush and soft sonic flood. The physical presence of this piano was very much alive. I played a song on it. It was a dramatic cover of "Where is My Mind" by the Pixies. My fingers pounded the keys, the keys shooting shouts up copper strings, and ultimately singing to the small audience of my class of 12.

It was nothing less than magic. It was like a spell. I imagined the thick notes flowing through everyone, filling the room to the brim, and drowning everyone in the feeling of the song.