

A woman in a long, flowing white dress stands on a paved road that curves to the left. The road is marked with a white line on the left and a double yellow line on the right. Three orange diamond-shaped signs with black arrows pointing left are placed along the curve of the road. The background consists of a grassy field and a dense line of trees under a soft, hazy sky of sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

kendra keefer

“The work of memory collapses time.”
—Walter Benjamin

In 2021, I fled my home to ensure the safety of my LGBTQIA teen. This 3 Channel multimedia installation grounds our flight within the material world and our cultural context and maps how that relocation echoed ones from my childhood.

The title, **“oh, but if I had the stars from the darkest night”** is from the Dylan song, ***Boots of Spanish Leather***, which is also about a journey and a relocation. For me, the phrase, “oh, but if I had the stars...” speaks to a longing impossible to fulfill. My longing, in this case, was to live in a world in which I could keep my child safe, despite political forces beyond my control.

[oh, but if I had the stars from the darkest night]

Kendra Keefer

Elliot Keefer-McGee

with thanks to the SIU Film Archive



...OH, BUT IF I HAD THE STARS FROM THE DARKEST NIGHT...

Three Channel Mixed Media Installation, December 2024, North Light Gallery, Southern Illinois University
School Of Media Arts, Carbondale IL



American Horror: Returning Home

By Kendra Keefer

Poem Written and Read by Kendra Keefer

Cinematography by Elliot Keefer-McGee and Kendra Keefer

American Horror:

5:00 minutes

(scroll down)

"...it is half the art of storytelling to keep a story free from explanation as one reproduces it" **Walter Benjamin**

(IF BY GOD, I MEAN MEN))



See How She Runs:

5:06 Minutes

(scroll down)



...oh, but if I had the Stars :
3:06 Minutes
(scroll down)

WAKE: IF HEAVEN'S NOT MY HOME

Multimedia Installation Including Video And Performance,



Spring 2022

It had become my routine to observe a specific herd every morning after dropping my teenager off at school. Estranged from my family of origin, watching the deer take care of each other, gave me comfort. One morning, I found that a young male member of the herd had been killed by a car the night before.





Enlisting my teenager's help, I drew on the rituals I had grown up with to honor the young buck's life. First, I called local flower shops to see if any would be willing to save their broken flowers for us. Thankfully, a florist in the neighboring town was more than willing. Originally, we planned to make a memorial with the flowers on the side of the road where I had found the deer. However, we quickly realized that was a bad idea, because it might attract more deer into harm's way. We settled on making a wreath in the field where I regularly saw the herd and I sang a song I remembered from a childhood in the church.

WAKE: IF HEAVEN'S NOT MY HOME

Multimedia Installation Including Video And Performance,



play video
:32 Seconds

*WAKE: IF
HEAVEN'S NOT
MY HOME*

Installed at Art
Space Gallery in
Carbondale, IL





Kendra Keefer is an interdisciplinary artist, educator, and poet. She designs installations combining new and traditional media, including time-based media, mark making, photography, and poetry. Using an expanded documentary format, her work maps overlapping human and animal kinship systems, the site-based nature of memory, and the stories we tell about ourselves. Keefer has a BFA in Painting in Painting and Drawing and an MA in Art Museum Education, both from the University of North Texas, and an MFA in Media Art from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. Keefer has worked as a Museum Educator at illustrious institutions like the Art Institute of Chicago and the Dallas Museum of Art, as an Art Teacher at K-12 schools in Texas and Massachusetts, and, most recently, teaching university level classes at the University of Missouri, St. Louis. Her influences include Tacita Dean, Kiki Smith, and Donna Haraway.

for more, see www.kendrakeefer.com

kendra keefer

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excerpt from *...oh, but if I had the stars from the darkest night*