

ELLIPSES

2022-2023 WTP ETHEL WOOLSON LAB STATEMENT

My intentions for the lab are its several rehearsals and a full reading of ELLIPSES to address two specific development goals:

1) Clarify JD's motivation. In the story, JD starts off longing for adventure, having outgrown the nest and feeling discontent with their parent Singularity. They then have a moment with their youngest sibling Milky Way, which may lead the audience to believe JD is loyal. But they kill their parent and run out on their siblings, so their motivation to be free seems stronger than their loyalty to their siblings. But once they reach the Edge of the Universe, they flip on a dime and rush back to their siblings, betraying Gravity. JD changes their mind almost every time we see them. Gravity is often the driving force for JD's action, but I can make these actions make sense internally. I am stuck on how to naturally plant the liminal context and reason for this teen's mind changes. I want the opportunity to convene with an Acting Ensemble artist who is going through a major transition in their life to uncover more of how internal liminality can flesh out JD's motivation and complexity.

2) Strengthen Singularity and JD's connection. "Ellipses" are three stages representing childhood, teenhood, and adulthood. The teenage-adult transitions occur in Singularity's backstory along with JD's return and realization that they were meant to swan off to a whole new dimension and raise Abell. Singularity's parents shift smoothly into accepting Singularity's newfound family. However, I am stuck on Singularity's development from being an overprotective parent to being accepting of JD's newfound family (another dime flip). I want to work with a well-rounded director and dramaturg who can reexamine Singularity's and JD's elliptical arc and help them come full circle.

In my time at a yearlong WTP program, ELLIPSES was the project. Four bimonthly Monday Night Development Workshops developed its excerpts, with the audience responses informing my revisions. WTP assembled an all-star cast and creative team (Stage Manager Lexi McKay, Dramaturg Jordan Ealey, Director Aliyah Curry). For the public reading, we prepared with two three-hour rehearsals, ending with feedback sessions. I uncovered Gravity's motivation and a cogent inciting incident, thanks to Aliyah's questioning and the thoughts of Gravity's performer Vallea E Woodbury.

I have distanced myself from full-time development of the book for a year and I apply anew. At this corresponding point in my process, the Ethel Woolson Lab would be useful to me in terms of post-rehearsal feedback and full reading audience feedback.