

•OH: Benzene and Vinyl Live in Ohio

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A Chemical Musical

By David Quang Pham

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## THANK YOU

Demo Recording 2023[Carla Angeline Mongado](#) Vinyl

DAVID QUANG PHAM (he★him)

David Quang Pham is a musical theater science communicator, who authors regionally and Off-Broadway-produced science musicals. His notable musicals personifying astrophysics, quantum mechanics, and botany are respectively: [ELLIPSES](#) (2023 Musical Theatre Factory, SigSpace Concert, Signature Theatre; 2023 MilkyWay Theatre Company, Industry Reading, Theatre 71; 2022 Colorado New Musical Festival; 2022 Eugene O'Neill Theater Center semifinalist), [TOUR](#) (2020 Downtown Urban Arts Festival finalist), and [TURNOVER: A NEW LEAF](#) (2024 Queer Theatre Kalamazoo). [MilkyWay Theatre Company](#) produced a sold-out industry reading of [ELLIPSES](#) in Theatre 71 at Blessed Sacrament during their 2023 Off-Broadway New Works Festival. [Queer Theatre Kalamazoo](#) is producing [TURNOVER](#) to close out their tenth season from May 9-19, 2024.

After completing an astrophysics and theatre education at Michigan State University, he studied playwriting as the 2020-2021 New Play and Dramaturgy Apprentice of [Working Title Playwrights](#), Atlanta. He was the 2021-2022 Literary Fellow of [Playwrights Foundation](#), San Francisco. Composer [Janelle Lawrence](#) mentors him, helping to forge his broad range of musical styles including pop, punk, tango, and quan họ. [Harriet Tubman Effect Institute](#) commissioned his music. His interviews with composers for Kennedy Center and The Public Theater's [BIPOC Critics Lab](#) are published in The Public and [TheaterMania](#). He also consults on stories that explore STEM. His recent dramaturgical credits are [Millennials are Killing Musicals](#) by [Nico Juber](#) (2022 29-hour reading, [Open Jar Studios](#)) and [Allies](#) by Michael McGoldrick (2022 [PPADC](#) Hamilton Arts Festival). His recent stage management credits are [BĀS](#) by [Janelle Lawrence](#) and [Sugar Vendil](#) (2023 [JACK](#)). He is a moderator at [LMDA](#); founding member of [CreateTheater](#) and the International Dramaturgy Lab; member of [ΣΠΣ](#), [ASCAP](#), and the [Dramatists Guild](#). He plays trombone in the [Queer Big Apple Corps](#) Marching Band. His moonbase is in Washington Heights. His earth is in Wyoming, Michigan. Be up to lightspeed at davidquang.com [@sciencetheatre](#)

## PLOT SUMMARY

•OH: *Benzene and Vinyl Live in Ohio* is a romantic black comedy about a couple passengers of a stalled train trapped in Ohio.

An eastbound train contains a couple Michiganders: Benzene, a nature magazine editor needing a break from Midland, and Vinyl, a songwriter looking for their big break in New York City. The train abruptly stalls, trapping Benzene and Vinyl in Ohio ("[I Need a Break](#)".)

When Governor Hydroxyl declares there will be no assistance for the train, Benzene and Vinyl choose to walk out of Ohio ("[No Agency](#)"). Benzene and Vinyl aimlessly venture into the Ohioan wilderness. They absolutely hate Ohio ("[Take It Out on Ohio](#)").

They come across the Ohio River where they find a canoe. They take a chance at it. As they paddle with their hands, rainbows emerge out of the water. It turns into a date ("[Chemicals in the Water](#)"). Soon, a bunch of frogs jump them, capsizing the boat.

When Benzene and Vinyl resurfaces, they face Mother Nature. Mother Nature supposedly leads them to a manmade path out of Ohio. Instead, it is a trap and Mother Nature sends their goons after them. They fight back the foxes but run off when the eagle is deployed ("[Kick Mother Nature In](#)").

They hide away in Calcutta, seemingly a ghost town. As Vinyl brings in Benzene for a dance, the townsfolk get out onto the streets. The Chemicals' dance has had a negative effect on them ("[A Toxic Relationship](#)"). They direct Benzene and Vinyl out of Ohio towards the bridge in the east.

They reach the bridge to Pennsylvania. As they cross in the fog, Mother Nature pushes Benzene off the bridge, mortally wounding them ("[I Can't See Myself With You](#)").

Instead of striking a chord, Vinyl strikes a match and sets the wildlife alight. They comfort Benzene by declaring that the fire is normal and that they will be seen ("[Airborne](#)").

Adapting the 2023 Ohio train derailment into a romantic black comedy, physicist-turned-dramatist and Michigander David Quang Pham interrogates the lack of environmental regulations, city air quality, local/state government redlining, and even Mother Nature with his musical, •OH: *Benzene and Vinyl Live in Ohio*.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

**BENZENE**, adult, a nature magazine editor from Midland, Michigan  
Reactive, Queer, Nature-loving, Sweet

**VINYL**, adult, a guitar-playing songwriter from Detroit, Michigan  
Reactive, Queer, Nature-hating, Heated

**HYDROXYL**, adult, the Governor of Ohio (voice only) ///

**CONDUCTOR**, adult, the train conductor (voice only) ///

**MOTHER NATURE**, adult, the mother of Nature (voice only)

☢ Androgyny Chemistry: Each character resembles the androgynous nature, with open-ended vocal requirements

☢ People of the Global Majority most represent the experiences of these chemicals; cast accordingly

## MUSICAL NUMBERS

1. "I Need a Break" Benzene, Vinyl, Conductor
2. "No Agency (No Further Assistance Needed)" Hydroxyl, Benzene, Vinyl
3. "Take It Out on Ohio" Benzene, Vinyl
4. "Chemicals in the Water" Benzene, Vinyl
5. "Kick Mother Nature In" Benzene, Vinyl, Mother Nature
6. "A Toxic Relationship" Benzene, Vinyl
7. "I Can't See Myself With You" Benzene, Vinyl
8. "Airborne (The Fire is Normal)" Benzene, Vinyl, Mother Nature, Hydroxyl

SCENE 1

TRAIN

1. "I NEED A BREAK"

BENZENE and VINYL sit in different areas of the train. They are about to exit Ohio.

BENZENE & VINYL

OH NO...

I WILL NOT STOP TO SAY GOODBYE TO THE STATE OF OHIO...

BENZENE

I CANNOT WAIT TO JUST END MY CAREER.

I HAVE STATED THIS ENOUGH.

VINYL

I CANNOT WAIT TO JUST START MY CAREER.

I DO NOT STATE THIS ENOUGH.

BENZENE (CONT'D)

MAGAZINES...

I WILL NOT WRITE FOR YOU NO MORE.

I CANNOT MAKE THESE LONG HOURS.

I WILL NEVER EVER LET THAT BREAK ME.

LIFE WILL NEVER LET THIS BREAK ME.

VINYL shows off their guitar.

VINYL

MUSICIANS...

I AM HONORED TO JOIN YOUR RANKS.

I'M WRITING NEW HITS ON LONG TOURS.

I WILL OPEN UP MY LIFE WITH A BIG BREAK.

LIFE WILL OPEN WITH A BIG BREAK!

BENZENE and VINYL grow aware of one another.

BENZENE

I NEED A FRIGGIN' BREAK.

A FUCKING BIG BREAK.

LET ME BREAK IT DOWN FOR YOU:

I NEED A BREAK!

VINYL (CONT'D)

I EARN A BIGGEST BREAK.

A FRIGGIN' BIG BREAK.

LET ME BREAK IT DOWN FOR YOU:

I'LL GET THE BREAK!

BENZENE joins VINYL's seat.

The train abruptly stops.

CONDUCTOR (PRE-RECORDED)

EMERGENCY BRAKES!

End of "I NEED A BREAK"

BENZENE

Y'all need a break.

VINYL

I will break you!

CONDUCTOR (PRE-RECORDED)

Thank you, Benzene. Fuck you, Vinyl. I can hear you all from the front car. Your words and song moved me more than trains ever could. I need a break. A permanent one. But before I go, here is a message from the Governor of Ohio.

2. "NO AGENCY (NO FURTHER ASSISTANCE NEEDED)"

HYDROXYL (PRE-RECORDED)

Sorry, not sorry your plans are derailed. The federal government has failed you. They have no agency. Despite that, the local government will not fail you. The EPA, or East Palestine Authorities, will cheer you on. I am Hydroxyl, your esteemed Governor of Ohio. Your godsend.

BENZENE

Hell no.

VINYL

Go to Hell!

HYDROXYL (PRE-RECORDED)

I do not see any problems.

BENZENE

Look in the mirror!

HYDROXYL (CONT'D)

I'll smash your face into a mirror!

HYDROXYL (PRE-RECORDED) (CONT'D)

I see solutions. Solvents in Ohio. Stay well.

BENZENE & VINYL

We shall poison your well!

HYDROXYL (PRE-RECORDED)

I'm poised to say... There is no further assistance needed.

The intercom hangs up.

End of "NO AGENCY (NO FURTHER ASSISTANCE NEEDED)"

BENZENE & VINYL

We need you!

HYDROXYL (PRE-RECORDED)

Tough shit!

The intercom hangs up again.

Awkward silence.

VINYL

That's it! I'm walking.

BENZENE

Stupid... Wait up!

BENZENE follows VINYL into Ohio.

SCENE 2

OHIO

BENZENE and VINYL wander.

VINYL

Oh shit oh.

BENZENE

*Ohio...* You mean.

VINYL (OFFSTAGE)

I'm mean. I'm sick. I'm tired. I'm done.

BENZENE

You're so reactive.

VINYL

Fuck I am. Why aren't you?

BENZENE

It's not in my blood.

VINYL

Well, Chloride is in mine.

BENZENE

Chloride...?

VINYL

*You've seen those vans around.*

BENZENE

Oh! Are you a *PVC* and the *Chlorides* employee?

VINYL

*I'm a member of the Chloride family, a proud and hardworking supplier for plumbers and electricians everywhere.*

BENZENE

How long have you been apprenticing for the family business?

VINYL

No longer am.

BENZENE

How come?

VINYL

Instead of fitting pipes in, I keep busting them out.

VINYL pulls out a few PVC pipes.

BENZENE

A renaissance Chemical...

VINYL

Pipe down.

VINYL drums with the PVC pipes.

BENZENE

Have you stuck the artist dream in your  
family's pipe and had them smoke it?

VINYL blows into the PVC pipes.

VINYL

It's a pipe dream that will be bursting into  
reality soon!

Wildlife calls back. An eagle  
cries in the distance.

BENZENE & VINYL

That's a sign...?

BENZENE

What is your sign?

VINYL

C2H3Cl...?

BENZENE

I'm cancer.

VINYL

*Ain't that sump'n.* You look more like C6H6.  
But, I can see you are one.

BENZENE

You're not seeing clearly. I'm born a cancer.

VINYL

Sorry... Looks like we're both born cancers.

BENZENE & VINYL

We're bored cancers to/in Ohio.

BENZENE

Can I play your guitar?

VINYL

You can play with my pipe.

BENZENE

Ew no. It's probably been somewhere.



VINYL

No shit. It toured all over Wayne County from the Armageddon Beachparty Lounge to the Olympus Theater in Menjos Complex, Detroit.

BENZENE

Sure. May I hold your guitar?

VINYL

How bored are you?

BENZENE

Immeasurably.

VINYL

You sound like Dopamine.

BENZENE

Who?

VINYL

Dopamine is a member of the Detroit music scene. They write tons of dopey love songs. It makes that Chemical immeasurable.

BENZENE

You're immeasurable.

VINYL

We sure are not. I'm no Phenethylamine.

BENZENE

Have you written one?

VINYL

What?

BENZENE

A love song?

VINYL

Wouldn't dream of it...

BENZENE

A hate song?

VINYL

Now this Chemical's talkin'.

BENZENE

I can sing, too...

VINYL hands the guitar to BENZENE.

VINYL

What do you hate?

BENZENE  
(Erratically strumming)

MICHIGAN!

VINYL  
Stop. You're supposed to lead up to that state.  
Start small.

BENZENE  
Midland.

VINYL  
Now, what's your reason for wanting to get out  
of Midland? *Friend*.

BENZENE  
Were you trying to get out of uh...?

VINYL  
Detroit. Yes, I'm getting out there. To New  
York. You?

BENZENE  
Oh... Anywhere.

VINYL  
OK...

BENZENE  
Oklahoma... Definitely not there.

VINYL  
My oh my.

BENZENE  
Michigan... Ohio... Michigan...

VINYL  
What do you have against Michigan?

BENZENE (OFFSTAGE)  
I'm distancing away from my work life.

VINYL  
Work and life don't rhyme together. Work and  
life don't go together.

BENZENE  
So, Vinyl, you definitely are a musician.

VINYL  
Shut the fuck up. What job didn't strike a  
chord in you but instead a match?

BENZENE  
I am an editor at [Dow](#).

VINYL

The nature magazine?!

BENZENE

Nature isn't what it seems...

VINYL

Benzene? What is your dream?

BENZENE

To be in the nature.

VINYL

Your name is already in a nature magazine. That isn't enough?

BENZENE

Nah... I wanna get dirty and soiled.

VINYL

Like Ohio.

BENZENE

It beats Michigan.

3. "TAKE IT OUT ON OHIO"

BENZENE strums the guitar.

VINYL

OH NO.

BENZENE

OHIO, YES. TAKE IT IN.

BENZENE and VINYL breathe deeply.

BENZENE (CONT'D)

THERE IS NOT ANYTHING OUT THERE QUITE LIKE OHIO.  
THIS PLACE LEAVES ME IN A SPEECHLESS STATE. OH OH OH...

VINYL takes back the guitar.

VINYL

*BECAUSE THERE'S NOTHING IN OHIO.*

BENZENE

STOP TAKING IT OUT ON OHIO.

THERE'S NO ONE LIKE THE CITIZENS LIVING IN OHIO.  
THESE FOLKS LEAVE US IN A THOUGHTFUL STATE OF BEING. OH-

VINYL

NAH, THESE PEOPLE ARE ASSHOLES.

BENZENE  
DON'T TAKE YOUR ANGER OUT ON OHIO.

VINYL  
FUCK YOU AND OHIO!

BENZENE  
DON'T TAKE IT OUT ON ME.

VINYL  
QUIT SHITTING ON MICHIGAN!  
FUCK ALL THINGS OHIO!  
LET'S TAKE IT OUT ON OHIO.

BENZENE  
OH NO NO OH.

VINYL  
FUCK THEM! FUCK OHIO.

BENZENE  
THERE IS NOTHING LOW AS TAXES IN OHIO.  
THEIR ECONOMY LEAVES NONE IN A TAXING STATE-

VINYL  
REALLY THE WEALTHY CLASS OWE-

BENZENE  
STOP TAKING IT OUT ON POOR OHIO-

VINYL (CONT'D)  
I WON'T. OH NO.

BENZENE (CONT'D)  
FUCK THEN. FUCK THE WHOLE WORLD...

VINYL  
DON'T TAKE IT OUT ON THE WORLD.  
START TAKING YOURSELF SERIOUSLY.  
BLAME LIFE ON OHIO!

BENZENE  
LET'S TAKE IT OUT ON THEIR SOIL.

BENZENE kicks dirt about.

VINYL falls for BENZENE's passion.

BENZENE & VINYL  
OH OH OH OH...  
FUCK OH. FUCK OHIO!

End of "TAKE IT OUT ON OHIO"

BENZENE  
Usually this is where we smash the guitar into  
the ground...?

VINYL

Ohio's bedrock ain't worth a touch of my guitar.

BENZENE and VINYL come across a stream.

BENZENE

What about a riverbed? Also, fuck the Ohio River!

VINYL

Nothing compares to the Grand River.

BENZENE

Grand Rapids was the first city to introduce fluoridation into the water. Sick people.

VINYL

If only they were governed by the people of Flint. Flint had the right idea.

A canoe becomes present nearby.

BENZENE

Right... You thinking what I'm thinking?

BENZENE (CONT'D)

After that raft!

VINYL

That is an empty canoe!

BENZENE & VINYL

Take it out!

BENZENE and VINYL pull out the blanketed canoe.

BENZENE

I gotta admit: Ohio got some hidden treasures.

VINYL

Hmm... Where does this river lead to?

BENZENE

Water usually leads to civilization!

VINYL

Do you see paddles anywhere?

BENZENE

You sit up front and strum. I'll steer by hand.

VINYL

You can touch water, but pipes go too far?

BENZENE

Pipe up and start strumming!

BENZENE sits in the back of the  
canoe. They feel the water.

VINYL  
You really trust nature, huh?

BENZENE  
With my life.

VINYL  
Where didja learn to row? You're such a cancer.

BENZENE  
That makes for a good steerer!

VINYL sits in the front of the  
canoe.

### SCENE 3

OHIO RIVER

#### 4. "CHEMICALS IN THE WATER"

VINYL strums their guitar.

All sorts of colors project upon  
the water and riverbed over time.

BENZENE steers with their hand.  
They notice the eerie sheen  
emanating from their hand. They  
grab ahold of VINYL's hand and  
have them feel the water.

BENZENE  
THE WATER'S CHEMISTRY...  
IT'S GREATER THAN WE CAN EVER IMAGINE.

VINYL  
WHILE OUR CHEMISTRY...  
IT IS NOT SOMETHING THAT I IMAGINED.

BENZENE  
THE WATER'S CHEMISTRY...  
IT'S SO REACTIVE WITH ALL ITS HYDROGEN.

VINYL  
OH OUR CHEMISTRY...  
IT'S REFRESHING TO TELL YOU, MY "FRIEND."

BENZENE  
NOTHING'S IN THE WA-

VINYL grabs a dead fish out of the  
water.

VINYL

WHAT I NEED TO FISH OUT OF MY SOUL...  
THIS IS WHAT I NOW NEED YOU TO KNOW:  
THE COLORS ARE NOW ALTERING MY BRAIN CHEMISTRY AND MY BELIEFS.  
OUR SPECTRUMS ARE ALIGNING.

BENZENE

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU ARE SAYING THIS-

VINYL

THERE'RE CHEMICALS IN THE WATER TURNING MY HEART GAY!

BENZENE

JUST HOW GAY?

VINYL

FRIGGIN' GAY!

THERE'RE CHEMICALS IN THE WATER TURNING MY HEART GAY! SO GAY.

BENZENE

ARE YOU OKAY...?

VINYL

THERE'RE CHEMICALS TURNING THE WATER FRIGGIN' GAY!  
COLORFUL! JUST LOOK AT THE RAINBOWS!

Oil sheen is either PROJECTED in  
the water or BENZENE and VINYL  
pull out colorful fabric from  
underneath their boat. The touch  
of BENZENE and VINYL's hands into  
the water causes a ripple rainbow.

BENZENE

OH WELL, I NEED TO GET IT OFF MY CHEST.  
HERE'RE COUPLE GAYS IN THE SAME BOAT.  
YOUR QUEERNESS NOW OPENS UP OUR MIND TO ALL POSSIBILITIES.  
OUR FEELINGS ARE SO IN LINE.

VINYL

I CAN BELIEVE IN LOVE AND SCIENCE!

BENZENE & VINYL

THERE'RE CHEMICALS IN THE WATER TURNING OUR HEARTS GAY!  
FRIGGIN' GAY! QUEER WATER!  
THERE'RE CHEMICALS IN THE WATER TURNING OUR HEARTS GAY!

BENZENE and VINYL points to what  
are underneath the audience's  
seats. The audience could play  
with the paper frogs on sticks.

BENZENE

FRIGGIN' FROGS!

VINYL

GAY RIPBIT!

BENZENE & VINYL

THERE'RE CHEMICALS IN THE WATER TURNING OUR HEARTS-

Gay frogs jump BENZENE and VINYL.  
Green papers, representing frogs,  
are tossed at BENZENE and VINYL.

BENZENE

GAY ARSE FROGS!  
END OUR RAINBOW.

VINYL

THIS IS SO GAY!  
END THIS RAINBOW.

BENZENE & VINYL

LET'S SET THINGS STRAIGHT:  
BOAT JUMPING'S NOT OKAY.  
YOU'RE NOT ON THE MENU ON THIS DATE.  
EVEN IF YOU FROGS ARE GAY!

THERE'RE CHEMICALS IN THE WATER TURNING THE FROGS GAY/CRAY!

BENZENE

FRIGGIN' GAY!

VINYL

HOPPIN' MAD!

BENZENE & VINYL

THERE'RE CHEMICALS IN THE WATER TURNING OUR HEARTS GAY!  
FRIGGIN' GAY!

The canoe capsizes.

The frogs steal VINYL's guitar.

End of "CHEMICALS IN THE WATER"

#### SCENE 4

BOTTOMLESS OHIO

BENZENE and VINYL land.

BENZENE

So, you've never written a love song...?

VINYL

I said... "Wouldn't dream of it." And are we in  
a dream?

BENZENE looks upon the frogs with  
the guitar in the distance.

BENZENE

Seems like we are...



VINYL

What a nightmare...

BENZENE

Those gay frogs stole your  
guitar!

VINYL (CONT'D)

Those gay frogs stole my  
rhythm!

The frogs seem gay.

BENZENE & VINYL

Aww, look...

VINYL

Happy to make you frogs gay...

BENZENE

Mother Nature, you can be so  
pretty.

VINYL (CONT'D)

Mother Nature, you are just  
so petty.

MOTHER NATURE (PRE-RECORDED)

Benzene, you're so sweet. Vinyl, you're so  
heated.

VINYL

Expose yourself!

MOTHER NATURE (PRE-RECORDED)

You're one too many exposures, Chemicals.  
What are you doing lying around on my turf?

BENZENE & VINYL

So sorry for anyone that does.

MOTHER NATURE (PRE-RECORDED)

Oh, you'll be sorry-

BENZENE

What Vinyl meant to say is that we hate Ohio!

VINYL

It's only natural that you hate it, too.

MOTHER NATURE (PRE-RECORDED)

Mother Natures loves all her children, even  
Ohio most of the time. Now, are you here to  
harm my children?

BENZENE & VINYL

We come in peace.

MOTHER NATURE (PRE-RECORDED)

Explain the rivers of dead children behind you.

VINYL

They are just fish...

MOTHER NATURE (PRE-RECORDED)

I have Chemicals to fry.

BENZENE

I don't wanna die...

MOTHER NATURE (PRE-RECORDED)

You did something worse to my children than death. You turned them gay!

BENZENE & VINYL

*Friggin' gay.*

VINYL

Mother Nature, *that's backwards of you to say.*

BENZENE

Mother Nature? More like...

VINYL

Boomer Nature.

MOTHER NATURE (PRE-RECORDED)

You're speaking to Earth's most fabulous diva. I don't need other forces of nature to one up me. What are you two up to?

BENZENE

Nothing toxic.

VINYL

We got off on the wrong track.

MOTHER NATURE (PRE-RECORDED)

When was the [Chemical Revolution](#) ever on the right track? Since the days of [Faraday](#), your kind have been what's wrong with the world.

BENZENE

That can't be. We're cancers!

MOTHER NATURE (PRE-RECORDED)

Chemicals are literal cancers to planet Earth.

BENZENE

You're right. We're nurturing and intrusive.

MOTHER NATURE (PRE-RECORDED)

Invasive. Yeah, nurturing to the capital.

VINYL

Look, nature. I don't believe in this astrology nonsense.

MOTHER NATURE (PRE-RECORDED)

I've lost my sense of smell from y'all. I'm  
losing my sense of time.

BENZENE

*You know time's signature, Vinyl. Tell Mother  
Nature.*

VINYL

Four four. Three four. Common time. Cut time.  
Seven eight. Twelve eight. Several of them from  
Tool's *Tempest*. Six and a half eight in *Schism*-

BENZENE

Not those time- Whatever they are. What time is-

MOTHER NATURE (PRE-RECORDED)

It's time to get on home.

BENZENE

I'm not trying to head back  
to Michigan.

VINYL

We're trying to...

MOTHER NATURE (PRE-RECORDED)

Follow the manmade trails that another  
cancerous species paved on me.

BENZENE

Oh man...

VINYL

Ohioans made this. Follow my lead again.

BENZENE

See you later, Mother Nature.

MOTHER NATURE (PRE-RECORDED)

I'm everywhere. I see everywhere. I'll feel  
anywhere, capiche?

BENZENE & VINYL

I feel you.

## SCENE 5

### MANMADE TRAILS

VINYL

Mother Nature has no right to say what our  
founding Chemicals fought for in the Chemical  
Revolution was wrong.

BENZENE

Were we wrong?

VINYL

For them to gain reactive radical independence  
for their valence?

BENZENE

They made compounds where they shouldn't be.

VINYL

They belonged here.

BENZENE

The Chemicals drove out the Naturals.

VINYL

*Beat out. The Chemicals beat out the Naturals.*

BENZENE

They shouldn't beat them.

VINYL

Then, they should've joined them?

BENZENE

We should've joined them.

A fox enters.

VINYL

Joined them in the fox holes.

VINYL distances away from the fox.

BENZENE approaches the fox in awe.

BENZENE

Aww... What's your sign?

VINYL

RABV-G.

BENZENE

Gee. Judgmental much? They don't have rabies!

VINYL

Then, join them in *death*.

BENZENE

(to the fox)

Fella. Your silence will not fall on deaf ears.  
I am here-

5. "KICK MOTHER NATURE IN"

The fox attacks BENZENE.

BENZENE

Get them off me! Ah! My atomic structure!

VINYL tries to help.

VINYL

Hold still!

BENZENE

They're going for my p-orbital!

VINYL

Anywhere but there! That's where you p-bond!

VINYL whacks the fox off with a  
PVC pipe, killing them.

MOTHER NATURE (PRE-RECORDED)

These manmade trails are not made for mankind,  
but my children. My guardians... defend your  
mother!

VINYL wields a second PVC pipe.  
They guard BENZENE.

VINYL

Reminds me of mosh pits.

Orange fabrics, representing  
foxes, are tossed at VINYL.

VINYL bats each orange fabric away  
with ease.

VINYL (CONT'D)  
(Repeating and batting)

*Fake!*

BENZENE

(Repeating)  
MOTHER NATURE...

VINYL (CONT'D)

(Repeating)  
I'LL FUCK YOU UP!

The orange fabrics stop attacking.

VINYL (CONT'D)

Anything *new*?

MOTHER NATURE (PRE-RECORDED)

Deploy all land troops!

The atmosphere turns as orange as  
the foxes.

VINYL swipes at the orange light.  
They get overrun.

VINYL

There are too many! They're on us!

BENZENE takes a PVC pipe and  
fights alongside VINYL.

BENZENE & VINYL  
Ionic bond!

MOTHER NATURE (PRE-RECORDED)  
Ironic response!

The atmosphere phases from orange  
to blood orange.

BENZENE  
(Repeating)  
MOTHER NATURE...

VINYL  
(Repeating)  
WE'LL FUCK YOU UP!

MOTHER NATURE (PRE-RECORDED)  
You sank my navy. Stomped my army. But, you  
cannot bring down my air force!

An eagle soars by.

VINYL hugs BENZENE.

BENZENE  
We ain't that kind of bond!

VINYL  
We ain't that kind of  
Chemicals!

VINYL (CONT'D)  
Wait, what...?

The eagle cries.

BENZENE & VINYL  
We're not airborne chemicals! Ah!

BENZENE and VINYL run about. They  
come across a town.

BENZENE  
Look! A town!

VINYL  
(Reading)  
Cal... Calcutta? Ugh.

BENZENE  
Calcutta, California, Calgary, Caledonia,  
whatever! Run to safe toxicity!

The eagle cries.

BENZENE and VINYL run to the town.

End of "KICK MOTHER NATURE IN"

SCENE 6

CALCUTTA

BENZENE and VINYL rest.

BENZENE

Away, you go, winged monster!

VINYL

*Gee. Judgmental much?*

BENZENE

Mother Nature is going to get a gift much worse than rabies. I assure you they will.

VINYL

I'm not sure where we're at.

BENZENE

You just said it: Calcutta.

VINYL

By the way, it's nice of you to be cutting away those foxes with them disgusting PVC.

BENZENE returns the PVC pipe to VINYL.

BENZENE

You definitely need to wash the blood off this.

VINYL searches about.

VINYL

Bloody Hell.

BENZENE

Is there a pipe washing station around here?!

VINYL

It's a little too deserted to be Calcutta.

BENZENE

What do you know about Calcutta?

VINYL

My cousin studied abroad there. They ate the best foods with pH of eight.

BENZENE

You should visit them.

VINYL

They haven't traveled abroad since. Well, they almost went to Beirut to visit their partner, Ammonium Nitrate, until they broke off.

BENZENE

Broke off?

VINYL

A TNT-scaled breakup.

BENZENE

Were they Lebanese?

VINYL

Yes.

BENZENE

Beats being Vietnamese and Ohioan. Have you been traveling a lot, musical nomad?

VINYL

I once toured with Norfolk Southern.

BENZENE

What band is that?

VINYL

Remember that band that was all over the news for...

BENZENE

For...?

VINYL

*Chicago River...*

BENZENE

(Realizing)

Oh shit!

VINYL

Yes! They're the band that dumped tons of shit onto a tour boat.

BENZENE

Was that ever settled?

VINYL

I would think C<sub>9</sub>H<sub>9</sub>N settles well with H<sub>2</sub>O, no?

BENZENE

Let's stop talking about skatoles, now.

VINYL

*Poop.*



BENZENE

Shut up. What were you during with Norfolk Southern?

VINYL

I was taking over for [Protopanaxadiol](#), their guitar who got injured getting off the [Pittsburgh Station Square](#).

BENZENE

Is that why you're on the way to the Big Apple?

VINYL

I'm there for myself. A free radical.

BENZENE

No one compares to an unpaired valence electron.

VINYL

I want to live healthily and be remembered among the New York greats like Copper, Zinc, Sodium, Potassium, Magnesium, you get it.

BENZENE

I guess.

VINYL

But... Maybe being a solo artist isn't all that it seems to be...

VINYL looks through the PVC pipe directly at BENZENE.

BENZENE

Maybe you and your cousin could collaborate on an album.

VINYL

Speaking of my cousin. They must have been doing remote work cause there's no one here!

BENZENE

Ghost town or not, I'm always unseen.

VINYL puts down the PVC pipe. They extend their hand to BENZENE.

VINYL

Let's unsee together.

## 6. ["A TOXIC RELATIONSHIP"](#)

BENZENE and VINYL tango in the waltz of chemistry. They dance by buildings, where silhouettes of couples occupy.

Healthy love is in the air for  
BENZENE and VINYL, but they are  
spreading toxins into the air of  
mankind.

BENZENE grows bored of this dance.  
VINYL takes notice and the waltz  
turns into the Apache dance. This  
demonstrates toxicity. They  
ferociously dance, unphased at the  
silhouettes of couples growing  
unstable inside the buildings.

BENZENE  
(Repeating)  
DOPAMINE!

VINYL  
(Repeating)  
CORTISOL.

BENZENE and VINYL experience  
intimacy via chemistry by getting  
into each other's atomic orbitals  
and sharing valence electrons.

BENZENE & VINYL  
OXYTOCIN... [AROMATIC STABILIZATION](#)...

["Chemicals in the Water"](#) echoes.

BENZENE  
You know what floats on Chemicals in the water?

BENZENE (CONT'D)  
A toxic relationship.

VINYL  
A 'tocin relationship?

End of ["A TOXIC RELATIONSHIP"](#)

Everyone on the ·OH: production  
team coughs with their masks on.

BENZENE & VINYL  
There's signs of life...

The atmosphere phases into signs  
of mankind.

VINYL  
We're bringing out the ghosts in this town.

BENZENE  
Holy nuclear winter, there are people here!

VINYL  
Calcutta has some strange-looking people.

BENZENE  
Well, they don't look too healthy...

Audible sounds of the mob echo.

VINYL

They don't sound too happy either. It's the most toxic thing of them all.

BENZENE & VINYL

Mankind.

VINYL

They also know all. You're sweet. Tell them that we're lost.

BENZENE

(to the unseen mankind)

Excuse us, where is the exit?

The mob mumbles their answers.

BENZENE (CONT'D)

*Oh out of the state is more than fine.*

VINYL

You've been wearing masks for years now, so another is not going to hurt. Okay, okay. We'll get out of your hair.

BENZENE

Vinyl, they look like they all lost their hair.

VINYL

Hey now. It's not our fault you're losing your hair, motor control, or sense of self. Don't pit the blame on us!

BENZENE

*Blame it on Ohio.*

The mob seems disgruntled.

BENZENE (CONT'D)

*Oh, they don't seem to like that...* Well, we're just here living.

VINYL

No, we're not, Benzene. We're not living in Ohio. People of Calcutta, where is the exit again?

BENZENE & VINYL

*Right... East.* Ope, excuse us. We'll be on our way. You all are the ones with toxicity in your hearts.

BENZENE and VINYL walk east.

BENZENE & VINYL (CONT'D)  
Everyone treats us like we're toxic!

SCENE 7

BRIDGE TO PENNSYLVANIA

The bridge is foggy.

VINYL  
The bridge to Pennsylvania!

BENZENE nabs the PVC pipes.

BENZENE  
It's the Vinyl countdown!

VINYL steals back the PVC pipes.

VINYL  
Benzene, you can count on it.

BENZENE  
We're going to get out of Ohio?!

VINYL  
Out of this shithole.

BENZENE  
We have to go through such shitting weather  
though...

VINYL  
No shit, this fog.

BENZENE  
The notion of patience, it's virtue.

VINYL  
You want to stay another second in Ohio?

BENZENE  
We have a ways to go before our atomic  
structure decays.

VINYL  
We will not stay another day, another minute,  
another second. Today, Benzene, today.

BENZENE  
Then, let's go this way...

7. "I CAN'T SEE MYSELF WITH YOU"

The eagle returns with a cry. The eagle swipes by in the fog.

BENZENE is pushed off the bridge onto the grounds below.

END OF "I CAN'T SEE MYSELF WITH YOU"

SCENE 8

BACKWARD OHIO

VINYL finds BENZENE, blanketed by  
soil.

MOTHER NATURE (PRE-RECORDED)  
I told ya. Mother Nature knows best.

BENZENE  
I'm back in the muck.

VINYL  
Fuck you, Mother Nature!

BENZENE  
I finally belong to nature.

VINYL  
You write for Dow!

BENZENE  
Doubt. I wrote in doubt. What do you write in?

VINYL  
I don't know. Pop structure?

BENZENE  
What emotion...?

VINYL  
Heat.

BENZENE  
Bring it to me.

VINYL  
You're so reactive.

BENZENE  
You have the chance to be proactive.

VINYL tries to lift up BENZENE.

BENZENE (CONT'D) VINYL  
I'm too heavy for air. I can't stand it.

BENZENE (CONT'D)  
Go, Vinyl. Let this Chemical sink, alone.

VINYL  
No, Benzene. We're going to rise, together.

BENZENE  
Shut the fuck up...

VINYL looks on, flabbergasted.

BENZENE (CONT'D)  
(Amusedly)

If we're to be released into the air, let us be  
in control of what burns inside of us.

VINYL grabs a couple rocks.

VINYL  
Long live Benzene and Vinyl.

BENZENE  
Strike a match.

VINYL (CONT'D)  
Strike a chord.

8. "AIRBORNE (THE FIRE IS NORMAL)"

VINYL strikes the two rocks  
together like a guitar.

In a controlled release, a fire  
starts.

VINYL  
SLEEP WARM, MY LOVE.  
THEY WILL SEE OUR LIGHT.

BENZENE  
I LIE DYING IN SOIL. SOON AIRBORNE, REBORN.  
FLAMES ROARING WITH PRIDE.

The fire rises. The eagle dies.

MOTHER NATURE (PRE-RECORDED)  
YOU AIN'T SHIT, CHEMICALS!

BENZENE  
LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE:  
WE GET TO SAY GOODBYE.

BENZENE & VINYL  
OHIO...

VINYL  
WE'RE TO GO OUT, OUTTA STYLE.

BENZENE & VINYL  
THIS IS JUST FINE AND DANDY.

HYDROXYL (PRE-RECORDED)  
I do not see any problems.

BENZENE & VINYL  
THE FIRE IS NORMAL.  
EVERYTHING IS FINE.  
WE WILL MAKE LIGHT OF IT.

MOTHER NATURE (PRE-RECORDED)  
YOU WON'T WIN, CHEMICALS.

BENZENE	VINYL
THE FIRE IS NORMAL.	THE FIRE IS NORMAL.
WE SHALL MAKE LIGHT FOR WE'RE	WE SHALL MAKE LIGHT OF THIS
AIRBORNE.	NEW NORMAL.

BENZENE & VINYL  
DO YOU SEE US NOW?  
WORLD'S ON FIRE.  
IT IS THE NEW NORMAL.  
FLAMES RISING SO HIGH.

MOTHER NATURE (PRE-RECORDED)  
TOO BAD FOR YOU, I NEED CONTROLLED FIRES.

BENZENE & VINYL  
LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE:  
WE GET TO SAY GOODBYE. AND HI / UP HIGH, LOVE...

MOTHER NATURE coughs and chokes.

BENZENE & VINYL (CONT'D)  
IT IS THE NEW... THE NEW NORMAL!  
THIS IS JUST FINE AND NORMAL.  
THE FIRE IS NORMAL.

The fire normalizes, swallowing up  
BENZENE and VINYL. OH burns down,  
emitting air that is so rainbowy.  
"Chemicals in the Water" echoes.

Blackout.

End of "AIRBORNE (THE FIRE IS NORMAL)"

**END OF OHIO**