Records Ruin the Landscape

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RECORDS RUIN THE LANDSCAPE

John Cage, the Sixties, and Sound Recording

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The rejected chapters have taken over. For a long time it was as though only the most patient scholar or the recording angel himself would ever interest himself in them. Now it seems as though that angel had begun to dominate the whole story: he who was supposed only to copy it all down has joined forces with the misshapen, misfit pieces that were never meant to go into it but at best to stay on the sidelines so as to point up how everything else belonged together, and the resulting mountain of data threatens us.

—JOHN ASHBERY, "The System" (1972)