

DNA OF SOUND AND VISION

Asya Draganova

“DNA” is my response to the “High school Hop” scene in *American Graffiti*. Hand drawn in the spirit of DiY zines, this piece is an abstract exploration of the relationships between image and sound in film and elsewhere. It uses the bridged spirals we recognise from the popular diagrams of DNA as a metaphor to express how vision and sound interweave to embody and voice emotional experience. Yet, they remain autonomous, not always synchronised, and sometimes even in contrast with one another; image and sound allow for a multiplicity of meanings.

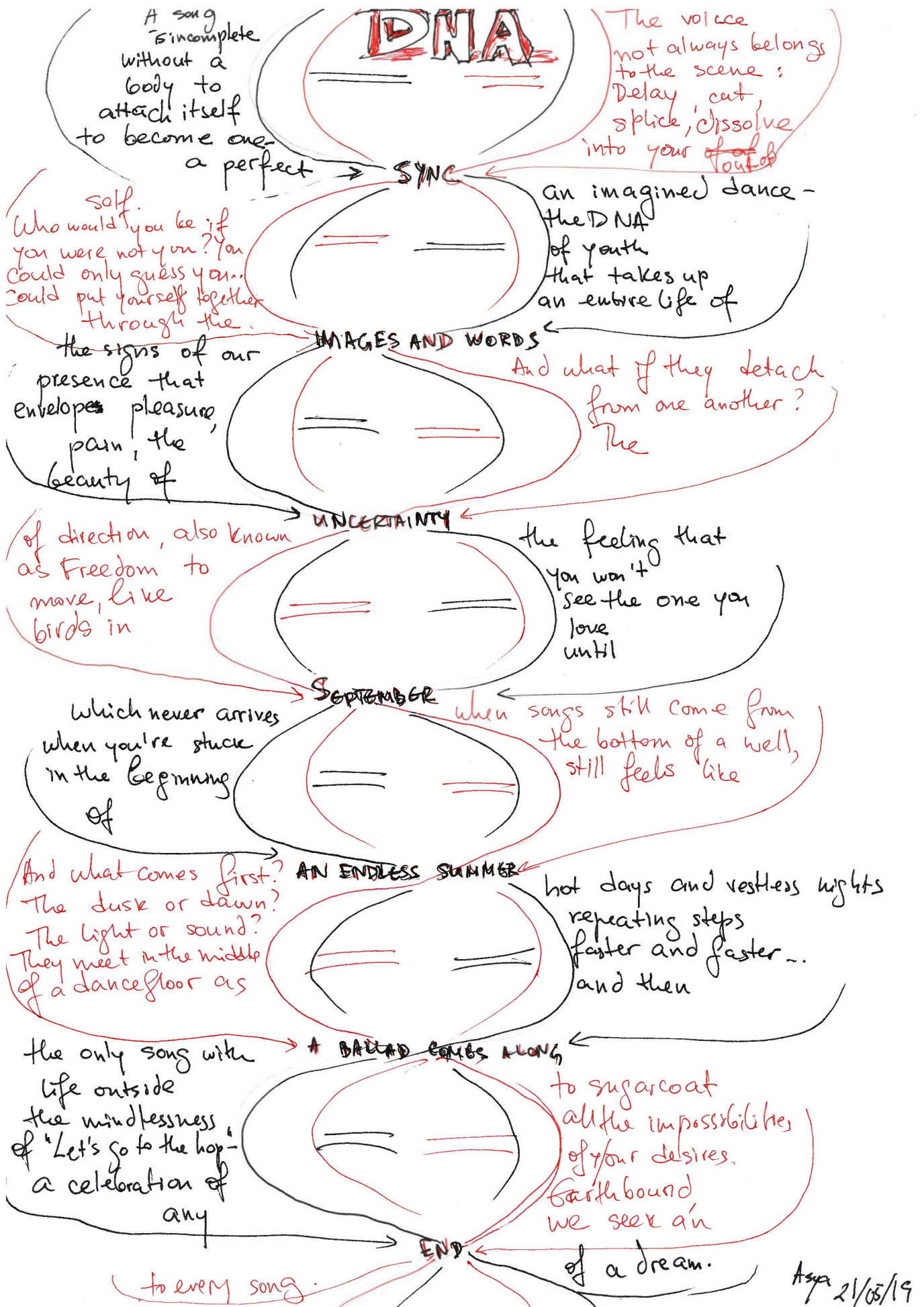
This experimental “DNA” can be read in many different ways: you can follow the arrows and read the poem in black ink, and then follow another poem in red ink; you can read each vertical column too, or each horizontal line, where red and black take turns... As long as you use the connecting words, or “bridges”:

SYNC
IMAGES AND WORDS
UNCERTAINTY
SEPTEMBER
AN ENDLESS SUMMER
A BALLAD COMES ALONG
END

So, this DiY sketch can result in (at least) five poems, with a number of *American Graffiti* and music-related references to be spotted!

As well as a response to a Write Club task, “DNA” is biographical to me. The red and black spirals resemble my life split between the UK and in Bulgaria, which creates two emotional worlds that have become interdependent but never dissolve into one another. Instead, they meet at the “crossroads” performed here by the connecting words.

Asya Draganova is a Senior Lecturer in Popular Music Culture at Birmingham City University and a co-leader of the Popular Music Research Cluster at the Birmingham Centre for Media and Cultural Research. She is the author of *Popular Music in Contemporary Bulgaria* (2019) and lead editor of the collection *The Canterbury Sound in Popular Music* (2021). Asya’s research includes themes such as cultural alternativity, ethnographic methods, popular music heritage and place, and East European post-communist transitions. She is keen to explore exciting ways of writing about exciting stuff such as popular music research. Asya also enjoys playing the guitar and singing.



DNA – Version 1 (Black Spiral)

A song is incomplete
without a body to attach
itself to
become a perfect
SYNC
an imagined dance
the DNA of youth
that takes up and entire
life of
IMAGES AND WORDS
the signs of our
presence
that envelopes
pleasure, pain,
the beauty of
UNCERTAINTY
the feeling that you
won't see
the one you love
until
SEPTEMBER
which never arrives
when you are stuck
in the beginning of
AN ENDLESS SUMMER
hot days and restless
nights
repeating steps, faster
and faster,
and then...
A BALLAD COMES
ALONG
the only song
with life outside the
mindlessness
of "Let's go to the hop" –
a celebration of any
END
of a dream.

DNA – Version 2 (Red Spiral)

The Voice
not always belongs
to the scene:
Delay, cut, splice, dissolve
Into your own out of
SYNC
self. Who would you be
if you were not you?
You could only
guess you...
Could put yourself together
through the
IMAGES AND WORDS
And what
if they detach from one
another? The
UNCERTAINTY
of direction, also known
as Freedom
to move, like birds in
SEPTEMBER
when songs still come
from the bottom of a well,
still feels like
AN ENDLESS SUMMER
And what comes first?
The dusk or dawn?
The light or sound?
They meet in the middle
of a dancefloor as
A BALLAD COMES ALONG
to sugar-coat
all the impossibilities
of y/our desires:
Earthbound, we seek an
END
to every song.

DNA - Version 4 (Vertical Column 1, Black and Red)

A song is incomplete
without a body to attach
itself to
become a perfect
SYNC
self. Who would you be
if you were not you?
You could only
guess you...
Could put yourself
together
through the
IMAGES AND WORDS
the signs of our
presence
that envelopes
pleasure, pain,
the beauty of
UNCERTAINTY
of direction, also known
as Freedom
to move, like birds in
SEPTEMBER
which never arrives
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AN ENDLESS SUMMER
And what comes first?
The dusk or dawn?
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They meet in the middle
of a dancefloor as
A BALLAD COMES
ALONG
the only song
with life outside the
mindlessness
of "Let's go to the hop" –
a celebration of any
END
to every song.

DNA – Version 4 (Vertical, Column 2, Red-Black)

The Voice
not always belongs
to the scene:
Delay, cut, splice, dissolve
Into your own out of
SYNC
an imagined dance
the DNA of youth
that takes up and entire life
of
IMAGES AND WORDS
And what
if they detach from one
another? The
UNCERTAINTY
the feeling that you won't
see
the one you love
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when songs still come
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