

Vermont Ave.

(Transcript)

[VIDEO GAME SOUNDS]

The sounds fade from the foreground and we're placed in a living room. Someone is playing video games as John grabs for some keys.

JOHN: *Hey, I'm, uh, I'm just going to go for a walk. Okay?*

John opens the door. He walks down the hallway, down the stairs, and out the front door. Someone is holding the door open. He says to the neighbor...

JOHN: *Thank you.*

He's outside and walks towards Vermont Ave. John lights a cigarette and puts in his headphones. The world sounds muted. And then, John pulls out his phone, opens up a music app, and presses play.

[SONG]

KORDELYA - s a l u d o s

It's a chill, laid back song about love with a beat that will want you to sway your body and put your mind in a trance.

[Verso 1]

*Dame tus pecados
Tu manera de ser
Y me los desayuno
Con algo de beber*

[Precoro]

*Que tu forma de mirar
Pertenece a alguien más
Y no puedo acercarme-*

He stops the song before it gets to the chorus. Something is on his mind. The street sounds are louder now that he's on Vermont Ave. He's typing something on his computer. And then again, he presses play.

[SELF HELP PODCAST]

PODCAST HOST: Today, we're going to talk about loneliness, which, if you're like me, might be a thing that you struggle with off and on as a regular part of life, but this year it might be something you're experiencing in an entirely new way. Just because you live with a partner or a roommate you adore doesn't mean you're immune to loneliness. But today, we're going to talk about a really specific kind of loneliness, the loneliness you feel after a breakup, when you have a big hole in your life and there's a person missing who you used to be able to tell everything-

John turns off the podcast mid-sentence. Clearly he's trying to push through some feeling and drowning out his thoughts isn't working. But he gives it another try.

[SONG]

Conner Youngblood - Lemonade

The song sounds like you've been holding your breath, and finally, you let out a deep exhale. The lyrics go:

Everybody wants to grow up
I just wanna be stable
Everybody wants to give up
Let me breathe

[Pre-Chorus]

I'm unstable as they come
I'm human francium
I feel inclined to run
So I feel like I should run

I'm unstable as they come

[Chorus]

You can break me down to the smallest
Start me over/rearrange
You can make sense of my madness
Let me be your lemonade
Lemonade

[Verse 2]

Everybody wants to blow up-

Suddenly, in the background..

PHOEBE: John?!

John takes out his headphones. The street noises rush in.

JOHN: Oh!

PHOEBE: Hi!

JOHN: Hey, what's up Phoebes!? How are you doing?

PHOEBE: Good. How are you?

JOHN: Good. Good. What are you doing here?

PHOEBE: Oh, I just left Skylight.

JOHN: Oh, nice. You get anything?

PHOEBE: No!

They both laugh.

JOHN: What did you do?

PHOEBE: I just looked around.

JOHN: Oh, you did?

PHOEBE: Yeah, I've been feeling kinda shitty.

JOHN: Oh, no. Is everything OK?

PHOEBE: I'm fine. I just- I just wanted to, like, get out for a little bit.

JOHN: Yeah.

PHOEBE: But yeah. I dunno. I like Skylight.

JOHN: Yeah.

PHOEBE: I always go here when I'm feeling...like I need inspiration.

JOHN: Yeah.

PHOEBE: You know what I mean?

JOHN: Yeah, yeah. That's nice. You here with anyone or did you come by yourself?

PHOEBE: No, I'm by myself. Yeah.

JOHN: Oh nice.

PHOEBE: Where's Gary?

JOHN: Oh uh...he's just at home.

PHOEBE: Okay!

JOHN: Yeah, yeah. He's uh...playing video games. So-

PHOEBE: Okay...

JOHN: So I just decided to...walk.

PHOEBE: Do you wanna walk me to my car?

JOHN: Yeah! Yeah.

PHOEBE: I'm like...not that far. I'm actually this way.

JOHN: This way?

PHOEBE: Yeah.

JOHN: Okay, let's do that.

They walk away from Vermont Ave. and away from the busy street.

PHOEBE: But yeah.

JOHN: What's new with you?

PHOEBE: Nothing really. Just trying to stay sane.

JOHN: Yeah, yeah. It's kind of a shitty time.

PHOEBE: I know. But yeah, I dunno. I was, like, catching up with Angie last night and..

JOHN: Oh nice.

PHOEBE: Yeah...I think they're gonna have like a...I dunno...a get together next week...

JOHN: Oh cool. Like a virtual thing or..

PHOEBE: Yeah, I'm sure you're gonna get an invite for it.

JOHN: Cool, cool.

PHOEBE: I feel bad, like I feel like lately I've been really flaky...

JOHN: Yeah...why do you say that?

The music coming from a taco shop is blaring. Phoebe waits to say the next thing after they pass the loud music.

PHOEBE: I dunno...like...just little things. Like, how we're on the group thread and, like, Angie will say something and then I'll try and respond, but like, usually...I dunno. I feel like I'm the first one to respond and recently I've been just very M.I.A.

JOHN: Yeah, yeah.

PHOEBE: Do you know what I mean?

JOHN: I feel you. Well, how is the whole um...what are you doing again? It's the, uh...I want to call it coding, but it's not coding.

They laugh.

PHOEBE: S-Fall?

JOHN: What is that again?

PHOEBE: It's like this CRM. I dunno. It's like a cloud based storage thing that you build out for your company that will, like, store all this information...

JOHN: Kay...

PHOEBE: ...And you can run your business on it basically.

JOHN: Oh, cool. Very responsible job. Yeah.

PHOEBE: Yeah.

JOHN: Well that's good.

PHOEBE: A pivot towards tech. I'm trying to get that tech money.

JOHN: As you should! You should.

PHOEBE: I know.

JOHN: Film was fucking stupid so, you know, and they didn't pay you shit. So it's nice that you're choosing something that, I don't know, will be...um...help you sustain a good life, you know what I mean?

PHOEBE: Yeah. You know, hot tech bros.

They laugh.

JOHN: Exactly. Exactly. Oh my God.

PHOEBE: Where are you going?

JOHN: Uh, well, I was just walking and just doing a loop. I just need to clear my head.

PHOEBE: Yeah...So are you and Gary still going to go to Chicago...?

JOHN: Oh, you mean for like the holidays?

PHOEBE: Yeah!

JOHN: Um...no, he's, uh, he's going by himself, and...I dunno. Especially with this whole situation, I think it's better if I stay and he goes and...and it's just safer that way, you know?

PHOEBE: Yeah.

JOHN: Yeah. But uh...everything's great, though! It's all good!
Yeah. Um...

PHOEBE: That sucks. I know you were, like, talking about it...

JOHN: No, no, I...I've been in Chicago so many times, I don't really...I am going to be very happy being at home alone. I get to clean, I get to watch what I want to watch. It's going to be fun. It's going to be good. Yeah. Um, yeah. Speaking of which, I have to cook some dinner, so um...Yeah, it was good seeing you!

PHOEBE: Well, I'm really glad that we ran into each other.

JOHN: Yeah, absolutely.

PHOEBE: Can we, like...hang out soon?

JOHN: Yeah! Of course! You know I love hanging out with you.

PHOEBE: OK!

JOHN: Yeah.

PHOEBE: Yeah. Let's go hiking.

JOHN: Yeah, let's go hiking! Well...he's going to be gone next week so we can hang out whenever, you know?

PHOEBE: Oh my god...I'm so lucky...

They awkwardly laugh.

PHOEBE: Fuck that guy! I'm just kidding! I'm just kidding. I'm just kidding.

JOHN: Oh yeah, yeah yeah yeah. He's a good guy. Um yeah. Uh...well I should get going.

PHOEBE: OK! I'll text you!

JOHN: All right. See yah!

PHOEBE: Bye!

Phoebe walks away. John is alone.

JOHN: *Fuck.*

He walks back home.

[MUSIC COMES IN]

The streets are busy. John gets back to his place. He opens the door, up the stairs, down the hallway, gets to his apartment door, puts in the keys, and stops. He takes in a deep breath, and then opens the door.

[VIDEO GAME SOUNDS IN THE BACKGROUND]

JOHN: *Hey. Uh, can we talk?*

CREDITS: Vermont Avenue was created and written by James Kim and Brooke Iskra. Elyssa Dudley played the podcaster. The track "s a l u d o s" by KORDELYA was provided by ML Artists. And the track "Lemonade" by Conner Youngblood was provided by Conner Youngblood.