Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller

**Her Long Black Hair (Excerpt)**

**Location 4: Central Park, Balto Statue**

(Sound File 4)

*[Audience begins this portion standing at the intersection of walkways beside the dog’s statue on the rock. The red-brick tunnel is down the pathway to the left.]*

SFX: Birds, footsteps on sidewalk:

NARRATOR

Go left after the statue of the dog.

Go on down into the tunnel

OVERHEARD CHILD’S VOICE

Mine… over ice… over high ice

SFX: Gradually fade in voice of street singer in the tunnel, voice echoing against the walls and ceiling.

SINGER

Sometimes I feel like a motherless child  
Sometimes I feel like a motherless child  
Sometimes I feel like a motherless child….

NARRATOR

(Over Singing)

Stop… Wait for a minute

SINGER

(Continuing)

SFX: Reduce echo on the singer’s voice, as if heard coming out of the tunnel

A long ways from home  
A long ways from home

Sometimes I feel like I’m almos’ gone  
Sometimes I feel like I’m almos’ gone  
Sometimes I feel like I’m almos’ gone

A long ways from home

NARRATOR

Let’s continue

SFX: Birds, footsteps continuing

Follow the road to the right

Keep to the right all along here.

Looks like we’re in an enchanted forest here, or the underworld.

MALE VOICE

Do you remember the story of Orpheus?

NARRATOR

No

MALE VOICE

His love Eurydice died from a snakebite.  He was so heartbroken he journeyed to Hades, the underworld, to try to get her back.  The Gods agreed but only on the condition that he never look back at her face until they had reached the light of day.  Of course he has to look back.

SFX: Music from opera *Orpheus.*

NARRATOR

There’s a place along here where he took another photo.

SFX: Footsteps.

NARRATOR

Sit down on the last bench on the right.  It’s just before the big tree on the left where the roots go right into the rock.  There’s a street lamp across from it.

**Location 5: Central Park, Bench in The Dene**

(Sound File 5)

*[At the end of the previous section, the audience was instructed to sit on a bench across from the gnarled tree growing out of the huge rock. This is where the audience begins this section.]*

SFX: Bird sounds

NARRATOR

I could sit here all day and look at the trees.

SFX: dog bark in distance

NARRATOR

Take out the next photograph.  Number four.

It took me a few hours to find where this was taken.  She’s standing in front of the tree, a piece of hair across her face.  It bothers me, that hair.  I’ve noticed that there aren’t any photos of them together.  He could have asked someone passing by to take one, but he doesn’t.  And now she looks sort of unhappy.

MAN PASSING BY

Excuse me, who is that?

NARRATOR

I don’t know.  I just found this photograph at a flea market.

MAN PASSING BY

It looks just like my mother when she was young.  She had long black hair just like that.

NARRATOR

It’s taken right here.  See?  The exact same spot—you can see the tree and the lamppost

MAN PASSING BY

Um-hum.  That’s not her.  She was here for a while, though; it could have been her.

NARRATOR

You grew up in New York?

MAN PASSING BY

No, I’m just visiting.  My mother left us and that’s when she came here.

NARRATOR

She left you?

MAN PASSING BY

Yeah.  For a few years, I mean.

NARRATOR

How old were you?

MAN PASSING BY

Seven.  She’d phone once in a while but Dad wouldn’t let us talk to her.  He’d sit in the kitchen and listen to the radio, drinking.  I blamed him for her leaving.  Now I realize how sad he was.

NARRATOR

But she came back?

MAN PASSING BY

Yeah.  Like it was Christmas.  Presents and kisses.  Sorry, what time is it?

NARRATOR

It’s about four.

MAN PASSING BY

I have to go.  My wife is supposed to be back at the hotel soon.  Nice talking to you.

NARRATOR

Yeah.  Yeah, you too.  Bye.

SFX: Slowly fade in guitar intro to song “Her Black Hair.”

NARRATOR

Put the photo away now.

SFX: Song fades up to full volume

SINGER

Last night my kisses

Were banked in black hair

And in my bed my lover

Her hair was midnight black

And all her mystery dwelled within her black hair

On my fingers, the smell of her deep black hair

SFX: Fade song partially so narrator’s voice can continue over….

NARRATOR

Sometime I take pictures of my husband when he’s sleeping.  It’s one-sided gaze that attracts me.  The freedom for me to digest his naked body from whatever angle.  His helpless being at the mercy of my lens.  It’s also the attraction of watching someone being unconscious.  Lost in another world.

SFX. Music continuing up to full volume.

SINGER

All my tears dried against her milk-white throat

Hidden behind the curtain of her beautiful, beautiful black hair