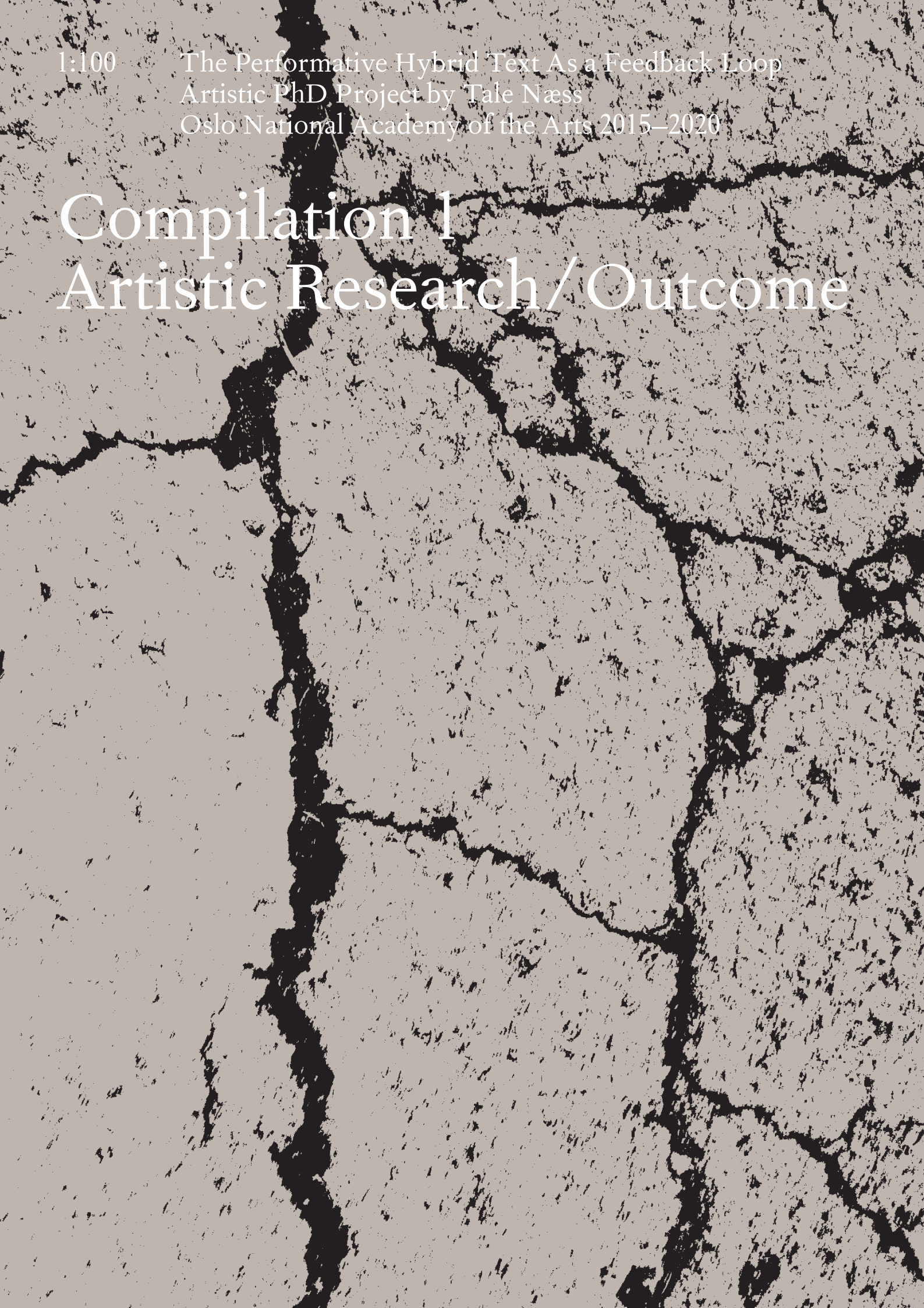


1:100

The Performative Hybrid Text As a Feedback Loop
Artistic PhD Project by Tale Næss
Oslo National Academy of the Arts 2015–2020

Compilation 1

Artistic Research/Outcome



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Compilation 1
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- 1 SOARE (Play)
- 2 SOARE (Radio)
- 3 Corridors and Rooms
- 4 Sweatshop–Aleppo
- 5 Darkness – The enemy inside
- 6 The Island
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S O A R E

Characters:

Samuel – an UAV pilot

One – the narrator

Anna – a domestic help

Rakel – a security guard at a Holiday Inn Hotel

Ewo – an unemployed immigrant

PROLOGUE

One:

This is my voice.

I'm the one talking.

In the evenings. When it's dark. When nobody else is listening.

I am talking to the walls, to whoever. I say –

It's the garbage –

The following lines can be distributed equally among the actors, or performed as suggested

Anna:

It's the waste. Somebody has to deal with the waste.

One:

All the leftovers.

Anna:

The way they pile up.

One:

And the kids –

Anna:

Somebody has to take care of the kids.

In their beds,

One:

– in their rooms. Switching the world on and off, switching themselves on and off –

A beat

One:

I am the one talking. They say I repeat myself. That I keep saying the same things over and over again, that I keep on returning to the same subjects. That what I say will happen is what is going to happen. That it will go on happening.

Samuel:

Yes –

Rakel:
I'm thinking about unspeakable things –

Anna:
Yes –

Samuel:
It's the echo in the hallways. The taste in my mouth.

One:
Yes –

Anna:
All the stuff piling up.

Pause

One:
I'm the one talking – Can you hear me?
As you walk down the hall. As you pass by the children. As they sleep in their beds – your wife's face then. As you pass by the reception, Rakel. The shopping malls. On the bus, on the way home – the churchyards, the roundabouts. Faster now. Faster.
When you go to work. When you walk down the stairs. Walk up the stairs. Prepare yourselves. As you wake up under a bridge –

Ewo:
God its hot.

One:
As you finish that, all that you think should be finished, all those necessary chores – In the kitchen, in the bunker, in the lobby.

Samuel:
Yes –

One:
And you take your turn. And the pilot on the previous shift signs out as you sign in, and you find your seat, and you try to focus. Try to get on with the job. Focus on the screen: The greyness of the landscape. The familiarity of the joystick.

Short pause

One:
– and you're the only one at the controls now.

Samuel:
–

One:
The flickering of the screen /

Samuel:
–

One:
– and the landscape you leave behind is a monotonous grey. And the landscape you are facing is a monotonous grey, and you are given the coordinates, and you check the communication satellites, and as you do all that – there is the constant sound from the fluorescent lights, a kind of hissing. The persistence of it sometimes overwhelming. The greyness of the landscape, the everydayness –

those first minutes of the dayshift. And you try to make yourself comfortable and you know what you have to do.

They look at each other.

Samuel:

–

Silence

1.

Rakel:

I arrive at work. The screens are on, and my team takes over. We clock the cameras; – the cameras in the west wing, the cameras in the east wing, the ones covering the reception area, the corridors, the underground parking lot.

We make sure that today's footage is safely stored on the hard disc, that all the cameras are operational.

Sometimes it's the dayshift that does your head in and sometimes it's the nightshift: The half-eaten burgers in the bin, doors opening and closing. An alarm going off somewhere, somebody lingering in the stairway for a little bit too long – but nothing really out of the ordinary – as you watch the cameras in the storage room, as you watch the cameras in the corridors on the third floor, as you watch row upon row of closed doors.

Closed doors and that which goes on behind them.

It's at nighttime. At four in the morning maybe, or five – as you sit there with your seventh cup of coffee – that's when your head starts playing games with you. Or you start playing games with your head – these not too healthy games. Just to keep yourself occupied. That's when your mind starts to wander – and you start guessing at things, you start guessing at what goes on inside the rooms, in the beds, in the showers. With the guests.

You see them there.

You imagine them there.

You transport yourself there – as if you through sheer willpower were able to place yourself there with them, in their rooms, in the privacy of their beds where the cameras cannot reach.

You are thinking of unspeakable things.

Short pause

You have observed something, by chance maybe. Earlier in the day: An old man entering the lobby. His tattered suit and shabby shoes. How he pays in cash, not once looking up during the transaction – And there is something about him. Something about the way he walks. Stooped. Something about his scrawny neck, and as the elevator door closes behind him, you imagine him there on his knees, with his belt around his neck, with a pistol in his mouth. Or by the bar: A young Asian girl. Dressed in tight jeans and a slinky white top. Barely seventeen. Or maybe just sixteen. Small-chested, her face like a child's – and the man beside her – heavy built. Older. Italian, or Russian maybe. The way he takes her by the hand, how he pushes her into the elevator, along the corridors – and as soon as the door closes behind them, there is this image in your head. This scene unfolding in your mind and you cannot shake it: The girl on the floor. Her trousers around her legs as an object is forced into her. And then the sound she is making. A whimper. Or less than a whimper – and the hotel has more than a hundred rooms and more than a hundred cameras distributed everywhere, on all sixteen floors, in the basement, in the kitchen, in the elevators – but none of them can take you there. Nothing can take you there – and her face is close to the floor now. She is barely moving, barely breathing – and you know that it isn't real, that it is just an idea in your head as you survey the parking-lot, the main entrance, the reception, the stairway leading down to the reception, the stairway leading down to the kitchen – and as you do all that you still can't help yourself. You still can't stop yourself from thinking about her. You can't help but think that this could be it. This could be

what's happening – This could be what goes on right now, on your watch, while you should be watching – And who could you call? Who should you call? Who could you call to stop it?

Silence

Rakel:
I'm thinking about unspeakable things –

One:
Yes.

Rakel:
About those who are asleep.
About those who cannot sleep.
Lights being turned off and lights being turned on.
The darkness.
A sudden sound.
A TV-set. A child crying. A woman crying.

One:
Yes.

Silence

2.

Anna:
I try not to bother myself with it. I try to take the day as it comes. To get my work done, get everything out of the way. To be there for the kids. Get some dinner organized. Get myself organized. Show up at the language course. Do my homework.
I try to practice.
The language.
I try to practice it as much as I can.
With the kids. With Jo sometimes, if she can be bothered. Whenever I get out of the house. When I take the dog for a walk, like. Or when I'm at the store buying groceries.

Samuel:
I mean –

Anna:
The same stuff, usually.

Samuel:
Why bother.

Anna:
– milk, tea, bread, juice. Some butter –

Samuel:
What's there to think about.

Anna:
– a lottery-ticket sometimes. Or a magazine.
I try to read, but most of the time I just look at the pictures –
Or when I pick up the mail in the morning. If I meet somebody. Or when I take the kids to school. I park the car and then I wait by the school gate and sometimes one of the parents stop for a chat.
I never smoke in the car.

Samuel:
I never smoke in the car.

Anna:
She can't stand the smell. His wife.

Samuel:
I smoke on the way home. Then I have a shower. We never talk about it.
My day.

Anna:
The parents. The people I work for. Samuel and Jo. They both hate the smell of cigarettes they say, so I might have a quick one by the school gate, or by the kiosk, or on the playground when I take the dog for a walk.

Samuel:
I mean – these things happen, she says –

Anna:
She says – these things happen, Samuel – Jo says. She can see it in his eyes and then they do not talk about it.

Samuel:
That's how it goes. I know that. It comes with the job.
It was my assignment. Mine.
Mitch started it, Smith took over but I ended it. It was my shift, my turn by the controls, my hand – so to say – on the trigger.
Having dinner. Knowing that.
Driving home. Stopping for a fag. Taking a shower not to smell – Knowing that. That it was me. Thinking that she should know that too, Jo. That it was me. That I've done that.
No feeling of victory. No feeling of hate.

A beat

Anna:
I've been pondering over some words lately. Wanting to understand them better maybe. To get to know them better.

Samuel:
No feeling of hate.
No feeling of victory.

Anna:
Words like "mine". Words like "me". The m and the e. The sound of them –

Samuel:
–

Anna:
My duty.

Samuel:
No feeling of hate. And I let the dog out.

Short pause

Anna:
I can see them.
I can hear them talk.
I can hear Jo standing in the livingroom.
I can see Samuel opening the door to the garden, letting the dog out.
I can see her standing in the kitchen, counting the silverware. The cutlery. The forks and those big silver spoons. Making sure that it is all there. That nothing

is missing.

Silence

Anna: (despairingly to one of the other actors, to the audience, as if she has a need to defend herself)

No!

It was not me!

I did not do it!

I haven't done anything!

It was all there when I left!

I was out walking the dog!

Why do you keep on asking me all those questions? When I was not there?

When I was out? When I did not take it? When I could not have taken it! I haven't stolen anything!

Silence

3.

Rakel:

It was early spring.

April maybe. Just after Pesach – It was the nightshift. I was doing my round:

First the sauna, then the spa, then the swimmingpool.

Such a hot night.

I was back by the screens. The sound of the air-conditioning, faint steps in the hallway –

One:

Did you see him?

Rakel:

No.

Or, I had a glimpse of him earlier on. Down by the reception.

One:

So he's back.

Rakel:

–

One:

Have you noticed? The way he takes off his gloves?

Rakel:

–

One:

The way he holds them.

Rakel:

–

He came at six. He always comes at six.

One:

So you waited for him?

Rakel:

–

One:

You saw him.

Rakel:
The dark coat across his arm.

One:
And then?

Rakel:
Nothing.

A beat

One:
He's here.
She saw him. She has started to notice things. Like when he arrives and at what time he leaves. What car he drives. A four-wheel drive. Dark blue. How he always parks in the same spot.
It's not the things he do, is it? It's how he does it. Considered. Precise. As if all every deed carries the same weight, is of the same vital importance. As if it is the last thing he is going to do: His hand on the doorknob. The tenseness of his shoulders.

Rakel:
—

One:
—
And then; a moment of hesitation, there, before he enters the room. Always the same room. Always the same floor. Everything with such certainty, and then — hesitation. As if he for a second, just for a brief moment, is about to give it up — all of it. The room, the night, what he came for. And you want him to turn around.

Rakel:
I want him to turn around.

One:
You want him to turn around so you can see his face, — But he never does. And then the moment is over. He enters. He closes the door and he's gone.

Short pause

Ewo:
Anna.
Look at me.
Anna — Turn around and look at me. Turn around so I can see you.

Silence

Rakel (to herself):
Turn around.
Turn around so I can see you.

Ewo:
Anna, turn around and look at me.

That's my girl.

Pause

One:
And you know that he will keep the lights on all through the night.

Samuel:
Yes.

Short pause

Samuel:

– and the next morning, when I'm ready to go home again –

Rakel:

– and the next morning when I pass by his room, he's already gone. And the girls are doing up his bed as I enter. Just to take a peek. Just a quick peek – and I notice that it hasn't been slept in.

The bed.

It's untouched.

Samuel:

–

Rakel:

The sheets snowy white and tightly stretched across the mattress.

And later I find out: No telephones. No pay-TV. No towels on the floor, no water in the shower.

One:

No sleep. No hunger –

Samuel:

– no hate. No victory.

One:

–

Rakel:

What does he do?

What does he do in there?

What does he do with himself all night?

Does he just sit there?

It's these thoughts, these ideas you keep getting – these not so healthy ideas about what goes on behind closed doors, with the guests. Where the cameras do not reach.

I see him there. At the edge of the bed. He's not moving. He has not moved for hours. He just sits there. As if he is afraid, afraid of touching anything, afraid of moving. To taint – to bruise – to leave a mark –

Short pause

Rakel:

That's how it started.

I saw him. And then I saw him again. One day I went to his room. I saw the bed all made up – and the sheets – And then I started expecting him. Looking for him. And as he came – always the same day of the month, always at the same time, in the same car, the same coat, asking for the same room.

And I began tracking through old recordings to see when all this started. How long he'd been coming here. I was looking for his car, his back, his face. And when I found it, I kept on playing it. Kept on playing it over and over again.

Pause

One:

I'm the one talking.

When I stop, you listen.

I say:

Anna:

It's the dog.

One:

—

Anna:

Somebody has to take care of the dog.

Rakel:

It's his neck.

Anna:

It's the kids.

Rakel:

All those closed doors —

Ewo:

It's this restlessness.

Rakel:

— and that which goes on behind them.

Samuel:

It's that which can't be undone.

Anna:

I am thinking about words like "mine".

Rakel:

I'm thinking about my hands, my thighs, the words I speak. The things I do.

Pause

Anna:

All that garbage that keeps piling up.

Pause

One:

I'm the one talking.

Ewo:

They say I keep repeating myself. That I'm going around in circles. That I
am h o p e l e s s.

Am I hopeless, Anna?

Anna:

Yes.

Ewo:

In what way am I hopeless?

Anna:

Just the way you are.

Ewo:

And how am I?

Anna:

You. You are mine.

My Ewo.

You are my Ewo and nobody can change that.

Silence

Anna:
What are you doing in the kitchen?
Ewo!

Ewo:
—

Anna:
I told you not to go there. I told you not to come!

Ewo:
—

Anna:
How did you get in anyway?
Did anybody see you?

Short beat

Ewo:
I was just getting something to eat. I —

Anna:
Who gave you the key?

Ewo:
I was hungry.

Anna:
I never gave you a key.

Ewo:
I was just getting something to eat —

Anna:
Close that!
Close that drawer, Ewo —

A beat

Ewo:
Hey —

Anna:
I'm counting.

Ewo:
What are you doing?

Anna:
I'm counting the silverware.

Ewo:
Christ!

Anna:
I won't have you letting yourself in here. I want you to give me the key. I said Tuesday. I said that you could come on Tuesday — when they are out —

Ewo:
But they are out —

Anna:
I told you to call in advance –

Ewo:
I missed you.

Anna:
–
Let me see your pockets.

Ewo:
It's the truth. I missed you. I couldn't wait.
It's true, Anna – I wouldn't – I would never. You are the only friend I've got.

Anna:
Friend?
Friend?
You call yourself a friend? Do you know what they would do if they found you here?

Short pause

Anna:
Have you been talking to the kids?
Have you?

Ewo:
–

Short pause

Anna:
I am here at their mercy.
Do you know what that means?
Mercy, Ewo?
Do you know what kind of life this is?

Short pause

Anna:
You're laughing?

Ewo:
But Christ – What can they do?

Anna:
–

Ewo:
Ok – they throw you out.
They send you out of the country – Is that the worst thing that could happen?
Is it?
Or –
Standing here – counting the cutlery?
Anna!

Anna:
–

Ewo:
You would just have to go back – just go back for a few months – then we would come up with something new.
I'm here for you.

Anna:
Not this time.
Just close that drawer!

Pause

Ewo:
Anna.
You are my Anna.

Pause

Anna:
No.
Not now.
Not here.
Not like that – Ewo.
Not this way.
They can hear us.
See us.
If they come down and see us.
The children –
They're coming –
I think they're here –

Silence

5.

One:
–

Anna:
I'm thinking about my father –

Ewo (as from another room or another place):
Anna, what are you thinking about?

Anna:
He's at the top of the stairs. I'm hiding in the basement. Behind an old oil barrel, in a parking lot. I'm hiding in the bushes and he cannot find me.

A beat

Anna:
His face. Bottles of booze. A heap of cardboardboxes. Toxins spilling over on the pavement, the endless rows of trailers by the border crossings. Girls waiting for what? The smell of gasoline and vomit. My face pushed deep into a mattress. His sleep. His toxic intoxicated sleep all boozed up.
Pigs' blood thick and sticky on the frozen concrete. The slaughter. The slaughterhouse. Frozen berries hard as glass. My hands beating, digging, scraping at the mud. The language in me still and thick and dark like ink.

One:
What more?

Anna:
Neon maybe –

One:
And?

Anna:
Neon and fog. Drizzle. Drizzle resembling gas. Gas all lit up. The world lit up.
Everything lit up and Ewo and I in the middle of it. Me and him in the middle
of it. Alight. The streets, my teeth, my flesh, the bones inside my flesh, the
softness under my fingernails, –

One:
–

Anna:
– me and Ewo. Fleeing. Maybe running, splattering alight. Inside the city.
Inside the belly of a big city. Inside the belly of another big city. The rattling of
our bones, of our fluorescent skeletons dancing into the dark, hiding under the
soiled underbelly of a freight train, crossing another border, then another
border and then –

One:
– somewhere

Ewo (as from another room or space):
You can rest now Anna.

Anna:
– somewhere on the outskirts of northern Europe –

Ewo:
You are safe with me.
Look at her little face.
Look at it! Nothing like it in the world – but my Anna. My Anna all lit up –

Anna:
– by the lanterns of the factory, by the firecrackers, by a New Year's Eve I've
almost forgot about.

One:
Just like that.

Anna:
Yes – until the light itself dances and dances and dances – like a dead man in the
dark.

Short pause
Silence

6.

Samuel:
I mean – what's there to think about?
These things happen. This is what we have been trained for.
It could have happened to anybody – Simon or Smith or – any of the guys –
But it was me. I was the one sitting there.

Short pause

Samuel:
I was the one out there.
In my seat.
Watching: Cars on the roads, children on their way to school, the mountains,
the mountain-ranges, some barren trees, stretches of sand, a village – Just me
maneuvering it as it moves, glides forward, eating miles. Wings twice as wide
as a bomber –

One:
And you know where you are headed?

Samuel:
Yes.

One:
There is no need to check your orders.

Samuel:
No.

One:
You have been given the coordinates.

Samuel:
Yes.

One:
You've updated the log –

Samuel:
–

One:
And you merge with the screen, and the sound of the instruments are barely noticeable now, and your vision narrows as the room disappears, as the sound of the instruments tune out, and you just keep on going, almost becoming one with the thing out there. The Reaper. Eleven million dollars worth of it.

Short pause

Samuel:
I am the pilot.

One:
It has no pilot.

Samuel:
I'm the one flying it.

One:
You're not flying anything. You're in your seat. You're in the bunker.
Samuel –

Samuel:
Hssssh.
I am the one flying the damned thing –

One:
–

Short pause

One:
– and your hand is on the joystick and your mind is out there now, under that merciless sky. That's where your mind is. Your body is in the bunker. It's your mind that ties it all together: You, the mission, the thing out there. All fully armed. All fully loaded. All loaded up and ready to go.

Samuel:
Yes –

Anna:
I'm thinking about unspeakable things –

Silence
A beat

Samuel:
Nothing happens by accident.
The target is given. I know that. You're locked on it. It is all under control, I had it under control. The Sidewinders ready, the Hellfires –

One:
You check the timer: /

Samuel:
04:26.

One:
– You know the procedure. /

Samuel:
04:28.

One:
– prepare for the attack: /

Samuel:
04:32.

Short pause

One:
– and then: It all happens at once – the plume of dust. The house it hides, the roof collapsing. A rain of stones, the stones raining, the dust settling. You are looking straight down at it. From the belly of the drone – this gigantic drone – straight down, as if from a cloud – and you see a herd of goats skipping, skirting down the hill and you had no idea that there were so many people in there –

A beat

Samuel:
I had no idea they were so many –

One:
A whole family. Seven children.

Samuel:
–
And there is no sound –

One:
– and once more it strikes you – that lack of sound. You see it as it happens: the plume of smoke, the rain of rocks, the goats running, skidding, skirting down the slope, down into the valley and across the fields before they are settling hesitantly – but no sound. Then the smoke lifts, the mission is over, the scene is calm again.
That's it: The goats grazing. The roof collapsing – or in the opposite order as you record it, store it on the hard-disc. Document it. It's documentation. Playback-time. Samuel. Playback-time ...

Silence

Samuel:

–

One:

–

They look at each other.

Samuel:

Say it.

Say it!

Tell it to me!

Tell it to me like it is. Tell me what really happened!

Tell me what's happening out there!

Silence

Rakel:

Playback-time.

I go through the database. I run through the recordings – just one more time, I say to myself. Just one more time. I am looking for his face – and they ask me – what do you want them for? Those old recordings.

Do you keep them?

The tapes?

Why?

You know that you're not allowed to keep them?

You know that you are not allowed to take them outside the building?

And I say – I'm not taking them anywhere.

And they say – So what is it – that you keep looking at?

Is that somebody you know?

(Rakel, as if talking to herself) So what is it – you keep looking at?

Is that somebody you know?

Pause

Samuel:

And I leave the bunker. And I pick up the car and drive home. And they cover the bodies. The children, seven of them. Small bodies under the sheets – Jo's still at work. I have a smoke in the garden. Anna has left some cold meat on the stove and a jar of gherkins. She pickles them herself.

There is a note under my plate. It's from Jo. It's Tuesday. She always works late on Tuesdays.

There is mustard there too, and some dark rye bread.

I settle by the window. I'm starving. All of a sudden I'm just extremely hungry.

And I walk over to the stove and I help myself to some meat and then I help myself to some more.

I bring the jar of gherkins with me and I help myself to one gherkin. And then another.

I'm thirsty. I need a beer. I suck the salty juices off my fingers. Sling a beer down. I keep on eating. Keep on drinking. Straight from the bottle and it has no weight. I watch how the bubbles shoot, shoot through the brown beer from the bottom of the bottle. Shooting their way through the dark malty liquid like tiny, sparkling planets – and as I drink, as I eat, as I sit there by the kitchen window, in my house, looking at my garden, my car, my gate with its high-tech alarm-system, – I'm still out there. I'm not here, not really. I am out there – doing it – It's happening – and it continues to happen. It keeps on happening –

7.

Anna: (walking down the stairs, tying the the belt on her morning gown)

You're home?

Samuel:

—

Anna:

You're up?

You found the meat?

I just came to check the door. I thought I heard something. The alarm isn't on

—

Samuel sits. He is holding on to the glass of gherkins. He looks at it. It's almost empty.

Samuel:

I seem to have eaten all of them.

Anna:

Please/help yourself/velbekomme – (or some phrase in her own language)

He hands her the glass and she puts the lid back on.

Samuel:

That robe —

Anna:

—

It's Jo's. It's Johanna's.

Samuel:

And the slippers —

Anna:

She gave them to me.

Samuel:

—

She opens the lid. Takes a gherkin.

Anna:

Jo said —

Samuel:

They're really tasty — those gherkins —

Anna:

A bit too sweet —

Samuel:

No — they are really nice.

Anna:

Too salty.

Samuel:

Perfect.

Anna:

She's working late.

Samuel:

Yes — she left a note under my plate.

Really tasty.

Anna: (in a low voice)

Thanks.

Short pause

One:

And you do not want to have sex with her.

Anna:

You mustn't think that I –

Samuel:

I don't think anything.

What do you think?

What do you think – Anna?

Silence

8.

Rakel:

The back of his head. His neck. His shirt, his hair.

In the reception, by the entrance, at the bar.

It's not that I am stalking him. I'm just keeping an eye out. Am I not?

One:

–

Short pause

Samuel:

Everything happens by accident.

Rakel:

It's that noise in my head. A kind of white noise. Filling it.

Samuel:

I'm here and at the same time I'm out there. Hovering over another continent.

It would take me days to get there, still that's where I am. Still that's what I'm

doing. I'm left at the scene, I'm circling the grey landscape, I'm counting the

bodies. You never see the faces you know. They have no faces. They are just

silhouettes – The plume of smoke, the roof collapsing, the goats hurdling down
the slope –

One:

There he is.

On the 7th floor. In his room.

It's Samuel.

Sitting there on the bed. Unable to move.

Rakel:

And it's late at night and your mind starts to wander and you see him there, in
the room he has rented for the night. Always just for one night.

He sits on the edge of the bed as if waiting for something, waiting for
something to happen. Waiting for someone to come.

Samuel starts to shout. He can say this, or he can say something else:

Samuel:

But I wasn't there!

I wasn't there!

I was here!

I never left. I did not mean to! I didn't –

God! Christ! Fuck! I see them! I see them all the time. I can't see their faces. I
want to see their faces! Why can't I see their faces! Turn around! For fuck's

sake turn around! Turn around so I can see you!

Silence

9.

Quiet

Anna:
I don't know –
Sometimes it feels as if I might grow old in this place.
Like really, really old –
Ewo –

Ewo:
Mhm?

Anna:
Like really, really old. Do you want that? To become like really, really old?

Beat

Anna:
It's lovely up here.
Isn't it lovely?
Lovely to get out of that house.
Don't you think?
Where did you get that car?

Ewo:
It's a friend of mine's.

Short pause

Anna:
Do you remember when we were kids?
Sitting in Jano's basement while the others were up to no good?
His parents were always away.
He had that stick, remember?
We used to just hang out. Watching TV, chucking ice cubes at each other.
We weren't ganging up on them or anything but you wanted that stick,
remember? Jano's stick.
What did you want that stick for?

A beat

Ewo:
Take off your blouse.

Anna:
What?

Ewo:
Take it off.

A beat

Anna:
You had this torch.

Ewo:
Nobody can see us.

Anna:
It was always dark down there.

Ewo:
Do it Anna.
Remember?

Anna:
And you refused to use it. The torch.

Ewo:
Take it off.

Short pause

Ewo:
Take it off.

Anna:
Now?

The following lines can be shared between Ewo and Anna, or distributed among all the actors, repeated and swapped

- Nobody can see us.
- It was so dark down there.
- You had this torch.
- Take it off, Anna.
- Remember?
- You refused to light it?
- Just do it. Do it for me Anna.
- Take it off.

A beat

Anna:
Everything has a beginning.

Samuel:
Nothing happens by accident.

Rakel:
I'm thinking about unspeakable things.

Ewo:
There is no way –

Anna:
There is no way –

Samuel:
There is no way I can go back there.

The following lines are to be distributed between all the actors, repeated and swapped

- Remember?
- That –
- you wanted it.
- You took it from him.
- Just pitch dark.
- Take it off, Anna.
- Do it.
- Do it now.
- Do it because I tell you to.

Rakel:

There are sixteen floors in this hotel. Fourteen above ground and two underground.

Here, where I am sitting – Here in this control room, I have eleven floors above me.

If this place should tumble. If this place should topple and fall, all eleven floors would land on top of me. Eleven floors, fifty-five rooms in each, the rooftop bar, the outdoor swimming-pool, the gym, the sauna, the sushi restaurant on the 5th floor, the staff, the hired staff, and the guests. Hundreds of them. Maybe a thousand, late at night or on a good weekend.

Pause

Samuel:

Everything happens for a reason.

Anna:

I salted the gherkins. I pickled them in a jar like my mother used to do. He had been working late.

I'd gotten some cold meat out of the fridge for him.

I often did that. When he was working late. Or came home late. Some Tuesdays he didn't come home at all.

I didn't wait up for him. The kids were fast asleep when I heard a noise. I found him by the kitchen window. He was about to finish them off. The gherkins. The whole jar. He had that look on his face. I've seen that look before.

Famished -

Anna comes down the stairs while tying the belt on an old dressing-gown.

Anna:

You're home?

I thought I heard something?

So this is where you are?

Samuel:

—

Anna:

Did you turn on the alarm?

He stops eating

Samuel:

I seem to be eating all of them. So sorry – I think I was about to finish them off.

She turns away from him, putting the lid back on the jar

Anna:

He asks me about the robe –
(to Samuel) It's Jo's.

Samuel:

And the slippers?

Anna:

She gave them to me.

She unscrews the lid and starts chewing at a gurkin

Anna:
She said –
She's working late.
She's –

Short pause

Anna:
I'll get the alarm going.

Samuel:
There is no need.
If anybody tries to get in – We'll just put the dogs on them.

Anna:
I think we should –

Samuel:
Wait.
Wait. Stay.

Anna:
–

Samuel:
–
Let's just talk.
Stay – Let's just talk – just talk for a moment.

How long have you been with us?

Anna:
–

Samuel:
Here.

Anna:
One and a half year.

Samuel:
That's nice.
That's really great.
And before – what did you do before?

Anna:
–

Samuel:
That's not a complicated question is it?
What's the problem? I just asked you the simplest of questions –
What did you do before you came to us? Did you have a good time –
Christ! I'm just trying to make conversation here –
Can't you just tell me what you did before?

Anna:
–

Samuel:
But for fuck's sake? What's wrong with you? Talk to me!
Are you just going to stand there?

Anna:
I just think we should –

Samuel:
What!
What is it that we should?
What is it that – Don't just stand there!

Anna (in a low voice):
I should really get that alarm going.

Pause

One:
And he stops her.
And she stands there.
And he walks over to the refrigerator. And he takes out another bottle of beer.
And he drinks it.
Or he does not drink it.
And he just stands there.
And she just stands there.
And he lifts the bottle and then he throws it, and the bottle hits the wall.
And he grabs another bottle. And he smashes it against the wall.
And he grabs another.
And it smashes against the wall like the last one.
And then another.

Anna starts picking up the broken glass.

Samuel:
Anna.

Anna:
–

Samuel:
I'm sorry.

Anna:
–

Samuel:
Stop that.
Get up.
Get up!

She gets up

Samuel:
Come here.
Sit down.
Just sit down. Let's talk.
Let's just talk for a little.
It's none of my business. I know. What you did before. It's none of my business
–

Anna:
–

Samuel:
And your parents?
What did they do for a living?

Anna:
They had pigs.

Short pause
And another

One:
And Jo comes home.
And you feel like making love to her.
And you try to make love to her, but you are not able to. And she says:

Samuel:
I know where you've been.
I know what you're up to. Why you keep on disappearing like that. You must
be aware of the fact that I –

One
And you say:

Samuel:
You mustn't believe that – I haven't –

One
And –

Samuel:
You must know that I never would –

One
And she says:

Samuel:
I don't believe anything.

One
And she says:

Samuel:
What do you believe in?
What do you believe in Samuel?
She says – Samuel.
She says – Samuel
– Samuel.

Samuel
Samuel
Samuel
Samuel

Silence

11.

Rakel:
It's nighttime. I'm just sitting here. Waiting. That's when your mind starts to
wander – That's when you start playing this game, this not too healthy game –
to pass the time mostly – trying to guess what goes on, try to imagine what
could be going on behind those closed doors, inside the rooms where the
cameras cannot reach.
I imagine him there.
On the bed.
By the window. On the floor. Straight out like a corpse. Still wearing his suit,
his gloves, his shoes. Still breathing. Just lying there. Staring at the ceiling.

He has a ring in his pocket. It's a wedding ring. He picks it up, puts it in his mouth. Puts it on his finger. Looks at it. Hides it in his fist.

Clenches it. And afterwards. An hour later maybe – In the bathroom – The water filling the sink, filling it to the brim, pouring over the edges, onto the floor, onto his feet, into the room, soaking the carpets, wetting the skirting-boards, the wallpaper, and it continues to flow –

One:

Yes.

Rakel:

– and there is nobody there to see it.

And there is nobody there to stop it.

And there is nobody there to talk to, there is nothing I can do about it.

One

No.

They look at each other

Rakel:

It's just a thought but it's there and I can't stop thinking about it.

I want to be there with him.

I want to go up to his room and be there.

To stand with him in the wall of water.

In my mind it's there. Do you get it. It's as real as anything –

You're being silly, I say to myself. This is silly. This indecisiveness – and then he leaves, he's gone. And I go up to his room again. I talk to the maids again and they let me in. And the room is dry. Everything's in place. Untouched. The sheets tightly stretched across the mattress, and I put my hand on it. On the coolness of the sheets. And I place myself in the chair where he might have been sitting. And I lie on the floor where he may have been lying. And I search for his warmth there, but I cannot find it.

No waste in the bin.

The room's empty in a lurid way, as if nobody had ever been there: The bed, the nightstand, the navy-blue wall-to-wall carpet woolly and dry against my hand.

Pause

A beat

Anna:

It's the dirt.

It's the filth.

It's the filth, or it was the filth –

Somebody has to get rid of it.

The way it mounts up.

Short pause

Anna:

It's the living room.

The furniture.

Broken glass all over the kitchen floor.

Splatters of beer running down the kitchen walls – and I fill the bucket with hot water, and I open the cupboards and I look at all the different types of detergents. Bottles of polish, bottles of soap and bleach. Not very different from those we had at home. They are even in the same place. There. Under the sink. All filling the same purpose, the same smell, just different labels: one for the sink, one for the stove, one for the tiles in the bathroom.

Pause

One:

I am the one talking.

Can you hear me?

Can you hear me talking to you? At nighttime. When it's quiet. When it's dark.

I talk to the will in you – Samuel – standing there, watching the beer as it trickles down the walls. Watching Anna as she bends down, as she cleans up after you.

Watching Jo beside you in your big bed as you push your hand between her thighs, as you kiss the kids before they go to school, as you drive to work. As you stop. As you stand there with the engine running. As you leave it. The car. As you walk into a field purposelessly. As you take a cigarette. As you forget to come home, to shower. As you forget to get up. What's there to get up for? As you check in at a big hotel downtown, and it's so hot and it's not the first time you are there. It's not the first time you check yourself in. And you lose yourself in the corridors, in the sheer space of the place.

Always the same hotel.

Always the same room, the same insomnia. The night guard passing by your door. His or her steps as he or she stops, stands there. Listening maybe. Stands there outside your door –

Short pause

One:

You wait.

You check your watch –

Samuel:

It is –

One

04:26.

Samuel:

04:28.

One

04:32.

Continued by One or this part could be distributed among One, Anna, Samuel and/or Rakel

The roof collapsing, the stones cascading, the dust settling, a herd of goats skidding, leaping, hurdling down the hill –

It never ends.

This is how it's going to be.

This is how it is.

Short pause

One:

Samuel –

Turn around. Turn around and look at me.

A beat

In the kitchen with Anna

Samuel:

Stand up, Anna!

Long pause

One:

But she does not listen and she does not answer and that's when the children

open the kitchen door and you realize that you have been shouting. That you have been shouting out her name. That you have been shouting for a while – because the eldest, your four year-old daughter keeps covering her ears with her hands and you realize that you are shaking, that you are shaking her – and you let go of her, you let go of Anna and you look at your daughter and you look at her and you can see a streak of blood under her nose and a spike of bottle-coloured glass stuck in her cheek –

A beat

Ewo:
What is it?
What's on your mind, Anna?

Anna:
I slept with the goats you know. Sometimes. I slept there. With the animals.

One
What's on your mind Anna?

Ewo:
That's what's on her mind as he takes the children out of the room, as she wipes the beer off the walls, as she wipes the blood off her cheek. She is thinking about the goats. The smell of them. The warmth of their bodies. The yellow gleam of their eyes. The warmth of the goats milk fresh in her mouth on grey, icy, Ukrainian mornings.

Short silence

Samuel:
I'm crossing the lawn.
I can't find my shoes?
My wife is watching from the bedroom window.
She's there. Watching me.
I've taken off our wedding ring. It's in my mouth.
I'm light as a feather.

Ewo:
It's Tuesday.
It's our day.
They shouldn't be home.
The cars in the drive. The alarm's off.
I can see her through the kitchen window. Crouching down. Rubbing the walls, wiping them down, and there is a hatred in me. Or anger. I do not know which
–
Turn around, Anna.
Turn around and look at me!

A beat

One:
And Ewo pushes his face against the window as Anna keeps wiping the the wall. Sitting on the floor all covered in broken glass.

A beat

One:
He is leaning his forehead against the window.
Samuel is barefoot in the grass.

A short beat

Samuel:
What are you doing here?

Ewo:
What I'm doing here?

Samuel:
Sit.
Don't move.

Ewo:
Hey!
Wait!
Wait.
I can explain.
I'm a friend of Anna's.
She knows me.
She asked me to come. You can just talk to her.
Why are you looking at me?
Why are you looking at me like that?
Stop looking at me like that!

Samuel:
—

Ewo:
I had no idea you were at home —
I — Ok — just do it.
Go ahead.
Just turn the dogs on me.
—

Silence

Rakel:
It's at night. That's when you get these ideas. These silly ideas in your head —
and you turn yourself into an eye. You become this eye. You move about, up
and down the corridors, you hover over the bar — enter the rooms, sit by the
beds and nobody can see you.
It's Tuesday.
Past midnight.
Room 703 is dark.
I'm waiting.
He should have been here by now.
Where is he? Why isn't he here?

Samuel is watching Anna. Ewo is watching Anna

Samuel:
Look at her.
Look at her.
How long do you think she'll go on doing that?

Ewo:
—

Samuel:
She'll just keep on doing it, won't she? She'll just keep on wiping those walls
for as long as it takes. She'll keep on going at it until everything is back in its
place. Until there isn't a trace, until it's all cleaned up.

Pause

One:
Ewo gets up. Anna's hair keeps falling into her eyes, hair dark at the roots.
Samuel has no shoes on.

He's just out there walking. The wedding ring is in his mouth, at the tip of his tongue. He is about to swallow it. He stops. He is talking to Ewo. This is his garden. His house. He is considering letting the dogs loose on him. He stands there. All sober now. Smelling of gherkins and beer.

12.

One:

Samuel crosses the lawn.

Jo closes the curtains.

Anna wraps the broken glass in an old newspaper.

Ewo gets up.

The car is in the drive. The engine is on. The key is in the ignition.

Ewo is by the veranda door. He opens it.

Anna:

What are you doing here?

One:

He does not answer. He says:

Ewo:

You are my Anna. You're my girl and nothing is going to change that.

Short pause

One:

Samuel crosses the lawn. He gets into the car. Sits there. He's not wearing any shoes. He steps out of the car. Leaving the keys in the ignition. He walks, just walks out the garden gate as Anna turns off the lights in the kitchen and Ewo is left in the dark.

Rakel pours herself another cup of coffee.

She starts talking to herself, – and the hotel is a huge body harboring a thousand mouths and a thousand eyes. Harboring sinks and doors and locks – And Samuel walks through the suburbs, stops a taxi as it passes. Does not think. He is out outside the hotel now. He enters the lobby. Still barefoot, his shirt all wet from beer and sweat.

He does not have his wallet.

He passes the camera to the left, he enters the camera to the right, and Rakel is looking at her hand. At the cup. At her coffee. She does not see him. His face grimy.

Ewo:

They say that I repeat myself. That I am moving in circles. That I am

hopeless?

Am I?

Am I Anna?

Anna:

Yes.

Ewo:

In what way am I hopeless?

Anna:

The way you are.

What you are like.

Ewo:

And what am I like?

Anna:

You're Ewo.

You're my Ewo and nothing's going to change that.

Silence

One:

He's in the elevator. He's in the stairway.

He takes the fire exit. He's crouching down in an ironing cupboard.

It's too hot in there, isn't it?

It's only you there, isn't it Samuel?

Beat

One:

And Rakel finishes her coffee. She reaches for her bag. It's time to go home.

He's not coming. It's time to take the subway. It's raining. She takes the stairs.

She enters her flat without turning on the lights. Gets undressed in the dark.

Among her belongings, among all that which belongs to her.

She keeps her socks on. That's all. Stands there in the light from the aquarium.

She does not turn the radio on. She does not turn on the TV. She stands in the

light from the refrigerator. She is eating a hot dog straight from the can. She

does not bother to heat it. She is leaning her forehead against the icebox. Her

eye is translucent. It's a gateway and the gateway needs no crossing. It's as

wide open as Rakel herself.

Silence

Rakel:

I'm in my room. I'm in the living room. Surrounded by my belongings, my

stuff. I'm there in the dark. I'm standing in the dark flipping through a

magazine and I can feel it – He's –

One:

I'm so close now.

I'm right behind you.

Rakel:

And I am trying not to notice. It's nothing. I'm just being silly.

One:

And she is trying not to notice. Not to be silly.

Rakel:

I'm in the kitchen. I open the refrigerator.

One:

A half-empty cup of yoghurt on the top shelf. A can of coffee beans, a piece of
cheese, old and yellow and stale.

Rakel:

I can feel him – there. It –

One:

I'm closing in on her and she knows it. She awaits it. I'm here. I'm in her room.

Right now I'm nowhere else. I touch her. I reach out and I touch her back and

it is hard as glass.

It's silent.

All is silent for a little longer.

Pause

One:

I'm the one talking. Listen -

Not a sound, – and Anna looks at Ewo, and Ewo says:

Ewo:
I promise you, Anna.
I promise you.
I'll take you away from this place. I'll take you somewhere great.

Short pause

One:
It's dawn.
This night will soon be over.
The live screens lights up as Raket is back behind the screens.

Raket:
I can't sleep. I'm facing the screens. I can envision it all. Every room. Everyone asleep in their rooms – but he isn't there. He must be somewhere. In the elevator, by the stairs, he is hiding in the ironing cupboard. He's on his back now – His hands stretched out. He resembles a beggar, a crucified, himself. There is blood on his shirt – he is not wearing any. He makes me think of a big dog. A big bleeding dog. A horse left out in the rain. That's what I see. That's what I make myself imagine. I can see him there. I see –

One:
But the room is still empty.
Room 703. Locked. She's –

Raket:
– looking –

One:
She –

Raket:
– says

One:
I.

Short pause

Raket:
He's pacing the room –
He's wearing a suit –
He's undressed –
He's waiting for somebody. The suitcase on his bed is full off stuff, it's empty. By the door a shotgun. On the nightstand a bible.

One:
She glances from one camera to the other. His room is still empty.

Raket:
He's nowhere –
He's not to be seen –
He should have been there.

One:
A chill runs down her spine. A nibbling little flame – and she starts turning off the cameras. Camera one, camera six, camera hundred and eighteen. And Anna says:

Anna:
Never mind.

Never mind, Ewo.

One:

And the traffic keeps building up in the roundabout, bumper to bumper down the high street as Rakel turns off camera two hundred and twelve and two hundred and fourteen.

Rakel:

Yes.

Ewo:

Did you see his face?

Did you get to see his face?

Anna:

Who's face?

Ewo:

That guy you are working for? As he left?

Why was he talking about goats?

One:

While Rakel turns off camera three hundred and twenty one and three hundred and twenty-four.

Anna:

Yes.

Ewo:

He must have been drunk.

Anna:

I don't think so.

Ewo:

He had no shoes on –

One:

Rakel waits.

She watches the darkened screens.

It is soon dawn. Yet another hour before the next shift. She's the only one there.

She takes out her keys.

She's ready to leave it all behind as Ewo gets into Samuel's car.

Anna:

Are you sure.

Ewo:

–

Anna:

Are you really sure.

Ewo:

I'll take you somewhere nice. You'll see.

A beat

One:

As Rakel opens the door.

She's inside.

This is room 703.

I'm there with her.

It smells of – nothing.
Dust and detergent.

Silence

Rakel:
Yes.

One:
She sits down on the bed.

Rakel:
Yes.

One:
I'm there beside you.

Rakel:
–

One:
You can feel my warmth.

Rakel:
No.

One:
But you know I'm here?

Silence

Rakel:
–

Short pause

One:
What do you see?

Rakel:
The bathroom door's ajar. A shower, a toilet, a towel by the sink. Grey tiles.

One:
What do you see?

Rakel:
The TV set. The window. The view of the park.

One:
And you walk over to the window?

Rakel:
Yes.

One:
And we are standing there?

Rakel:
The lawn scorched by the sun. The park desolate. The grass covered by dead leaves and it hasn't rained for days, months maybe.

One:
And you wish that it could rain –

Rakel:
How I wish it would rain again.

One:
What else?

Rakel:
The newspaper-stand on the corner is about to open. A woman approaches the hotel. She is pushing a pram. She's followed by two small children.

One:
And you turn away.
And you turn on the television set.
There is no signal.
All the screens in the world are lit up, and this one has no signal.
The sheets, cold and dead beneath your hands.

Rakel:
And then?

One:
He's not here.
This is not where you will find him.
You get that now – And you leave the room. You close the door behind you and then you see him. Standing. At the end of the corridor.
Barefoot. Gloves on his hands. Beer spilled all over his pale blue shirt.

Samuel:
–

Rakel:
–
Is this your room?

Samuel:
–

Rakel:
Can't you find it? Your room?
It's this one, isn't it?

Samuel:
–

Rakel:
Isn't this were you stay?

Samuel:
–

Rakel:
Are you staying in this hotel?
If you're not staying in this hotel you shouldn't –

Samuel:
I usually –

Rakel:
– then I might have to call /

Samuel:
I can't –

Rakel:

Off course you can – but if you are not a guest here then I am afraid I have to –
You'll have to leave the premises –
Or you need to book a room –
Have you booked a room?

Samuel:

I've left my wallet.

Rakel:

–

Samuel:

I have no money. I didn't take my card – I can't. I can't do it. I can't be – I can't
do my job anymore. – I can't do this – I need to see their faces – There is no
way I can do this, and my kids – There is just no way – No way I could –

Beat

Rakel:

Ok.

I hear you.

Wait.

One:

And I hold his arm as if he was a child.

And the door to room 703 closes behind them and Anna says:

Anna:

Ewo, Ewo, Ewo, Ewo – where are you taking me?

One:

And the light is dim. In the hallway there is a sound. A sharp bang, maybe.

Or a clutter. As if something just toppled over inside one of the rooms. As if
someone just fell to the floor. And then a hush of welling water. As if the room
was suddenly afloat with it. As if the room was about to break at its seams. And
the television is on. All of a sudden, as if in a flash, all the hotel's hundreds,
maybe thousands of television-sets light up, and Rakel holds Samuel by the
arm.

Rakel:

I am holding his arm as if he was a child.

Samuel:

Rakel.

One:

She is holding his arm as if he was a child

Rakel:

Samuel –

Pause

One: (as if starting all over)

Samuel – the watch he wears, the whiteness of his underarms, the shirt, his
socks, his back – not especially broad, not especially muscular. Those narrow
hips, the inside of his knees, the way he bends down to pick up a newspaper, the
way he undresses – We know it by now. These movements. The way he takes
off his shirt – not fast – not slow. There beside her. Crying maybe. Or totally
still, lying on his back like a dead person.

The way he never turns around to look at me.

Rakel:
Turn around and look at me.

One:
– not until it's over.

Beat

Samuel:
That is what I do.

Pause

Rakel:
And I can't help pondering upon words like "mine". On words like "me". On expressions like "my duty", "my responsibility".

Samuel:
–

Beat

Anna:
Who's going to look after the children?
When I'm gone – who's going to look after the children?

One:
And I'm in the car with her and I'm holding her arm like a child.

Ewo:
Are you hungry?

Anna:
No

Ewo:
You're hungry.

Anna:
Don't stop

He stops

Ewo:
Let's get something to eat!

One:
And it's hot
The city underneath them hidden in a vibrating, luminous haze – and Ewo says:

Ewo:
Ah – Isn't it better up here?

Anna:
Great to be out of that house

Ewo:
Isn't it great? Just great to be up here –

Anna:
We shouldn't have taken that car

Ewo:
He'll get it back. I'll get it back to him.

A beat

One:

Jo's with the children.

She is outside the hotel.

She is at the hotel. The kids are playing in the lobby.

And Anna and Ewo sits at a bench, high up in the hills by a petrol station. Anna's restless.

I'm there with her. Ewo is outside, fueling up the car, as Anna says:

Anna:

Did you say something?

Rakel:

No.

Anna:

I thought you said something?

Ewo:

I'm just getting a coffee and a bun. You?

One:

And Ewo takes a bite of her pancake and the sun is rising now – low and orange as it stretches lazily across the tarmac, across the slick black bonnet of the car and in one brief second everything is alight, the bumpers, the rearview mirror, the headlights, the horizon, Anna's face flaring up, silvery and bright – and Anna says:

Anna:

Isn't it great here?

Wasn't it great to get out of that house?

We should not have taken that car?

Ewo:

–

Anna:

We –

Ewo:

The car is fine

Anna:

–

How fast is it?

Ewo:

210 km – 220 –

Anna:

Not faster?

Ewo:

250 maybe?

One:

And she knows they cannot stay there.

Anna:

I don't know –

One:
You cannot stay here.

Anna:
I don't know –

Ewo:
–

One:
Time's running out.
And I'm sitting right beside them.

Anna:
I don't know –

Ewo:
–

Anna:
I think we should leave.

Ewo:
It's fine.
It's fine, Anna – I promise. We're leaving in a minute.

Anna:
I think we should be off now.

Ewo:
I'll just finish my coffee.

Short pause

One:
Anna and Ewo.
Jo and her children.
Samuel and Rakel.
A sixteen-story hotel.

The following passage can be divided between the characters as suggested or be shared randomly among them. It can also be performed partly or as a whole choir sequence

One:
This is what we believe in
This is what we will continue to believe in.
This is what we got.
Rakel turns off the tv.
Samuel rests his head in her lap – and down in the basement, water starts seeping through the foundations, forcing its way through the sediments, trickling through the insulation, breaking through the vents, the sockets, the outskirts of pipes, along the cracks and the skirting boards.
Just dampness at first.
Soaking everything.
A feeling. Just a feeling – Then it's there.
The water, the force of it, the pressure of it. As it breaks through, pours in, seeping into the carpets, the linen, the dirty sheets in the wicker baskets in the washroom, the grey heaps of laundry on the basement floor. And it keeps on coming. And it keeps on rising. Up the staircase, covering stacks of chairs and discarded shelves at the backside of the parking lot. Washing with it lightbulbs and radios and dvd-players. Wine-lists and napkin holders and old menus. Rising up along the basement walls and spilling onto the ground floor, soaking the soft brown carpet in the hotel lobby, pushing up the elevator shafts, filling the elevators, and bursting out through the doors on the first floor where it

sputrs, brown and murky over the newly waxed floorboards into the breakfast area.

Sunny streets.

A traffic-jam over by McDonalds. Cars honking their horns by the malfunctioning traffic-lights.

A hot breeze blowing through the park.

Dry leaves adrift across the lawn. Pushing onwards as the wind pushes it along the tarmac on the other side, as an UAV takes off. Fully armed.

This is what we believe in.

This is what we know: Ewo chewing on a bun.

Samuel's head in Rakel's lap.

And Rakel turns on the TV again. She turns to a channel showing nature programs: Zebras, savannahs, killer whales.

And the water is filling the hotel basement
the kitchen

where pots and pans are floating alongside cabbages and cooking utensils,
bottles and washing-up liquid, packets of sweet peas, parcels of plastic forks and
plastic spoons, containers with offcuts and cold meat. And the water fills the
plumbing

pours out of the hundreds of toilets and the washbasins on the first floor
spurting from showerheads and bathroom drains

And the debris washes across the marbled floor

pushes its way through the corridors

where the surveillance cameras shortcut

past the control room

where the computers shortcut

and there are people in the doorways

pushing against each other

and the doors –

Who locked the doors!

Why are the doors locked!

Pause

One:

This is my voice.

I am the one talking.

When it's quiet – when there is nobody there to listen – and Rakel says:

Rakel:

What do you believe in?

Do you believe in anything?

Do you believe in anything at all, Samuel?

A beat

One:

And the UAV is heading for the northern provinces of Aghanistan, the
southern parts of Somalia, the western parts of Angola.

And the sun beats down on the scorched grass in the park

as the traffic jam slows and jilts, edging its way past the hotel, past the H&M,

trickles into the alleys – and the fallen leaves lift for a moment as the wind

sweeps them up in one swift movement

pushing them on to the curve and onwards

spiraling

red and ocher.

And the lights go out

all the lights are out

the only light there is the flickering blue from the TV-screens

across the white leather sofa in a private suite

across the pink bedspread in a room for one

across the king-sized bed in a double

and a deer lowers its head to drink

and the riverbeds are running like dried-out veins across the Afghan provinces
/

Rakel:

It hasn't rained all summer. How I wish it would rain.

One:

– as eight Afghan women herd their goats along the dried-up creeks carrying
piles of brittle wood on their back

And Ewo says:

Ewo

Are you ready?

One:

And the water has reached the second floor now and it's still rising /

Ewo:

I'll show you how fast it can go.

One:

– and it will keep on rising
as it floods the breakfast restaurant
lifts the chairs, the tables, tear to pieces the flower arrangements all ready and
waiting for the evening banquet
sweeping with it a dozen teak tables as it reaches the grand dining room on the
third floor

as it reaches the bar

its mirrored surfaces

its glass shelves filled with bottles of booze

bottles of wine

bottles of soda water

and the pressure rises

and it reaches the glass wall leading into the conference area

and the glass breaks

and the wall bursts

and as it collapses, cascades of broken glass spurt, fall and sink to the floor

great piles of shards of glass, bottles, cutlery, chairs – and through this broken
landscape drift the floating bodies

One by one at first

then in pairs

and soon there are hundreds of them

face up

face down

like sleepers

sinking to the floor as if the hotel is a gigantic ship about to keel over.

This is how it goes. The water will keep on rising until the room is full, until
the room is bursting with water

cracking, sighing, shaking

as the pressure mounts

as the doors burst open

the doors burst open and torrents of water start thundering along the corridors
carrying with them suitcases and bags

hairbrushes and makeup-kits, toys and old train sets, condoms and diapers and
bundles of last week's newspapers

while Jo runs down the corridors

pushing her way amongst the panicking crowds

she can't find her girl

the girl with the brown coat

holding her oldest girl by the hand

carrying the youngest on her hip

She does not shout

She isn't making a sound

The baby isn't making a sound

They have their eyes on the elevator

Their eyes on the target /

Anna:

Faster! Make it go faster!

One:

– and in the park, the grass is yellow and brittle from the lack of rain, the ground cracked, all dried out along the foundations of the multi-story hotel complex where the windows on the ground floor, the windows on the first floor and the windows on the second floor are about to burst open as the windows on the 3rd and 4th floor are about to burst open as the building is about to get filled with water

On the 6th floor

where the lights from the television sets are still flickering as the water reaches the 5th

and on the 7th Samuel is resting his head in Rakel's lap

and there is a trembling

a murmur

from underneath their feet

from the ceiling

the inside of the walls

and they can hear how the building shakes and sighs

and Rakel just sits there watching the screen

watching the hummingbirds

a baby giraffe being born

a baby zebra being born

a baby zebra fleeing a lion attack

a hyena attack

the dust pluming around its feet

the blood in the sand

the fear in its eyes

and the water engulfs the cameras in the west wing

soon the whole hotel will be flooded

as it pushes up the elevator shafts

as the walls crumble

as the walls get skinned, leaving the wallpaper drifting in dark gigantic sheets

covered with subtropical flowers

and Jo is running now

she has lost her oldest

and her girl in the little brown coat

she is clinging on to her youngest

as she has left her safe stand by the elevator

as she is forced by the crowds unto the staircase

further and further up

away from the water

away from the screams and the shouting

up to this creepy silence

and as she walks

the wall of water follows

and as she opens the door to the staircase leading on to the floor above this one

the water is there

waiting for her

thundering over her as an avalanche

as a wall of dark green glass

as it collapses over her

as she stands inside it

holding onto her baby

as the baby gets ripped out of her hands

as the pram gets ripped out of her hands

and Rakel is watching a pelican take flight – an eagle take flight – an albatross

take flight and a UAV crosses the sky leaving behind a pale white trace across

the bright blue and Samuel says:

Samuel:

—

One:

— as the windows on the ground floor burst open
as the windows on the first floor burst open
as the windows on the second floor burst open
as the windows on the third floor burst open
and the water spurts out of them, falls in cascades along the building's shiny
surfaces
showers the air
waters the earth and the withered grass
washes over park benches
awakes the sleeping homeless
drenches the shoepolishers and the dogowners
wets the dusty wings of a flock of sparrows
and the earth drinks it up
and the stone hard ground becomes wet and dark
and from somewhere deep down the water starts to pull upwards
and inwards
into roots and stems
into budding branches
a violent burst of green

(Tale Næss, Oslo, 2015)

S O A R E
– *a radio play*

S O A R E (a radio play) is based on the play with the same name

Characters:

Samuel – an UAV pilot

One – the narrator

Anna – a domestic help

Rakel – a security guard at a Holiday Inn Hotel

Ewo – an unemployed immigrant

Other:

Hannah

Colleague 1 and colleague 2

A hotel-receptionist

PROLOGUE

One:

Can you hear me?

Can you hear me talking

At night

when it is quiet

when it is dark and nobody else is there to listen

I am talking about/

Anna:

the garbage

It is the garbage

We have to get rid of it

It just piles up

And the kids/

One:

somebody has to take care of the kids.

Hannah:

Could you watch the dog for a moment?

One:

They say that I am repeating myself

That I keep going in circles

That I keep repeating the same words, circling the same events

Ewo:

Yes

One:
I am the one talking
As Anna passes you in the hallway

Samuel:
Yes

One:
Walks past your bedroom
runs to get the milk, the paper, the mail

Anna:
Yes

One:
When Rakel arrives at work
Takes the elevator up
Takes the elevator down
Settles by her desk
Checks the camera to the right
The camera to the left

When Ewo awakes under a bridge

Ewo:
Christ, it's hot!

One:
When he takes off his shirt
His socks, his pants and wades into the river
Stands there, knee deep in water

When you get yourselves ready, Samuel
On your drive there
To the bunker
As you take the elevator down
There, in that mundane, everyday arrival

A door slams shut

Samuel:
Yes

One:
When you take over the nightshift
and the others hands in the report
and you fill in the forms and you settle there
in front of the screens
trying to focus
trying to find the right focus
as you take over
put your hand on thee lever
Ready?

Samuel:
– Ready

One:
And it is all up to you now
there by the flicker from the screen, it is all up to you
as the landscape passes by
and you. check the communication-satellites
get hold of the coordinates
and the hissing sound of the fluorescent lighting overwhelms you

just for a moment
just overwhelmed you, as they always do
in the beginning
And you try to focus
and you know that the mission is already on its way. Now it is up to you to
finish it

Samuel:
And I sit there
And I watch it
and the only thing moving is the machine there, the landscape under it:
mountain-ranges, cedar trees
sand
cars on the roads
a bunch of houses grouped together
children on their way to school
Life that goes on as life goes on

One:
And you know what kind of mission this is

Samuel:
Yes

One:
And all you have to do is follow the instructions
Keep an eye on the coordinates
Update the log

Samuel:
And me and the screen become one
All sounds disappear
The room disappear as we fly, hunt, float onwards and onward –

One:
And it is as if you no longer are in this room
You are out there
you are connected to the drone, to what it wants
to what it is doing out there
as the target is given
as you focus on it
Ready?

Samuel:
Ready

One:
Are you ready?

Samuel:
–

One:
And you check the timer

Samuel:
04:26

One:
As you follow the procedure

Samuel:
04:28

One:
As you start the attack

Samuel:
04:32

One:
Check the missile as it is launched
As it moves towards the target
As everything goes according to plan
As it hits

The plume of dust
The house imploding
The roof as it collapses
The dust as it settles – a rain of stones and a herd of goats leaping down the
steep
And you have no idea, have you

Samuel:
I have no idea –

One:
You have no idea how many people there were in that building
And there is no sound
It hits you again how strange it is that there comes no sound with these images
the rain of stones
the heard of goats scattering across the hill

Short pause – a beat

Rakel:
When I arrive
When the one who has done the nightshift logs out - and we. synchronize the
cameras, makes sure that the footages is stored and registered
all the cameras operational – then it is just me
Me and the screens

Sometimes the first hours seem to last forever:
the half-eaten burger in the bin
doors opening
doors closing
An alarm going off
a shadow in the stairwell
Beds, sheets, empty stairs, empty corridors ...

In the daytime you never give it much thought
It is at night
Or late in the evening that your mind starts to wander
that your imagination starts playing the games with you
This slightly sick game
mostly to help you stay awake
and you start guessing what goes on behind closed doors
inside the rooms
as if the mind was an eye that could reach further than the cameras

Something has caught your eye during the day
late in the afternoon maybe: a man enters the lobby
he carries a worn-out suit
he pays cash and there is a feeling about him
as he pays
as he opens the door to his room – enters
stooped, kind of
And you imagine him there

on his knees
A rope maybe, around his neck

Ore later on
down in the bar
a young Asian girl
barely sixteen
With black, shiny hair, beady eyes
The man besides her is older
Broad
Italian maybe, or Russian, and he sort of
handles her
Pushes her in front of him into the elevator while beholds her wrists with his
left hand
and as night progresses, you can't stop thinking about her bent over in a sofa
bent over a desk while an object is being inserted into her anus, her vagina, and
while you keep your eyes on the screens
on the parking-lot
on the stairs leading down to the kitchen
the stairs leading down to the basement – you know that this might be what is
happening
that it could be happening right now
as you sit there
as you stair at the screens
and there is not the fuck you can do about it
And the hours pass
and everything is so quiet
and you want to cry out
you want to tell somebody what's goin on
what *could* be going on
but who should you tell
and what should you tell them

Short pause

Rakel:
When I close my eyes, I can see them
The sleepers behind closed doors
the lights being switched on
The lights being switched off
The sound of a television-set
A child crying
A woman crying

One:
Yes.

Rakel:
And that's when I see him
I am sitting there behind those flickering screens and I see him

One:
Where?

Rakel:
There
A glimpse of him only
A neck
A back
down by the reception
He holds his gloves in his left hand
His coat across his arm
He has parked his car in the basement
It is a four-wheel drive

I see him as he leaves the camera to the left and enters the camera to the right
I see him holding the keycard
The way he touches the doorhandle
Opens the door to his room
hesitates
as if he is about to turn around
as if he is about to turn around to see if there is anybody there, watching him

One:
And now?
Can you see him now?

Rakel:
The light in his room is on all night long
He just sits there

Samuel:
Yes

One:
He just sits there at the edge of his bed
There, on those white, neat sheets
He does not turn on the TV
He does not speak on the phone
He does not shower
He sits in the shower with all his clothes on
He sits there for the longest time ...

Rakel:
Its nighttime
I am searching for his face
I am going through some old recordings
There he is
It's a Tuesday
another Tuesday
And I play it again and again
see how he enter the hotel at exactly the same time
Pays for exactly the same room
How he enters into the camera from the left
And I want him to turn around
(under her breath) turn around
Will he turn around?
(under her breath) turn around
turn around
(under her breath)Yes
Yes
(under her breath) I want to see your face

Short pause

2.

One:
I am the one talking

Rakel:
And I keep running through the recordings and then ask me again and again;
what are yo doing that for?

A colleague (before):
What are you doing that for?

Rakel (before):

Doing what?

Rakel (now):

You mean taking care of them?

You mean the recordings?

A colleague (before):

You know that you are not allowed to take them out of the building?

Rakel (now):

And I say that I have never taken anything out of the building

Another colleague (before):

Can I see?

Rakel (now):

They say: is that somebody you know?

Rakel (before):

No

A colleague (before):

Can I see?

Rakel (now):

They say:

A colleague (before):

Is that somebody you know?

A beat

One:

Can you hear me talking?

In the evening

when nobody else is listening

Rakel is globing through her recordings, playing them over and over again.

She is lookin for a face

Finds a back

A pair of gloves

A closed door

Anna is in the livingroom

She is checking the silverware

Making sure that it is all there

She says:

Anna:

It is the dog

Somebody has to take care of the dog

It is the kids

Ewo:

I am just so bloody restless

Anna:

I keep thinking of words like mine

Hannah (shouting from another room):

Can you look after the dog for a minute?

Anna?

Rakel:

Its my hands

My thighs

My words
The things I do

Samuel:
I mean, one can't go around thinking about
I can't stop thinking about it
It was my mission
The others started it, but I was the one ending I
I had to, that's all
It is my job

Hannah (before):
Is that's what on your mind?
Really, Samuel
Just let it go

Samuel:
It was my responsibility

Anna:
Lately I have been thinking about works like "mine"
Like me
Like my hands, my stuff

Hannah (before):
One, two, three, four/

Anna:
When I stand here by the window

Hannah keeps on counting

Hannah:
five, six, seven, eight

Anna:
When I let the dog out
As I wash the dishes
As I count the silverware
the napkin-rings - nine, ten, eleven

Anna:
just to make sure that it is all there, that nothing is missing
(shouting, as if she had a need to defend herself):
No!
It was not me!
I did not do it!
I haven't done anything!

Anna (before):
I did not do anything

Anna (now):
It was all there when I left!
I wasn't there
I saw nothing

Anna. (before):
I saw nothing
I was walking the dog

Anna (now):
I was with the kids
Why do you ask me this?

Anna (before):
When I wasn't there

One:
They are not there

Hannah (before):
Samuel, I can't find those keys

One:
Hannah is looking for her keys

Hannah (before):
They are just not here

What do you mean?

No.
No, I never Put them there

One:
She is checking the silverware

Anna(before):
One, two, three. Five, six, seven, eight

One:
The living room is empty

Anna:
One, two, three, four, five, six, seven

Low laughter

3.

Anna:
What are you doing here?

Ewo:
—

Anna:
No, I mean i.
What are you doing here?
Did somebody see you?

Stay away from that fridge

Close that fridge Ewo

Ewo:
I am starving!

Anna:
Who gave you a key?

Ewo:
I am starvring. Do you have anything?

Anna:
I never gave you a key

Ewo:
You must have something.

Anna:
Close that draw, Ewo!

Short pause

Ewo:
What are you doing?

Anna:
I am counting the knives

Ewo:
You are counting the knives

Anna:
Give me that key
I don't want you to lock yourself in whenever

I said Tuesday.
I said you could come Tuesday. That you had to call first
That you could/

Ewo:
I missed you

Anna:
Let me see your pockets

Ewo:
It is true
I missed you
I couldn't wait

I could never
I would never
You are the only friend I have

Anna:
Friend?
Friend!
You call yourselves a friend!

Do you know what they would do if they found you here?

Have you spoken to the kids?
You did not speak to the kids?

I am at their mercy do you get that?
Do you know what that means?
What it means to be here at their mercy?

Are you laughing?

Ewo:
But what can they do?

So they through you out
So they turn you in

Is that really the worst thing that can happen?
Or is it this?
Standing here counting other peoples knives?

Lets go back

Lets go somewhere else
We will find something
Something better
I will help you

Anna:
Not this time
Just shut that cupboard!

Ewo:
You are my Anna
—

Anna:
No
Not now.
Not here.
Not like that – We
Not like that way
They can hear us
See us
If they come down and see us
Not here

Pause

Ewo (in a low voice):
What are you thinking about?

Anna:
Nothing

Ewo (in a low voice):
What are you thinking about

Anna(in a low voice):
I'm not thinking about anything

Ewo (in a low voice):
What are you thinking about

A beat

Anna:
He's at the top of the stairs. I'm hiding in the basement. Behind an old oil barrel, in a parking lot. I'm hiding in the bushes and he cannot find me. His face. Bottles of booze. A heap of cardboard boxes. Toxins spilling over on the pavement, the endless rows of trailers by the border crossings. Girls waiting for what? The smell of gasoline and vomit. My face pushed deep into a mattress. His sleep. His toxic intoxicated sleep all boozed up. Pigs' blood thick and sticky on the frozen concrete. The slaughter. The slaughterhouse. Frozen berries hard as glass. My hands beating, digging, scraping at the mud. The language in me still and thick and dark like ink. Neon maybe –
Neon and fog. Drizzle. Drizzle resembling gas. Gas all lit up. The world lit up. Everything lit up and Ewo and I in the middle of it. Me and him in the middle of it. Alight. The streets, my teeth, my flesh, the inside my flesh, the softness under my fingernails. Me and Ewo. Fleeing. Maybe running, splattering alight.

Inside the city. Inside the belly of a big city. Inside the belly of another big city.
The rattling of our bones, of our fluorescent skeletons dancing into the dark,
hiding under the soiled underbelly of a freight train, crossing another border,
then another border and then somewhere on the outskirts of northern Europe
by the lanterns of the factory, by the firecrackers, by a New Year's Eve I've
almost forgot about.

One:

Anna is thinking about her father

Ewo is undressing her

He is undressing himself

He stands in front of an open window smoking

He is not thinking

A the hotel, Rakel is storing recording on a memory-stick

Samuel is leaving the bunker

A door opens

One:

He changes his shoes

Grabs his coat

Samuel:

Drives home

One:

No

Samuel:

I drive home

One:

No

Samuel:

I am just driving?

One:

You know where you are going

You have ended up there a lot lately

Every Tuesday sometimes

Samuel:

What am I doing?

One:

Checking in

You are in the elevator

You are on the bed

You sit there

Samuel (before):

Yes

Give me room 1103

Samuel:

I never knew there were so many people there

One:

Seven

Samuel:

A whole family

One:
Seven/

Samuel:
children

Short pause

One:
You sit there
gazing at nothing
You do not sleep
You haven't slept
At home in the villa the kids are asleep
Anna is just about to go to bed
she has left some cold meat for you in the kitchen, and a glass of gherkins
You enter the hallway
Stand there in the dark
You settle in the windowsill
start to eat
all of a sudden famished
the dark is thick around you
You are thirsty
You get yourselves a bear
and another
You drink straight from the bottle
You watch as the bubbles shoot up from the bottom, through the dark malty
liquid like tiny, sparkly planets and you think
This is not over
It continues
still and all the time –

Anna:
Are you up?

One:
She says, while tying a knot on the old bathrobe she is wearing

Anna:
I thought I heard something
I just came to check the door
To make sure the alarm was on

Samuel:
Look at me
It seems I am about to finish the whole jar

Anna:
Just eat
You are more than welcome

Samuel:
That robe –

Anna:
She gave it to me

Samuel:
And the slippers?

Anna:
Hannah gave them to me

Samuel

—

Anna:

She said —

Hannah said:

Samuel:

These gherkins are really nice

Anna:

I don't know

Samuel:

I mean it. They are really nice

Anna:

To salty

Samuel:

Perfect

Anna:

She is working night

Samuel:

I know

I found her note

One:

And you don't want to sleep with her

Anna;

You mustn't think

Samuel:

What mustn't I think, Anna

What do you think?

What is it you think about?

A beat

One:

Everything starts somewhere

Anna pickles some gherkins

Samuel cleans the car

Hannah goes through her wardrobe

Puts aside some slippers, an old bathrobe

Hannah (before):

Look!

One:

Look, she says

Hannah (before):

These are for you

One:

These are yours

Hannah (before):

I mean it

One:

You can have them

Hannah (before):

Off course you can

Suuuure

One:

Sure, I never wear them anymore

Hannah (before):

They are just filling up space anyway

One:

No point having them here

A beat

Samuel:

Everything has a beginning

Anna:

I was in the basement, pickling gherkins, the way my mother used to do

I had put some cold meat out for him in the kitchen

I often leave something out for him when he has been working late

I heard something

I went down to check that the alarm was on

I found him on the windowsill

He was going through the gherkins

One:

And he sees goats skidding down a slopes, a plume of smoke, and he just can't seem to get it out of his head:

Samuel:

No sound.

No colour and no sound

One:

And he tries not to think about it

And the building keeps on collapsing as Anna enters the kitchen

Anna:

Are you up?

Samuel:

These are nice

Anna:

I just came down to check that the alarm was on

Samuel:

I was about to finish the lot

One:

And that's when he asks about the robe

Anna:

Hannah gave it to me

Samuel:

–

And the slippers?

Anna:

–

She said ...

I will go and lock the door

Samuel:

Leave the door

Anna:

I am just going to lock it

Samuel:

No

Wait

Stay

Let's talk

Just for a moment

How long have you been with us?

Anna:

Here?

Samuel:

With us

Anna

Six months

Samuel:

That's nice

That's really great

And before – what did you do before?

Anna:

–

Samuel:

That's not a complicated question is it?

What's the problem?

I just asked you the simplest of questions –

What did you do before you came to us?

Did you have a good time –

Christ! I'm just trying to make conversation here –

Can't you just tell me what you did before?

Anna:

–

Samuel:

But for fuck's sake?

What's wrong with you?

Talk to me!

Anna:
I don't believe

Samuel:
What is it that you don't believe
What don't you believe in?

Why do you just stand there
You just stand there

Anna:
I just think we should –

Samuel:
What!
What is it that we should?

Anna (in a low voice):
I should really get that alarm going.

One:
And he stops her.

Anna:
Please

One:
And she

Anna:
Please let go of my arm

One:
And she stands there
And he walks over to the refrigerator
And he takes out another bottle of beer
And he drinks it
Or he does not drink it
And he just stands there
And she just stands there
And he lifts the bottle and then he throws it, and the bottle hits the wall
And he grabs another bottle. And he smashes it against the wall
And he grabs another
And it smashes against the wall like the last one
And then another

Silence

Samuel:
Anna

Anna:
–

Samuel:
I'm sorry

Anna:
–

Samuel:
Stop that

Get up

Get up!

Come here

Sit down
Just sit down

Let's talk
Let's just talk for a little
It's none of my business. I know. What you did before. It's none of my business

—

Anna:

—

Samuel:
And your parents?
What did they do for a living?

Anna:
They had pigs

Short pause

Rakel:
It is at night, that's when your thoughts start to wander
That is when you start playing this game
This not so healthy game
mostly to stay awake
and you start guessing what goes on behind the doors, inside the rooms
as if the mind was an eye that could reach where the cameras don not
and you imagine him there
He is on the bed
He picks up a ring
It is a wedding ring
he puts it on his tongue
Closes his mouth and then he opens it again
He puts the ring on his little finger
He looks at it
Takes it off again

One:
Yes

Rakel:
And there is no one there to see it

One:
No

Rakel:
And all of a sudden I thinking about going up there
locking myself in
Enter the room
Lay down beside him maybe
stay there —

One:
And you wait until he has left
and then you do it
You go up there

It is a standard room
Nothing special
A bed
A nightstand
A navy blue carpet
And you put your hand on the bed where he has been sitting
and you sit in the chair
And you look in the bin

Rakel:

—

One:
It all starts somewhere:
Rakel and her recordings
Anna kneeling over the broken bottles
Samuel in the villa, by the double bed
Hannah is there

Samuel:

Yes

Hannah:

Samuel, is that you?

I did not hear you

When did you come home?

Come here

One:

And you want to be with her

Hannah:

Come

One:

And you try to make love to her, but you can not
and she says:

Hannah:

What is it?

What is it, Samuel

One:

She says:

Samuel:

I know where you've been

Hannah:

Talk to me

Samuel:

I know where you stay

Hannah:

Where have you been?

Samuel:

Don't you think I know. where your at?

Hannah:

Do you really want me to believe that?

Samuel:

You mustn't think

Hannah:

Don't you think I know where you go?

One:

She says:

Hannah:

What do you believe in?

Samuel:

I don't believe that you believe that

One:

She says:

Hannah:

What do you believe in?

Samuel:

I am not suggesting

I would never believe that you

Hannah:

What do you believe, in Samuel?

One:

She says:

Samuel

Samuel

Samuel

Samuel

Samuel

Short pause

One:

I am the one talking

Can you hear me?

Can you hear my voice?

They say I am talking to the dark

To my feet

To the will in you, Samuel

As you stand there

As you see the bottle hit the wall

As you see Anna bent over it

As you reach for Hannah in bed

as you drive your kids to school

As you kiss them

As you drive to work and back again

Can not enter

It has become possible to enter

The same sleeplessness as you lay there on the hotel bed

and you check your watch

Samuel:

It is

One:

04:26

Samuel:

04:28

One:

04:32

as the roof collapses
as the stones starts to rain
as the dust settles
as the goats get scattered across the hill
it continues
It keeps on happening
it will go on happening
It will be like this
it will never be another way

Samuel:

Get up

Anna, get up

One:

But she just sits there

Says nothing

She just keeps on wiping the beat of the walls and it is then you discover that
the kids are there

They are standing in the doorway

they are standing in the doorway and you realize that you have been shouting/

Anna:

Hi there –

One:

That you must have been shouting something, because the youngest are
covering her ears with her hands, and you let go of her. You let go of Anna and
you see that a shard of glass is embedded in her cheek, and for a second you feel
like crying

Short pause

Samuel:

I am crossing the lawn

Where are my shoes?

Hannah watches me from the window

I have taken off my wedding-ring

It is in my mouth, on my tongue and there is this feeling of weightlessness

One:

Ewo rests his forehead against the window

Anna is washing and washing the kitchen wall

Can you see her?

Ewo:

Yes

One:

What is she doing?

Ewo:

She os on her knees

She is wearing an old bathrobe

She is wiping and wiping the bear of that fucking wall

Ome:

You are late

Ewo:
I know

One:
She has been waiting for you
She has always been waiting for you

What's on your mind?

Ewo:
Nothing

One:
What are you hoping for?

Ewo:
Nothing

He knocks on the window

Ewo:
Anna

Anna

One:
Samuel crosses the lawn

Samuel:
What are you doing here?

Ewo:
Me?

Samuel:
Yes

Don't move
I said what are you doing here?

Ewo:
Wait!

Wait for fuck sake. I can explain
I'm a friend. I know Anna
Just ask her
She asked me to come
You can just talk to her

Anna!

Samuel:
Don't

Look at her
Look at her
How long do you think she'll go on doing that?

Ewo:
—

Samuel:

She'll just keep on doing it, won't she? She'll just keep on wiping those walls
for as long as it takes

One:

Annas left hand is bleeding.
Her blond hair is dark at the roots-
It is wet around her face
Samuel stands barefoot in the grass
He walks away from them
Just walks
He has taken off the wedding ring
It is in his mouth, at the tip of his tongue. He is about to swallow it
He stops
Hannah has drawn the curtains

Hannah (fast and in a low voice):

Samuel. Samuel, Samuel, Samuel, Samuel, Samuel

One:

Anna wraps the broken glass in a newspaper
Ewo is standing now
He keeps on knocking gently on the window
saying her name

Samuel passes his car
Samuel passes the gate
He just keeps on walking

Hannah (in a low voice):

Samuel, what's going on
Whats happening to you?

One:

He falls on his knees

Samuel:

Tell me
Please tell me
Tell me what's happening to me

One:

He gets up
He feels disoriented
He does not know where he is
He will keep on walking all night

Samuel:

Where am I going?

One:

Away from here

Samuel:

I did not bring my valet. I have no shoes

One:

Ewo stands in the kitchen door
Anna says:

Anna:

What are you doing here?

One:
As Rakel makes her selves a cup of coffee
And the hotel is a beast with a thousand eyes and a thousand mouths, locks,
sinks, doors
She is talking to herself
She does not see the man as he enters the foyer
as he walks into the camera to the left
He is barefoot
He has been crying
He is all sober now

Samuel:
Where am I?

One:
You are in the boiler-room

Samuel;
The boiler-room?

One:
You came here by the back stairs

Samuel:
I am all alone in here

One:
It is hot is it not?

And Rakel says to herself

Rakel:
Fuck it. I am not a fucking stalker

Short pause

One:
And the hotel has sixteen floors
fourteen over ground and two underneath
And where she sits right now, there are eleven floors above her

Rakel:
If the hotel should topple

One:
If this hotel were veto collapse, all those eleven floors would fall on top of us

Rakel:
Eleven floors
with 54 rooms's in each of them
then the rooftop swimming pool, the gym, the restaurant on the second floor,
all the people working here, all the hired helpers, hundreds of them. Over a
thousand in high season

One:
And Rakel says to herself

Rakel.
It is Wednesday
He never comes on a Wednesday

One:
She takes the subway home.
The world is dry and hot and black. Almost electric

She climbs the stairs. Undresses in the dark
Stands there in the middle of the room among her belongings
She keeps her socks on
She stands there in the light from the aquarium
She does not turn on the radio. She does not turn on the TV
She stands in the light from the refrigerator

Rakel:
I have opened the fridge

One:
She is eating a hot dog straight from the can
She does not bother heating it
She leans her forehead against the icebox

One:
I am there
right beside her

Rakel:
Yes

One:
She does not notice me

Rakel:
No

One:
The fridge is almost empty
Just two cups of youghurt, a jar of coffee and a cheese. Yellow and hard at the
edges
I am so close
I am right behind her

She know I am there
She wait's
I wait

I rest my hand against her back
It is cold and hard like glass

Short pause

One:
Anna looks at Ewo

A car door slams shut

One:
Ewo starts the engine

Anna:
Are you sure, Ewo?

Rakel:
I am in the kitchen
I close my eyes and see him there
On the bed
In the room
At the hotel

One:
He sits in the boiler-room

Rakel:
It is all dark in there

One:
She gets dressed again
All of a sudden in a hurry
And the screens light up as Rakel is back behind them

Rakel:
He is waiting for somebody

One:
There is a feeling of urgency

The corridor outside room 1103 is empty
Where is he?
She/

Rakel:
looks for him

One:
She/

Rakel:
Says:

One:
I/

Rakel:
can not see him

Anna:
It does not matter
It is all right, Ewo

One:
And Rakel stares at the screens as she disconnects camera number 112 and
camera number 1134

One:
And the trafick is relentless
and she disconnects camera 76 and 79

Rakel:
Yes

Ewo:
Did you see his face?
Did you see it?
What the fuck was he on about

One:
And Rakel disconnects camera 320, 321 and 324

Ewo:
Was he drunk ore something?

Anna:
I don't think so

Ewo:

He had no shoes on

One
And all the screens in the control-room are black now
as Rakel locks herself into room 1103

There is a smell of detergent
She thinks: Maybe just walk out of it all

Rakel:
Yes

One:
She sits on the bed

One:
I am sitting there beside her

Can you feel me?

Rakel:
No

One:
But you know I'm here?

Silence

One:
What do you see?

Rakel:
The TV
The bathroom

One:
What do you see?

Rakel:
The window. The view of the park.

One:
And you walk over to it?

Rakel:
Yes.
The lawn scorched
Brown almost

One:
Are we there? Are we by the window?

Rakel:
It hasn't rained for months

One:
And you wish that it could rain –

Rakel:
How I wish it would rain

One:
What more?

She opens the window. The sound of the city

Rakel:
Ahhhhhhhhhh

One:
The park is almost empty
The newsstand is about to open
A woman arrives with three small children

Hannah:
No
No, this is the way
Come
Let us find daddy
Yes, daddy is here
Jon. Do not touch that please.
Look, now you are all dirty

Come now!

One:
And you turn your head away

Hannah:
Yes. He is here

No he is resting. Just resting

One:
You sit on the bed
The sheets feel cold under your hands

Rakel:
What?

One:
—

Rakel:
He is not here

One:
This is not where he is
And you leave the room
And there in the hallway/

Rakel:
May I help you?

One:
There is a man

Rakel:
Are you lost?

One:
He is barefoot
His shirt are open

Rakel:
Are you looking for your room?
Is this your room?

Samuel:

Eh –

Rakel:

Are you staying here?

You can not be here if you if you are not staying here

Samuel:

I usually –

Rakel:

Isn't this were you stay?

Then I have to call security

Samuel:

I am –

One:

It is Samuel

Rakel:

You are?

Look, only guests are allowed here

If you're not staying in this hotel you shouldn't –

Samuel:

I can't –

Rakel:

Do you need to book a room?

Have you booked a room?

One:

It is him

Rakel:

You will have to get yourself a room

Samuel:

I can not pay

Rakel:

–

Samuel:

I have no money. I didn't take my card – I can't. I can't do it. I can't be – I can't do my job anymore. – I can't do this – I need to see their faces – There is no way I can do this, and my kids – There is just no way – No way I could –

One:

Rakel. It is him

Rakel:

Ok.

I hear you.

Wait.

Wait

Wait

One:

And she takes his hand and Anna says

Anna (in a low voice):
Ewo, Ewo, Ewo, Ewo – where are you taking me?

Rakel:
I am holding his arm as if he was a child.

Samuel:
I am Samuel

Rakel:
Rakel

One:
Rakel opens the door to room 1103
and Anna and Ewo takes off at an intersection
I am right there beside him

Anna:
Keep your eyes on the road, Ewo

Ewo:
You're hungry.

Anna:
No

Ewo:
You're hungry. I know it
Let's get something to eat!

One:
And its hot

And the city deep down in the valley resembles a mirage and Ewo says:

Ewo:
Is it not great to get out of town for a second

Anna:
Yes. So good to get out. Out of that house

Ewo:
Just the two of us

Anna:
We should not have taken that car

Ewo:
Borrowed

We have just borrowed it

Come
Sit down

That's better

Anna:
Do you remember when we were kids?
We used to hang out, remember? At Janos place. And his parents where never
home, and we used to sit there, throwing ice-cubes at each other
It was always us against them, remember? And he had that stick and for some
strange reason you really wanted that stick
And do you remember that time we snuck down into that basement, though the

window, in the night

Ewo:

God it was dark

Anna:

You had a flashlight, remember?

Ewo:

Yes

One:

Samuel is in the hallway

The door to room 1103 is open

Rakel:

Come

One:

She is right there beside him

and I keep thinking on words like mine

Like me

and Hannah is in the lobby now

She has the youngest by the hand

Hannah:

Well here we are

One:

She asks after him

Hannah:

We are looking for a man

He is a guest here

Yes, yes. He usually stays here

Like once a week

What room?

I do not know exactly

One:

The children are playing in the lobby and all of a sudden Anna starts to cry
she clenches her cinnamon-bun in her hand and and sobs and then she stops

Wipes her face

I am there right beside her

Anna:

What?

One:

She says

Anna:

Did you say something?

Ewo:

No

Anna:

I thought you said something

One:

And Ewo takes a bite of his sandwich

chews

and the sun is there
Just for a moment warm and bright
Everything lit up
Ewo, Anna, the car - as the sunbeams hits the front mirror, the bumpers, the
bright red of the bonnet and Anna says:

Anna:
How fast is it?

Ewo:
210 km – 220 –

Anna:
Not faster?

Ewo:
250 maybe

One:
And she knows they cannot stay there

Anna:
I don't know –

One:
They cannot stay here

Anna:
I don't know –

I think we should leave

Ewo:
It is fine
It's fine, Anna – I promise. We're leaving in a minute

Anna:
I think we should be off now.

Ewo:
I'll just finish my coffee.

Short pause

One:
Anna and Ewo
Hannah and her children
Samuel and Rakel
A sixteen-story hotel

The following passage can be divided between the characters or shared randomly among them. It can also be performed partly or as a whole choir sequence

One:
This is what we believe in
This is what we will continue to believe in
This is what we got
Rakel turns off the tv
Samuel rests his head in her lap – and down in the basement, water starts
seeping through the foundations, forcing its way through the sediments,
trickling through the insulation, breaking through the vents, the sockets, the
outskirts of pipes, along the cracks and the skirting boards.
Just dampness at first.
Soaking everything.

A feeling. Just a feeling – Then it's there.

The water, the force of it, the pressure of it. As it breaks through, pours in, seeping into the carpets, the linen, the dirty sheets in the wicker baskets in the washroom, the grey heaps of laundry on the basement floor. And it keeps on coming. And it keeps on rising. Up the staircase, covering stacks of chairs and discarded shelves at the backside of the parking lot. Washing with it lightbulbs and radios and dvd-players. Wine-lists and napkin holders and old menus. Rising up along the basement walls and spilling onto the ground floor, soaking the soft brown carpet in the hotel lobby, pushing up the elevator shafts, filling the elevators, and bursting out through the doors on the first floor where it spurts, brown and murky over the newly waxed floorboards into the breakfast area.

Sunny streets.

A traffic-jam over by McDonalds. Cars honking their horns by the malfunctioning traffic-lights.

A hot breeze blowing through the park.

Dry leaves adrift across the lawn. Pushing onwards as the wind pushes it along the tarmac on the other side, as an UAV takes off. Fully armed.

This is what we believe in.

This is what we know: Ewo chewing on a bun.

Samuel's head in Rakel's lap.

And Rakel turns on the TV again. She turns to a channel showing nature programs: Zebras, savannahs, killer whales.

And the water is filling the hotel basement
the kitchen

where pots and pans are floating alongside cabbages and cooking utensils,
bottles and washing-up liquid, packets of sweet peas, parcels of plastic forks and
plastic spoons, containers with offcuts and cold meat. And the water fills the
plumbing

pours out of the hundreds of toilets and the washbasins on the first floor
spurting from showerheads and bathroom drains

And the debris washes across the marbled floor

pushes its way through the corridors

where the surveillance cameras shortcut

past the control room

where the computers shortcut

and there are people in the doorways

pushing against each other

and the doors –

Who locked the doors!

Why are the doors locked!

Pause

One:

This is my voice.

I am the one talking.

When it's quiet – when there is nobody there to listen – and Rakel says:

Rakel:

What do you believe in?

Do you believe in anything?

Do you believe in anything at all, Samuel?

A beat

One:

And the UAV is heading for the northern provinces of Aghanistan, the
southern parts of Somalia, the western parts of Angola.

And the sun beats down on the scorched grass in the park

as the traffic jam slows and jilts, edging its way past the hotel, past the H&M,

trickles into the alleys – and the fallen leaves lift for a moment as the wind

sweeps them up in one swift movement

pushing them on to the curve and onwards

spiraling
red and ocher.
And the lights go out
all the lights are out
the only light there is the flickering blue from the TV-screens
across the white leather sofa in a private suite
across the pink bedspread in a room for one
across the king-sized bed in a double
and a deer lowers its head to drink
and the riverbeds are running like dried-out veins across the Afghan provinces
/

Rakel:
It hasn't rained all summer. How I wish it would rain.

One:
– as eight Afghan women herd their goats along the dried-up creeks carrying
piles of brittle wood on their back
And Ewo says:
Ewo:
Are you ready?

One:
And the water has reached the second floor now and it's still rising /

Ewo:
I'll show you how fast it can go.

One:
– and it will keep on rising
as it floods the breakfast restaurant
lifts the chairs, the tables, tear to pieces the flower arrangements all ready and
waiting for the evening banquet
sweeping with it a dozen teak tables as it reaches the grand dining room on the
third floor
as it reaches the bar
its mirrored surfaces
its glass shelves filled with bottles of booze
bottles of wine
bottles of soda water
and the pressure rises
and it reaches the glass wall leading into the conference area
and the glass breaks
and the wall bursts
and as it collapses, cascades of broken glass spurt, fall and sink to the floor
great piles of shards of glass, bottles, cutlery, chairs – and through this broken
landscape drift the floating bodies
One by one at first
then in pairs
and soon there are hundreds of them
face up
face down
like sleepers
sinking to the floor as if the hotel is a gigantic ship about to keel over.
This is how it goes. The water will keep on rising until the room is full, until
the room is bursting with water
cracking, sighing, shaking
as the pressure mounts
as the doors burst open
the doors burst open and torrents of water start thundering along the corridors
carrying with them suitcases and bags
hairbrushes and makeup-kits, toys and old train sets, condoms and diapers and
bundles of last week's newspapers
while Hannah runs down the corridors

pushing her way amongst the panicking crowds
she can't find her girl
the girl with the brown coat
holding her oldest girl by the hand
carrying the youngest on her hip
She does not shout
She isn't making a sound
The baby isn't making a sound
They have their eyes on the elevator
Their eyes on the target /

Anna:
Faster! Make it go faster!

One:
– and in the park, the grass is yellow and brittle from the lack of rain, the
ground cracked, all dried out along the foundations of the multi-story hotel
complex where the windows on the ground floor, the windows on the first floor
and the windows on the second floor are about to burst open as the windows on
the 3rd and 4th floor are about to burst open as the building is about to get filled
with water
On the 6th floor
where the lights from the television sets are still flickering as the water reaches
the 5th
and on the 7th Samuel is resting his head in Rakel's lap
and there is a trembling
a murmur
from underneath their feet
from the ceiling
the inside of the walls
and they can hear how the building shakes and sighs
and Rakel just sits there watching the screen
watching the hummingbirds
a baby giraffe being born
a baby zebra being born
a baby zebra fleeing a lion attack
a hyena attack
the dust pluming around its feet
the blood in the sand
the fear in its eyes
and the water engulfs the cameras in the west wing
soon the whole hotel will be flooded
as it pushes up the elevator shafts
as the walls crumble
as the walls get skinned, leaving the wallpaper drifting in dark gigantic sheets
covered with subtropical flowers
and Hannah is running now
she has lost her oldest
and her girl in the little brown coat
she is clinging on to her youngest
as she has left her safe stand by the elevator
as she is forced by the crowds unto the staircase
further and further up
away from the water
away from the screams and the shouting
up to this creepy silence
and as she walks
the wall of water follows
and as she opens the door to the staircase leading on to the floor above this one
the water is there
waiting for her
thundering over her as an avalanche
as a wall of dark green glass
as it collapses over her

as she stands inside it
holding onto her baby
as the baby gets ripped out of her hands
as the pram gets ripped out of her hands
and Rakel is watching a pelican take flight – an eagle take flight – an albatross
take flight and a UAV crosses the sky leaving behind a pale white trace across
the bright blue and Samuel says:

Samuel:

–

One:

– as the windows on the ground floor burst open
as the windows on the first floor burst open
as the windows on the second floor burst open
as the windows on the third floor burst open
and the water spurts out of them, falls in cascades along the building's shiny
surfaces
showers the air
waters the earth and the withered grass
washes over park benches
awakes the sleeping homeless
drenches the shoepolishers and the dogowners
wets the dusty wings of a flock of sparrows
and the earth drinks it up
and the stone hard ground becomes wet and dark
and from somewhere deep down the water starts to pull upwards
and inwards
into roots and stems
into budding branches
a violent burst of green

Corridors and rooms

For Vitorchiano August 2016 – by Tale Næss

About the room:

The text can be performed in any space in between the public and the private. In a stairwell, in a corridor, in an abandoned restaurant, in a hotel-kitchen or in a hallway etc.

About the actor:

*She can just be herself.
Or the text could be performed by a child.
It could also be performed by a man.*

Possible starts:

*The audience enter as a group together with the actor, or the actor meats them as they enter.
All through the performance the forth wall is gone. Addresses are personal, even intimate.
Gazes are met and touch is allowed.*

About the text:

*This text is as cold as it is emotional.
As virtuose as it is matter of fact.
It answers to a real place and to an imagined place.
It is a crime-site, an event, an address.
It is past and it is time rushing forward.*

1. THE CORRIDORS

Shall we?

Shall we let something pass?

Here?

Between us?

See – a nun.

Can you see her?

Stooped by the doorway.

Holding her left hand on her belly.

A wedding-party!

Hear how they sing!

And a little bony boy – wide awake by the door.

He's mother has barricaded it.

There is a man on the other side. He has stoped shouting. He his burying his face in the carpet –

And in the room across the hall a couple asleep. All entangled in the bed.

– Hush.
– We must not wake them.
It is soon morning and they need their sleep.

And over in that room over there, a man is about to collapse over his memoars.
His one hand clenching the pen, the other his chest. It is a grinder, grinding the
present into the past. Trying to hold onto it all, he has stepped out of time.
Can you see it?
Can you see his hand?
Can you see how they strive to hold on to all this?
As they strive to hold on – as the wedding party arrives, as the guests arrives –
a scythe cutting through thickets ...
They are here now.
All of them.
Those who can pay and those who can not.
Those dressing for dinner.
Those going to bed and the ones who cannot sleep.
Can you feel them?
The stillborn and the unborn – hanging onto time. In the corridors, behind
closed doors, on the first floor, the second floor, the third floor. In room
number 2, room number 18, room number 10.

Let's enter.

2. THE ROOMS

One – All the furniture covered in sheets. The walls wet with mortar
Two – a man praying, his crucifix. The cat and its shadow
Three – All the windows are open
Four – a politician on his knees. Shards of glass everywhere
Five – a confession
Six – an ongoing transaction
a dog barking
a red ball rolling down the stairs.

In room number seven – Nothing.

In room number eight – a bony boy wide awake.
He has wet himself. He does not dear to tell his mother. He stands in the middle
of the room listening.
It's all quiet now.
Nobody shouting anymore.
We see him.
We see him barefoot on the floorboards as he walks over to the door, as he
climbs up on the chair that barricades it, as he puts his eye to the key-whole.
We are right behind him as he looks out and sees – nothing.
Just the hallway.
Just the wall on the other side.
From this angle he cannot see the man face down on the floor. The ring he
clutches in his left hand. His eye swollen.
There he is. Drunk. Asleep. Dreaming.
The boy cannot follow him where he is. Into the dream where he crosses a
bridge in a strange town. Where he holds the boy's hand, lifts him up, where
the sky is all purple and blue.

In room number nine – a radio playing.
Song.
Sun across the floorboards.

In room number ten – A marriage not yet consummated. The groom half
undressed at the edge of the bed. He is hiding his face in his hands,
overwhelmed by lust or by shame.
Down in the restaurant the wedding guests continues to party.

A man has taken off his jacket and the other guests chafe as he buttons up his shirts, showing off his muscular back.

An easter-procession!

A sudden shower ...

Generations that come and go as the church yard is filled by mourners, as accounts are opened and closed – Can you see my face?

It's there in the crowd.

I am looking for you.

In a mirror a mother greets her newborn baby – that's me too.

I am there. Blinking at my reflection.

Night-time now.

The dead on their stretchers as a war breaks out. My face is a gateway – it is a door swinging back and forth between what's private and what's public.

A soldier lights his cigarette. Leaning his back against a basement-door as the judge collapses over his memoirs. His hands shaking as he writes:

– I am trying to write, but I am getting nowhere.

– I awake in the night. I am falling through the corridors.

Sometimes I feel that it's as if it's been all in vain. That I made the one wrong decisions. Passed the wrong sentence.

Am I –

He writes:

– Am I this mistake?

Am I just an unfinished puzzle?

Silence

Yes.

Silence

Did you hear that?

How heavy –

The weight of it

as the judge collapses, as he is already gone, already empty –

He will no longer dream of falling through the corridors, lived life will no longer cling to him like leftovers – and I am a child, here on my own, by the door, on the floor.

Can you see me?

Aren't anybody going to pick me up?

And there are room upon room, stairwell upon stairwell, can you hear the rattling inside the walls, the creaking in the floor – That is time moving.

Steadying itself as it makes up its mind. Sneaking through the corridors, hiding in the corners. Barking like a monkey. Rushing through the centuries, entering spaces, bodies, minds and onwards into other spaces, bodies, minds.

The war is here.

The war is over.

Time for peace

and for what comes after.

The rooms are empty now. Dust falls where it pleases.

The air is hot and heavy.

That is all.

We are all there is:

A convent-girl all alone in her cell.

She is seventeen. She stands terrified of sounds. Shakes as she hears a child

crying. It is her own child, left alone in the woods – is it not, sister?

Sister, look at us.

Just look at us and say it wasn't true:

That it wasn't you.

– It wasn't me.

– It was not my child.

– I did not do it.

– That there is somebody else's child crying.

But still it awakes her at night and she says:

– Don't look at me.

Why do you look at me?

Why do you look at me like that?

Why don't you say something?

Why don't you answer me?

I never said anything.

– You were the one crying, we say.

– I never cry.

– You were scared.

– I am never scared.

– You wanted your mother. You wanted to go home.

– I am fine. I don't want to go home. That's not true! Who told you that! There is nothing wrong with me.

Don't look at me!

Stop looking at me like that!

What are we supposed to tell her?

What should we say?

How can we comfort her?

– It is alright. We are here now.

– You'll be fine.

– No, the winter won't be too cold. You will never shout, cry, despair again.

– We won't look at you.

– See – We've closed our eyes.

– Look – we are not looking at you anymore. We are not even here. We can't even see you any longer.

Short pause

And then – we are somewhere else.

She is no longer with us.

We are in room 32.

How bright it is!

Completely drenched in sunlight.

– Wait. Don't touch.

Just stay still.

Now you can continue.

Come.

Can you see it now?

The open door?

There to the left of the bed?

The sink in the corner.

The carpets.

Can you smell it?

sweet

sickly.

Can you not smell it?

It's still her isn't it

the smell of flesh rotting?

The sun against our face.

The shape of something on the floor.

Now close your eyes.
Wait til you are somewhere else.

Silence

Now you can open them again.

Mmmmm – the smell of honey and rosemary ...

Listens

Spring.
Rain falling against warm cobblestones on a hot afternoon.

That's all:
The key in the lock.
Doors that swings open and that which waits behind them.

No.

Can't we just leave it – the bony boy, the judge, the nun, the voices saying:

– Stay.

– Go.

– Come in.

– You came!

– I have been waiting.

You are finally here.

Finally it's just us.

Finally it's not just me –

And the walls start tumbling

and room number 21 becomes a garden

and there is the sound of a body falling and the silence as it hits the floor

beneath

cocaine white like a seventeen year old girl.

She left it all behind.

She could not sleep, could not eat.

She was homesick.

And the boy puts his eye to the key-whole

balancing on the chair – seeing nothing at first.

Then his father – as he gets up from the floor

stands there

steadies himself.

What do you think, little boy?

Will he stay?

Will he go?

Will he ever come back?

Time is a shadow.

It is a wide-eyed boy.

We are there with him.

We stand in the doorway between what was

and what will be.

We are the mirror where time shows itself

taking on a face:

Yours

mine.

Yours

mine – as room number 11 gets filled up with instruments.

With sunshine.

A litter of kittens.

With whatever.

Look – a road spins out of nowhere lit up like in an old arcade-game.

This is a puzzle

a piece here

and a piece there as the picture completes itself.

I am the room.

You are the key.

What do you see?

Sweatshop – Aleppo

A play for the ear for five voices by Tale Næss

The voices:

Sara

Meriam

The boy

The boy's mother

Meriam's father

1.

The boy (close up):

I had this dream. I dreamt about tree standing tall at the top of a steep hill

By the foot sat two sisters

One of them was you

Meriam (close up):

Me?

The boy (close up):

Yes

Meriam (close up):

I was in your dream?

The boy (close up):

Yes, you were

Meriam (close up):

But I have no sister –

The boy (close up):

I think the other one was Sara

In the dream she did not look like Sara, but I think it was her

Short pause

Meriam (close up):

Go on

The boy (close up):

Well – there was this tree –

and I could follow its roots all the way down under ground

And at its root was this well

and deep down in the well there were cities

cities long forgotten

cities long abandoned with their alleyways and squares

with their mosques, and schools, and libraries where books floated about in
water
darkened by ink
and one of these cities was Aleppo
and I could see your house there
and the stairs leading up to it
and the room where you and your brothers used to sleep
you were there in your bed
all the other beds were empty
and then there was Sara
She was outside the building, throwing pebbles at your window
shouting your name

Far away – as from another time or another room: city-sounds, voices and cries through an open window. The sound of Aleppo before the war.

Sara (back then – shouting from the street):
Meriam!
It's me!
Come out!

Meriam (now – close up):
Did you dream about us?

A window opens

Meriam (back then – answering Sara):
I am not allowed –

The boy (now – close up):
Yes

Sara (then):
Just tell your father
that you are with me – Tell him that
then he'll let you

Meriam (then – shouting):
But I can't – he won't

Meriam's father (then):
Whose there?

You can be thirteen maybe, or
fourteen

Who are you talking to?

And he will not let you out

Meriam (then):
It's Sara

Meriam (now – close
up):

And you saw all that?
My room

Meriam's father (then):
Shut that window

and my brothers beds – and

Listen to what I am saying, – just shut

The boy (now – close up):
Yes

that window
Nobody is leaving this house today

Silence. Now.

The boy (now– close up):
And at the end of the well, there was an ocean I think
sun on the waves
and sometimes –
 boats –
 the whole ocean covered by boats

A voice outside his door

The boy's mother (now):
Are you in there?

What are you doing?

The boy (now):
Nothing, mum

The door opens

The boy's mother (now):
Who were you talking to?

The boy (now):
Me?

The boy's mother (now):
I thought I heard voices.

You are up
Can't you sleep?

The boy (now):
–

The boy's mother (now):
No, of course you can't. It's impossible. Just plain impossible.

Are you hungry?
Shall I bring you something to eat?

Did you have one of those dreams again?

The boy (now):
I'm fine mum. Don't worry.
I'm going to bed now.

The boy's mother (now):
So –

What did you see?
In your dream?

Was I there?

Your father?

Did he say something?
In your dream, – did he say something?

The boy (now):
It was just a dream, mum.

It was just a dream I had.

The boy's mother (now):

—

Do you want me to stay a while?

The boy (now):

No

The boy's mother (now):

I don't mind

The boy (now):

Really mum. I'm fine.

I am going to bed now.

The boy's mother (now):

Give me a shout then, if you need anything.

The door closes behind her.

Silence

The boy (now – close up):

Meriam?

Are you there?

She is gone. She won't be back for a while.

Short pause

Meriam (now – close up):

Tell me about my brothers

In your dream, did you see them?

The boy (now – close up):

No

Meriam (now – close up):

You didn't see any of them?

Feisal? Or Wahel?

The boy (now – close up):

I saw Roch

Meriam (now – close up):

Roch?

The boy (now – close up):

I did not see your brothers, but I saw Roch. And Fares

He was cycling through town with a box of chickens on the back of his bike

Meriam (now – close up):

Nobody's seen Fares or Roch in months

Not since they volunteered

The boy (now – close up):

I saw him

Face down at the bottom of ditch

Meriam (now – close up):

I don't like it when you talk like that

The boy (now – close up):
You wanted to know

Meriam (now – close up):
I wanted to know about my brothers

The boy (now – close up):
And I dreamt about Roch
I can't decide what I am going to dream about, Meriam

Meriam (now – close up):
–
And if you could?

The boy (now – close up):
If I could what?

Meriam (now – close up):
If you could decide what you were going to dream about

The boy (now – close up):
–

Meriam (now – close up):
If you could decide and you had a dream about my brothers, what would you –

The boy (now – close up):
Meriam –

Meriam (now – close up):
I just – if you just – if you could only –

You never see them?
You do not see them at all?

Silence

The boy (now – close up):
This is what I dreamt – You were standing at the foot of a tree
Sara was there and when you turned around you saw a kind of opening
a door
and then –
It's hard to explain
It's as if everything grew darker
Just this darkness
and you were running

Meriam (now – close up):
–

The boy (now – close up):
And I think it was raining

Meriam (now – close up):
Why was I running?

The boy (now – close up):
I don't know
You were just running
Maybe you felt like it
It had been such a long time – such a long time since you were last running like
this
such a long time since you've been outside

Meriam (now – close up):
Where am I heading?
To your place?

The boy (now – close up):
No.
You are not here. Not in Aleppo

Meriam (now – close up):
Then where am I?

The boy (now – close up):
In a city

Meriam (now – close up):
What city?

The boy (now – close up):
A big city

Meriam (now – close up):
—
Am I all alone?

The boy (now – close up):
I think Sara is there.

Meriam (now – close up):
Sara?

The boy (now – close up):
She is waiting for you. In your room. Where you live

Silence

Meriam (now – close up):
Can you dream stuff that are going to happen?

The boy (now – close up):
I'm just guessing, Meriam
I'm just guessing

Silence

A beat

The boy (now):
Meriam?
Meriam, are you there?

Silence

The boy (now):
Meriam – I can't hear you
Talk to me

Silence

The sound of the city
Of war maybe, coming closer

The boy (now – close up – addressing himself):
Sometimes I dream that everything is like it used to be:
Meriam in the house next door
Sara in her yellow dress

Fares on his bike crossing the roundabout with a box of chickens
on the back, but I know that it's over. That they are all gone
Soon we'll be the only ones here

2.

The boy (now – close up):
I dream I get stabbed in my thigh, in my neck, in my chest
I dream that they cut my throat
I awake and I'm live
I awake
and I'm live
I am awake and I'm alive

Meriam says:
I wish I never met you

I say:
I am here now

We share an apple

I think:
Soon, she is going to kiss me
Or I am going to kiss her

She says:

Meriam (then):
What do you think?
What do you think is going to happen
next?

The boy (now – close up):
She is standing right beside me
She says: Tell me about my brothers
She says: Tell me where they are

Meriam (then):
Why can't you tell me about me about
my brothers?

In my dream we are walking through acers
of golden wheat
She says:

Tell me!
Tell me about your dreams

The boy (then):
You must go home now, Meriam
Your father is looking for you

And your father chases you away from the window

Meriam (then):
I hate him
I hate him

And there is shooting in the northern hills
And you are wearing that red sweater
and I take your hand –

He won't let me out

the boy (then):

You are the only one he's got

Your father wants to take you away from here
He used to have five children
now you are the only one
Do you hear me?

Meriam (now – close up):
I hear you

Silence

The boy (now – close up):
We are standing outside the grocery shop
All the others have gone home
The streets are empty and I take your hand

The boy (then):
They've all left

And I bite into the apple
and you bite into the apple
and the street
the houses
your face
everything around us all of a sudden
all lit up

Meriam (then):
I know

and I say:

The boy (then):
Soon we'll be the only one here

3.

The boy (now – close up):
I see you.
You do not notice it, but I see you

Meriam (now – close up):
Where are we?

The boy (now – close up):
You're in your room

Meriam (now – close up):
Where?

The boy (now – close up):
In Turkey
In Izmir
You have travelled here by bus
You've been here several months now
You are safe
You are waiting
You are waiting for them to come and take you away from here

Meriam (now – close up):
Can you see all that?

The boy (now – close up):
Yes

Meriam (now – close up):
Where we are?
What we are doing

The boy (now – close up):
It's early morning
Soon the shop on the first floor will open and the old girls next door will put the
kettle on
and the sisters from Yarmuk have already finished their breakfast
soon they will start swiping the stairs, as the owners gets the goods ready
as he opens the till
checks the front door, the back door, that all is as it should be

Sara is still asleep
You do not have the heart to wake her

Meriam (in Izmir):
Sara
Sara, wake up

In the room in the basement
the sowing machines stand lined up and ready

Meriam (in Izmir):
Sara. Get up

and in the attic, in the storage rooms, the boxes
stand fully loaded
with zippers and fabrics
hooks and threads

Shall I put the kettle on?

And a truck unloads its goods in the back yard
And box upon box gets filled in the basement
of orange and blue life vests
of yellow and grey – and all the time
all hours of the day – that low humming of the sowing machines

Nobody else knows
Nobody else knows what you're lives has become
That you are not even allowed to talk to anyone
To open the door, walk the streets, and it is driving you crazy
You cannot leave the house
They have your papers
they won't let you out of their sight
all this silence
all this waiting and you open up the window and you:

The sound of a window being opened and the city outside

Meriam (in Izmir – shouting out the
window):
Aaaaaaaahhhhhhh!

Sara (in Izmir):
Shut that window!
Shut that window, Meriam – stop making
a racket
You are not supposed to open it –

Meriam (now – close up):
And then –

The boy (now – close up):
Sara closes the window
The whole day goes by –
you sit bent over the material
a zipper
a lining – in a room hazed by dust

Meriam (now – close up):
What are we making?

The boy (now – close up):
Life wests

The sound of the sowing machines

The boy (now – close up):
You start with the front
Then you do the back
Then the zipper

Filling it with foam
Securing the seams

And then the next
And then another one
This one is for a child
size 6–9

Sara (in Izmir):
Can you pass me a piece of that foam?

And a zipper

No, – not that one. That's too long

Short pause

Sara (in Izmir):
So, where did you meet him?

Meriam (in Izmir):
Who?

Sara (in Izmir):
That boy
The one who's dreams came true?

Meriam (in Izmir):
At Fares

Sara (in Izmir):
And his dreams come true?

Meriam (in Izmir):
Fares said so

Sara (in Izmir):
Fares
Never believe a word he is saying.
—
Did he walk you home?

Meriam (in Izmir):
Who?

Sara (in Izmir):
That boy –

Meriam (in Izmir):

No!?

Sara (in Izmir):

Did Fares walk you home?

Meriam (in Izmir):

Nobody walked me home.

It wasn't like that

then

One could walk wherever – take the buss

It wasn't like it is here – now – There –

Sara stops sowing

The boy (now – close up):

I see them

I sleep – and I see them

I am awake – and I see them

Sara says:

Sara (in Izmir):

Imagine. Of all possible places we had to end up here.

I told him. I told Roch last time we chatted –

Never ever, ever am I going to stay here

in this shithole – Never

This is a really, really C R A P P Y place

I told him

I'ts just not on

Meriam (in Izmir):

–

Sara (in Izmir):

I just don't get it.

Of all places in this whole fucking universe we had to end up here in the crappiest of all the crappy cities on the planet – and you know as well as I – that there is no such thing as dreams coming true –

I asked Roch about it and he said so.

All that is just superstition, he said. It's just something Fares made up, and Meriam, – Meriam, she is just a stupid little country girl – just like her brothers. Peasants, the lot of them. He said so.

Meriam (in Izmir):

Don't talk about my brothers –

Sara (in Izmir):

For all I know it's just some story you two have made up

The boy (now – close up):

Meriam says:

Don't talk about my brothers –

Sara (In Izmir):

Could you just tickle my back?

The boy (now – close up):

Sara is sifting through a magazine
She says:

Please
Just a little

You have taken the bus all the way here
All the way to Turkey

No, – don't stop

Imagine if we just could stay like this. All
day
Every day

Your father arranged it
You are supposed to wait for them here

A bit further down.
There – that's lovely

They'll come and get you
Later
when everything is ok

Meriam (in Izmir):
Do you like it like that?

then you all can go together, to Europe

Sara (in Izmir):
Mmm –
You're the best

So – what did he say?
That boy which dreams come true?
Had he dreamt about you?

Meriam (in Izmir):
–

Silence

The boy (now – close up):
Sara and Meriam
Meriam and Sara –
You have a room
a kettle
a small fridge

They have your passports
They have given you these jobs
You fill the life vests with foam
and when the job is done
You will get your passports back

One vest consists of 48 pieces
You've counted them
You count them

Meriam counting

Meriam (in Izmir):
One, two, three, four, five ...

The boy (now – close up):
And you pick up a piece of fabric
then another
then another
You are counting pieces
The cords

The lining at the front left
The lining at the front right
And you keep on counting

24, 25, 26 –

Sara (in Izmir):
Why are you counting?

Meriam (in Izmir):
Twelve, thirteen, fourteen ...

Meriam (in Izmir):
11, 12, 13, 14

Sara (in Izmir):
Who do you think decides which colour
they use?

Meriam (in Izmir):
I think they just use the cheapest fabric
they can get hold of

Sara (in Izmir):
Yes – but it's a real funky colour this one

Look – that's wrong –
You are doing it wrong
That section is in two parts
Two parts, Meriam
You need to cut that in two

Sara (in Izmir):
That's two different parts you have
there!

Meriam (in Izmir):
Hush
I will get it all wrong if you keep on
shouting like that –

492
492 different parts

Yesterday I finished twelve vests – all
together with all the pieces, the zippers
and lining
that's 492 different parts all together.

Sara (in Izmir):
How does it matter how many pieces
there are?

Pause

Sara (in Izmir):
What, Meriam? What!

What are you laughing at?

Me?

What are you doing?

Stop that!

Stop throwing things at me?

The boy (now – close up):
For a long time, all I saw was darkness
Just darkness
No trees, no sweatshop, no Sara, no Meriam

Meriam (in Izmir – throwing a tube of
glue at Sara)
Take this one!
And this!

Just darkness

Darkness as I closed my eyes and darkness
as I opened them

Sara (in Izmir):
Stop!

Meriam (in Izmir – throwing a roll of
fabric at Sara)
And this!

Sara (in Izmir):
Meriam – stop it!

Laughter. Breathing
Just breathing

The boy (now – close up):
At first it was like an echo

Meriam (in Izmir – short of breath):
Foam does not float, you know

and I knew what it was

Sara (in Izmir – short of breath):
I know
I'm not stupid
Sometimes I think that you think I am
stupid, but I'm not

It's that kind of dream that you dream

while you're awake
You think I'm stupid
but I am not

It was driving me crazy

Meriam (in Izmir):
They fall over board, you know

I was awake – and I was dreaming

(making a ghostly voice)
they faaaall

Sara (in Izmir):
–

Meriam (in Izmir):

I was awake – and I was dreaming

I was under water

I was drowning and I was still alive /

/ and all around me

/ everywhere

all these bodies

white, naked, skinny
 old and young
 mothers and fathers
 sons and daughters

brothers
and sisters

A beat

The boy (now – close up):
Sara writes Roch with capital letters on the mirror
Sara writes Roch with crayons on the floor
With lipstick
With whatever she can get hold of
She writes Roch on her arms
on her thighs
she lies on her back looking at her hands

She gets up
She's on her mobile
She puts on her headphones

Meriam says:
He is not there

Meriam (in Izmir):

I've seen it
They buy these fake life vests, thinking
they are for reel – and then they feel all
safe and secure and then /

(in a whispering voice)
they faaaall

Sara (in Izmir – in a low voice):
Stop

Meriam (in Izmir):
– and then the foam gets filled with water
and then /

they sink
They sink and they sink
Deeper, deeper

Meriam (in Izmir):
Deeper and deeper –

Sara (in Izmir – a bit higher):
Stop it

Just stop!

Meriam (in Izmir):
And then the foam becomes wet and
heavy
And then

They just keep on sinking

Sara (in Izmir):
Can you stop it!

I'm telling you – he is not there
He wasn't online yesterday –
he won't be online today

Sara (in Izmir):
I'm not talking to you

Meriam (in Izmir):
He won't answer

Sara (in Izmir):
I am not talking to you
I am talking to Roch

Meriam (in Izmir):
He's not there
He is not on Facebook
He's not chatting
All the time you say that he is there, – but he is not.
You are just pretending to be chatting with him.

Sara (in Izmir):
Says whom?

Meriam (in Izmir):
You are just pretending to annoy me
He's gone

Sara (in Izmir):
He's not gone
He's fine
Roch's fine
He is not like your stupid brothers
He'll make it
He always does
He's just

Meriam (in Izmir):
If that's what you want to believe

Sara (in Izmir – she gets up):
I hate this place!
I hate this job!
I hate you

Meriam (in Izmir):
Wow – that's a really, really grown up thing to say
Really, really mature

The boy (now – close up):
Sara takes a life vest

Meriam (in Izmir):
Sara

She starts tearing up the seams

You – I did not mean to
Sara

She starts pulling out the foam – then she
takes another

What are you doing?

Stop it!

and another
She is shouting
She is pulling them apart
There is no stopping her

Why are you tearing them apart?

She is going through a pile
Tearing it all to shreds
Throwing them on the floor
Stepping on them

Meriam (in Izmir):

Sara!
You mustn't
You can't –
Give me that! That there is a whole day's work!

Sara!
Don't!
Sara

The boy (now – close up):
She pushes her aside

Sara (in Izmir):
Let me!

Meriam (in Izmir):

I'm sorry
I was just kidding – sure you will hear from Roch
Sure there will be a message for you – just wait and see

Sara (in Izmir):
Let me be!

Meriam (in Izmir):

Sara stop it!

The boy (now – close up):
Sara turns the table
Sara breaks a mug

Sara (in Izmir):
Leave me alone!

Meriam (in Izmir):

Look at me, Sara!
Look at me!

Breathing

They are standing in chaos. In rolls of
fabric, of broken life vests, in piles of
zippers and foam

Silence

Sara (in Izmir):

Oh no.
Oh no, oh no.

Oh Sara – you shouldn't have
Oh dear – What have I done

What are we going to do now?

What are we going to do? Meriam?
What shall we say?

What will they say?
Oh no
I've ruined everything, haven't I?

Meriam, say something.

Silence

A beat

The boy (now – close up):
Meriam walks through fields of corn
Meriam cuts her hair off with a knife
She is knee deep in sand
She wipes off her mouth, her face
She is talking to her brothers
She says: Here, but no further
She says: This is my place now
She is stamping her feet
She whispers:
Sara
My sister
Why is it so dark?
She is lying at the bottom of the stairs
A man stands over her with his fist raised
He is hitting her repeatedly
He owns the floor she is lying on
The food in her mouth
The clothes she is wearing
Her skirt is black as tar around her ankles
He hits her with his hand, with his knuckles
She has closed her eyes
She stands facing a field of corn
she walks through it
At the end she can see them
she has five brothers
they are waiting for her
She tries to speak, but her mouth has deserted her, and his fists rains down on
her
She is a desolate building
She is as barren as bone
Look
look at her sinking
Sinking into a mountain of orange
of soft foam

Meriam (in Izmir):
Sara

Sara
I cannot breathe

I cannot breathe, Sara

Sara (in Izmir):
Take my hand!

Meriam (in Izmir):
I can't breathe

Sara (in Izmir):
Take my hand, Meriam

Stand up
Come on!

He has left now
You have to get up before he comes back –

Do it
Take it.
Take my hand

That's the way.
That's my girl
I knew you could do it.

Just hold on to me
Just hold on to me, you are alright now.

Look at you

Look at me

Let me wash your face

Silence – for a long time

Meriam (in Izmir):
We lived –

Sara (in Izmir):
Hush

Meriam (in Izmir):
We lived in the smallest village

Sara (in Izmir):
Hush
Don't talk

Meriam (in Izmir):
It must have been the smallest village in the whole world
Three houses
Just rocks
Sara – do you hear what I am saying?

Sara (in Izmir):
I hear you
Hush – You don't need to say anything
You don't need to talk
Don't talk, Meriam
You don't need to say anything

Meriam (in Izmir):
Oh – Christ I'm thirsty

Could you get me some water?

Sara (in Izmir):
Here

Meriam drinks

Sara (in Izmir):
You didn't have to do it
You did not have to say it was you – you who did it
You really didn't
When it was me
I who did it

There was no need for it

Meriam finishes drinking

Meriam (in Izmir):
Thanks

Sara (in Izmir):
Let me have a look at that eye
Shit

Don't touch it!
Leave it alone –

You did not need to
Say what you did – when it was never –
he never ever would have hit me
He never has
Meriam

He's never hit me

Silence

The boy (now – close up):
How quiet it is

Meriam (now – close up):
Yes
What is it – are you crying?

The boy (now – close up):
Am I?

Meriam (now – close up):
We'll manage

The boy (now – close up):
Will we?

That's what they tell us, isn't it?
That we are going to manage it.
That everything is going to be alright –
and we believe it, don't we?
They tell it to us, and we believe them:
The life vests will keep us afloat
Your brothers will come home
We will all soon be home again
Things will get better, you'll see
As soon as we get the job done
As soon as the war is over
As soon as we pay for the food,
for the journey, for the room

Sara (in Izmir):
Hush
Hush Meriam

Hush – It's alright
I promise

All you need is just a little bit of rest
There you are

Sara is here
I'm here
Sara will look after you

4.

The boy (now – close up):
I am not dreaming
I am wide awake
Sara is bony and restless
She is grasping for Meriam
for her hand in her sleep
she cannot find it
She is not there
She is somewhere else – she is pacing the room
She leaves it
She is standing in the hall
It's night-time
She knows it won't work
That she has nowhere to go
– What will you do without money?
Out there without anyone
She stands there
I see you
You want to leave this place and never come back,
but you don't know how

Meriam (now – close up):
You see me?

The boy (now – close up):
Yes

Meriam (now – close up):
Are you there?

The boy (now – close up):
I am here

Meriam (now – close up):
We are there together?

The boy (now – close up):
We're in the hallway

Meriam (now – close up):
Everybody else is asleep

The boy (now – close up):
Yes

Meriam (now – Close up):
So what happens now?

The boy (now – close up):
I am where you are

Meriam (now – close up):
Where are we going?

The boy (now – close up):
Where do you want to go?

Meriam (now – close up):

Out

Am I going out?

The boy (now – close up):

Yes

Meriam (now – close up):

No

I do not have the courage

The boy (now – close up):

But you do it anyway

Meriam (now – close up):

I am leaving the building

What am I doing?

The boy (now – close up):

You are running

You are running down the street

You are running in the rain

You haven't been running for the longest time

But now you are

You are running like it's no tomorrow

Through streets and alleys

Past shops selling life vests and kitchen appliances

past supermarkets and petrol stations

Meriam (now – close up):

Where am I going?

The boy (now – close up):

Away from here

You are standing in a roundabout

Izmir is all around you

It's a breathing, living, giant animal

You have made up your mind

You are going to find your brothers

Meriam (now – close up):

Yes

Why are you dreaming this?

Never mind

I like it

In a dream, everything is possible – right?

If you dream this, then anything could happen?

The boy (now – close up):

I don't think this is my dream, Meriam

Meriam (now – close up):

It isn't?

The boy (now – close up):

No.

Meriam (now – close up):

–

Is it me?

Is it me – dreaming you?

It this my dream? And in this dream I can be anywhere I want?
Even in your room?

The boy (now – close up):
Even in my room

In the boy's room in Aleppo
Maybe sounds of war

Meriam (now – close up):
It's so stuffy in this place
Why can't we open the window? Let in some air?
Just for a minute?

She opens the window
The sound of gunshots in the distance

Meriam (now – close up):
Did you here that?

They listen

Meriam (now – close up):
Is it getting closer?

The boy (now – close up):
Yes.
Every day a little closer

Meriam (now – close up):
And no lights
Why do you have the light on? Nobody else in the city has the lights on
Shouldn't we turn the lights out?

The boy (now – close up):
Wait
Wait just a moment –
I want to see you

Steps outside the door

The boy's mother (now):
Are you there?
Are you still awake?

The boy (now – close up):
Hush

The boy's mother (now):
Why have you turned the lights on?

The door opens

The boy's mother (now):
I'm coming in – But darling – Turn it off at once! You can not have the lights on
–
And the window is open – Why did you open that window!
You can't – You just cannot do things like that!

He shuts the window

The boy's mother (now):
Christ, how many times do I have to tell you!
You know that – standing here with all the lights on and the window

Turn it off
You are not the only one living in this building!

What were you thinking about!
You're just like your father

The boy (now):
—

Silence

The boy's mother (now):
But darling boy – what's the matter?
What's on your mind?

You know that you just cannot turn the lights on like that

The boy (now – close up):
In the dream I am not here
In the dream I cross a border
In a dream you are running in the rain

What's the matter?

Meriam (now – close up):
Yes

The boy (now):
It's —

The boy's mother (now):
It's?

The boy (now):
In the dream I am not alone
In the dream you are with me
You are in my room
We have turned the lights on
My mother is there together with us
In a moment, she will be leaving

Meriam (now – close up):
I know

The boy (now):
Nothing

The boy's mother (now):
I don't understand

The boy (now):
It just isn't – working

The boy's mother (now):
What's not working?

I don't know what to say —

Those dreams – it will pass

The boy (now):
Do you believe that?

The boy's mother (now):
I don't know what to believe – but you have to sleep
You cannot be afraid of going to sleep every night
You wear yourself out —
Just one more night
One more night – you can do that?

The boy (now):

–

The boy's mother (now):

Go to bed now

Tomorrow – everything will be alright

I promise

Silence

Meriam (now – close up):

Has she left?

The boy (now – close up):

Yes

Meriam (now – close up):

Are we still here?

The boy (now – close up):

No – not any more

We are some place else

On a beach

You have a life vest in your left hand

Meriam (now – close up):

What do we see?

The boy (now – close up):

The ocean

Boats

Meriam (now – close up):

What do I see?

The boy (now – close up):

Boats approaching

People waiting by the shore – your father, your mother and – /

Meriam (now – close up):

– my brothers –

I can see them!

The boy (now – close up):

– your father's taking hold of the stem

Meriam (now – close up):

I try to wave to him, but he does not see me

They are there

all of them

the boy (now – close up):

They are boarding the boats now

Picking up their luggage – and you can hear your fathers voice

He is saying: We can do this

Meriam's father (in the dream)

We can do this

We are going to be fine

We are going to be fine

And your mother climbs on board

And your brothers climb on board

Meriam (now – close up):
and I run towards them

No!
Leave that

And I shout
And nobody hears me

Just leave that bag
There is no way we can bring it all

The boy (now – close up):
And they have started the engines

Sound of boats starting up their engines

The boy (now – close up):
And your brothers /

Meriam (now – close up):
climb on board
and the boats leave the shore

The boy (now – close up):
You are there
standing at the beach

Meriam (now – close up):
They are alright, – aren't they?
They will make it – won't they?

The boy (now – close up):
–

Meriam (now – close up):
The sea is smooth, and grey and shiny
The boats are heavy in the water

They are slowly filling up
There is water to the brim
They are going to sink, aren't they?

The boy (now – close up):
And you wade into it

Meriam (now – close up):
Look at them!

The boy (now – close up):
You are wading to your knees, your hips, your breasts

Meriam (now – close up):
Look at that man
Lifting his child
Lifting his child out and away from the water

The boy (now – close up):
You are in water until your neck

Meriam (now – close up):
Why must I see this?

The boy (now – close up):
I don't know

Meriam (now – close up):
Why must I see this?

The boy (now – close up):

–

Meriam (now – close up):

There is water all around me

The boy (now – close up):

Yes

Meriam (now – close up):

It's freezing. I'm wet

I'm alone

I am afraid. I don't want to be here!

The boy (now – close up):

I am here

Meriam (now – close up):

I cannot stay here

The boy (now – close up):

We can hold on to each other

Meriam (now – close up):

We cannot stay here

The boy (now – close up):

I've got you

Meriam (now – close up):

You've got me

The boy (now – close up):

I'll hold on to you /

Meriam (now – close up):

I don't want to do this anymore

They won't make it, will they!

They won't!

I'm afraid

Wake me up!

Silence

A beat

Meriam (now – close up):

It was just bad luck

That

boat was not good enough

The boat was shit, that's all

Short pause

Sara (in Izmir – far away)

Meriam!

Meeeriam!

Did you hear that?

The boy (now – close up):

–

Meriam (now – close up):
What was that?

Meriaaaam

The boy (now – close up):
That's Sara

Meriam (now – close up):
What's she doing?

The boy (now – close up):
Looking for you

Where are you!

They listen

Meriam, whe e e e e e e e e e e e are
you!

Far away in the distance, a window is opened. We can hear the sounds of a big city, – Izmir

Meriam (now – close up):
No – don't open the window-
Leave it alone Sara!
Leave it.
They don't like it!
Shut it!

Just shut that window!
Stop calling my name!

Silence

Meriam (now – close up):
Am I awake now?

The boy (now – close up):
Soon

Long silence

Meriam (now – close up):
I dream that there are five ways to die
A bullet in the back
drowning in ones own spit
while watching the roof collapse
having ones neck broken
being buried in rubble

I dream of captivity
of starvation
of a knife through my cheek, my chest
cut wide open and it isn't me
It's my dream – but it
Isn't me
I'm awake and I'm alive
I'm awake and I'm alive

The boy (now – close up):
Sara is wearing a yellow dress
her face is the sun rising

Meriam's in the hallway

Wait Sara
Don't call anybody

Don't go running down the stairs
Don't go knocking on those doors
Do not wake the aunts
the owner
the sisters in the front room
she's here
She's on her way back
Soon
Soon
Soon – you will see her

Silence

Meriam enters the room

Meriam (in Izmir):
Hi

Sara (in Izmir):
Where have you been?

Why don't you answer me?

Come over here!

Meriam (in Izmir):
Ouch!!

Sara (in Izmir):
Your soaked.

Take off that jumper.
Just do what I tell you to

Be still!

Now – let me dry your hair

Don't move
Christ – I've been waiting and waiting – I thought I was going to go mad – all
night long, all night long, Meriam

And the stockings!

Here
Lift your arms up
Just lean on me
Just do it – you are shivering girl

Silence

A beat

Sara (in Izmir):
Where have you been

Meriam (in Izmir):
Out

Sara (in Izmir):
Out?

Whereabouts – “out”?

Meriam (in Izmir):
–

Sara (in Izmir):
Stop kidding with me –

Meriam (in Izmir):
–

Sara (in Izmir):
So where did you go?
Where did you go?
Where?

Meriam (in Izmir):
Just out

Sara (in Izmir):
Without me?

Meriam (in Izmir):
I just had to

Sara (in Izmir):
Alone?
Leaving me here

Meriam (in Izmir):
Sara
I'm here now

Sara (in Izmir):
–

So – what did you do?!?

Meriam (in Izmir):
I ran

Sara (in Izmir):
–

Silence

Meriam (in Izmir – in a low voice)
We can't stay here
I can't stay here

Sara (in Izmir):
And then you thought – that you – out there
But how?
Where would we go?
What would we do, Meriam?

I mean – where would we live
On the street like?
You and me
On the street?

No way
There is no way I can do that
I'll wait here
Until we hear from them
Until they come and get us

Just say it

Just say that we are not going anywhere

Say it!

Meriam (in Izmir):
We are not going anywhere

Silence

Meriam (in Izmir):
We'll be fine
All will be fine, Sara

Sara (in Izmir):
No, it won't. He'll beat the shit out of us.
They'll kill us if he finds out that you've been out.
Promise never to do that. Promise that you will never do that again

Meriam (in Izmir):
I promise
Sara
I'm here now
I promise

The boy (now – close up):
Meriam is in Sara's embrace as the sun
traverse the city smoky brown

Sara (in Izmir):
Can't you sleep?

Meriam (in Izmir):
It's just my eye

Sara (in Izmir):
Does it hurt?

When you went out –

Meriam (in Izmir):
The door was open

Sara (in Izmir):
What was you thinking?

Meriam (in Izmir):
I wasn't

Sara (in Izmir):
You just

Meriam (in Izmir):
I just
I had to get away from here /

Sara (in Izmir):
And then you ran
down the streets

Meriam (in Izmir):
I couldn't let it pass
Him hitting me
They've taken everything
It just won't do

I won't have it – for my brothers
for you
for us

It can't go on like this

The boy (now – close up):
And so you went out
running through the rain
not able to stop

and then you saw this bus shed

Meriam (in Izmir):
All I wanted was to sit down
Just sit – for a while – away from the rain
To get my breath back

The boy (now – close up):
And your eye hurts and your mouth
aches

Meriam (in Izmir):
I thought – but this – this just won't do
I just had to get out of that place
It was intolerable

I just had to rest for a while – and I sat there
In the shed
and the rain fell
and I must have dozed off for a moment
and then

Sara (in Izmir):
And then

Meriam (in Izmir):
And then I was back here with you

Silence

The boy (now – close up):
Meriam with her back to the world
Meriam in somebody else's dream
Meriam – the sister who has no brothers
Meriam in nothing but darkness
She says:
Wake me

5.

The boy (now – close up):
I am dreaming everything back to what it was:
Fares cycling down the street with a box of chickens on the back of his bike
Meriam eating an apple
Her red jumper
Her hand on mine and the whole world all of a sudden all lit up

Fares' shop
the dogs
the kids
the streetlights
the back yards
the evening sky

I am in what might be the last night or the first night

I've dreamt it many times before
There are so many dreams
One on top of the other

Meriam (in Izmir – talking to Sara):

I dreamt about the two of us
We were walking across Europe
crossing the Turkish border
the Serbian border and onwards through Russia and it was winter
it just kept on snowing
as we crossed yet another border on our bikes
deep in snow

It was such a strange dream
This place we came to – it was so forsaken, so barren
You hardly saw a face
Just the road we were on and then a church
and a few miles later
a store
and there
there was a school
and people welcoming us
they've put mattresses down on the floor /

Sara (in Izmir – continuing the story):

And the first night we sleep there
In that school – and the next day the school is a hotel and we take the elevator
All the way up to the top
The tenth floor, the twelfth floor
And there
All the way up at the top there is a Jacuzzi and everything /

Meriam (in Izmir):

Not in my dream it wasn't

Sara (in Izmir – just continuing on her version of the dream):

And from up there we could see everything
The store
And the church
And kids on their way to school
Everything
An aeroplane taking off
The sea
And tons of islands
And far out there big tankers
and all the way over to the other side
to the United States and Turkey and Aleppo /

Meriam (in Izmir):

– and Roch has just gotten out of bed
He wakes up in the middle of the night thinking about you
He is going to write to you
today
he is going to write to you

Sara (in Izmir):

And here
In Izmir
They are opening the shop on the ground floor
And the aunts are putting the kettle on – and they know nothing about all this
Where we've been

What we've dreamt
What we've seen

Silence

Sara (in Izmir):
And everybody
in the whole of this house
in the whole of this city
in the whole, wide world – /

Meriam (in Izmir):
– None of them knows what we can do

Sara (in Izmir):
That we can cross borders

Meriam (in Izmir):
That you are a supernova

Sara (in Izmir):
That you are a time-traveller

Meriam (in Izmir):
That you are a beam of pure energy

Sara (in Izmir):
That we can bicycle through snowstorms

Meriam (in Izmir):
Cut across Europe when nobody is watching /

Sara (in Izmir):
– through outer space if we want too
That you have kissed a boy who's dreams come through

Meriam (in Izmir):
Almost kissed a boy who's dreams come through

Silence

Sara (in Izmir):
Do you know what I have in my pocket?
A pit
From a plum, from the tree back home

Meriam (in Izmir):
–

Sara (in Izmir):
When we get back
I am going to plant it
I know exactly where I am going to do it
on that sunny spot you know – right behind the shed
right by where the old clotheshorse used to be
The earth is rich there, and one can
bring a chair out, in the afternoons

The boy (now – close up):
Sara is combing her hair
The sun's bright on the floorboards
In the mirror
And you say:

Meriam (in Izmir):
You have such lovely hair, Sara

I wish I had hair like you

The boy (now – close up):
And while you are sitting there, you
discover that
she has grown – Sara

Meriam (in Izmir):
I think you have grown

That soon she will be as tall as you

Christ Sara –
Soon you'll be as tall as me

The sound of war, of Aleppo in the distance as a faint noise

I see them

Gunshots getting closer

I'm asleep, and I'm awake
and I see them
Sara is a flowering tree
Her arms heavy with plums as she keeps
on growing: one meter, two meters
all lit up, as walls tumble

The girls are crossing a cornfield
The field is aflame
and

The sound of gunshots grows loud and clear

The boy (now – close up):
Just wind
Just dancing dust
I'm here
in Aleppo
There is shouting in the street
My mother is with me

The boy's mother (now):
I told you!
Get away from that window!
Get away from it!

The boy (now – close up and soon far away):
And a gunshot breaks the glass
crosses the room and smashes into the wall behind us
And another hits the floor at the left of my feet
and somewhere in the eastern suburb a hospital is turned into rubble
as twelve families gets buried in the rubble
and the window breaks
and my mother opens her mouth to say something – the look on her face
confused, bewildered
and I can feel something warm running down my nose
my cheeks
the taste of metal
And then no more
just the world crowned with light
all white
all shiny
And inside that light I can see Meriam putting her hand on mine
She is a key
she is my second skin
Further down the street Sara runs in her yellow dress
And as she runs – further and further away from us –
her eyes change colour

She is a boy
she is a boy who's dreams come true
She is as sharp as a bird's beak
She is a dried out little heart
She wipes her mouth off her face and we are
nobody
The light surrounds us and we are
nobody

She is running into a crowd
She is surrounded
She is gone and then we
disappear

THE END

Darkness – The enemy inside

*A collaborative play by Kristin Eiríksdóttir, Gianluca Iumiento, Tale Næss, Sigbjørn Skåden og Albert Ostermeier
Assembled by head-writer and dramaturge Tale Næss*

Characters:

Julian
Kate
Emil
Lina
Hunter 1
Hunter 2
and four children pretending to be animals

*All actors are on stage all the time
The scenes and actions run parallel more often than not. Sometimes they overlap*

*The text in italics can be read as stage directions
They could also, or as well, be shared between the performers, read by one actor, or shared between the performers representing the children*

The text in brackets is not to be read

PART 1 – IN THE BEGINNING

*The characters enter the stage
The children are watching from afar
Each of them locked up in a room, in a cupboard, in a grown person's life*

*They own the statue of the little girl with the matchsticks
They own all these Danish statues of white children grimacing
They own these candlesticks
They own these hand-made coasters
They own this African quilt
They own this silk
They own this linen
They own these napkin-rings
They own this silver
They own these silver spoons
They own these silver forks
They own these silver knives
They own this painting of dancing women
They own this painting of a quiet man
They own this painting of forms and colors
They own this Turkish rug
They own this old porcelain
They own this stereo
They own these speakers*

They own this TV
They own this sofa table
They own this chair
They own this chair as well
And this chair
And this chair

The room is empty

Julian:
I had a dream

Kate:
A dream?

Julian:
I saw this rock that looked like a giant head
A face
floating like – And the sun was setting

Kate:
That's beautiful

Julian:
I wouldn't call it beautiful
It was more
It was like floating, tipping ever so slowly – up and down in the water

Kate:
A gigantic face, tipping in the water, as the sun sets
I call that beautiful

(Silence)

Julian:
We have everything we need, don't we?

We do – don't we?

Kate:
Yes, it's so lovely
here on this island – this time of year

Julian:
It's not an island

Kate:
–

Julian:
It's not an island – it's a peninsula.
You keep calling it an island – but it is a peninsula. That's where we live
–
I don't like the way you're looking at me right now

Kate:
How am I looking at you?

Julian
Like It's my fault
Like I've done something wrong
Like I have a smoking gun in my hand

Kate:

I'm looking at you like someone who knows that something is about to happen
Something terrible with our children

*As they speak, the children start filling the room with objects
with china, tables, forks and table clothes
bicycles, books, stairways and staircases
napkins and napkin-rings*

the Squirrel:
Look at this napkin ring!

the Fox:
Look at this picture of white children grimacing

the Squirrel:
Look at this painting of a quiet man

(the Badger picks up battle axe)

the Crocodile:
That's mine!

the Fox:
That's mine!

the Squirrel:
Leave it alone

(The Badger lifts the axe. Swings it)

the Squirrel:
He claimed it!

the Crocodile:
I claimed it!

the Fox:
Watch it – or he'll chop your heads off!

(Laughter)

Lina:
They gritted their teeth and celebrated Christmas together
They only did it for us
They only did it because of us
Because we were their children
She got us and the house and all the stuff but he got nothing at all
He left and she stayed and she never threw anything out
She just packed the drawers without even looking through them,
just bagged them and taped them. There was just this old random mess
To think how she carried this ugly old mug with her, from apartment to
apartment, since early in the nineties

Julian:
It's going to get better

Lina:
So – I saw this badger

Julian:
Where?

Lina:
In the garden

Julian:
Shit. You know, when they bite, they don't stop until they feel the bones

Lina:
Yeah. Until it crunches. It's so nasty

Julian:
Maybe we were all badgers once

Lina:
My husband is one for sure

(Lina does a funny badger face)

Julian:
That's right. That's how he looks! Definitely a badger!

Julian:
Do you think it's gone?

Lina:
What? The badger?

Julian:
Yes, the badger

Lina:
I think it is. I guess it was migrating from the forest to the water or something like that. I'm not an expert
Ah – it's lovely on this island this time of year
Don't you just love the flowers and –

Julian:
It's not an island

Lina:
Excuse me –

Julian:
It is not an island
Don't say that

Lina:
Say what?

Julian:
That it's an island
It's a peninsula

It's inaccurate
An island is inaccurate

An island have water
It's surrounded by water
This is not an island

Lina:
Whatever

Julian:
You all call it an island, but it's not – it's a peninsula, we live on a peninsula, a peninsula that's where we live so why does everybody go on calling it an island!

(A beat)

Julian:

It was not enough

A house, a garden, out of the center, close to the water,
perfect for kids

We came in the marked, such a luck, we were relieved
My wife – She works less, I work more, she wants more, she wants more of me
We went to the mountains, the snow went away ... it's not global warming. It's
spring, we were too late

The children are watching him

A father

A breadwinner

the Squirrel:

Who is there?

Says the Squirrel

the Fox:

Who's there?

Says the Fox

the Crocodile:

That's my father

Says the Crocodile

the Squirrel:

He is funny

the Fox:

He is mental

the Squirrel:

He is /

the Crocodile:

a hyper carnivore apex predator.

(Pause)

Kate:

A friend of mine returned from Peru the other day
He had taken part in this ritual
He had taken this old magic red Indian medicine – this tea called St. Pedro
and he said that it was extra-ordinary
that when he walked on the grass – it was as if it was electric
as if the energy floated from the grass, up through his feet from the earth itself
He touched the water
and it was alive – he touched the stones
and they were warm
He felt this energy flowing through the logs that were holding up the maloca
like this glowing green field surrounding everything – holding everything
together and he said:
You know
all things reach upwards
the trees, the plants – towards the light
and I can't stop thinking about that

I think about it when I shower
when I do my pilates, my yoga
when I drive the children to the kindergarten
go to work
sit there by the drawing board
looking at the city plans
the allotments
the lintels, the buttresses, thinking about the keystones
imagining it all – tied together by this green field of energy – thinking about
high-rises, office blocks, this new apartment block I am working on right
now – Like trees
like plants
stretching themselves upwards – electrified
whole cities held together by this invisible force
even the cells in our body
the molecules in our DNA – and then my heart skips a beat
just skips a beat thinking about what would happen if it disappeared
if the connection all of a sudden broke
the energy gone – if the current turned
how the molecules would fall away from each other
how the cells in our skin no longer would cling to the cells in our flesh
how the buttresses no longer would hold unto the columns as the keystone tore
itself away from the arches, how the arches would collapse
as the streets started to drift away from each other
buildings, rivers, mountains floating in a free falling, tumbling chaos
and I pinch myself
and I look up at the sky
and I look at my children
the way they run, laugh, how they smell in their sleep and I want to hold on to
them
just hold on to them
like tie them to my chest
and never let go

(Silence)

Julian:
We got this second kid
We ended up where she wanted to be
with the kids in this suuuuper Steiner place
a kindergarten in the woods – that is beautiful but not very practical
And then there was this problem
What to do with the car?
This electric car?
So I got this *Quasqai*
It's big. It's safe. It's good for the kids
It drives on gasoline, well hell!
But I just could not get rid of the other one, the electric one – So now I have
two
Two cars

I try to feel good about myself
The planet won't die

Kate:
You are lying

Julian:
Am I?

Kate:
Yes

Julian:

You are right

Kate:
So why did you say it then?

Julian:
For you my dear
For you

*The ferry leaves the shore
a bird in the bushes
a hoover craft
And Julian says:*

Julian:
Let me fuck you up!
Let me give you a good time!
Let me take you for a ride in my Batmobile!

*The Fox lurks under the bed
The Crocodile that is a child makes scary sounds at the breakfast table*

Julian:
Let's face it, this place is unbearable
It's claustrophobic
They all smile at you, they all seem friendly
But deep, deep inside, you have no idea about what they are thinking
And then one day BOOM! You get stabbed!
You get killed! Just like this! BOOM! Without a notice
Paranoia, this is the home of paranoia
And we are all guilty for not screaming, for not opposing
We are all guilty because we prefer to be invisible

PART 2 – THE HUNTERS

*We have water
We have water all around us
We have so much water it feels like an island
An island so huge we almost forget*

*We have seasons, beautiful and long
with colors and leaves and storms
We have it all
We have it all
We have it all*

(The children are running around in circles)

The Squirrel:
I have a tail!

the Fox:
I have a hoof!

the Crocodile:
I have fangs!

the Fox:
I have the sharpest teeth!

The Crocodile:
I have the sharpest teeth, the biggest
grin, superpowers, handicaps, life-skills,

love, a jar filled with sprogs, with
jellyfish, heartache

The Fox:
We have a battle axe!

The Crocodile:
Off with their heads!

The Badger:
Grrrrrooaawllllle

*The children are hiding in the cupboards
In the basements
In the sewers
In the innards of a roundabout
They are bumping into furniture
Into shelves and wardrobe-doors*

the Crocodile:
Look at me now!

Says the Crocodile

the Squirrel:
Look at me now!

Says the Squirrel

the Crocodile:
Listen to the sounds I make

the Squirrel:
Who is to be the bee?

the Fox:
Who is to be the beaver?

the Badger:
Hzzakkkettettethzzz

*This is an island so huge you could even get lost
This is an island so huge we almost forget – its forests and lakes
valleys and mountaintops
beaches and farms
all drowning in the darkness of the woods
littered with rabbit-holes
with fox-holes
dens and hives
two hunters by a creek
waiting for their coffee to boil*

Hunter 1:
Strange. It's a place, out there – where the waves break

Hunter 2:
Yes, that's the Marbakke

Hunter 1:
Marbakken

Hunter 2:
Where it suddenly gets deep

Hunter 1:
I see

(Silence)

Hunter 1:
It's the sun. And the wind, – like now – like a head in the waves. A
daudinghode. Where the waves break. It appears when the wind turns and then
– I've seen it. It breaks the surface – a dead man's head

Hunter 2:
Can't say I have. Seen it, sitting here, seeing the sun go down – I've been here
so many times

Hunter 1:
It's the wind, when it turns. I was a child the first time I saw it. Up by
Krokelta. Its high ground up there. It's easy to see it from up high, but you can
see it here too

Hunter 2:
I've never heard anybody else mention anything like that – that there is a
daudinghode in Vågen

Hunter 1:
They all know it, and nobody talks about it

(Short silence)

Hunter 2:
That guy, Kroken. Wasn't he still around when you were a child?

Hunter 1:
Was he? I don't know. I can't remember

Hunter 2:
He must still have been around when you were that age

Hunter 1:
No. Not in this area. Not as far as I remember

Hunter 2:
It was a shooting accident wasn't it? That deformed his hand?

Hunter 1:
No, he was born that way

*The badger is packing
a battle axe*

The Squirrel:
Where are you going?

The Fox:
He's going nowhere

*He is packing a comb
a torch
a packet of chewing gum*

The Crocodile:
He's going somewhere

The Fox:
Let's get out of here!

Let's just get lost!

The Squirrel:
I am going nowhere

The Fox:
If he's going somewhere – I'm going
somewhere

The Crocodile:
Who is a coward?

Says the Crocodile

The Fox:
Not me!

*Says the Fox:
The badger is humming*

The Squirrel:
Look – if we are going like
for good –
We should bring some cash

The Fox:
We don't need cash

The Squirrel:
We do!

The Fox:
I am bringing my swimsuit!

The Squirrel:
Are we leaving a note?

Says the Squirrel

The Crocodile:
Who is a bat, is a rat, is a beaver?

Says the Crocodile

(Silence
A beat)

Emil:
Come shooting with me

Lina:
Shooting?
At what? What do you want to shoot at?

Emil:
Just at anything at all. We could shoot at some seagulls or at some critters or at
this mug your mother left you that you hate so, so much
or just at the sky ...

Lina:
No thank you. I don't even know you!
Do you have a gun?

Emil:

I have plenty of guns, we could leave right now and I could let you try all sorts of guns, a shotgun, a handgun, a rifle. I even have a machine gun

Lina:

And where could we fire all these guns?

Emil:

At my place

You can sleep at my place

We could drink some more

We could just go on a shooting spree

You could shoot at my stuff

At my paintings

My china

My silverware

My pots and pans

A fox

A badger

My horse

Lina:

Not your horse

Emil:

Not my horses

But anything else

Lina:

Anything?

Emil:

Absolutely anything

Lina:

—

It's just ... I haven't even put on make-up or showered or anything

Emil:

You are fine just the way you are

Lina:

Right.

Emil:

No, I mean it. I prefer you like this

I always like you best just in your leisure wear

Lina:

My husband always says

Emil:

Your husband is a badger

Lina:

But you have never seen me in —

Emil:

It is up to you

Lina:

Hang on

Do I have time to get my purse?

It's just I don't like not having my phone ... or money

Emil:
Just come

*Lina lies deep in grass. Can you see her?
She is a turtle too big for her shell
She is a princess shedding her skin*

PART 3 – CHILDREN ON THE RUN

*The wood is green and deep and endless
there – where four animals are making their way through the thickets
Who is there in the water?
Who is there resting in the woods?*

The Squirrel:
We shouldn't be here

The Badger, The Fox and the Crocodile:
–

The Squirrel:
We are not allowed
You know it
We should not cross that bridge
We should not swim that river

The Fox:
A puddle!

The Crocodile:
Let's cross it

The Fox:
Let's jump it!
Let's splash around

The Squirrel:
I want to go home

The Crocodile:
Here comes the boogiemán

Says the crocodile

The Fox:
Here comes the hammerfish

Says the Fox

Emil:
Have you ever shot a gun before?

Lina:
No, never.
Have you ever shot anyone?

Emil:
Many

Lina:
Who then died?

Emil:

I'm very precise

Lina:

Always in self-defense?

Emil:

What do you think?

Yes, maybe just start with this one. Look, now it's loaded, here, just aim, and pull the trigger

See

Lina:

Wow, it's heavy

Is it still loaded?

Emil:

Yes, just go crazy

Shoot

(Lina goes crazy, shooting at everything
A beat)

The children are crossing the creek

*By a roadside a man stands bent
over a flat tire cursing:*

As he continues to curse

As he calms down.

As he is saying:

Saying:

*Saying: Show me your bags
Show me your hands
Show me your teeth
Show me your hopes and dreams
Show me your secret selves
Show me the way home
Tell me my name
Tell me my name
Tell me my name*

*The children watch him
He is crying*

The Squirrel:

What's wrong with him?

They are never coming home

Bugger

Bugger

*Bugger, ass, puke, shit, bugger! Bugger
me!*

Blasted

Cunt!

Cunt-face!

Ass!

Cunt-ass

*Damn, damned, bugger, ass-bugger,
motherfucker, fuck!*

Fuck, fuck, fuck

I wish I was a child again

I wish I was a child

I wish I was a fireman

*I wish I was a goldfish swimming in my
goldfish-bowl*

Do you have any tranquilizers?

Says the Squirrel

the Crocodile:
He wants a new name

Says the Crocodile

The Fox:
What name shall we give him?

The Squirrel:
Maybe he already has a name

The Fox:
Maybe somebody has taken his name away from him

The Crocodile:
He wants a *new* name, stupid

The Squirrel:
Don't you like your name?

The Fox:
Do we think he deserves one?

The Squirrel:
Everyone should have a name

The Fox:
What kind of name do you want?

The Squirrel:
Like a human name?
Or /

The Fox:
– like our names?

The Squirrel:
I have a name for him!

The Crocodile:
I don't know
He looks like the type who always gets *whateeeever* he wants
and that's /

the Fox:
just never good for anyone

They lead him to a tree
They tie him to the trunk

The Fox:
I am the Fox

Says the Fox

The Squirrel:
I am the squirrel

Says the Squirrel
as they fill his pockets with honey
as they fill his mouth with ants

(A beat)

Lina:
It is so easy!

Emil:
See, I knew you had potential

Lina:
Who would have thought that it could be so rewarding shooting a gun? Just like this, right into the mud, blah blah

—
Remember when you gave me a kiss?

Emil:
When?

Lina:
—
You could do it again sometime

Emil takes off his clothes. Underneath he wears shiny prince costume. Jewels falls from his pockets. He drags a chain of pearls from his mouth and puts it around Lina's neck

PART 4 – LOST

*We have forests
We have lakes
We have mountaintops and valleys
We have all kinds of animals
We have creatures, monsters, trolls
We have hidden places and famous ghosts
We have snow, and rain and even darker days
We have it all and it makes us wonder what's real*

Lina:
I had this dream

Emil:
What dream?

Lina:
Oh – it's silly

Emil:
Tell

Lina:
In this dream, I was a woman
And this woman said –

Lina as the woman
What am I?

(Lina pretends to be an animal)

Emil:
Ok –

Lina:
So what am I?

–

(Lina tries but gives up)

Emil:
What's wrong with you?

Lina:
Nothing's wrong with me
It's just –

Emil:
Come on

Emil as the man
– show me!

Lina as the woman
–

Lina:
No –
Bugger

OK – Wait!

Like this?

Lina as the woman
–

Emil:
I love it
No – I really – Really. That's lovely
Come here
(in a low voice) You are a squirrel – an alley cat – a tiny white mouse

(A beat)

The children are watching from the bridge
Let's cross it
says one
Let's stay behind
says the other

Julian:
I tried to sign up for online dating
I thought there must be some horny women online
There must be other compulsive liars who'd want to have an affair with me
Someone that wouldn't get hurt
Someone open to the terms
We meet we fuck we keep it secret
I was wrong
I couldn't find anyone like that out there
I ended up spending a lot of money fighting online with women that didn't
want to meet
I mean do they think I'm stupid?
That I don't get it?
I know they're paid to entertain me online
To make me feel special
To send me pictures with the hope that one day we will meet or fuck
But the truth is that they are hired by some company to keep me on the website
chatting
And since you pay for each email you send

It's not convenient for them to let you meet out in real life
They're not people that you can actually spend time with or have fun with
You get it?
They meet liars with lies
That's maybe fair
They make their profit off our fucking sorrow
They use people's problems to suck money out of our pockets
Fuck anyway
I felt so useless when I realized I got depressed because some woman I met
online
was probably lying to me
I was so shocked to realize that she didn't find me incredibly attractive
That she was sitting somewhere unknown getting paid to turn me on
Fuck that's humiliating!
I'm tired
I can't be a good person
I don't believe in therapy to change
I don't believe in art anymore as sublimation

I drove the car, the car drove me, in silence, it's electric and it drives in silence
It stopped by the water, and there I saw – the feeling
There I could finally meet it, there it was inside me – For an hour, I was by the
water, waiting, trying to push the pedal, trying to give gas

I smelt shame
I felt narcissistic shame

Kate:
You are lying

Julian:
Yes

Kate:
You don't want to die
You've never even watched online porn

Julian:
No, I haven't

Kate:
It's just something you say to impress me
You've never believed in in art as sublimation

Julian:
Yes, I did!

Kate:
– I know
You are just depressed because some asshole didn't want to put on your
performance, that's all

Julian:
I am depressed because I am losing my hair! That's all!

(A beat)

Lina (shouts):
No
I don't need a bed
No
I don't need sleep
No
Don't need a thing, just a back to push myself against

A resilient back
The real diagnosis is to like me

(Long silence)

*A campfire
Four children pretending to be safe
pretending to be what they want to be: a squirrel, a badger, a crocodile and a fox
Four animals
lighting an engangsgrill
barbequing a chocolate bar and a sandwich and a piece of chicken*

The Crocodile:
Watch out – the chocolate is melting!
I told you
I told you we should have put it on last

The Fox:
Scoop it up!
Scoop it up!
It's just like poo – it's like soup – we could drink it

*Four little animals lighting a fire
It's golden
It sparks
Shines and glistens in the dark far away
Far away from home
That's where they are*

The Squirrel:
Are we really?

The Crocodile:
We are

The Squirrel:
Are we really like lost?

The Fox:
Lost in the woods

The Crocodile:
Not kind of lost but like
– LOST

The Fox:
Totally

The Crocodile:
Like totally fucking lost

The Fox:
Like totally – t o t a l l y /

The Crocodile:
– fucking – /

The Fox:
Like we have to live on roots and moss and shit, right?

The Crocodile:
– lost – Right!

(Silence)

The Squirrel:
I have a can of beans here – if anybody fancies it

The Fox:
Does anybody have a can opener?

The Squirrel:
We could use a stone or something

The Crocodile:
Yeah – let's stone it

They stone the can of beans

Julian:
I thought about taking a lot of pills
I thought about cutting open my veins, going out like a Roman, sitting in the bath and enjoy the end while reading my favorite book, but then I thought, shit, – we don't have a bath. We never had the money to replace our shower with a bathtub. She always complains about it. Says the kids should live in a house with the bath – and anyway – I can't even decide what *is* my favorite book. It all seems so staged, so thought-out
I thought about hanging myself, but it's not so easy. Too many things can go wrong. Maybe the hook isn't strong enough, the rope could break, worst case, you risk hanging a long time before you actually die!
It's like that – That's the terrible thing – like when you have the feeling that you don't even own your own words
Not even your feelings
They are – They are not even like /

Emil:
original?

Julian:
–

Lina:

We know how you feel

Julian:
Yes –
They feel even /

Emil:
– made up?

Julian:
Made up –
the moment you say them – As you say them – As you speak

Lina:
–

Emil:
–

Lina:
I think it's psychological

Julian:
Damned sure it's psychological!

I get so frustrated sometimes
Just so fucking FRUSTRATED -

I just feel like screaming

—

What if I can't function
What if I'm like
 Broken
Like a piece of machinery, like — just
 PUFF — and then — no more
Just like scrap

Lina:
You are not broken

You are not broken, Julian.

(Silence)

Hunter 1:
How high was the river last time you were here?

Hunter 2:

—

Hunter 1:
I don't think I've ever seen it run this high

(Silence)

Hunter 1:
This place is not exactly solskinnslia

Hunter 2:

—

Hunter 1:
But that's where you find them
Krokstavemne
Where there is little sun, and rough terrain
Up this scree, see?
All along Is-skardet the woods are all crooked
Almost no need to do anything but chopping a emne off the tree and then just
carve the bark right off it
You would be pretty silly if you went looking for krokstavemne at the sunny
side of eide
One needs to know these things, there is no point whittling the wood
polishing it — if you have a emne that is as straight as an edge
But who has time these days
As soon as the snow melts, — it's calving, and planting, and there is wood to be
chopped
There is no end to it this time of year
But it's nice
it is
working the wood
when the weather is nice and the summer breezes blows across eide
then this is the place to be, you know
before you have to turn your hand to the firewood
or fishing
or both

(Silence)

Hunter 1:
Who is there?

Hunter 2:
–

Hunter 1:
I thought I heard something

Some children. Laughing -

Did you hear anything?

Hunter 1:
–

(Silence)

Hunter 1:
Can you see that gorge over there, between the mountains?

Hunter 2:
What gorge?

Hunter 1:
There –
When you see it from this direction, it looks like if someone has cracked the mountain right open, – there. That crack over there. Can you see it?

Hunter 2:
Oh yes
Now I see it!

Hunter 1:
They say that one day that crack will just burst open. That it will open itself up into an abyss. No one knows when it will happen. It could be tomorrow – or in a hundred years from now.

(A beat)

Julian
Lately –
I don't know

It's like - I can't find my voice

I wake up, and it's gone
I open my mouth - and it's not there

I can't find my voice and I don't own my own words
Not really
I mean in a way I do

but not really

I don't really own them
I mean, fuck – they are just words
So I try to speak and I just –
No voice – damned it

Kate
He has been saying that he wants to die

– I'm fine with the dying I just hate
all this talk

It's not that I want him dead
It's just
It's just

I am not his art-project
He wants to wear me like a sweater
Sneak around in me
Try to get below the line,
underneath.

I am under a spell
a spell in which my brain is
like a huge maze
at some point
You've come inside the maze

and I am desperately looking for an exit

but I can't find it.
There are more and more alleys
there are more and more walls
there are more

and more problems.
There are more and more
meaningless actions
meaningless relationships
meaningless locations
meaningless dreams
meaningless worries

You know
the earths' crust –

I like that word – crust

We live on these giant plates
and they keep pushing against
each other - pushing and pushing
we are afraid of global warming
but one day

one day

one day in some part of this place
the tension will just be too great

and they will just

break away from each other

Just flip
and crash down
and that will be that

*The children are standing at a clearing
They are waiting for the sun to come out
They are never coming home*

The Squirrel:
I have the prettiest tail in the world!

The Fox:
I have the sharpest teeth!

The Crocodile:
Come on everybody!
This way – Over here!

The Badger
Grrroooowl

PART 5 – THE DARKNESS

*We have forests
We have lakes
We have mountaintops and valleys
We have all kinds of animals
We have it all and we know it's precious
And all we can feel, is the darkness
All we can see, is the darkness
All we can think, is darkness*

(A beat
Julian alone on the stage)

Julian:
in the beginning was the word you
did not hear me did not see me did
not cover your eyes did not hear
a word think a thought did not hear
me breathing your breathing it is for you

I stand in darkness for you I
am night I am the blackness
that surrounds me it's like
the air in your lungs I
pour gasoline over me can
you hear the sound of it like water
heavy water that swirls
that leaps across the wall the
dam that falls to the ground
spreads itself out touches your
feet you stand barefoot in it it folds
around you you do not hear my thoughts
not a word you do not know that
which is going to happen a work of art
that's what will happen we will
make a work of art
that is what you will do you are all there
you are all invited
you are all a part of my story you
are my work of art your lives
your fears your memories
your thoughts your
feelings the fucking that already
goes on in your heads that which you detest
the punches the caresses the way you
can't stop
thinking about your children your cat
and the wind fills the hall
it caresses our necks it is
so cold a rough hand and even
if it is there the air is still
it is all a totally still as if the
air that's there was constituted by our breath as
if in this hall on this peninsula we are
running out of it the air
we breath it stinks soon it will reek of gasoline
I have begged you to come you
all know each other I know you all
you have all become one word for me that's
enough that you are here that you know
why we know each other we
sleep with one another we kill
each other we make each other
sick we love
one another we hate we have
had enough of one another and still
we want more ... that is all
a complete murky darkness ... you
sit here like blind as
you learn to see with your
senses to read with your minds as your fears are being
unlocked the singing in you and your heart breaks out
into the open out of your
narrow chests but you are
caught here in this waiting in this
silence in the silence of the other and the
silencing of others ... as we avoid
each other's gaze
we are on an island of bliss we are
the makers of Utopia that will arise
from the truth that I speak we will
die you and you and
me and you
and your child in your home and the

dog and the deer as the forest burns down as
it all burns down as
the oceans rise aflame you will be
on this island in an ocean of flames you
as the ice turns to heat you are
the heart of my art
the eye of the storm
I have this gasoline and this matchstick with it
I will draw your portraits ... you will
burn for my art for
our joint venture
each and every one of you will become
an artist and as one finally
like one... you take leave of your personalities you
will become pure colours you
will become my colours you
will become all ears you
can hear every word I say

(he lights a match)

you rise as I
burn for you I stand
aflame before your eyes
who of you will take his jacket off which one
of you will take his jacket off and throw it
over me which one of you will try
to put out the fire
... as I run through this dark crowd like
a fireball to put you all alight
you and you
and you and you
and you ...
while we all
turn into language not flesh
not blood not hair heart only
words freedom will blow you wide open turn you into
word-bodies language-bodies all
languages spoken as one
this peninsula is my Babylon and I am
Atlantis...
we are shadows
shadows of words
look
deep inside you there is light
you are all lit up
like through a window you can spot your own
inner selves can you read your
own hearts what is written there
in the dusk
that which makes what's readable
unreadable ...
this night smells of gasoline
hear how I sing

(Sings a children's song. The author suggests this one – see on YouTube: ())

Its night on the island
Julian stands aflame
The crowd is applauding
The Crocodile is asleep
the Squirrel rests all curled up in the arms of the Badger
he is dreaming of candy floss and little brown nuts
Only the Fox is awake

She has gone hunting
She does not care about the stars
She is not gazing into the fire
She is a turtle too big for her shell
She is just like her mother – a wolf devouring a deer
a princess shedding her skin

Julian:

I mean – There is a certain kind of framework that you are supposed to fit into

Consensus paralyses action

I mean – if the idea of what you cannot do is stronger than the idea about what you *can* do

Emil:

Like the sniper

Julian:

What *about* the sniper?

Emil:

When he hits

I mean – there is the voice of reason and then the will to act and then – the sniper

–

These are the days of the sniper

That's what I think

It's all about what you do and what you say

Cause and effect

Cause and effect

Julian:

Like when the link is broken then – If what you say – does not mean anything

Like –

There is no effect

Lina:

And the sniper?

Emil:

That's what I mean

Julian:

You have guns?

Emil:

Yes

So – If the link is broken, then -

Julian:

Why have guns if you are not going to use them?

Emil:

–

Julian:

So – it is the time of the sniper

Just

BANG !

And get it over with

(Silence)

*Who is there in the undergrowth
It is a Squirrel crying in her sleep*

The Squirrel:
I don't want to play anymore
I don't want to pretend anymore
You are all lying!

*Kate is looking for something
She has forgotten what it was and she cannot find it
She is searching through the bread bin
Where are you –*

Where is your den

Kate:
my little Crocodile?

Come out! She cries

– my little Fox?

Come home

Stop hiding!

– and I'll play with you
I'll build you a palace
I'll fill your purses with flagstones and
gold
I'll be the candy-bear
You'll be the boogyman
You'll be the astronaut
I'll be the sun

PART 6 – THE HUNT

*We wonder if we are dreaming
We wonder of the outside
And all we can feel is its darkness
And all we can see it is darkness
And all we can think, it is darkness*

The Fox:
This way

The Crocodile:
This way

(Short pause)

The Squirrel:
Do you think they still remember us?

*The children are leaving the peninsula
They are entering the mainland
moving deeper into the interior – and as they do, they are leaving a trail behind them
a plastic bag
a candy wrap
a cap
the Badgers left shoe
The night is there
the marsh spreads out between the pine trees
pulling at their roots as the puddles grow darker*

Hunter 1:
Hey – did you hear that?

Dead?

Lina:

Yes

It's just. It's not as if you would be missing much.

I mean, what would you miss? Your thoughts?

Emil:

No ... I certainly wouldn't miss them much.

You?

Lina:

But still – I'm not going to shoot myself.

Emil:

It's a possibility

Lina:

–

Emil:

I've always considered it a possibility. Sort of a privilege even.

That you can shoot yourself in the face if you wanted to

Isn't that better?

Consider it my gift to you.

You are welcome.

Lina:

I didn't thank you.

(silence

A beat)

The hunters wade through the wetlands

Following the traces of tiny footprints

Hunter 2:

That's what it's called

Hunter 1:

What?

Hunter 2:

Krokkelva.

Hunter 1:

Because it is crooked?

Hunter 2:

No. Because of that guy that lived down there

Kroken.

He lived by the river. A long time ago.

Hunter 1:

–

Hunter 2:

His hand was so deformed that it looked like a hook, all crooked. Like this
(he shows him) That's what they say, anyways.

Hunter 1:

The old folks?

Hunter 2:

Yes. He never got himself a woman. Just lived there, down by the river alone.
Getting by as best as he could with his crooked hand. People looked at him like
an original, I guess.

Hunter 1:

These things happen

Hunter 2:

They do

Hunter 2:

What is it?

Hunter 1:

I'm not sure.

Hunter 2:

I think it's a fox. It's not a squirrel, not a hare. Too heavy

Hunter 1:

– it might be a fox

Hunter 2:

Hussjj

Look –

Hunter 1:

Where

Hunter 2:

There

Under the branches

Hunter 1:

It is really big. As big /

Hunter 2:

– as a six year-old.

Hunter 1:

I got it.

Hunter 2:

Wait

Are you sure it's an animal?

Hunter 1:

I got it

Hunter 2:

Should we not – I think it's -

Hunter 1:

–

The sound of a gunshot

(Long silence)

Kate:

What was that?

Julian
What was what?

Kate:
It was as if fire touched my back.

Julian:
I felt nothing

*This is not an island
It is a peninsula
It will never move
And then it does
there is a cracking noise
and then a silence
A cracking noise and then a movement – at the place where the peninsula is at its narrowest
A fox lies dead in the woods
It is cold
The children that pretend to be animals pretend no more*

PART 7 – THE ISLAND

Julian
What's that sound?

It sounded like thunder
Or an earthquake
Or something

Kate:
It's probably just the world coming to an end

Julian:
With my luck?

Kate:
Don't worry
Today is not the day

*If you were a bird
You could see it
A peninsula tied to the mainland and then a crack
straight across eide
You would see the suburbs, and the lake and the kindergarten
You would see eide
And then the wood and the marshland and the little dead fox
At eide there is a trail of ants
and a tree
with a man tied to it and then suddenly a crack
and you would see how the crack spins and moves
chewing up the tree – the man – the trail of ants
leaving the interior on one side
and the peninsula on the other*

Hunter 1:
There it was again!

*Let's go home
says the boy
I want my mother
Says the girl
I am scared*

As if something shifted underneath our feet

*Opening up and getting ever wider
Turning the peninsula into an island*

Hunter 1:
How close was it, do you think?

Hunter 2:
Not close
At least on the other side of the marsh

The Squirrel:
Look at the trees!

Says the Squirrel

The Squirrel:
Look at the trees!
Look at the trees!

Look at the Fox
It's not moving

The Crocodile:
I don't want to look at the Fox

The Squirrel:
Will she ever move again?

The Crocodile:
Look at the water in my cup!
It's shaking!

The Squirrel:
It is!

The Crocodile:
How cool is that!

Look at the trees

Look at the Fox

Look at the trees – says the Squirrel as the Fox lies outstretched on his back

The Crocodile:
Give her the battleax

The Squirrel:
She never wanted the battleax

The Crocodile:
Give it to her!

The Squirrel:
It was always you who wanted that battleax
I don't want to have anything to do with it

As the trees shake as the leaves tumble over them as they jump and shout between twigs and branches

The Crocodile:
The Fox should have it!

*As the world rips open – as Julian stares down in the abyss: Bye bye children
Bye bye hunters
Bye bye mainland*

Julian:
I don't want to die!

Kate:
You are not going to die!

Hunter 1:
There it goes again?

Julian:
The ground's shaking!

Emil:
What was it?

The Squirrels looks at the Badger who looks at the Crocodile

The Squirrel:
The ground's shaking!

The Crocodile:
My belly's shaking!

The Squirrel:
My tail is shaking!

The Squirrel:
I don't like this anymore

Emil:
We better call somebody

Lina:
Who do we call?

*and rocks starts rolling down the slopes
and the rumbling grows higher
and the river starts to spill its water onto the marshes
and the lake rips open like a ripe fruit
Pouring its sweet water into the ocean as the hunters picks up their guns in that dark
interior far away from danger
As the rivers ripple – as the Badger clings to the Crocodile
As the Squirrel clings to the Badger
And the Crocodile keeps slamming its tail in the mud shouting to see if her voice is bigger
than the rumble
As the peninsula starts tearing itself away from the mainland
as if it had a will of its own*

Julian:
Really Kate – I don't want to die!

Kate:
Nobody is dying
This is not the end.
It can't be – whatever end you're looking for... it's not going to happen while
we're here on this island

Lina:
Emil – could you just hold me for a
second

Emil:
What?
What did you say?
I cannot hear you for all that noise!

Julian:
We should jump, all together. Before it's too late.

Kate:
How strange – I feel like this is all a metaphor
Maybe it's all just a metaphor
I don't get it
I don't get it Julian
You've always been good with metaphors
I mean – I thought – Even if the world ends, this place would like
stay the same.

Lina:
Somebody must do something!

Julian:
I think I'm going to jump.

Kate:
But you can't.

Emil:
He'll never do it. He'll never jump.

Julian:
Well, you're wrong. I'm going to jump.

Kate:
Julian!

Emil:
You can't stop a man from killing himself.

Lina:
What if you don't die?
If you just keep falling forever?

Emil:
Once, I tried bungee jumping. Falling was the worst part.

Julian:
This is a nightmare!

(Silence)

*There it is
The peninsula
Floating like on its own like a giant scull – It tips ever so slowly in the water
swaying then stabilizing
Swaying
then stabilizing
Drifting further and further from the mainland
Away from the woods
Away from the children – four little animals – a Fox
Insects building nets in its pointed ears*

Lina:
I always thought of this as an island anyway

Kate:
This place is where I grew up.

Julian:
This place is what we chose for our children

Kate:
We have to find them

Emil:
Well, we still have the ferry.

Lina:
The gas station is still here

Kate:
What if they are there
On the other side

Julian, Emil and Lina:
—

Kate:
The children!

Julian:
—
Don't be stupid
They are just hiding somewhere

Kate:
—
When we moved to this place, we thought this was the exit.

Julian:
When we moved to this place, I didn't want to move.

Emil:
At this point, all we need to do is to relax

Julian:
Whatever we decide to do, it's going to be ok —

Julian:
Whatever we decide to do, it's no longer our decision.

Emil:
Whatever we decide to do, we need to transform.

Kate:
Whatever we decide to do, we need to take care of what we have.

Julian:
It's going to get better

Lina:
—

Julian:
It always gets better

Lina:
It's like –
All I do
All I think
It's just -
I know –
it comes from society, from our parents –
It creates – like a hole and then -

Julian:
I know

Lina:
We fight
aaall the time – to be -

We fight

(a pause)

Lina:
It's the snails
It's the garbage
We can't get rid of it
It's everywhere

I think –
I mean – I don't mind the rain.
I am just worried about the snails
The slugs

Julian:
I know

This system makes profit off our fucking
sorrow

Lina:
I am just worried about the garden
About all the stuff
My mother died
It's important – how we live

(Silence)

Julian:
Did you hear?
This man went to the kindergarten
to pick up his grandchild and discovers that it was the wrong
kid
The child – The kid was three
I mean – what a shock
Like picking up the wrong child

How can you do that?

Kate:
You are lying

Julian:
Yes

Kate:
You never slept with the neighbor

Julian:
No

Kate:
You are lying

Julian:
Yes

Kate:
You slept with her

Julian:
No

Kate:
You live in denial.

Julian:
You are in denial

Kate:
You feel like a coward

Julian:
You are in denial about how the world perceives you.

Kate:
And how is that?
How does the world perceive me?

Julian:
Oh – I am this wonderful person
I recycle my garbage

I want to save the world

Who are you going to save now!?
Who!?
This planet is already a big dump
A dump full of plastic
And we, we are dancing right on top of it!

Deep in the marsh
Two hunters are burying a child

Hunter 1:
Yes

Hunter 2:
Yes

Deep in the marsh
The birds are chirping: Who is a bat, is a bird, is a beaver?

(A beat)

Lina:
Before I was careful. I recycled every little item.
If I wasn't sure I just put it to the side until later. I started thinking about it like raw material. Paper, plastic and all that. Hazardous waste, electronics, wood,

aluminum

Now it seems endless.

Little by little I've just lost my patience. The emotions got me. First it was just a little carelessness. A framed photograph that I just couldn't deal with dismantling it in order for the paper to go with paper, glass with glass, aluminum with aluminum, wood with wood.

I just threw it in a garbage bag and as soon as I did that – the entire system was flawed

So, in the end – that's what we all do

We just stuff it all in garbage bags and drag it to the front lawn and there they just stand

hundreds

thousands of black garbage bags.

No one no longer has any idea of what *is* what: photo albums with kitchen appliances and stereos and books and pamphlets from every organization – clothes

heaps of winter coats

one for each winter, and all the tiny fibers in all the other coats,

all the filling

filling the garbage cans

all this winter

heaped up in the front yards

Five thousands pairs of shoes.

in the roundabouts

Smelly old crusty leather piles

In the school yards

dragging with them some filth from some long gone

It nauseates me.

Sometimes I just wish it would all explode, all of it, just so that we don't have to worry about it anymore.

Lina keeps roaming through the fur coats

The shoes

The filth

A piece of art

A piece of shit

Lina (shouts):

I hate things!

Why can't they just self-terminate!

Why can't they just explode!

(Silence)

The children that pretend to be animals pretend no more

It is cold

Snow's falling

A child lies covered with earth

Hunter 1 and 2

—

The hunters do what they know how to do

They hunt

Hunter 2:

—

I was thinking about doing some fishing. Putting out some nets.

Hunter 2:

Nets here?

Hunter 1:
Yes.

Hunter 2:

—

But that's illegal, isn't it?

Hunter 1:
Maybe

Hunter 2:

And you are going to do it anyway

Hunter 1:

It's only for the good
Thinning it out

Hunter 2:

Thinning it out?

Hunter 1:

The fish are too small. And there's too many of them. So, I am thinning it out

Hunter 2:

In the river?

Hunter 1:

Yes

Hunter 2:

You are thinning the river because there are too many small fish in the pond?
Wait – don't answer

Hunter 1:

It was me and my cousin. We were about to jump, but then we heard somebody, long steps across the heather and then we lost our courage. We just turned around and ran away.

Hunter 2:

Where did you run too?

Hunter 1:

Up. Up along the creek. Into the ravine and through the thickets. Up to the waterfall. It's hard work, slow all the way to the top. Around it, the ground was covered with Geitrams, by the pond, underneath the waterfall. And no sign of marshland. The waterfall is all hidden behind the thicket, it closes in on it, around the pond. There were some other children there, but when I turned around I could not see any.

Hunter 2:

What other children?

Hunter 1:

In the waterfall, in the pond. Behind the foxgloves. I cannot see them. Not in the waterfall, not in the pond. But I hear them saying things. Talking. They say – your family has left you. Your family has left you. Your girlfriend has left you. You are alone. They keep on repeating it. You are alone, you have nobody. Far away. Up the hill, I crawl through the ferns, all along the edge of the waterfall. Its steep up there. The earth is so brittle where the fawns grow, I keep on slipping. Slipping. Slipping. But I get up, I get myself up. Then it opens up. The landscape.

Hunter 2:
Yes. Up by the lake –

Hunter 1:
Yes.

Hunter 2 (continues):
– at Isskardet. That icy cleft up there. You walk it and then onwards, as far as you want to go.

Hunter 1 or Hunter 2 or both:
I am up by the water facing it, facing the cleft – and when I turn around, I can see vågen.
The bay is clear and frail like –

*And as they stand there
The snow continues to fall
And as they stand there
It covers the ground
the flowerbeds and garbage cans
soaking the trees lining the roundabout
soaking the paths leading into the cracks – into the place where the island became an island*

PART 9 – THE ISLAND

*This is the island
This is our home
This is where we drive our car
This is where we ride our horses
This is where the ferry anchors up
Here there was no need for a bridge. Here we were connected, were safe.
This place is a part of the world.
This is how she used to think of it.
Kate parks the Qasqai
Lina is pacing the floors
What is it Lina?*

Lina:
I can not bear it anymore

It's everywhere
It's like acid – corrosion

What is it –

*the smell /
– like a cat breaking down inside me
a porcupine
a badger
melting into me
a seagull, a lumpfish,
an old rat*

To think how she carried this ugly old mug with her, from apartment to apartment, –

No

She says

No

She is leaving the basement

*She is in the livingroom
She is holding the jug
She has these candlesticks.
She has this Danish statue of white children grimacing.
She has these hand-made coasters.
She has this African quilt.
this silk.
this linen.
these napkin-rings.
these silver spoons.
these silver forks.
these silver knives.
This painting of a quiet man
this chair
and this chair
and this chair – and she starts to shoot
at random first
just randomly at her stuff
at her paintings
her china
her silverware
her pots and pans
all the leftovers
her mother's jug
the window in her living room
the windows in her bedroom
one, two, three, four*

*Drop the gun Lina
Drop the gun!*

*She goes out
She is heading for higher ground*

Let go of the gun!

*She lets go of the gun
She is not thinking about slugs*

(Long silence
A beat)

Kate:
Did you hear that?

Lina:
–

What?

Kate:
Nothing
The sound of nothing
So quiet

Lina:
–

Kate:
Is that your gun?

Lina:
–

Kate:
Do you have more?

Lina:
More guns?

What do you want to shoot at?

Kate:
I don't know
Is it important?
At road signs maybe
Or the garden center
They have a sale on

Lina:

—

I was thinking – when I'm done shooting at the mug – that I want to just shoot at the bullet, shoot it once and when it splits open I shoot at the fragments and then again, you see, until there is just powder and bang.

Kate:

—

You know there is a part of our brain, from back in evolution, that is activated with the sound of something crunching ... it makes us hungry ... like when they design chips, they study the crunch ... the better it crunches, the harder it is to stop eating. It's like a biological click in your brain that the crunch activates ... that's why it's so hard to stop eating chips once you have started ...

Lina:

—

Kate:
Smell the grass
So fresh
Isn't it lovely?
It's so lovely here, this time of year – on this peninsula

Kate and Lina:

—

(A beat)

The Squirrel:
I am hungry

The Crocodile:
We'll eat soon

The Squirrel:
How soon?

The Crocodile:
We'll find some berries
Or mushrooms
Or a house

The Squirrel:
I hate mushrooms

The Crocodile:
Let's make a snowman!

The Squirrel:
Look!
Over there – a path!

The badger and the Squirrel:
–

The Squirrel:
Let's take it!

The Crocodile:
What if it takes us all the way into town

The Squirrel:
I have a hundred dollar bill

The Crocodile:
We could get a hot dog, or a pizza,

The Squirrel:
Or a steak
I want a big, fat bloody steak

The Badger that is a boy starts humming
The Squirrel is right behind him
The Crocodile is humming to

The Crocodile:
Here comes the boogyman

Says the crocodile

The Squirrel:
Here comes the hammerfish

Says the Squirrel

EPILOGUE

(As the characters leaves the stage)

They own the statue of the little girl with the matchsticks.
They own all these Danish statues of white children grimacing.
They own these candlesticks.
They own these hand-made coasters.
They own this African quilt.
They own this silk.
They own this linen.
They own these napkin-rings.
They own this silver.
They own these silver spoons.
They own these silver forks.
They own these silver knives.
They own this painting of dancing women.
They own this painting of a quiet man.
They own this painting of forms and colors.
They own this Turkish rug.
They own this old porcelain.
They own this stereo.
They own these speakers.
They own this TV.
They own this sofa table.

*They own this chair.
They own this chair as well.
And this chair.
And this chair.*

(The room is empty)

The Island

A collaborative play – twin version with *Darkness the Enemy Inside*
by Kristin Eiríksdóttir, Gianluca Iumiento, Tale Næss, Sigbjørn Skåden and Albert
Ostermeier
Dramaturg/headwriter/translator Tale Næss.

Characters:

Julian
Kate
Emil
Lina
Hunter 1
Hunter 2
and four children pretending to be animals

All the actors can be on stage all the time.

The scenes and actions run parallel more often than not. Sometimes they overlap.

The text in italics can be read as stage directions.

They could also, or as well – be shared between the performers, read by one actor, or shared between the performers representing the children.

The text in brackets is not be read.

PROLOGUE

The characters enter the stage.

The children are watching from afar.

Each of them locked up in a room, in a cupboard, in a grown person's life.

They own the statue of the little girl with the matchsticks.

They own all these Danish statues of white children grimacing.

They own these candlesticks.

They own these hand-made coasters.

They own this African quilt.

They own this silk.

They own this linen.

They own these napkin-rings.

They own this silver.

They own these silver spoons.

They own these silver forks.

They own these silver knives.

They own this painting of dancing women.

They own this painting of a quiet man.

They own this painting of forms and colors.

They own this Turkish rug.

They own this old porcelain.

*They own this stereo.
They own these speakers.
They own this TV.
They own this sofa table.
They own this chair.
They own this chair as well.
And this chair.
And this chair.*

(The room is empty)

PART 1 – IN THE BEGINNING

Kate:

A friend of mine just came back from Peru
He'd been travelling. He had taken part in a ritual while he was down there
It included drinking this tea. This narcotic tea, extracted from this cacti, and he
said that everything just opened up, transforming itself into pure energy.
He touched the stones on the ground, and they were warm
He put his hand in the creek running by, and it was alive
And all of this, the stones, the creek, the teacup, his body was surrounded by
this energetic field. A green, glowing field holding everything up, keeping
everything together...
I can't stop thinking about it.
It's there when I get up, when I shower, when I go to the gym. When I prepare
for a meeting, drive the children to school
at work
at the drawing board when I go through the allocations
look at the plans for a new building

the children are filling the space with objects

It's all there:

with tables and table clothes

foundations, lintels, cornerstones

*plates and cutlery
bicycles and books*

and I see it
How it's all connected and all hold together by this green, glowing field of
energy

with steps and staircases

cities

Servietts and serviett rings

High rises, office blocks – electrically loaded
intertwined like the cells in our bodies
and then –
the thought of it no longer being there
that one day, it will be gone
the link broken
how it all would start to collapse – collapse and start drifting apart
the walls from the foundation
the roof from its beams
buildings from the city
cities torn away from the ground
even the molecules in the water, the cells in our bodies – mountains free

floating there in an empty space all of a sudden filled with snow, with grit, with
stones and pine forests – thinning out
Thinning out and moving in all kinds of directions at the same time
The world left open to a free-falling chaos, – and I have to pinch myself
and I try to focus on the sofa
on the kids – running, playing laughing.
how they smell
when they sleep
and I want to hold on to them
tie them to my chest and never let go

(silence)

the Fox:

Look at this painting!

the

Squirrel:

Look at this lamp!

the crocodile:

Look at this tablecloth!

the Squirrel:

And this one!

the crocodile:

And this one!

And this one!

(The badger picks up a battle axe)

the crocodile:

It's mine!

the Squirrel:

It's mine!

the Fox:

Leave her alone!

(The badger lifts the axe. Swings it)

the Fox:

She had it first!

the crocodile:

I had it first!

the Squirrel:

Watch out or she'll chop your heads off

(Laughter)

Julian:

I had a dream

Kate:

A dream?

Julian:

I saw this rock that looked like a giant head.

A face

floating like – And the sun was setting

Kate:

That's beautiful

Julian:

I wouldn't call it beautiful

It was more

It was like floating, tipping ever so slowly – up and down in the water

Kate:

A gigantic face, tipping in the water, as the sun sets

I call that beautiful

(Silence)

Julian:

We have everything we need, don't we?

We do – don't we?

Kate:

Yes, it's so lovely

here on this island – this time of year

Julian:

It's not an island

Kate:

–

Julian:

It's not an island – it's a peninsula.

You keep calling it an island – but it is a peninsula. That's where we live

–

I don't like the way you're looking at me right now.

Kate:

How am I looking at you?

Julian:

Like it's my fault.

Like I've done something wrong.

(Lina says:)

Lina:

They gritted their teeth and celebrated Christmas together

They only did it for us

They only did it because of us

Because we were their children

She got us and the house and all the stuff but he got nothing at all.

He left and she stayed and she never threw anything out.

She just packed the drawers without even looking through them,

just bagged them and taped them. There was just this old random mess.

To think how she carried this ugly old mug with her, from apartment to apartment, since early in the nineties

Julian:

It's going to get better.

Lina:

—
So, I saw this badger.

Julian:
Where?

Lina:
In the garden.

Julian::
Shit. You know, when they bite, they don't stop until they feel the bones.

Lina:
Yeah. Until it crunches. It's so nasty.

Julian:
Maybe we were all badgers once.

Lina:
My husband is one for sure.

(Lina does a funny badger face)

Julian:
That's right. That's how he looks! Definitely a badger!

Julian:
Do you think it's gone?

Lina:
What? The badger?

Julian:
Do you think It's gone?

Lina:
What? The badger?

Julian:
Yes, the badger.

Lina:
I think it is. I guess it was migrating from the forest to the water or something like that. I'm not an expert.
Ah – it's lovely on this island this time of year
Don't you just love the flowers and –

Julian:
It's not an island

Lina:
Excuse me –

Julian:
It is not an island

Don't say that

Lina:
Say what?

Julian:
That it's an island
It's a peninsula

It's inaccurate
An island is inaccurate

An island have water
It's surrounded by water
This is not an island

Lina:
Whatever

Julian:
You all call it an island, but it's not – it's a peninsula, we live in a
peninsula, a peninsula that's where we live so why does everybody go on
calling it an island!

(A beat)

Julian:
It was not enough

A house, a garden, out of the center, close to the water,
perfect for kids

We came in the marked, such a luck, we were relieved
My wife – She works less, I work more, she wants more, she wants more of me
We went to the mountains, the snow went away ... it's not global warming. It's
spring, we were too late

(The children are watching him)

the Squirrel:
Who's there?

Says the Squirrel

the Fox:
Who's there?

Says the Fox

the crocodile:
That's my father

Says the Crocodile

Julian:
We had a second child
The dream house

the Squirrel:
He's funny

Julian:
We got the children into kinder garden
this suuupre Steiner place – deep in the woods
we all loved it, but it wasn't very practical

the Fox:
He's strange

the crocodile:
He's mental

And then it was all this with the car
What to do with the car –

the Squirrel:
I don't know
The electric car

The crocodile:
He is an hyper carnivore apex predator.

So I got this *Quasgai*
It's big. It's safe. It's good for the kids.
It drives on gasoline, well hell!
But I just could not get rid of the other one, the electric one – So now I have
two. Two cars.

(Silence)

Kate:
You are lying

Julian:
Am I?

Kate:
Yes

Julian:
You are right

Kate:
So why did you say it then?

Julian:
For you my dear
For you

A fox is hiding under the bed
A badger lurks underneath the kitchen table

the Squirrel:
Where are you going?

the Fox:
He's going nowhere

The badger is packing a battle-axe
a comb
a flashlight

the crocodile:
It looks like his going somewhere

Julian:
I'm doing it for you,

the Squirrel:
If *she's* going, then I want to go!

Julian:
It's true.

the Fox:
Let's all go!

PART 2 – THE HUNTERS

*We have water
We have water all around us
We have so much water it feels like an island
An island so huge we almost forget*

*We have seasons, beautiful and long
with colors and leaves and storms
We have it all
We have it all
We have it all*

the Squirrel:
I have a tale!

the Fox:
I have a hoof!

the crocodile:
I have fangs!

the Fox:
I have the sharpest teeth!

the crocodile:
*I have the sharpest teeth, the biggest
grin, superpowers, handicaps, life-skills,
love, a jar filled with sprogs, with
jellyfish, heartache*

the Fox:
We have a battle axe!

the crocodile:
Off with their heads!

the Badger
Grrrrrooaawllllle

*The children are hiding in the cupboards
In the basements
In the sewers
In the innards of a roundabout
They are bumping into furniture
Into shelves and wardrobe-doors*

the crocodile:
Look at me now!
Says the Crocodile

the Squirrel:
Look at me now!

Says the Squirrel

the crocodile:
Listen to the sounds I make

the Squirrel:
Who is to be the bee?

The Fox:

Who is to be the beaver?

the Badger:
Hzzakkkettettethzzz

They are sitting under the living room table, tearing a map to shreds

the crocodile:
Who's in?

the Squirrel:
So we are going?

the Fox:
I'm bringing a bikini!

*The badger is packing a piece of barbeque chicken
Some antiseptics
He says:*

the Badger:
Hzzakkkettettethzzz

*This is an island so huge you could even get lost
This is an island so huge we almost forget – its forests and lakes
valleys and mountaintops
beaches and farms
all drowning in the darkness of the woods
littered with rabbit-holes
with fox-holes
dens and hives
two hunters by a creek
waiting for their coffee to boil*

Hunter 1:
Strange. It's a place, out there – where the waves break.

Hunter 2:
Ja, that's the Marbakke.

Hunter 1:
Marbakken.

Hunter 2:
Where it suddenly gets deep.

Hunter 1:
I see.

(Silence)

Hunter 1:
It's the sun. And the wind, – like now – like a head in the waves. A daudinghode. Where the waves break. It appears when the wind turns and then – I've seen it. It breaks the surface – a dead man's head.

Hunter 2:
Can't say I have. Seen it, sitting here, seeing the sun go down – I've been here so many times.

Hunter 1:
It's the wind, when it turns. I was a child the first time I saw it. Up by Krokkelva. Its high ground up there. It's easy to see it from up high, but you can see it here too.

Hunter 2:

I've never heard anybody else mention anything like that – that there is a daudinghode in Vågen.

Hunter 1:

They all know it, and nobody talks about it.

(Short silence)

Hunter 2:

That guy, Kroken. Wasn't he still around when you were a child?

Hunter 1:

Was he? I don't know. I can't remember.

Hunter 2:

He must still have been around when you were that age.

Hunter 1:

No. Not in this area. Not as far as I remember.

Hunter 2:

It was a shooting accident wasn't it? That deformed his hand?

Hunter 1:

No, he was born that way

(Silence

Lina looks at Emil)

Emil:

Come shooting with me

Lina:

Shooting?

At what? What do you want to shoot at?

Emil:

Just at anything at all. We could shoot at some seagulls or at some critters or at this mug your mother left you that you hate so, so much or just at the sky ...

Lina:

No thank you. I don't even know you!

Do you have a gun?

Emil:

I have plenty of guns, we could leave right now and I could let you try all sorts of guns, a shotgun, a handgun, a rifle. I even have a machine gun.

Lina:

And where could we fire all these guns?

Emil:

At my place

You can sleep at my place

We could drink some more

We could just go on a shooting spree

You could shoot at my stuff

At my paintings

My china

My silverware

My pots and pans

A fox
A badger
My horse

Lina:
Not your horse

Emil:
Not my horses
But anything else

Lina:
Anything?

Emil:
Absolutely anything

Lina:

—

It's just ... I haven't even put on make-up or showered or anything.

Emil:
You are fine just the way you are.

Lina:
Right.

Emil:
No, I mean it. I prefer you like this.
I always like you best just in your leisure wear.

Lina:
My husband always says

Emil:
Your husband is a badger

Lina:
But you have never seen me in —

Emil:
It is up to you.

Lina:
Hang on.
Do I have time to get my purse?
It's just I don't like not having my phone ... or money.

Emil:
Just come.

*Lina lies deep in grass.
Can you see her?
She is a turtle too big for her shell
She is a princess shedding her skin*

Says the Crocodile

the crocodile:
This way

The Fox:
I want to go home

Says the Fox

PART 3 – ON THE RUN

*The wood is green and deep and endless
there – where four animals are making their way through the thickets
Who is there in the water?
Who is there resting in the woods?*

The Squirrel:
We shouldn't be here

The Badger, The Fox and the Crocodile:
–

The Squirrel:
We are not allowed
You know it
We should not cross that bridge
We should not swim that river

The Fox:
A puddle!

The crocodile:
Let's cross it

The Fox:
Let's jump it!
Let's splash around

The Squirrel:
I want to go home

The crocodile:
Here comes the boogiemán

Says the crocodile

The Fox:
Here comes the hammerfish!

Says the Fox

Emil:
Have you ever shot a gun before?

Lina:
No, never.
Have you ever shot anyone?

Emil:
Many.

Lina:
Who then died?

Emil:
I'm very precise.

Lina:
Always in self-defense?

Emil:
What do you think?

Yes, maybe just start with this one. Look, now it's loaded, here, just aim, and pull the trigger. See.

Lina:

Wow, it's heavy.
Is it still loaded?

Emil:

Yes, just go crazy. Shoot.

(Lina goes crazy. She shoots at everything

A beat)

The children are crossing the creek

They are never coming home

By a roadside a man stands bent over a flat tire cursing:

Bugger

Bugger

Bugger, ass, puke, shit, bugger! Bugger me!

As he continues to curse

Blasted

Cunt!

Cunt-face!

Ass!

Cunt-ass

Damn, damned, bugger, ass-bugger, motherfucker, fuck!

Fuck, fuck, fuck

As he calms down.

As he is saying:

I wish I was a child again

I wish I was a child

I wish I was a fireman

I wish I was a goldfish swimming in my goldfish-bowl

Saying:

Do you have any tranquilizers?

Saying: Show me your bags

Show me your teeth

Show me your hopes and dreams

Show me your secret selves

Show me the way home

Tell me my name

Tell me my name

Tell me my name

The children watch him

He is crying

The Squirrel:

What's wrong with him?

Says the Squirrel

the crocodile:

He wants a new name

Says the crocodile

The Fox:

What name shall we give him?

The Squirrel:
Maybe he already has a name

The Fox:
Maybe somebody has taken his name away from him

The crocodile:
He wants a *new* name, stupid

The Squirrel (to the secretary of state):
Don't you like your name?

The Fox:
Do we think he deserves one?

The Squirrel:
Everyone should have a name

The Fox:
What kind of name do you want?

The Squirrel:
Like a human name?
Or /

The Fox:
– like our names?

The Squirrel:
I have a name for him!

The crocodile:
I don't know
He looks like the type who always gets *whateeeever* he wants
and that's /

the Fox:
just never good for anyone

They lead him to a tree
They tie him to the trunk

The Fox:
I am the Fox

Says the fox

The Squirrel:
I am the squirrel

Says the Squirrel
as they fill his pockets with honey
as they fill his mouth with ants

(A beat)

Lina:
It is so easy!

Emil:
See, I knew you had potential.

Lina:

Who would have thought that it could be so rewarding shooting a gun? Just like this, right into the mud, blah blah.

—

Remember when you gave me a kiss?

Emil:

When?

Lina:

—

You could do it again sometime

Emil takes off his clothes. Underneath he wears shiny prince costume. Jewels falls from his pockets. He drags a chain of pearls from his mouth and puts it around Lina's neck.

PART 4 – LOST

We have forests

We have lakes

We have mountaintops and valleys

We have all kinds of animals

We have creatures, monsters, trolls

We have hidden places and famous ghosts

We have snow, and rain and even darker days

We have it all and it makes us wonder what's real

Lina:

I had this dream

Emil:

What dream?

Lina:

Oh – it's silly

Emil:

Tell

Lina:

In this dream, I was a woman

And this woman said –

Lina as the woman:

What am I?

(Lina pretends to be an animal)

Emil:

Ok –

Lina:

So what am I?

Emil:

You are aaaaaa ...

beaver

Emil as the man:

Now – What am I?

(Emil pretends to be an animal)

Lina:

No, it's silly

Emil:

I don't think it's silly

It's kind of fun

Guess – what am I?

Lina:

Aaaaaa ...

hamster

Emil:

A hamster – Come on.

Emil as the man:

What am I?

Line

I don't know!

Emil:

Guess!

Line

You are

You are

You are

– a bear.

Emil as the man:

Grrrr

Emil:

And now it's your turn

Show me!

What are you?

Line

I don't know

Emil:

Show me!

Line

I don't know!

Emil:

Look – it's a game!

It's supposed to be fun – Show me!

Lina as the woman:

–

(Lina tries but gives up)

Emil:

What's wrong with you?

Lina:

Nothing's wrong with me

It's just –

Emil:
Come on

Emil as the man:
– show me!

Lina as the woman:
–

Lina:
No –
Bugger

OK – Wait!

Like this?

Lina as the woman:
–

Emil:
I love it
No – I really – Really. That's lovely
Come here
(in a low voice) You are a squirrel – an alley cat – a tiny white mouse

*The children are watching from the bridge
Let's cross it
says one
Let's stay behind
says the other*

Julian:
I tried to sign up for online dating
I thought there must be some horny women online
There must be other compulsive liars who'd want to have an affair with me
Someone that wouldn't get hurt
Someone open to the terms
We meet we fuck we keep it secret
I was wrong
I couldn't find anyone like that out there
I ended up spending a lot of money fighting online with women that didn't
want to meet
I mean do they think I'm stupid?
That I don't get it?
I know they're paid to entertain me online
To make me feel special
To send me pictures with the hope that one day we will meet or fuck
But the truth is that they are hired by some company to keep me on the website
chatting
And since you pay for each email you send
It's not convenient for them to let you meet out in real life
They're not people that you can actually spend time with or have fun with
You get it?
They meet liars with lies
That's maybe fair
They make their profit off our fucking sorrow
They use people's problems to suck money out of our pockets
Fuck anyway
I felt so useless when I realized I got depressed because some woman I met
online
was probably lying to me

I was so shocked to realize that she didn't find me incredibly attractive
That she was sitting somewhere unknown getting paid to turn me on
Fuck that's humiliating!
I'm tired
I can't be a good person
I don't believe in therapy to change
I don't believe in art anymore as sublimation

I drove the car, the car drove me, in silence, it's electric and it drives in silence
It stopped by the water, and there I saw – the feeling
There I could finally meet it, there it was inside me – For an hour, I was by the
water, waiting, trying to push the pedal, trying to give gas

I smelt shame
I felt narcissistic shame

Kate:
You are lying

Julian:
Yes

Kate:
You don't want to die
You've never even watched online porn

Julian:
No, I haven't

Kate:
Kate:
You are lying

Julian:
Yes

Kate:
You don't want to die
You've never even watched online porn

Julian:
No, I haven't

Kate:
It's just something you say to impress me
You've never believed in in art as sublimation

Julian:
Yes, I did!

Kate:
– I know
You are just depressed because some asshole didn't want to put on your
performance, that's all

Julian:
I am depressed because I am losing my hair! That's all!

Lina (shouts):
No.
I don't need a bed.
No.
I don't need sleep.
No.

Don't need a thing, just a back to push
myself against.
A resilient back.
The real diagnosis is to like me.

(Long silence)

*A campfire
Four children pretending to be safe
pretending to be what they want to be: a squirrel, a badger, a crocodile and a fox
Four animals
lighting an engangsrill
barbequing a chocolate bar and a sandwich and a piece of chicken*

the crocodile:
Watch out – the chocolate is melting!
I told you
I told you we should have put it on last

the Fox:
Scoop it up!
Scoop it up!
It's just like poo – it's like soup – we
could drink it

*Four little animals lighting a fire
It's golden
It sparks
Shines and glistens in the dark far away
Far away from home
That's where they are*

the Squirrel:
Are we really?

the crocodile:
We are

the Squirrel:
Are we really like lost?

the Fox:
Lost in the woods

the crocodile:
Not kind of lost but like
– LOST

the Fox:
Totally

the crocodile:
Like totally fucking lost

the Fox:
Like totally – t o t a l l y /

the crocodile:
– fucking – /

the Fox:
Like we have to live on roots and moss
and shit, right?

the crocodile:
– lost – Right!

(Silence)

the Squirrel:
I have a can of beans, if anybody fancies
it

the Fox:
Does anybody have a can opener?

the Squirrel:
We could use a stone or something

the crocodile:
Yeah – let's stone it

They stone the can of beans

Hunter 1:
What was that?

Hunter 2:
–

Hunter 1:
I thought I heard something
Some children. Laughing –
Did you hear anything?

Hunter 1:
–

(Silence – they listen)

Hunter 1:
I thought I heard something
Some children. Laughing –
Did you hear anything?

Hunter 1:
–

(silence)

Julian:
I thought about taking a lot of pills.
I thought about cutting open my veins, going out like a Roman, sitting in the
bath and enjoy the end while reading my favorite book, but then I thought,
shit, – we don't have a bath. We never had the money to replace our shower
with a bathtub. She always complains about it. Says the kids should live in a
house with the bath – and anyway – I can't even decide what *is* my favorite
book. It all seems so staged, so thought-out.
I thought about hanging myself, but it's not so easy. Too many things can go
wrong. Maybe the hook isn't strong enough, the rope could break, worst case,
you risk hanging a long time before you actually die!
It's like that – That's the terrible thing – like when you have the feeling that
you don't even own your own words
Not even your feelings
They are – They are not even like /

Emil:
original?

Julian:

–

Lina:

We know how you feel

Julian:

They feel even /

Emil:

– made up?

Julian:

Made up –

the moment you say them – As you say them – As you speak

Lina:

–

Emil:

–

Lina:

I think it's psychological

Julian:

Damned sure it's psychological!

I get so frustrated sometimes

Just so fucking FRUSTRATED –

I just feel like screaming

–

What if I can't function

What if I'm like

Broken

Like a piece of machinery, like – just

PUFF – and then – no more

Just like scrap

Lina:

You are not broken

You are not broken, Julian.

Julian:

I mean – There is a certain kind of framework that you are supposed to fit into

Consensus paralyses action

I mean – if the idea of what you cannot do is stronger than the idea about what you can do

Emil:

Like the sniper

Lina:

What about the sniper?

Emil:

When he hits

I mean – there is the voice of reason and then the will to act and then –
the sniper –

These are the days of the sniper That's what I think It's all about what you do
and what you say Cause and effect Cause and effect

Julian:

Like when the link is broken then – If what you say – does not mean anything
Like –

There is no effect

Lina:

And the sniper?

Julian:

That's what I mean

So – If the link is broken, then –

You have guns?

Emil:

Yes

Julian:

Sometimes I feel

Like I've just lost my voice

I have now voice

I open my mouth to speak – and its just –

Gone

Emil and Lina:

–

Julian:

Why do you have guns if you are not going to use them?

Emil and Lina:

–

Julian:

So you mean –

Emil:

This is the time of the sniper

Julian:

You just get yourselves ready, climb on top of a roof

choose your spot

and then

BANG !

(Silence)

Julian

Lately –

I don't know

It's like - I can't find my voice

I wake up, and it's gone

I open my mouth - and it's not there

Kate

He has been saying that he wants to die

– I'm fine with the dying I just hate

all this talk

It's not that I want him dead

It's just

It's just

I can't find my voice and I don't own my own words
Not really
I mean in a way I do
but not really

I am not his art-project
He wants to wear me like a sweater
Sneak around in me
Try to get below the line,
underneath.

I don't really own them
I mean, fuck – they are just words
So I try to speak and I just –
No voice – damned it

I am under a spell
a spell in which my brain is
like a huge maze
at some point
You've come inside the maze

and I am desperately looking for an exit

but I can't find it.
There are more and more alleys
there are more and more walls
there are more

and more problems.
There are more and more
meaningless actions
meaningless relationships
meaningless locations
meaningless dreams
meaningless worries

You know
the earths' crust –

I like that word – crust

We live on these giant plates
and they keep pushing against
each other - pushing and pushing
we are afraid of global warming
but one day

one day

one day in some part of this place
the tension will just be too great

and they will just

break away from each other

Just flip
and crash down
and that will be that

PART 5 – DARKNESS

We have forests
We have lakes
We have mountaintops and valleys
We have all kinds of animals
We have it all and we know it's precious
And all we can feel, is the darkness
All we can see, is the darkness
All we can think, is darkness

(A beat
Julian alone on the stage)

Julian:
in the beginning was the word you
did not hear me did not see me did
not cover your eyes did not hear
a word think a thought did not hear
me breathing your breathing it is for you
I stand in darkness for you I
am night I am the blackness
that surrounds me it's like
the air in your lungs I
pour gasoline over me can
you hear the sound of it like water

heavy water that swirls
that leaps across the wall the
dam that falls to the ground
spreads itself out touches your
feet you stand barefoot in it it folds
around you you do not hear my thoughts
not a word you do not know that
which is going to happen a work of art
that's what will happen we will
make a work of art
that is what you will do you are all there
you are all invited
you are all a part of my story you
are my work of art your lives
your fears your memories
your thoughts your
feelings the fucking that already
goes on in your heads that which you detest
the punches the caresses the way you
can't stop
thinking about your children your cat
and the wind fills the hall
it caresses our necks it is
so cold a rough hand and even
if it is there the air is still
it is all a totally still as if the
air that's there was constituted by our breath as
if in this hall on this peninsula we are
running out of it the air
we breath it stinks soon it will reek of gasoline
I have begged you to come you
all know each other I know you all
you have all become one word for me that's
enough that you are here that you know
why we know each other we
sleep with one another we kill
each other we make each other
sick we love
one another we hate we have
had enough of one another and still
we want more ... that is all
a complete murky darkness ... you
sit here like blind as
you learn to see with your
senses to read with your minds as your fears are being
unlocked the singing in you and your heart breaks out
into the open out of your
narrow chests but you are
caught here in this waiting in this
silence in the silence of the other and the
silencing of others ... as we avoid
each other's gaze
we are on an island of bliss we are
the makers of Utopia that will arise
from the truth that I speak we will
die you and you and
me and you
and your child in your home and the
dog and the deer as the forest burns down as
it all burns down as
the oceans rise aflame you will be
on this island in an ocean of flames you
as the ice turns to heat you are
the heart of my art

the eye of the storm
I have this gasoline and this matchstick with it
I will draw your portraits ... you will
burn for my art for
our joint venture
each and every one of you will become
an artist and as one finally
like one... you take leave of your personalities you
will become pure colours you
will become my colours you
will become all ears you
can hear every word I say

(he lights a match)

you rise as I
burn for you I stand
afame before your eyes
who of you will take his jacket off which one
of you will take his jacket off and throw it
over me which one of you will try
to put out the fire
... as I run through this dark crowd like
a fireball to put you all alight
you and you
and you and you
and you ...
while we all
turn into language not flesh
not blood not hair heart only
words freedom will blow you wide open turn you into
word-bodies language-bodies all
languages spoken as one
this peninsula is my Babylon and I am
Atlantis...
we are shadows
shadows of words
look
deep inside you there is light
you are all lit up
like through a window you can spot your own
inner selves can you read your
own hearts what is written there
in the dusk
that which makes what's readable
unreadable ...
this night smells of gasoline
hear how I sing

(a beat)

*Its night on the island
Julian stands aflame
The crowd is applauding
The Crocodile is asleep
the Squirrel rests all curled up in the arms of the Badger
he is dreaming of candy floss and little brown nuts
Ekornet ligger i armene på grevlingen
hun drømmer om sukkerspinn og små brune nøtter*

Hunter 1:
Do you see that, wedge? Between those two mountains?

Hunter 2:

What wedge?

Hunter 1:

There. From over here it looks as if somebody has struck a wedge between those two mountains – that tiny crack over there, can you see it?

Hunter 2:

Ah, over there.

Hunter 1:

They say that one day it will crack wide open. That an abyss will open up underneath it. Nobody knows when. It could be tomorrow, or a hundred years from now.

(Silence)

Kate is roaming through the house

She is searching for something, but she cannot find it

She is checking out the breadbin

Where are you –

Have you gone hiding

Come out! She cries

Come home

My little crocodile?

– little fox?

No need to hide anymore!

– let's play a game together

Let me fill your pockets with candy and gold

I will build you a palace – I will be whom ever you want me to be

Look – I am a baby bear

I will get you a spaceship

You'll be the astronauts

I'll be the space-cadet

Let me fetch the sun for you

PART 6 – THE HUNT

Who's there in the woods?

It's a squirrel

She's crying

In her sleep she says

I don't want to play anymore

I don't want to be a squirrel anymore

You are lying. All of you!

(Silence)

Sometimes it is as if we are dreaming

We just keep on walking

Keep on walking and as the children leave the peninsula behind

The hunters are hunting

The children are deep in the woods

They are leaving a trail behind them – a plastic bag, a rubber band, a chocolate wrap and a yellow baseball caps

The badger has lost his shoes

He does not know what way to turn

the Squirrel:

Do you think they still remember us?

the Fox:
They remember us

the crocodile:
AU!

the Fox:
This way

the Squirrel:
This way

the crocodile:
WAIT!

Hunter 1:
Hey – did you hear that?

the Fox:
What happened? Did you fall?

Hunter 2:
What?

the Squirrel:
Are you ok?

Hunter 1:
There it was again

The crocodile:
I'm alright. I'll manage.

Over there

Hunter 2:
Where

No
Are you sure?

Hunter 1:
Ja – I heard something. I saw something moving

Hunter 2:
Could it have been a fox or something?
Or a squirrel?

Hunter 1:
It could have been a squirrel

*The hunters stop
They lower their guns
Listens*

Hunter 1:
Hush

There –

(Silence)

Hunter 2:

And –
then – Nothing

Hunter 1:
–
But you saw it too?

Hunter 2:
Ja – I think –

Hunter 1:
It was there – as big as a child?

(Lina turns to Emil)

Lina:
Maybe it's not such a big deal
Whether one lives or dies

Emil:
If you get hit, you mean?

Lina:
Maybe it's all the same
What would you miss?
Don't worry – I am not going suicidal on you

Emil:
It's a possibility

Lina:
–

Emil:
I've always considered it a possibility. Sort of a privilege even.
That you can shoot yourself in the face if you wanted to

(Silence)

PART 7 – GARBAGE

Julian:
Did you hear what happened!
One of the neighbours, that old maths-teacher, he went to pick up his grandson
at the kinder garden and came back with the wrong kid.
Imagine
Returning all happy and content with the wrong kid

Kate:
Why are you telling me this?

Julian:
It's funny

Kate:
Is it?
Are you scared?
Are you scared of messing up?
Forgetting your children
of something being wrong – going wrong
of not doing the right thing?

Julian:

What do you mean – “doing the right thing”
I’m always right t

Lina:

Before I was careful. I recycled every little item.

If I wasn’t sure I just put it to the side until later. I started thinking about it like raw material. Paper, plastic and all that. Hazardous waste, electronics, wood, aluminum

Now it seems endless.

Little by little I’ve just lost my patience. The emotions got me. First it was just a little carelessness. A framed photograph that I just couldn’t deal with dismantling it in order for the paper to go with paper, glass with glass, aluminum with aluminum, wood with wood.

I just threw it in a garbage bag and as soon as I did that – the entire system was flawed

So, in the end – that’s what we all do

We just stuff it all in garbage bags and drag it to the front lawn and there they just stand

hundreds

thousands of black garbage bags.

No one no longer has any idea of what *is* what: photo albums with kitchen appliances and stereos and books and pamphlets from every organization – clothes.

Heaps of winter coats

one for each winter, and all the tiny fibers in all the other coats,

all the filling

filling the garbage cans

all this winter

heaped up in the front yards

Five thousand pairs of shoes.

in the roundabouts

Smelly old crusty leather piles

In the school yards

dragging with them some filth from some long gone

It nauseates me.

Sometimes I just wish it would all explode, all of it, just so that we don’t have to worry about it anymore.

Lina keeps roaming through the fur coats

The shoes

The filth

A piece of art

A piece of shit

Lina (shouts):

I hate things!

Why can’t they just self-terminate!

Why can’t they just explode!

(Silence)

This is where we are living

This is our home

Kate parks her Qashqai

She’s been out looking for the kids. She can’t find them

What is it Kate?

Lina enters the kitchen

She enters the living room

She walks upstairs and then down again

What is it Lina?

Lina:
I cannot bear it anymore
It's everywhere
It's like acid – corrosion

What is it –

the smell /
– like a cat breaking down inside me
a porcupine
a badger
a seagull, a lumpfish,
an old rat

To think how she carried this ugly old mug with her, from apartment to
apartment, –

No

She says

No

She is leaving the basement
She is in the living room
She is holding the jug
She has these candlesticks
She has this Danish statue of white children grimacing
She has these hand-made coasters
She has this African quilt
this silk.
this linen.
these napkin-rings
these silver spoons
these silver forks
these silver knives
This painting of a quiet man
this chair
and this chair
and this chair – and she starts to shoot
at random first
just randomly at her stuff
at her paintings
her china

Kate:
I can't find them

her silverware

Julian:
You can't find who?

her pots and pans

Kate:
They're gone

all the leftovers

Julian:
They're not with the neighbours?

her mother's jug
the window in her living room
the windows in her bedroom
one, two, three, four

Kate:
I can't find them

Julian:
I thought you said they were with the
neighbors

Drop the gun Lina
Drop the gun!

She goes out
She is heading for higher ground

Let go of the gun!

She lets go of the gun
She is not thinking about slugs

(Long silence
A beat)

Hunter 1:
Ja

Hunter 2:
Ja

Deep in marsh
In the cold
In the dark – the children are no longer playing
Soon it will be snow
The hunters do what hunter do
They are hunting
They are getting their guns ready
They are sharpening their knives

Hunter 2:
—
I was thinking about doing some fishing. Putting out some nets.

Hunter 2:
Nets here?

Hunter 1:
Ja.

Hunter 2:
—
But that's illegal, isn't it?

Hunter 1:
Maybe

Hunter 2:
And you are going to do it anyway

Hunter 1:
It's only for the good
Thinning it out

Hunter 2:

Thinning it out?

Hunter 1:

The fish are too small. And there's too many of them. So, I am thinning it out

Hunter 2:

In the river?

Hunter 1:

Ja

Hunter 2:

You are thinning the river because there are too many small fish in the pond?

(Silence)

They sit

Darkness is falling

Snow soon covers the silky slopes

The moons up

Only the Fox is awake

She has gone hunting

She does not care about the snow, or the moon

She is not gazing into the fire

She is hunting

She is a turtle too big for her shell

a princess shedding her skin

She is just like her mother –

Kate:

It's snowing

Lina:

Yes

Kate:

–

Did you hear that?

Lina:

What?

Kate:

Nothing

The sound of nothing

All quiet

Lina:

–

Lina:

You know, when I started shooting, I just could not stop. I just kept doing it. I thought – I'll just go on doing it until there is nothing left. Until it's all reduced to pieces. Until it's all gone.

The hunters are in the marsh

Following tiny footprints in the snow

Hunter 2:

There!

Nei.

Hunter 1:
There. No.

Hunter 2:
There.

Nei –

Let's look further up the river

(Silence)

Hunter 1:
Krokkelva?

Hunter 2:
Ja.

(Silence)

Hunter 2:
That's what it's called
Because of that guy that lived down there
Kroken.

Hunter 1:
–

Hunter 2:
His hand was so deformed that it looked like a hook, all crooked. Like this
(he shows him) That's what they say, anyways.

Hunter 1:
These things happen

Hunter 2:
They do

Hunter 2:
What is it?

Hunter 1:
I'm not sure.

Hunter 2:
I think it's a fox. It's not a squirrel, not a hare. Too heavy

Hunter 1:
– it might be a fox

Hunter 2:
Hussjj

Look –

Hunter 1:
Where

Hunter 2:
There
Under the branches

Hunter 1:
It is really big. As big /

Hunter 2:
– as a six year-old.

Hunter 1:
I got it.

Hunter 2:
Wait
Are you sure it's an animal?

Hunter 1:
I got it

Hunter 2:
Should we not – I think it's –

Hunter 1:
–

The sound of a gunshot

Kate:
What was that?

Julian:
What was what?

Kate:
It was as if fire touched my back.

Julian:
I felt nothing

Emil:
What was that?

Linda:
I don't know

Julian:
It was as if the ground moved

Hunter 2:
Did you get it?

Hunter 1:
I think so

Hunter 2:
No
Look it's running – there – between those two big pines

Julian:
Did you feel it too?

*This is no island, it's a peninsula
It is what it is. What it'd always been
And there is a quiver
and Kate takes Julian's hand as the hunters hold on to their guns*

Hunter 2:

This isn't right

And the snow swirls as the children awakes from their sleep and looks at each other

the Squirrel:
Where is she?

the crocodile:
—

the Squirrel:
She was here — but where is she?

*And they get up
And they start running
And the badger starts falling behind
But they cannot find her*

the Squirrel:
She's all gone
We cannot find her

the crocodile:
The snow must have covered her tracks

*the Fox is deep in the woods
she is not running, she is falling
she gets up
and she falls
she gets up
and she falls
She is panting
bleeding
alone on a slippery slope
underneath the branches*

the Squirrel:
It's impossible
She is nowhere

the crocodile:
She could be anywhere

the Badger
MMMMMRRrrrr?

Says the badger, putting down her battle axe

the crocodile:
I know, I know — it just won't do
Let's go home

*That no longer pretending to be a squirrel
Let's go home*

*No longer pretending to be a crocodile
He wants his mother
And the Fox says nothing
It's just breathing. That's all it does, and then it stops
And the ground is shaking
And the fox lies there
And a woodcock says:*

Says the Squirrel that is a girl

Says the Crocodile that is a boy

(the sound of a woodcock)

And a little brown field mouse says:

(the sound of a field mouse)

And the hunter says:

Hunter 1:

There it was again – did you feel it!?!

*And an owl, and the minx, and a weasel
and the bear and the hare and the beaver
And a deer and a fink and even a tiny lemming is there
What's wrong?
They say*

*With the forest – why is it so restless?
What's wrong?
They say
With that little fox?
Why is she just lying there?
Why is she not moving?*

*She is beautiful
Says the weasel*

Will she just lie there?

Says the mouse

Will she never move again?

*And the wolf howls
And the birds stops singing – as stones and rocks starts rolling down the slopes
and the rumbling grows higher
and the river spills its water unto the marshes
and the lake rips open like a ripe fruit
Pouring its sweet water into the ocean
as the rivers ripple – as the Badger clings to the Crocodile
As the Squirrel clings to the Badger
And the Crocodile keeps slamming its tail in the mud shouting to see if her voice is bigger
than the rumble
As the peninsula starts tearing itself away from the mainland
as if it had a will of its own*

The Squirrel:
Look at the trees!

Look at the trees!
Look at the trees!

the crocodile:
Look at the hill!

the Squirrel:
look at the forest!

the crocodile:
It's shaking!

the Squirrel:
It is! It is!

the crocodile:
Look at my belly!

Says the Crocodile he jumps and shout between twigs and branches

the Squirrel:
Look at my tale!

*Says the Squirrel as the world rips open
Julian stands*

All still now
The petrol station is gone
The roundabout

Julian:
It's gone

Bye bye children
Bye bye mainland
Bye bye hunters

Julian:
How can it be gone?

Lina:
Emil!
Are you there?

Emil:
What?

Lina:
Are you there?

Julian:
Kate – I don't want to die now

Kate:
You are not going to die

Lina:
Can you just hold me!

Julian:
I think this is it

Emil:
What?!

Kate:
What?

Lina:
Can you just hold me!

Julian:
This is the world coming to an end

Emil:
What did you say?
Just my luck.

Kate:
We're not that lucky

I cannot hear anything for all the noise!

No?

Julian:

Kate:
No need to celebrate. We'll survive

How strange – I don't get it
I feel like this is all a metaphor

Maybe it's all just a metaphor
I don't get it Julian
You've always been so good with metaphors

Lina:
Can you just hold me
Can you just hold me, just for a minute

(Silence)

*If you were a bird
You would see it
A peninsula tide to the mainland and then a crack
Straight across eide
You would see the suburbs, and the lake and the kindergarten
You could see eide
And then the wood and the marshland and the little dead fox
The roundabout gone and a trail of ants
and a tree, with a man tied to it and then suddenly a crack
and you would see how the crack open wider – chewing up the tree – the man – the trail of
ants
leaving the interior on one side
and the peninsula on the other*

PART 8 – THE ISLAND

Lina:
I've always thought of this as an island anyway

Emil:
Well, at least the ferry is still running

Lina:
But no petrol station –

Emil:
–
Do you know, I tried bungy-jumping once. That really worked for me. You
should try it some time.

Kate:
Do you miss them as much as I do?

Julian:
That little fox that used to hide under our
bed?

Kate:
Yes

Julian:
That little crocodile that always wanted
to eat
his slippers for breakfast
Calling it crocodile-food

Kate:
–

Lina:
–
Ah – Smell the grass
So fresh in the morning

*There it is
The island that once was a peninsula
Floating like on its own like a giant scull, it tips
ever so slowly in the water*

Lina:
Isn't it lovely?
It's so lovely here, this time of year – on this island?

*swaying then stabilizing
Swaying
then stabilizing
Drifting further and further from the mainland
Away from the woods
Away from the children –
Fox lies under the branches
a little yellow finch watches over it
Insects are building nets in its pointed ears*

(Silence)

the Squirrel:
I am hungry

the crocodile:
We'll eat soon

the Squirrel and the Badger:
–

the crocodile:
We'll find some berries
Or mushrooms
Or a house

the crocodile:
I hate mushrooms

Let's make a snowman!

the Squirrel:
Look!
Over there – a path!

the badger and the crocodile:
–

the Squirrel:
Let's take it!

the crocodile:
What if it takes us all the way into town!

the Squirrel:
I have a twenty-dollar bill

The crocodile:
We could get a hot dog, or a pizza,

The Squirrel:
Or a steak
I want a big, fat bloody steak

*The Badger that really is a boy starts humming
The Squirrel is right behind him*

the crocodile:
Here comes the boogyman

Says the crocodile

the Squirrel:
Here comes the hammerfish

Says the Squirrel

EPILOGUE

(As the characters leaves the stage)

*They own the statue of the little girl with the matchsticks.
They own all these Danish statues of white children grimacing.
They own these candlesticks.
They own these hand-made coasters.
They own this African quilt.
They own this silk.
They own this linen.
They own these napkin-rings.
They own this silver.
They own these silver spoons.
They own these silver forks.
They own these silver knives.
They own this painting of dancing women.
They own this painting of a quiet man.
They own this painting of forms and colors.
They own this Turkish rug.
They own this old porcelain.
They own this stereo.
They own these speakers.
They own this TV.
They own this sofa table.
They own this chair.
They own this chair as well.
And this chair.
And this chair.*

(The room is empty)

The City Dwellers Complex

City Dwellers is an ongoing sound-based installation project. It has been going on since 2017, and so far lead to seven presentations and try-outs: *City Dwellers # 1 – 4* at KHiO March 2019. *City Dwellers # 5 and 6* at Vega scene September – November 2019 and *City Dwellers #7* at Gallery Bananaz February 2020. *City Dwellers # 8 and 9* will be presented at Intonal (Malmö) and at Vårscenefest (Tromsø) the spring of 2020.

City Dwellers consists of a pool of 400 texts recorded in studio and on site.

These texts/voices are either written texts (from this pool), or improvisations on these written texts. Things that occur in the studio while recording. In the recording sessions, new texts emerge inspired by the “old”.

Some of the texts in this compilation are also quotes or over-writings of texts from facebook, film, tv, general conversations etc.

In the studio many languages are in use (Norwegian, English, Swedish, French, Farsi, Arabic, Icelandic, Dutch and so on).

All the work represented here is in English.

I also work with sociolects and dialects.

The tone in the readings are everyday and verbal, even when the texts has a more literary value. They texts are never “played”/acted out, but sometimes the texts themselves or the situations that occur in the studio lends color and temperament to the reading. I try to make the texts tone, rhythm, content etc. as “active” as the prepared interpretations in the recording situation.

The readers are actors, colleagues, people I bump into, friends and family, and many of the texts have been through several recordings with many different writers. It is this sound-material that is the bases for the works when I compose them.

In the finished work polyvocality and simultaneity is of the essence. On paper – this is not easy to “copy”, so here you find the texts as material, organized according to a very rough timeline. This means that the more historical material comes first, while the contemporary follows later. Many of the texts are repeated and used several times in works. One could say that a new meaning or a new texts appear, as it gets read a different ways or by a different voices.

In a written compilation of the ground-texts like this, – this will not show. So consider this as what it is – a pool of material to be recorded, composed, combined and recombined.

I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT
Wine-leaves everywhere
So thick it covers everything
Deer in the woods
and squirrels
and everything wild
Apples and plums
and turkey, and quail, and pheasants and woodcock
and we're growing melons, and peaches
and plumbs and pears and apples, mulberries and grapes

and there are wild bees for honey, and aromatic herbs growing wild
And locals
paddling along the ship all the way up-river
eager to trade

2

WATCH OUT!
Don't mess it up!

Don't drop that cargo
You have no idea what those crates are worth

And there is more where that's coming from
Fifteen barrels just on this ship!

3

NO, GO FOR THE OAKS
Take the big ones first
The hardwood
The hazel

Go for the hazel!

4

A
SO WHAT DID HE BRING THE COMMANDER?
A wife -
Crates of brandy, certainly
and three horses –

B
Two

A
?

B
Two horses, sir
In the end sir
One of them died sir
the day he arrived

5

SHOW THAT SHOVEL INTO THE EARTH BOY!
Can you feel it
Soft as butter. You just sink into it
Have you ever seen earth as black as that
Like butter – I'm telling you –
Cutting through that earth like butter, boy

6

A

I THINK WE ARE READY FOR PLOUGHING

B
With what?

A
It's the season

B
With what I say
There is only one horse – and he owns it

A
-

B
We can't pay for it

A
I know we can't pay for it
-

I'll be the horse

You heard me – I'll be the bloody horse

7

IT'S A GIRL!

Version 1:
It's a girl!
It's a girl!

Version 2:
See Marie Therese
See!
A girl!
It's a girl

8

BORN ON THE SECOND OF FEBRUARY (while writing it down)

Born on the second of February
in the settlement
A girl

9

I'M JUST GOING DOWN TO THE LAND

version 1:
I'm just going down to the land
Just for a minute

Just to see

Just to check that everything is ok

No, don't worry

It's going to be alright

I'm just going down to check the crops
To draw some water

Short pause

It's only for a little while

Look the neighbours are up
You can see the lights in the window

Just you go over to them

You can go over to them if you feel like it

Short pause

Ok

Ok

Just stay here then
love
This is our land now
Our house

—

Hush

Listen

How silent
How silent it is

10

DON'T WAIT UP
Go to bed – I will take care of it

11

WHAT DID YOU SAY DEAR?

12

GOD IT HASN'T RAINED FOR WEEKS
I wish it would rain

13

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

14

HUSH

15

IT'S MINE

version 1:

It's mine

They gave it to us

We never took it

version 2:

They gave it to me

version 3:

This is my land now my house

We never took it –

They gave it to me – And it hasn't rained for weeks

Version 4:

I am just going down to the
land

Just to check that everything is ok

version 5:

This is the place

This is my house

Not taken

They gave it to me

16

LISTEN

version 1:

Listen

version 2:

Listen

How silent

You can almost hear the river

You can almost hear the grass grow

17

I'VE NEVER BEEN A GODFEARING PERSON

version 1:

I've never been a God-fearing person

version 2:

A

I've never been a God-fearing person

B

I believe in God

I pray every night

18

I BELIEVE IN GOD
I pray every night

19

STARTS HUMMING AND CONTINUES TO DO SO

20

STARTS HUMMING, CURSING OR PRAYING

21

LOOK – THE NEIGHBOURS ARE UP

22

SO CAN YOU DO THAT?
Look after it?
Just for a minute?
the dog
– That dog
It
it just keeps on barking
There is no way we can -
It just barks and barks
every time anybody moves
sits
stands – It's such a light sleeper
just opening a door sets it off and then
it can keep it going for hours

23

TURN AROUND
and smile
– yes.
Just like that!

And twirl!

24

SEVEN MARRIAGES

version 1:
Seven marriages
Seven marriages we celebrated that year

version 2:
Seven marriages
Seven marriages in 1712 – and 43 baptisms
43 baptisms

and 15 deaths
And then –

The fire

25

FIRE-SESSION:

1. Fire
2. What fire?
3. Who said fire?
4. The forts burning!
5. There is a fire on the lose!
6. Wild-fire?
7. Get it under control!
8. The animals
We have to get the animals out
9. Hoist those water-bucket's
10. There is no stopping this one
11. Close the gates
12. We need the horses
13. It's out of control
14. Get down to the river
15. The forts burning down to the ground!
16. God have mercy on us!

26

ARE YOU THERE?

version 1:
Are you there?

version 2:
Are you all there?

27

I AM HERE

version 1:
I am here

version 2:
Yes, mummy is here

ALWAYS, ALWAYS LOOK OUT FOR EACH OTHER

WE ARE A FAMILY NOW, AND FAMILIES STICK TOGETHER

DEAR MOTHER (while writing it down)

Der mother
 how is it with all of you at home
 we had a fire
 The summers was so warm and this fire was relentless
 No
 No (corrects him/herself)
 Dear mother
 how is it with all of you at home
 we are fine
 There was a fire her at the fort, a few weeks ago
 but we are alright now

REMEMBER TO WASH YOUR HANDS

Version 1:
 Remember to wash your hands

Version 2:
 Remember to wash your hands
 And your face!

IT WILL ALL BE FINE

WE'RE GROWING CORN AGAIN NOW
 and melons, and peaches
 plumbs and pears and apples, mulberries and grapes

WATCH OUT!
 Don't mess it up!
 Don't drop that log!

35

SO WHAT DID YOU BRING?

A new lamp?

A new wife?

A plow, seeds, horses?

Crates of brandy?

We could sure need it!

36

GOD ITS HOT

Version 1:

God its hot

Version 2:

God its hot, this summer

37

AND IT HASN'T RAINED FOR WEEKS

Version 1:

And it hasn't rained for weeks

Version 2:

And it hasn't rained for weeks

I wish it would rain

38

IT WAS SUCH A HOT SUMMER

Another incredibly hot summer

And a baker went to the mill with some flour

And the grass was all brown

And the hay was all yellow

And he knocked some ash from his

pipe

39

DON'T WORRY

the dogs fine

40

NO!

41

NOT AGAIN!

42

THERE IS NO STOPPING THIS ONE

43

THERE WILL BE NO SAVING US THIS TIME!

44

AND AFTERWARDS THERE WAS NOTHING LEFT

The town gone

They say they rigged an altar up in the orchard – and held services in the open air

45

HUSH ITS ALRIGHT

It's alright

Husssshhssss

It's going to be alright

I'm here now

It's going to be aaaaalright

46

I AM HERE NOW

47

COME TO THE WINDOW AND LOOK

A

Look

Look

Come to the window and look

Ponies

Wild ponies

Wild ponies in the street

B

Oh – their back

They've come for the salt

In the barrel's – Outside Mr Marks shop

A

Who owns them?

B

Some farmers – Before – Nobody now, I think

A

–

Look at that white one

Aaaall white

It's all shiny, isn't? Like a silver spoon

THEY ARE SHOOTING AGAIN

A
Mum
They are shooting again

Down by the river
Up in the hills

B
It's nothing

A
I heard it
I heard it all true the night

B
It's just some kids fooling around
You'll see

A
No -The dogs went wild with barking
I think they've killed somebody

ON THE 6th OF JUNE (while writing it down maybe)

A
On the 6th of June 1706
the dog from the colony
bites a local man

B
No it wasn't -

A
It wasn't what?

B
It was a local dog
Not a one of ours
a downstream dog -

A (correcting his report)
- a downstream dog ...
And -

B
- it was a a consequence of him kicking the dog, the local
an *upstream* local
He was so severely beaten by commander that -

A
That -

B
He died.
He died, sir

A

The dog died?

B

No, the priest

The priest, sir

He was walking in his garden, and then he was captured, –
by upstream locals – and then a Chief ordered the they release him, the priest, -
but when he was to pass through the Fort gate
he was shot dead by another local and the commander –
he ordered the garrison of 15 soldiers to fire and then then they killed them, sir.

He was walking in his garden, and then he was captured, –
by upstream folk – locals –
and then a they ordered to release him,
the priest,
but he was shot dead –

by another local and the commander –
he ordered the garrison of 15 soldiers to fire and then then they
killed them, sir.

A

–

B

Thirty of them

All dead

A

Thirty dogs

B

Thirty locals, sir

A

30 dead

B

Upstream locals.

And then the locals tried to get some other locals from the north to join them
and when they refused, the locals from down here attacked the northerners
and then the siege happened

And now, – and now the count is asking the Governor to intercede –

50

WHATEVER HAPPENS, HAPPENS FOR A REASON

Version 1:

Whatever happens, happens for a reason

Version 2:

Whatever happens has already happened, they say

Version 3:

Whatever more could happen after this?

Version 4:

All that can happen has already happened to us

51

52

ONCE BESIEGED BY THE LOCALS
And twice burned to the ground

53

SO THERE WAS THIS DOG
eh
It was a like a local dog but, but not from – not from our area
but from downstream
and hmm
it bit the commander and ah
as it happened
the commander ended up killing him eh or was it him
I am not sure
but it was the priest – anyway who got dead
he was – he was walking in his garden
and eh and eh
the dog bit the guy
and he got so angry that he went and killed the priest
(small laugh)
this local guy from – from upstream
and then the commander gathered 15 soldiers
and they shot all of them, all the locals
like 30 of them
all dead
And that's how it started (based on impro on text 49 in the studio)

54

AND ALL THIS – WHAT DOES IT HAVE TO DO WITH THAT DOG?

And all this – what does it have to do with that dog?
Or that priest?
Or that incident in 1706?

55

WELL, THEY SHOT THEM
thirty dead
Thirty locals
And then they started moving them up the river
We came up the river
and others came down
And soon they will have nowhere to go

56

NO GOD
– it cannot be –
Could it?

I DON'T KNOW

version 1:
I don't know

version 2:
Well, I don't know

THEY CAN'T DO US ANYTHING, CAN THEY?

COULD YOU PASS THE JAM?

I DON'T LIKE THEM BEING THAT CLOSE TO MY HOUSE

DID YOU SEE HIM?

Did you see him?
That local man
The one with the hat?

THE LOCALS

They hide in the water
And then they are there
In the night
And
tsjjjjkk
they take their knives out

STOP IT!

You are frightening the children

THEY SWIM UPSTREAM

I saw them
I see them

THE ARMY IS MOVING THEM FURTHER DOWN THE RIVER

66

WHAT'S THAT DOG BARKING FOR?

67

TAKE THE DOG DEAR

68

WHAT DO THEY WANT HERE?

69

HE WAS JUST

He was just

Just outside the window

70

DID YOU TELL THEM?

That we don't want them
We don't want them here

71

THEY ARE HERE FOR THE TRADE

72

THEY WON'T COME

Version 1:

They won't come

Not tonight

Nothing will come of it

Version 2:

It Won't come here, will it?

73

WAR CRIES

War cries

74

THIS WAR

This war – there is no end to it

75

THIS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH US

76

THEY SAY

Version 1:

They say they are moving inland

Version 2:

They say its all up to the government now

Version 3:

They say It's going to be aalright

77

IT WAS THE FALL

It was the fall of 1790

There had been assaults all through the summer

The army was moving the locals inland

And then two local tribes repelled one assault – killing 183 soldiers in the process
and then in the

spring

it was such bad weather – west of the river, – and we had just a few guards there and no
barricades

it happened in the morning during breakfast –

78

IT SOUNDED LIKE THERE WERE THOUSANDS OF THEM

79

DON'T GO ANYWHERE NEAR THE RIVER

Promise me

80

THEY ARE CROSSING THE RIVER!

81

I TOLD YOU

I told you

I told you

I told you they'd come in the nigh

82

OVERRUN
Totally overrun
by locals
Upstream locals
The camp was decimated and then
the army took revenge
It was a bloodbath

Hundreds dead

I don't know –

What a fucking surrender

83

WE WERE OVERRUN

Version 1:
We were overrun

Version 2:
We were overrun
Totally overrun

Version 3:
What are we?
Overrun?

Version 4:
We were overrun
Totally overrun
by locals
Upstream locals

The camp was

decimated
and then the army took revenge

84

WHAT A FUCKING

Version 1:
What a fucking surrender

Version 2:
What a fucking bloodbath

Version 3:
What a fucking bloodbath

Hundreds dead

85

WHAT A SENSELESS USE OF GUN POWDER

Version 1:
What a senseless use of gunpowder

Version 2:
What a riotous waste of gunpowder

86

THERE WERE ALL THESE STORIES

There are all these stories
Such as having his soldiers go through the mess-line at mealtime
over and over again – to give the appearance of being many
to those watching from the other side of the river
An army three times its actual size

87

ITS MINE VARIATIONS

1:
It's mine

2: It's mine
They gave it to me

It's my children's

It's my children's children's

4:
It belongs to my family

5:
It's mine
We never took it
They gave it to us

6: It belongs to my family

7: It's mine
We've worked for this in generations

8: Its theirs
It's their future

9: It's mine
It's all we
have

The soil
The food on my table
A mans honour

88

THE BOAT

They say that their boat hit a rock and broke in two
that she tried to jump

that she tried to jump the ship with her baby daughter on her hip and that when the found
her

washed up on the shore

she had pieces of gold sewn into her skirts ...

89

THERE WAS THIS RUMOU

about this relative of mine – It was kind of a story too

that went around in the family, about this uncle, or a cousin that had fallen in the battle of
Midway Creek

and that was exhumed from his grave to be taken home here to this local cemetery that does
not exist anymore – that cemetery

They say there is a bakery there now, – after the fire and all.

Anyway – before they took him here

they boiled him

his bones

in this big cauldron

and stuffed the remains into to saddlebags

and so they took the bones here, by horse overland – And they say, – some folks say – and
my grandaunt Hilda always used to say, -

That his ghost still walks the flint hills

along the highway up there, looking for the missing bones that they say fell out from the
saddle-bags.

90

200 HUNDRED WOUNDED

Bruised heads, black eyes, bloody noses

But no deaths

91

THERE ARE THESE STORIES

Such as soldiers going through the mess line over and over again –
to give the appearance of being an army three times its actual size

92

THE CAMP WAS DECIMATED

And then the army took revenge

93

THE KILLING WAS RELENTLESS

94

THIS CITY HAS SO MANY MANES:

Stove City, Dry Dock City, Cigar City, Salt City,

Black Earth City, River City, Beyond the river City

Big City, Woodland City, Green City, Runaway City –

I don't know what to call it anymore

95

HE FELL
Both his leg
His back
they broke
He will never walk again
Talk again
Both of them
Broke
Like matchsticks
His left arm – in five different places
No point trying to fix it
He just lies there
But his face is the same
I feed him
Wash him
Not a word
His eyes watching me
My man
My man
His face just the same
Not a scratch – just blood pouring out of his left air

They said he was dead
But I knew he wasn't
He will live
I don't hate him for it
For living
For falling
It just sucks the blood out of me
There is no warmth in this house anymore
All the children
Even the youngest out
working
At the mill, at the works, at the chicken-farm
No coal left for the fire
Tonight I will sleep with the dogs

96

I'LL JUST GO DOWN TO THE LAND version 2

I'm just going down to check the crops

I'm just going down to check the crops
To draw some water

Don't sit up

Go to bed – I will take care of it

I'LL JUST GO DOWN TO THE LAND version 3

I'll just go down to the land

I'll just go down to the land

Just for a minute

Just to see

Just to check that everything is ok

No, don't worry

It's going to be alright

I'm just going down to check the crops
To draw some water

Don't sit up

Go to bed

Short pause

Why should you?

Why should you worry?

Why should you sit up?

It's only for a little while

Pause

Look the neighbours are up
their just across the street
You can see the lights in the window

Just you keep the lights on
Just you go over to them
You can go over to them if you feel like it

Ok

Ok

Just stay here then love
Just you warm yourself some milk
The children are sleeping

They are sleeping I say
It's all safe I say
This is our land now
Our house

97

WHO CARES WHO RULES THIS PLACE

The fort has gone to seed
and it's a puddle of mud in the autumn
and we are practically snowed in winter
Not brick house in sight
Why on earth would people want to fight over this place

98

BORN ON THE 17th OF NOVEMBER

In the middle of a thunderstorm at Point Gross
Dead at four o'clock in the morning
on the 20th
Father's name Boy
Mother's name Betty

SHE WAS LIKE THAT, MY BABY
soft as beeswax she was born

birdlike

100

BIRDFACE

Be close
Betty-birdface
I will still marry you
in a sandpit
In a bakery, in a butcher-shed
I promise
I promise as before – I will be bothersome like a
brother
I'll be fierce
Like a new-born – and Boy to
no one

101

DON'T CRY

Version 1:
Don't cry

Version 2:

A
Don't cry

B
I'm not

102

I CAN'T MAKER HER STOP CRYING

103

THIS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH US

104

I DON'T SEEM TO DO ANYTHING RIGHT

105

THEY SHOT HIM IN THE HEAD
Hung him in a tree – took all his clothes off and left him there
This boyans
Just left him there – hanging
Outside the school
Yes

It was a school
And you know the birds
The birds – they always go for the eyes

No my aunt told me
She saw it herself

106

THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED

Straight through the head

107

ARE YOU CALLING ME A LIAR

108

THEY SHOT HIM

A
They shot him

B
Who?

A
That walker

He just passed by – and they shot him
I cannot believe it

It's the boyans – they did it

109

IT WAS A LOCAL
He did it

110

THAT'S A LIE

111

WHO'S A LIAR!
I saw it myself

112

I DON'T LIKE THEM

A
I don't like them coming up here

B
The natives bought them
its labour

113

A
FUR-TRADER ASKIM OWNED EIGHT
William of Gross Point owned 2
and the mayor, nobody knew how many he had

B
Not many, I'm sure

A
—

B
Not natives anyway —
I
know
He only let God-fearing people into his home

A
Strange people these boyans

B
I would not call them people

A
What would you call them? Beasts?

B
Not people at least

114

BEATRICE

A
Beatrice?

B
He called her that

C
And you received him?
In your tea-rom

B
That man Boy is just a boy

C
Who's the mother?

A
Betty

B
Aren't they all called Betty?

A

A domestic

C

That scrawny thing in the kitchen?

B

Beatrice

That's a name to pick

What about it!

C

This baby

This Beatrice creature – That boy ...

Surely he – we all – knew she would not live
his mother being like that

No meat on her

A/C

–

A

The boy wants to put it on her tombstone

That's why he stands there

That's why he stands there and just won't leave

As if it wasn't enough with the upstream and the downstream ganging up all through the
summer

115

IT'S JUST NOT TRUE WHAT THEY SAY

That he had boyans

116

NO

No

No no no – Not him. He never had any

117

THAT'S JUST A RUMOUR

118

WHAT RUMOUR?

119

I GUESS THERE WERE LAWS AGAINST IT

120

NOT UP HERE

121

MANY DID

122

NOT ANYMORE

There is a law against it now

123

YOU CAN ALMOST HEAR THE BANTER

going on

All the boyans playing cards

Over at Mr Marks shop

124

SHOW ME THAT HAND

125

BEEN NO BETTER HAND THAN MINE

put down a bet or nothing will come of
it

126

BE BRAVE

Bet

better

127

COME HOME

128

AND IN HIS SHOP

And in his shop there were photographs of abbeys and ancient places. Of birches, brooks, canals, cattle, churches, cottages, crags, crosses – dingles, farms, ferns, foxgloves, gables, ivy, land, locks, oaks, ponds, rustic bridges, and tombs – and watermills, windmills, walls and woods.[1]

129

I SAW HER, I SAW HER!

that black eyed, olive-skinned maid I told you about!

I saw her

In the marked – she was there!

She's not from here

She is from the other side of the tracks

She was there

At the marked

She got on this pony-cart

With this family

It's true
It's true – She really exist

130

KISS ME

131

DON'T GO

132

WE HAVE EVERYTHING HERE (while writing a letter)
We have everything here
More than you can imagine
Troops of locals
with big baskets and skins burning big fires and shouting
and dancing their war-dances
And hunters
with bales of beaver, mink and fox outside the trading-stores
Stale old judges with powdered wigs and officers
with brilliant scarlet uniforms – gold lace and sword-knots
And ladies
with crimson petticoats and beehive bonnets
and now and then the ponies
Wild ponies
Black and white and brown just scurrying through town

133

I WANNA SEE THE PARADE!
I wanna see the parade!
I wanna see the parade!

Please mum
Please I wanna see it

I wanna see the parade!
I wanna see the parade!
I wanna see the parade!

134

CAN WE SEE IT?

135

YOU CAN'T STOP ME FROM SEEING IT?

136

COME ON EVERYBODY

Version 1 :

Come on everybody!

Version 2:

Come on everybody!

you too woman

We're off to the park to see the elephant!

137

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

138

DID YOU SEE THE PARADE?

I mean – what a silly thing to drag through those swampy streets

What did it look like?

It did not even look like a boat

It looked like a badly shaped canoo mounted on wheels

139

BUT

Don't you wish that you had been out there?

Just to see the

parade

140

THAT SCHOOL

A

No, I don't like her going there

To that school

B

What do you mean, that school?

A

I wish she could go to the other school

B

But that's all the way across town

I don't understand

Why would you want that?

All her friends go there, they learn French

Why would you want to drag her all across town?

A

-

B

-

A

-

B
Why would you do that to her?

-

Is it that teacher?

A

-

B
That's just a rumour

A
It's the truth

B
We do not know that

A
I don't want her near him
I don't want that woman anywhere near my child

B
She is a good person, I have spoken to her

A
She has been teaching locals

B
She is just an idealist

A
Even downstream locals

B
She means well – she's just...

A
You don't understand

B
She's just mislead
Look
I'll make sure
I'll make sure that none of the boys will have any of her classes
Now calm yourself
Just calm yourself

THE CARNEVAL

B
Pauls going as a bear

A
Why don't you go as the president or something?

B
Nobody likes the president

C
Who is the president, mum?

A
You can go as a -

B
As a -

A
As a

B
As a soldier – that's cool

C
But I want to be a snow-leopard

B
You can't go as a snow-leopard stupid

142

WHO WANTS TO PLAY!

143

YES YES

YES YES YES YES

144

I WANTED THIS FERRET
That's all I wanted it
I'd seen them
People having them
As pets
White once
All cute and lively and cuddly one that I could train
and go rabbit hunting
But my mum said no
Just no
Whatever – just no
But my grandfather – he loved me

He could never say no to anything and so he bought me this ferret
An old one
not a baby one
a cute one, but this old, one-eyed, mean-looking, smelly old ferret that smelled
Gigantic
Too big for its cage
And I did not dare to take it out or hold it
Or anything
It was just in there
Staring at me
and then one day
it just escaped
and my sister had this cat
this beautiful, white cat
and it killed it
the ferret
my sister's cat
there
in the living room

145

STAY

146

I DON'T LIKE THESE RULES

147

WAIT

148

LOOK AT ME

149

DON'T LOOK AT ME

150

THE QUEEN

B
The queen

A
The queen?
She's like 70!

B
So who do you want to be?

151

HE HAS ACRES AND ACRES OF FRUIT TREES
And flowers from all over the world

And in the evening, all the paths are brilliantly
lit
and there is a garden restaurant
and floats of music and even a whole house
filled with the finest specimens of ornithology
minerals, coins, thirtyseven wax-figures
and even a grand Cosmorama

152

NO COME ON

A
No come on!

B
I don't know

A
It will be fun – all those people coming over from the other side of the border
it's not pricy
this place
They say you can even shoot your own turkey
live at the bar

153

HE IS DEAD DRUNK

No, he reeks of it
I'm telling you
He's dead drunk – that's what's the matter with him!

154

STARTS SINGING LOUDLY AND CONTINUES TO DO SO

155

SO LET THE POOR MAN IN
It's pouring down out there!

156

QUIET SUNDAY
For the first time in years
The first day of the week with becoming solemnity
A great day for our organization: all the bars, the bear-gardens closed

157

THE RAOD-BUILDER

A
No, he is a roadbuilder
He never was in copper

B
Who told you that?

A
Roads
That's all I say

He's building roads

158

WHAT NONSENSE

159

FLOODS

The roads flooded

No – roads

No its flooded I said
It's all the
rain

160

ON HORSEBACK

You have to go on
horseback
you have to take the canoo
It's the only way

161

HE WALKED STRAIGHT ACROSS THE TERRITORY

162

YES, THEY ARE BUILDING ROADS

163

IF THEY COULD JUST MANAGE TO KEEP THE COWS OFF THE ROAD

164

No, there is no copper – they will never find any

165

THEY ARE BUILDING ROADS NOW

166

ACROSS THE RIVER

It's sort of a chees-box on a raft
He has two ponies propelling this wheel
At the side of the boat
taking people across the river

167

MR SILVER-HEELS

He owns everything now
Even the public bathtubs
They call him Mr Silver Heels

168

POSTER

Rare spot at the gardens!
Two bears and one wild goose will be sat up
to be shot at
Or chased by dogs on the 20th of October at 2 O'clock

169

THEY CAME FOR THE PONY-RAISES

170

THE DOGS

No -The dogs went wild with barking
I think they killed somebody

171

It's just some kids fooling around
You'll see

172

200 WOUNDED

Bruised heads, black eyes, bloody noses

But no causalities

DEAR MOTHER (while writing a letter)
 Dear mother – how is it with all of you at home
 Here – I am sorry to inform you – an epidemic of smallpox have broken out
 The summers has been heavy with fever
 The killing relentless

NO PERFORMANCES
 I told you –
 There won't be any performances today

 They are shutting up the theatre

NO, I MEAN IT

DON'T GO

Version1:
 Don't go

Version 2:
 Don't go

No don't go out

WAIT TIL IT'S OVER

Version 1:
 Better wait her

Version2:
 Better wait until it's over, til it passes

Version 3:
 Give it a day or to and then it will be over
 Just like last time

EMPTY STREETS

There is nobody in the street –

They say old Israel came through the town with his carts laden full
with dead bodies

179

IT'S ALL A BIT SAD NOW

180

REAL SAD

I don't know
He just never leaves the house anymore
He used to be so
social
He never goes to dances
Never goes to the shop
Never takes the cart out
He just sits
there
In his
chair
I think I am the only one
that calls on him and he never wants to do anything when I get there
Like play cards or –

His sons says, that when they call, that they might play the occasional
game of chess
which he always wins

181

THEY USED TO TRADE ALCOHOL FOR PETS BACK THEN

182

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND

183

DO YOU HEAR ME?

Version 1:
Do you hear me?
It's your mother talking

Version 2:
Do you hear me?
It's your father talking

Version 3:
Do you hear me?
It's me talking.

184

I BELIEVE IN GOD

In things I can
touch
In doing the right thing
In hard work
In reading
In loads of reading – Reading always helps

185

EVERYTHING IS GOING TO BE ALRIGHT

186

HEAVY WORK

A
This boy you're seeing – What does he do?

B
He's down at the mill

A

Heavy work – lifting those sacks – sure does your back in

B
-

A
Upstream is it?
The works?

B
Now it's down by the yard, between Orchard and Plum

187

STEAMSHIPS

Look!
The steamships in

188

YES, THATS THE BIGGEST ONE YET

189

LIFTING AND CARRYING

Just lifting and carrying in
Lifting and carrying
Lifting and carrying all day long

WHAT KIND OF WORK DOES HE DO?

A

So, this boy of yours, what kind of work does he do?

B

He's down at the dock

A

Shipworking?

B

Engine building, I think

DO YOU REMEMBER

And do you remember

Do you remember John

Us is-skating on the frozen river

Watching them lords and ladies – all dressed up in
sable robes, grilling venison and drinking Madeira wine

And staying up all night

And dancing the money-musk, and the reel, and hunt-the-grey-fox, and the german-three
and the pillowdance and you walking me home in the snow

RUM-RUNNERS

Look at those rum-runners!

Driving their cars across the ice!

THE ORCHARD

So yes

That's what they do

If they want fish for dinner

They just stroll down to the river and get some

And if they want fruit for desert

They just stroll by their orchard and pick some

THERE IS A NEW FACTORY BUILD

they say that just the one

Just this one

Will employ 90 000 workers

WATCH OUT

Version 1:

Watch out for the dogs

Version 2:

Watch out for the dogs

Watch out for the cats, the kids, the corner

Version 3:

Watch out for the boogeyman –

Version 4:

watch out for the girl in the jersey knitwear

Version 5:

Watch out for the august stock market corrections

Version 6:

Watch out for your health

Version 7:

Watch your health insurance

196

YOU HEARD ME RIGHT

Yes, Yes – you heard me right

That's exactly the word I used

197

DO YOU HEAR ME?

Sit up when I am talking to you

It is your father talking

198

DON'T LISTEN TO ME

199

IT WAS ONLY A DREAM

200

NO PROGRESS

No, there will never be any progress

Not with that lot

As long as they have their shindigs and their brandy and their women and their cars

That's all they care for

Going wild in the night shooting at everything

201

SHADES

Oh – Shades? That's an ooold place
If you ever want to get pissed in a really old place
Go to shades
You can still shoot fowls and turkey there
geese and chicken too
at Thanksgiving and x-mas, they put the fowls in a
box or something, at some distance in the rear
and then when the fun is over
they raffle off the victims in the bar
one should think one still lived in the seventeen hundreds

202

SURE BENDS YOUR BACK

A
Sure bends your back this work

B
It does

A
Brutal to the body

B
Brings money though

A
Be that right

203

A RIVERBOAT AND A MANDOLIN ORCHESTRA

What do I remember the most?
A riverboat lunch with a mandolin orchestra

204

WHICH BAR

You know
Back then – if you wanted to know where anybody
Or whomever was
You just asked: which bar

205

RUNAWAYS

That tailor
Yes
That's why he built that bar
To hide runaways

No its true
They hide there – waiting to get across the border
They smuggle them across the border at night
They have this tunnel and they call the other side
Do you know what they call the other side?
They call it dawn
Over here with us, its dusk
And there
On the other side of the river – There is dawn

206

RUSSIAN JEWISH GRANDFATHER

A
I told her that my Russian Jewish grandfather
Got busted running sugar for that uptown gang

B
Did she believe you?

A
But it's true

207

A SILVER SPOON IN A CROWS NEST

That's what they found: a silver spoon in a crows nest,
a pink rubber band

208

LIST OF SHIPS

Superior
Sunnyside –
Cambridge
Champion
Vulcan – a schooner
Jane Bell – a Bark
Sweatheart
Delaware
and R. N. Rice – a Tug

Pathfinder
Reindeer
Monticella

Annie L. Young
S. Baldwin
Jenny Briskow
Hope and then Monitor – a bulk carrier

Scow No 1 and No 2 in 1886
Niagara – the Tug in 1887

Then Inter-Ocean
Victoria
Queen of the Lakes
And Myrtle
Fortune
Excelsior

and then in 1878 – the first ferry
in 1888 – the third and the forth

Then Transport
and Garland
and Iron Age
and Lee
and Boston
and Algomath

Sappho
Albony
Landsown

Pioneer
Promise
Arrow – that was a good one
and Argo
Aragon
Troy
Tashmoo
Orego
and Liza

209

IT'S ME

210

DID YOU KNOW?

A
Did you know!?

B
What?

A
Did you know that the first elections we had in this town
took place in a bar

211

PEOPLE HERE ARE NOT THE SAME

I don't think I was ever meant to go to the city
I never thought the city was all that
people here are not the same

212

I'M JUST A FARMBOY REALLY

213

THE SMALLEST TOWN IN THE STATE

I've always been alright with stuff like that – being from a
small town and all

being from one of the smallest towns in the state
Not even a town
if you think about it
just a church
and a gas station
a music pavilion
and the buss-stop

214

JUST FOR A MINUTE

Can I put my head in your lap?
Just for a minute -
Just in your lap –

215

YES I AM HERE

Version 1:
Yes, yes. I'm here.

Version 2:
Yes. I am here.
It's me.

Version 3:
I'm right here.

216

WE SHOULD NEVER HAVE COME

I knew it
We should never have come

217

DON'T WORRY

Don't worry
They would never dream about doing something like that

218

WE HAVE TO HELP THEM

We have to help them
They can't read or write or anything

219

I WILL BE HOME SOON

Don't sit up.

Don't answer the door.

Just keep the lights on
I'll be home
I'll be home soon.

No, nobody is coming

220

MURDER BY THE SCHOOL

They shot him in the head
took all his clothes off and left him there
Outside the school
Yes
It was a school
And you know the birds
The birds – they always go for the eyes

No my aunt told me
She saw it herself

221

LOOK AT ME

Look at me
Open your eyes and look at me!!!

222

A NEWCLEAR BOMB BY THE CARLSBERG CAVERNS

You know – once
when a nuclear bomb was dropped
nearby the Carlsbad caverns
some time in the fifties
as a test – the government watched the lake in that
cavern very carefully, to see if the blast caused ripples to appear
on the pool's surface. None did.

Not a ripple.

Non

The earth – It must just have swallowed up all the vibration

223

CAVES AND BATS 1

Did you know that 1942, the Army trapped thousands of guano bats in the Carlsbad Canyon in New Mexico and put them in a refrigerator to trigger hibernation. Then they strapped 9 gram bombs in 1 gram containers filled with kerosene onto the bats, held on by a string on their chests. The idea was they'd release these bats over Japanese cities. The bats were supposed to chew their way through the string to get the bombs off, and leave them where they did. But in the trial run, some bats never woke up. And others escaped, and set fire to a hangar and a general's car and so the program ended in 1943.

CAVES AND BATS 2

There is connections
There is connections: Bats and caves.
Caves and bats.

Few military conflicts in history have ever been conducted without the use of caves. Think of Jesse James.

He hid out in caves, and in 1863 excavations uncovered an 18 story deep city dug into soft lava rock, that could protect 20,000 people, – in Cappadocia, Turkey. And in France, during WWII, they dug a huge underground complex of tunnels and spaces, with an above-ground fort around it, called Maginot Line.

And there is the Vietnam War.

The North Vietnamese used caves and underground dwellings

And Afghanistan. Not to mention Afghanistan and the Zhawar underground complex in the mountains up there.

The Taliban know their caverns.

There is this connections. Between war and caverns.

Caverns and and bats.

Some have suggested that since bats fly into caves and that since the Taliban is in caves, we should try this type of thing again, but scientists say the problem is bats that are kidnapped, disoriented, and then dropped from 1,000 feet, do not act normally and fly into caves. They act in unpredictable manners instead.[ii]

224

AS IF LIFTED

and the bed was
moving

A moment
it is as if everything just floated
As if she was lifted
As if the world had turned into liquid
balancing on a breath
like a baby's
when it has just stopped crying
a quiver
running through everything

225

READING ALWAYS HELPS

I don't know if I believe in destiny
Or that it's every man for himself
I believe in luck
Or hard work
And reading
Loads of reading
reading always helps

226

ARE YOU STILL UP (on the phone)

Are you up
Are you still up?

Are you up?
You shouldn't be up.

No, no. Don't wait up for me.
There is no need to. No need to be up – No reason to wait
I'll catch a bus.
I'll catch a cab.

I'll get on the subway.

What noises

Just don't answer the door.

Just don't you answer – do you hear me?

What noises is that

No

And don't you open –

And not your sister either. You tell her – If she wakes up.

If there is anybody

there at the door

Do you here me?

Listen to your mother

Just keep the lights on

Just keep the lights on

Until I'm there

*

(on the phone)

– Buttercup

Is that you?

–Why are you answering the phone?

– Why aren't you sleeping?

Why are you up?

You shouldn't be up.

– And your sister?

She isn't sleeping?

– She is sleeping?

Why couldn't she sleep?

Why is she not sleeping

– I'll come

I'll come right now

You keep the lights on.

Just keep the lights on.

Keep the television on.

I know – I know. Just to keep you company. Just until I'm there

227

COME AS FAST AS YOU CAN

228

BOOK CLOSE TO FACE

A

My father

He gave me this other name

because I read all these books

Constantly reading they said

He called me

Book close to face

But like

in his own tongue
In his language

B
Like –

A
I couldn't even say it.

B
I'd like to hear it.

A
I couldn't even pronounce it.

B
I'm sure it's beautiful.

A
I can't even remember it
even
to be honest
I'd had to ask my father next

BOOK CLOSE TO FACE IMPRO

A
I had it in my family
I was called – stare in the air ...
From my father
That's so funny
...

*

A
My father – gave me this other name
I was constantly reading – and spacing out
daydreaming
And he called me stare in the air – and – he but like in his own tongue
In his own language

B
Like

A
I – I don't – I don't remember anymore really
ehm
I don't know

B
I am sure it's beautiful

A
I would have to actually talk to him
I would have to talk to my father first, and find out.

B
Hm

*

A
You know my father – he gave me this other name
Because I was constantly reading
He called me Book Close to Face

B
You know *my* father – he gave me the name – stare in the air
Because I was daydreaming a lot

A
And how would he say it?

B
Stierom
Stieroom

A
Stierom?

B
Stierom
And the other version was – eeh Guck in die luft

Laughter

B
Mmm

A
Mm

B
Do you have a second name?

A
A second name?

B
I had two

A
I actually I do not remember it
I don't remember how to pronounce it
He said it in his own tongue, his own language

B
Like – like what?

A
I don't remember

B
I'd like to hear it

A
-
I'd had to ask him

A
I am sure its beautiful

WHAT AM I?

A
Close your eyes

B
-

A
Close your eyes

Say what am I

B
-

A
Close your eyes
Close your eyes and feel me

So – What am I

B
-

A
No. Further down
Further

B
Oh
Fuuuuury

A
Its reeeaaaaal fur

As real as can be

B
-

A
So what am I

B
It's soft

A
Isn't it

B
And warm

A

Mmhm

B
A minx?

Can I taste it?

A
No

B
Can I smell it

A
No tasting
No smelling
Just touching

B
-

A
No that's not allowed

B
So there are rules?

Ok
Ok

A
So

B
You'r a little baby rabbit
You're a kittykat
You're a monkeypaw
You're a baby bear all warm and snug

230

A SHINY SLIPPERY THING

A fox deep in his cave
A shiny, slippery thing –
A baby bear all warm and
snug
Oh let me see you
Oh why don't you let me in

231

LAUGHTER SINGLE

232

LAUGHTER PLURAL

THE MAN WHO ATE HIMSELF TO DEATH

By the way – did I tell you about that man who
ate himself till death?

234

NO, LET GO OF ME

No, let go of me
Let go of my hand

235

WE WILL BOTH FALL

Just let go of me, or we'll both fall

236

CAN'T WAIT UNTIL EVERYTHING IS BACK TO NORMAL

237

FACE DOWN

I don't know
I don't know this man
They found him in the streets, face down
all his intestines were gone

238

THIS TOWN IS ALMOST BANKRUPT NOW ANYWAY

239

THEY ARE COMING

They're here
They are coming

240

DREAM OF CHILDREN BEING TRANSFORMERS

I had this dream
This strange dream
the children – being transformers – or robots or zombies
hiding in the bushes watching us
and we were having this barbeque party
everybody laughing and drinking

THE THINGS WE ARE DOING TO EACH OTHER

Version 1:

I imagine her
 touching herself
 She is thinking about me, my wife
 It turns her on
 The things we are doing to each other

Version 2:

My neighbor wears this really tight skirt
 its green

I find her at e-bay.
 at finn.no
 She is selling her dress.
 She is selling her shoes, her coat, her dishwasher
 She is selling her fridge, her chairs, her pots and pans

Sometimes I see her carrying out her trash
 Big bags of it

I awake at night thinking about her
 her trash
 her house
 where the rooms are situated: The kitchen, the bedroom, the hallway
 I see her standing there – her mobile in one hand, her coat in the other

I imagine her touching herself – thinking about me – about my wife – and the things we get
 up to

I BELIEVE IN LUCK

some people just have more luck than others
 I believe in luck
 I believe in that

THE FREAKY WHITE BOY

A
 And this car came driving down the street
 real slow
 No headlights
 Just silently driving in the dark
 Down the road
 And this kid jumped ut
 This tiny kid – no more than fourteen
 All white and freakly
 And he had this bat
 This baseball-bat – and he thumped him

B
 Who?

A
 This other boy

A tall musculare looking one
And he just collapsed
Went down on his knee like
And then he thumped him again

B
Who?

A
That freaky boy
At the left of his skull
Like right behind his ear – and he just like
keeled over
on the side
And then there was this other car
It just came out of nowhere
And these local boys jumped out
Huge, tattooed guys with mohawks and army boots
And then it just exploded
The whole street – it just went crazy

244

THEY SHOT HIM – THE DIALOGUE

A
They shot him

B
Who?

A
He was just stopping at red light

B
Where?

A
Does it matter where?

B
-
Was he local?

A
What do you mean local?
What do you mean where?
Don't you care?

B
Of course, I care

A
People just go about shooting people at random
Just like that

B
It wasn't at random

A
He just stopped for red

B
Yes, but it wasn't at random

A
And he wasn't a local
What do you mean a local?

B
You mean – you are sure he wasn't local?

A
-

B
-
Well anyways – it wasn't at random. They probably just wanted his car

245

KICKING AND KICKING HIM

Version 1:
They just kept kicking and kicking and kicking him

Version 2:
And you just kept on kicking and kicking and kicking and kicking and kicking and kicking
and kicking her in the face

And you feel like running – but you don't know where

Version 3:
They just kept kicking and kicking and kicking and kicking and kicking and kicking him

He had this knife
This really long Japanese looking knife
And his eyes was all wild

246

HE HAD TATOOS RUNNING ALL THE WAY UP HIS SCULL

247

I SAW NOTHING

No
I saw nothing
No
I did not see anything

248

YES I SAW HIM

Yes, I saw it
It was him
That fucker did it

249

RUN!

250

DO IT!

Just do it!

Just bash his skull inn

251

WE NEVER SHOULD HAVE MOVED HERE

Why did we move here

We never should have moved here

252

LOOK, HIS FACE IS ALL GONE!

253

RIOT SEQUENCE 1

A

Tanks

B

WHAT

A

Come and see

B

Not tanks

A

There

B

Is it the army?

A

It's the luting

That's why

B

It's political

A

People can't just go around taking whatever they can get their hands on

B

It's the riots – not the looting

Its political, I'm telling you

Tanks

Tanks in our streets

I can't fucking believe it

RIOT SEQUENCE 2

1:
Riots!
It's a riot

2:
What riot?

3:
They're rioting

4:
They're going wild
all of them

5:
Call the police

6:
Close the door – there

7:
Call someone!

8:
They say its out of control

9:
What's out of control?

10:
Oh no – the car!

11:
Who's shooting?

12:
Nobodies shooting

13:
They're coming

14:
Where are the children!
Get the children!

15:
Yes, yes. I'm here.
Yes. Yes. I am here.

I am here – Mummy's here

16:
How on earth did it get to this?!

17:
What in heavens name is happening!

18:
It wasn't his shop

19:
Look what I got!

20:
What are you going to do with that toaster?

21:
It's too heavy!

22:
No one trusts the police

23:
It's going to be alright
They know what they are doing

24:
Do they know what they are doing?

25:
Get it under control!

26:
Their animals, the lot of them

27:
We should never have moved here!

28:
They are looting the stores!

29:
We are a family now, and families stick together

254

CHIRST MAN

Christ man
Why do you leave your shoes lying around!
And what's this bread doing on the table
Now its all dry and hard

255

MY IDEAL SHRINK

If I could choose my ideal shrink
He would be like this guy – that repairs cars
And then you go to his garage
And you talk, and he listens
He can listen to cars – so -
He can listen to people
And he likes it
And you notice it, and it makes feel ok

And his wife makes cookies
and they get like reeealy popular
because people find it relaxing you know
to be with this guy, and his wife and his cars

THE SNIPER

A

I mean – There is a certain kind of framework that you are supposed to fit into

Consensus paralyses action

I mean – if the idea of what you cannot do is stronger than the idea about what you can do

B

Like the sniper

C

What about the sniper?

B

When he hits

C

I mean – there is the voice of reason and then the will to act and then –

B

the sniper –

A

These are the days of the sniper That's what I think It's all about what you do and what you say Cause and effect Cause and effect

Like when the link is broken then – If what you say – does not mean anything

Like –

 There is no effect

C

And the sniper?

A

That's what I mean

If the link is broken, then –

C

You have guns?

B

Yes

C

-

A

Sometimes I feel

Like I've just lost my voice

I have no voice

I open my mouth to speak – and its just –
 gone

C

It's just a feeling

It's psychological

I am sure it's psychological

A

Off course it's psychological

MARY

and I think about Mary –
She dreams of owning a small Deli in her own skyscraper and now she drives
At least once a month she drives
I see her driving off down G avenue four a clock in the morning with a gun in the glove
compartment –
Lately it just happens all the time
I see her as I return from the night shift
Always hard to get to sleep
I am such a light sleeper those first hours and I hear her car
Almost once a month – she takes that drive
to find a broken front window

They have been running it for 27 years
that deli
leasing it from a guy that still has all his confirmation-money in unopened envelopes.

It used to be great down here
Now the alarm wakes her up in the middle of the night
and she picks up the gun
and she gets into her car and drives all the way down
Onto the freeway
Towards the river
picking up cardboard on the way
to stop the alarm
clear away the glass –
wait for the police that never turns up before long after they have opened in the morning.

261

This is the thread in my hand
This is my hand
No more children
There just is no room for it –
This is the thread in my hand
This is my hand
This is the thread as it passes through it
I've told you I've told you
Don't kiss me like that – there is no room for it
This is the thread in my hand
This is my hand
This is the thread as it passes through it
As it enters the machine
As the machine eats it up
As my hand reaches out
and touches the metal, my knee, the softness of the wool
Yes I love you
–
This is the machine
Reds, blues, greens, yellows
It is in my hand – the wool – my mouth sore, the taste of beans and greens No more
children I say – no more
When you sleep
I kiss you
My hand is hard
It is the work
It is the noise – the dark is so quiet I cannot sleep
See
See
Snow falling

IT'S LIKE A TRIBE

It's like a tribe

It's like a very corrupt tribe

20 BOXES OF FROZEN PIZZA

When I walk through my neighborhood
 I hold my phone up
 and move my lips
 Pretending that I am talking to someone
 so that I do not have to stop and chat
 because

I've had enough of that
 of my neighborhood stopping me at random
 like in the stairwell
 or calling me over and over again
 on the phone
 sometimes in the middle of the night
 And one time
 one of them just came towards me
 and like
 moved straight into my private space
 and then he started reading this poem
 this like really sexual poem
 into my face

So now sometimes
 when the phone calls
 I just don't answer

remembering the time

when one of my neighbors called me

like twenty times the same night

offering me 20 boxes of frozen pizza

And this guy
 he is like
 really big
 really tall
 really heavy looking
 He murdered this man

Everybody knows it

He put a radio inside him and he died

I HOLD THE FABRIC IN ONE HAND

I hold the fabric in one hand
 And the ribbon in the other
 It's snowing outside
 No sound
 Just snow
 The needle and the thread
 The thread and needle

I hold the ribbon in one hand
The fabric in the other
My selection of feathers
My selection of buttons
My selections of linings and beads

I am thinking of poppies
I am thinking about leaving this house
I am thinking about the sound of snow that has no sound at all
The ribbon in one hand
The fabric in the other
Dust on the floorboards, the mantelpiece – not moving
I am not moving
How long since I moved
Just the snow
Just this needlework
Just this endless row of hats
Ladies
Laughter
Tea
Sacks of coal
I need to buy another sack of coal
I need a hand against my neck
Sometimes I feel as if I am dead from the waist down

Is this age?
The ribbon in my hand, the dust, the dead fire – the sound of snow falling

Blue
Stacks of blue
Shades of blue
My beads – emerald, crimson, bone-white
The china in my cup

I have to let go of it – the ribbon
Dear hand – you have to let go of it

The work is never over

I have to let go of it
This fabric
This hand
A pair of scissors in the wicked basket
All this beauty
feathers
the ribbon

in the snow
a raven black cat across the lawn
a raven black cat across the lawn
a raven black cat across the lawn

265

DOG ON ACID

In my village
everybody knows everybody
And this man
this man –
he tried to murder his grandmother

centre, the launch pad-area where the rocket takes oooooof – and takes the owl into space.
In nature
The owl would be sitting on top of a telegraph-pole or – at a high place, but for some
reason it is not
a telegraph-pole
It's a space rocket
And I am not – I am not anything
I am just an observing
Watching all of this happening
A somewhat frightened observer – because it's all a bit disconcerting
All very strange and worrying
A little bit intimidating, but there is a feeling of hurry – and I am running across the
wasteland
Towards the cliff
But I don't know what happens then
I have no idea

727

OWL 2 IMPRO

All owls are very mysterious
They are difficult to guess – they give the impression
Of commanding the whole environment from high up and with an absolute minimum of
movement a real
Economy of using virtually no energy – they just
Move their head a little bit – off course
It just rotates
The head of an owl – it just rotates without you even knowing if it really has a neck or not
Just turning around – surveying the environment really quietly – not – not
Alarming any possible prey that might be in the environment so – commanding the
environment so that any
 Life
Any – other animal life or birdlife that's within a 150 meters of the owl is basically
conscious that the owl is there – cause it could loose anything
A rabbit or a dog or anything – could basically they could basically loose anything
their lives – if they do anything wrong with an owl hanging around – up at the top of a pole
– But since the owl is actually on the space rocket it kind of loses some of its
 some of its natural power
cause
that's not really a place where owls probably wants to be – on the top of a space rocket
I think its forced to go out there – probably against its own will ...
And everything is moving much faster – I mean – that it ever would have wanted to be
moved – sooooo – so its not a natural situation for the owl – if one compares with its
natural environment

273

THE DEATH OF THE HONEY BEES

Like – I read it in the paper – this Sunday morning – it said that the honey bees had started
to die in massive numbers.

All the hives. Died on the spot, totaling about 2.5 million bees.

A woman stated on facebook – that walking through the farm was like waking through a
graveyard. Pure sadness

278

CLOSING

No
they are closing it down

279

CLOSING-TIME

They are closing down the factory

They are closing down the works

They are closing down the yard

The mill

The diner

No
I went down there today
They gates were locked

The door was locked

They've barricade it

You could walk right in

It was all gone

The machines, the shelves, the storage
All empty

280

DEPRESSION

70,000 abandoned buildings, 31,000 empty *houses*, and 90,000 vacant lots

281

GIVE ME MY KEYS!

Give me my keys!
Give me my keys
Give them to me!
Just give me my keys
Give me my keys -
My keys – Give them to me!

282

HE JUST SHOUTS

My neighbor – He is no problem
really
He just shouts
Like shouts
really loud
over and over again

like the same phrase – Just like: Give it here. Give me my keys!
like 40 times in different voices and I sit there, in my living room, and I listen to him.
My wife likes it less than I do. It kind of scares her, the way he just goes on and on. I guess
it's because she's pregnant. She worries about the child. About whether this is the right kind
of environment for our child to grow up in
Sometimes I go down. To the basement.
You can hear them even better down there
The way they carry on
I sit there on the washing machine
– and sometimes I see him – like
driving off
in the middle of the night.
And his wife there
on the lawn
in her rubber boots
or in her bathrobe
knee deep in snow.

283

WE LIT A FIRE IN THE BASEMENT

284

THE GOVERNMENT

A
there are killings again
Up in the hills
Down by the river

B
It's nothing
It's the government
Go back to sleep

A
I heard it
I heard it all true the night

B
Its just target practise
Its just some kids fooling about

A
They are doing it
Going from house to house
You'll see

B
-

A
The dogs went wild with barking
I think they have killed everybody
Like the gangs used to
Soon they'll go around
burning down the houses

285

RUBBISH

All that rubbish
Big plastic bags full of it
How can one person manage to produce so much junk

286

RATS

Rats
Worse than rats – the lot of them

287

CLOCKS, STEAM ENGINES, CAT-FOOD, RIFLES AND BULLETS

Clocks, steam engines, cat-food, rifles and bullets
Clocks, steam engines, cat-food, rifles and bullets
Clocks, steam engines, cat-food, rifles and bullets

288

FUCK THOSE BLOODY POLES

289

90 000

90 000

90 000 workers

290

CLOSING US DOWN

Version 1:
They are closing us down

Version 2:
They are closing it down

291

THE OWNERS

A
Why says that?

B

Say what!

A

That *they* are closing it down

B

What do you mean?

A

Who are they?

They who?

292

SELF MEDICATION

– working with animals, I'm just so fucking tired.

It's not the animals – it's the people. They self-medicate.

I want to go to Alabama. Raise horses, start a farm down there.

All my Family is from down there – you know. Back when they came –
Always loved horses.

There used to be a stable down here. The house is still there. I used to go there as a child. I was the only black person. I thought that there were no black jockeys but then I learned that in the South, before the ku klux klan went through it all – all the prize winning jockeys were black.

293

THE HATERS

They used to be hating on us. Now they are all coming down here.
in their cars.

They can't even cross the streets. They can't even walk.

I mean now they all say they support the team – in that time, when the stadium was down there – now we all go to the games, now when they are winning. But then – there were hardly any at the games. When they were one dollar a seat and you could bring your own food.

I remember like, when I was four, and my mother had brought me that new shiny jacket, you know that team jacket, and we went down there, and we walked over that overpass and it was a summers day and I was all proud and all.

294

THE PIANO

He does not do anything anymore

He just sits up all night – playing that piano

And now they are coming to get it

He picked it up when he got that job – but then he never payed for it

295

THE KEY

Do you have it?
The key?

296

TICK TOCK

We think that we've got 'n rid of it
We think we've stashed it away in the attic and then it keeps on reappearing in the living
room
It's like this alarm clock ticking
You can put it under your pillow, in the cupboard, but it keeps on ticking
Tick tock
Tick tock
Tick tock

297

THE ONE-HANDED SHRINK

This shrink I started going to, he does not have a hand
He has like – not even half a hand
So he puts forward this stump
And you grab it
And it's like the most beautiful thing

298

COME ON. YOU ARE HOLDING ME UP HERE!

299

A LITTLE BOY RUNNING

You hear him
their little boy running and
Running
running and
Running
across the floor

300

DO YOU HAVE IT

Do you have it?
The car?

301

SHAME

The fact that you don't own your own words!
Not even your feelings

That they are not original
That they are/feel even
made

They create shame

They come from society, from our parents – they create shame
We fight
With this self-censorship

302

BEHIND THE HOUSE (while writing on a computer)

We are growing corn again now
And apples and pears and grapes
And my neighbour he has bees
Beehives
Behind his house and on the ceiling

303

THE HUSBAND

My neighbor
she really want to be like us
you can see it in her face

And her husband
He plays a lot of footballgames
And he has this small office and she knows
That he will never make this amount of money
To get the house of her dreams – That her friends has
And I meet her even in the shop
Or I meet her on the doorstep

And she tells me everything
I met him on the boat
The husband
And he was going to Poland
On a guttetur

And he says
We are going to Auschwitz on Sunday
if we are not to drunk on Saturday

Its so hard – he says

After so many years
With my wife
things
no sex

304

IT'S PSYCHOLOGICAL

A
I don't know
In a way it's his problem, isn't it?

-

She also told me – that he only has one hand

Like when they came there, and he came to the door – she discovered that he only had one hand

The other hand was like gone

Just a stump – and I don't know

I just couldn't deal with that

305

FALLING SEQUENCE

1:

What happened?

2:

He fell

2:

Did he fall?

4:

What's up?

5:

He fell

6:

Who fell?

7:

He just lies there

8:

Get him up

Whats wrong with you!

Somebody get him up!

306

DARLING

Look at me

Darling look at me

307

IT`S THE LATEST MODEL

Do you like it?

It's the latest model

Is it the colour you like

Powder blue

It will take us straight across town

Straight across town – no waiting around in that tramline anymore

308

HE HAS THE NICEST CAR ...

309

WATCH OUT FOR THE TRAM!

310

YOU ARE HURTING ME

Let go of my hand
No
Let go of my hand
You're hurting me

311

THE BOYS SWIMMING

No they went swimming
The boys
in the river
run after them
just take this lunch-box
and this apple
and run

run and you'll catch up with them

312

CARD-PLAYING

The police came around
They'd been card-playing I thought
That's what he said
We've been card-playing all night – he said, but I don't know
They came and took him
God knows when he'll get out

313

THE MEMBRANE

It's like a membrane, an invisible skin that is hard – to penetrate – to find your voice in – in the society. Not just to live at the edge of it. Surviving by it – but not really being in it. Not being able to influence it – or criticise it.

314

THIS STREET WILL NEVER BE THE SAME

I WANT TO GO TO WARSAWA

I want to go to Warszawa
 Play the piano
 Were one of those dresses
 One of those long sleeveless dresses
 I dream of it at night
 Me
 In a lit up street back there where my folks came from
 Playing
 Letting the music pour out through an open window
 Down to the street below ...

THE VAN

In the van

 I can't

 She can't
 She's pregnant
 She's five months pregnant
 Its January

 In the van
 You can't be serious

 They've cut the electricity
 They've changed the locks
 It's not yours anymore
 Jim
 Jim

 Jim

 Its not your house anymore
 It hasn't been – if you don't pay
 it hasn't been for years

JUST SHUT UP

Just shut up
 Just shut up
 Just shut up about that van
 About that dog
 About the government
 About your dress
 About that school
 What school
 What fucking school
 Do you think I can pay for a school
 I can't even pay for petrol
 I can't sleep
 I haven't slept

This car
This car
This car
It's the nicest colour but it's not a fucking house
It's not a fucking house
This is not fair
This is not fair
This is not human
We are not supposed to live like this!!!

318

THE RULER

I had this ruler.
This ruler that I really loved
And it had all these faces on it
All the presidents faces – and I loved that ruler so much
I thought I would be like them one day
that I would be a president
and it was not until later
I could have been six maybe, or seven
when I noticed
when I saw
that they were not like me
that they were different
their faces – not like my face
That they were men, and that I was not
And I wanted to be one
a man
like my father
or a boy
like my brother

I loved my brother
and I could not believe it
how all
how all of them could be men and I
was not

319

SHIT

shit shit shit

shit shit shit shit shit

shit shit shit shit fuck this shit

320

HOLD ME

Please hold me
Just for a minute

321

Are you lost or something?

322

YOU OVER THERE

Can I help you with anything?

323

ANIKA IMPRO

1.

No it wasn't

No – it wasn't

No. It wasn't. osv

2.

Nei – va då?

Nei, det va det inte.

Nei de va det inte

Nehehe i de va det inte osv

Va det det?

Nei – va då?

3.

It wasn't what –

It wasn't what?

It wasn't osv

4.

Vad va de inte? Vå da?

Vad va det inte

Vad va det inte?

VAD va det inte? Osv

Det va inte vad då?

Vilket va det inte?

Vad va det inte för nånting?

Det va inte vad?

5.

Are you sleepy –

Are you sleepy?

Osv

Are you asleep?

6.

Sover du?

Är du sovnig?

Är du sövnig – etc

(whispers) sover du?

Sover du –

Nnnnn – hhhnnnn (hums)

–

IT IS YOUR OWN FAULT

I mean
 If you can't be successful it's your own fault
 I mean it
 That's what they say
 That's what people say
 And if you're not – it's like this disease
 This contagious disease you carry around with you
 Wherever you go

When the society solves your problems and its own,
 you are left on your own with your problem.
 – The fear that there is something wrong with me if
 I can't function inside these frameworks.
 The only thing that can go wrong is you

LET'S TALK ABOUT SOMETHING ELSE

Don't listen to me
 Do not listen to me
 Lets talk about something else
 Something else completely
 Like

squirrels.

Black squirrels.
 They came with the carnival
 one time,
 When a carnival came by my town
 and they had black squirrels
 and they spread,
 And then they have been mating -
 so you see a lot of back squirrels with brown tails there now
 and sometimes,
 there is this orchestra.
 They follow what they call the organ trail,
 and they play in the field
 in the spring

DO YOU WANT TO PUT YOUR HEAD IN MY LAP

THE CADILLAC

I remember him riding a Cadillac
 I remember him smoking on the balcony
 I remember him having this video camera
 That he made like tons of tons of takes with it
 Of everything
 Of almost everything
 Of us
 Taking trips
 Going in the park

His car
He loved his car
I remember him filming the scenery
He used to film the houses and the streets
How he used to follow me around with the camera
filming everything I did
all the time
I used to love that
he used to say – look at me!
He used to say – turn around and twirl!
I used to perform for him

328

BLIND

Sometimes it feels like I'm going blind

I cannot see

When I try to look ahead

It is just gone – obliterated

329

I NEVER MENT TO HURT YOU

No – don't say that
It's not true
I never meant to hurt you

330

I USED TO SEE THE BEAUTY IN THE WORLD

331

THAT'S IT

I've never been able to say no

That's it

I just never –

332

I HAVE BEEN UP ALL NIGHT

Look
Look
Look
I've been up all night
Up all night – with those bloody papers
With those number

No
No
No – we can't work it out
It's nothing to work out
It's over
No more tweeking, fixing, no more avoidance –

Yes
Yes
I told you
It's over
They'll put us under administration

Tomorrow
In a week
In a months time – but it will happen
There is no avoiding it

333

THE CONTRACT

See
There is the contract

334

LAWRENCE-QUOTE

the machine is a soft thing, it needs us

*We are not the centre
We are a part of thermodynamic processes
We are the producers of technology – of hot words, and cold matter
Maybe we have the potential to deal with it all ...*

325

A TRIBE

It's like a tribe
This government
It's like a very corrupt tribe

336

I DON'T BELIEVE IN POLITICS ANYMORE

337

FIFTH FLOOR

I live on the fifth floor
I grow lemon trees in my windowsill, and apple trees and tomatoes
I take the kernels out of the fruit and then I plant them there
I've also tried to plant an avocado, ginger and apricot

THE HOUSE

A
So it's yours

The house on the other side of the street

B
Yes

A
I didn't know
I thought that it was owned buy a guy who was leaving for Florida

B
It was

Jimmy something

he offered me to buy it
but I didn't first
I would never touching any property with tenants on it
and the women who lived there, Charleen – she was like bipolar
and then he said she had to get out
but it took him two months to get rid of her
from May to July
and then I bought the place, and this woman – Charleen – moved further up street
ironically enough renting
With another white guy – called Kyle
and now
after she left
the house is twice the price
nobody wants to live close to lunatics and killers and crack heads – but we all have to live
somewhere
and now she hates everything in Horton street
Charleen
Sometimes she comes around
In the middle of the night
And she just stand there
Outside the house
Screaming
Swearing
Calling me names
Threatening that she will kill me
Calling me a Polish, fascist, racist pig
she even hates the farm and all it represents
she attacked the farmer two weeks ago
with a sledgehammer

A
And the house?
Are you going to keep it?

B
I don't know
if I get the right offer, I might sell

I NEVER SAID THAT

No!

No!

No!

No, I never said that

Shut the fuck up!
Just give me the keys!
Give me the keys

340

YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW ME

341

They took us to that building that had just been sold for one million dollars to the guy who has that company – Cost and Credit, and inside it – there was this cathedral-like, heavily ornamented communal area, like ten floors high from the ground level, drawn by some of the world's best architects at the time, I mean the city was just overflowing with cash back then ...

342

LOCK IN

I can't stand it any longer
In two months time it will be five years since I last left this building

343

THE ARGUMENT

These last week we have been arguing
Constantly
We have bought this new flat
This penthouse
This rooftop garden
This ocean view and now he wants to get rid of it all
All the furniture
All the family portraits
Even the TV
He says it makes no sense anymore
All those things we have loved and cherished
That generations have loved and cherished since we are moving
Into this new flat
He says that when we pay so much for the view
For the space
For the vicinity
that that
Will have to do

IT WAS IN THE PAPERS

IT WAS IN THE NEWS

NEVER BELIEVE IT

A WORLD THAT VOTES BREXIT

A world that votes Brexit and Trump, and kicks refugees, and watches them drown in the sea. A world that turns its blind eye on barrel bombs, extreme torture, enshelterment, genocide... A world like this is an accessory to genocide

In a just world, all of your presidents and prime ministers will also be facing some kind of international court for justice, for being accessories to murder. I no longer think I am human... we have all become barbarians (Rana Issa on Facebook)

THE WORLD GOING TO THE DOGS

It's not true you know.

It's not true what they say – that the world is going to the dogs.

It is a lie.

A shitty lie.

Don't you ever believe it

Don't you believe a word of it. They want you to believe it, but never you believe it – We are fine. Just fine, I promise you. It's just scare tactics – You need to understand – there are countries on all levels, and most of them are ok. People are vaccinated

The number of children in the world has stopped. Stopped increasing.

Most people use contraceptives. They say –

Mr Trump

on the news

They say there is war, chaos, unrest -

– No

No, no, no, no –

That's wrong. You are wrong. They are wrong! Straight up wrong!

There are a fantastic elections, competent leaders. Yesterday India was declared free from tetanus, Nigeria has a fast economic growth and – if one chooses to – If one chooses to only show the shoe, my shoe – it's a very ugly shoe – but that shoe is only a part of me.

I am telling you.

I know.

I am a doctor.

I have been everywhere

I am having a shitty day, but the world is ok and I am telling you that if you choose to only show my ugly shoe – OR if you choose to show something else – like – my face, that's different thing. You only can't only show a small part and call that "the world".[iii]

THE WALK

I decided to walk straight across town
 From the old slaughterhouse and then just continue west
 All the way through Newtown and the upper district – not stopping
 Just do drink – and eat maybe once a day
 I decided to walk all the streets
 To circle town
 See how long it would take me
 Sleep as little as possible

I do one street at the time
 Circle them on the map
 the one I've walked and the once I'll do next
 Once all the madhouses and all the jails was outside town
 Now the city is catching up with them

A WORLD BUILD ON FANTACY

Is any of it real?

Look at this

Look at this!

A world built on fantasy

Synthetic emotions in the form of pills

psychological warfare in the form of advertising

Mind-altering chemicals in the form of food

Brainwashing seminars in the form of media

Cold isolated bobbles in the form of social networks

Real?

You want to talk about reality?

We have not lived in anything remotely close to reality since it turn of the century

We turned it off

Took out the batteries

Snacked on a bag of gmo's while we toss the reality into any

ever expanding dumpsters of the human condition

we live in houses build by trademarks corporations

built on bipolar numbers

jumping up and down on digital displays

Hypnotizing us into the biggest slumber mankind have ever seen

You have to dig pretty deep, kiddo

We live in the kingdom of bullshit

A kingdom you've lived in for far too long

I am no more real than a big mac

As far as you are concerned

I am very real

We are all together now

Whether you like it or not
(Mr Robot)

351

THE DOG

And our dog
it just keeps on barking
There is no way we can -
It just barks and barks
every time anybody moves
sits down
stands up
if the light shifts
or a car
passes
in the night
It's such a light sleeper
Somebody turning on a light
going to the toilet
opening a door – it just sets it off and then
it can keep it going for hours
But my other neighbours
the ones just across the street
They have children, a tiny child and all, and
sooner or later they will complain
They will call
or come over
and tell us that the dog
That it's impossible with that dog
And then
One night
I wake up
and the house is all lit up
Every room
the hallway
even the garage
like this bright, whitish light
A helicopter landing on the parking lot
the rotors spinning
whipping up the snow

352

LIPSTICK ON A WHORE

– the city, the main street – before, I wouldn't even stop at red
Now its safe – although some of it is like putting lipstick on a whore

THIS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH US

Don't cry
This has nothing to do with us

PRODUCTION

You want me to say it
What the this town has been producing?
What hasn't been producing: china, candles, and cars. Canned sausages, canned beef,
canned beans. Bier and bonnets. Bomb-carriers. Tanks and toys and lumber. And lard. And
meatloaf's.
Stoves, and salt, and ships, and spirits Sports-ware, pharmaceuticals, paper, pens,
upholstery. Tobacco, tupperware,
furniture and furnaces
Do you want me to go on?

IT WAS GONE

I walked through my old neighborhood, and it was gone
Just gone

DO YOU HAVE A JOB SEQUENCE

1:
Well, you have a job

2:
Well – now you have a job

3:
Well –
Do you have a job?

4:
Well – if you don't have a job

5:
Well, if you can't hold down a job...

6:
Well – when there are no jobs –

7:
Did you get that job?

8:
No job's eh?

9:
When you lost that job

10:
But you lost that job

11:
Better hold on to that job

357

WORKING
So brother –
Are you working?

358

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

359

YOU'RE GOING NOWHERE

360

IT'S NOTHING

361

AH

Oh – no –
Further down

Ah – that's lovely!

362

IT'S TRUE
I never meant to hurt you

363

I'VE BEEN UP

Look
Look
Look
I've been up all night

364

BANCKRUPSY

Yes
Yes

I told you
It'over
Tomorrow
In a week
In a months time – but it will happen
There is no avoiding it

365

JUST RIGHT HERE

366

TAXATION IN SPACE

A
What do you think about taxation in space?

B
–

A
Taxation.
In space.

B
I don't

A
You know they are planning for it.
It's the resources – metals and minerals and all kinds of stuff.
They say that that's the next race. The race to colonialize – you know – space.
After the race for water – its space, they say, – and then they need rules you see
– and regulations – to have them ready. To put down some principles – on how
to tax
the revenue.

B
–

A
I know –
I know that –
That when you look up. When you stand there and look up at the sky, like – the
night sky and the moon – In Marysville – It can be really spectacular. In winter.
When it has snowed and the coyotes are out and you just stand there – You've
gone camping or something and you just stand there and look up at the sky and
the stars and you can hear them yelping in the distance, and the stars are like
tiny diamond dots high, high above you – like tiny pinpoint holes in the sky – and
the sky is so black that it embellishes all, so all you can do is just feel the pull, the
pull from those holes you know – as if they are entrances or something. Tiny
entrances to something – better – or lighter – just something bright. And you can
feel your soul, literally your soul being pulled up there, like – all the way up there
from your toes and your fingertips and the roots of your hair and you do not
think about it then – I mean that is not what's in the forefront of your mind right
then, looking at the night sky, – I mean: taxation.

367

KEEP THE LIGHTS ON

No, keep the lights on
Keep the lights on so I can look at you

368

BLAST OUT

A Sunday morning, at 10.30 – this man starts going bananas at the main squeezer
Shooting at anything in sight. I mean anything. Not people but signs and busses, and
commercials and doves and even the tram as it passes

369

I DON'T READ THE PAPERS ANYMORE

370

WHAT NEWS?

371

BILLS

I cannot pay my bills
I don't have a car
I couldn't drive it if I had one

372

I SAW IT MYSELF

373

SHE SAID SO

374

THE GOLEM

C
I dreamt that we found this giant, this golem – that also was a machine
A kind of robot
deep inside the thickets at the back of the park
there where the drunks hang out
First I thought was just a small hill
All overgrown, and in the dream that felt all natural, as if it had always been there – but
inside that hill, hidden under leaves and branches it lay
As if sleeping

B
Why do you call it a golem?

C
I don't know
It was a person

but

home-made

Crafted in a way
Put together by different parts and it was so big
His left eye had fallen out and lay there on the ground
blinking at me

We found this door, and when we entered – it was all dark inside
And then we saw something
giving off a faint light

B

–

C

It looked like an enormous cupboard
Or an archive of some sort
a series of interconnected shelves and drawers
I think they were filled with voices

B

Stories

C

No, just voices
Just people talking
Whispering
I think they were whispering
Confessing
Talking about roads leading nowhere
About an aunt
A shop selling paper
Someone found dead face down in a bathroom in a derelict building
About different types of ice cream
About a house with 11 rooms and one child for each room
and about a theatre
long gone
Torn down
Demolished and all the performances that used to go on there

And there was a voice talking about her grandfather, that had this hollowed out walking
stick, a walking stick with a secret room just for stashing away silkworms, for smuggling,
back then, in a previous century
And about this architect
that built this skyscraper with all these balconies – and when he had finished building it
he went up to the top one
the top balcony
and then he just
jumped

And there were talks about underwater subway-systems
and soft cars
and runaway brides
and about this boy that dressed himself up in clouds
And in one of the drawers was this map showing all the possible and impossible hiding-
places any town could offer

B

-

I never dream anything anymore
I'm just out like light and then I'm awake again

SHUT YOUR FACE!

LOST

Have you ever been lost?
Like totally fucking lost
Like –

 out there
and
 real like
really lost and scared
Nothing fake
Real fear!
Full on
pure
just -

I wanted that
I just wanted to feel that – just once
and it was late September
at my mothers summerhouse
in the woods
and nobody knew I was there
that late in the season
And I had this plan
That I would just walk
I would just leave the place and start to walk and then continue until it got dark
And then I would leave the path
And I would just keep on walking
away from the cottage
away from the path and there
deep in the woods
I would face my fears

Soon
I couldn't see a thing
Soon
it was like pitch black out there – and I said to myself
watch your steps
watch your steps Ann Helen
and I thought: shit
Shit
Shit, shit, shut – this is like really, really dark
And I thought, fuck – why didn't I bring a mag-light or something?
and I went on like that for a while
crashing into branches, stumbling around in the moss and I was getting nowhere and I
though
this is stupid
and it was getting colder
and I thought
this is pointless without a mag-light
you are going to hurt yourselves – and I decided to go it back and get one
but instead of going down back through the valleys as I planned
there was no valley
I ended up in this marshland
I didn't even know there was marshland in that area
and I stood there

deep in the marsh
just out on this glen
and there was this moon
and a glimmering of water somewhere
and this darkness
and it was breathing
I thought
This darkness
This darkness is breathing like an animal and I thought, -
 this isn't right
and I turned left, or at least in the direction I was supposed to be going
– but I still couldn't find my way
I was still there in the wet
Under the branches, and I got that feeling, that feeling I had as a kid when you just stand
there, like – lost, in nature – and your heart is pounding and you just think FUCK THIS
SHIT ... and I said to myself – what the hell do you think you are doing out here? What the
hell do you think you are doing out here in the dark – on your own – in the middle of the
night, – you asshole-artist-face-your-fears-get-lost-in-nature-shit! And I just was
truly

TERRIFIED

Most of all for stumbling upon something, a corps or something
Mainly a corpse

Or

things

lurking in the woods
a killer or a wolf or something –

And, I said to myself
you know
you know Ann Helen – this –
this
is just

NOT GOOD

And Why didn't you tell anybody where you where going?
Why didn't you ask if somebody to come and pick you up?
Now nobody is going to pick you up
Now nobody knows that you are even here!!!

Do you hear me?
Do you hear me you face your fears
get lost
in nature
cunt-face
assole
idiot– artist-shit

short pause

And there were sounds
sounds in the undergrowth
I heard them
I could not see them, but I could hear them – and I said – as loud as I could – Ja!
Ja!
Ja!

Ok –
Ok –
Ok – So what are you waiting for?
So what are you waiting for?
Ok!

Just eat me – just finish me off –
wolf, badger, fox

Come on!

pause

(in a low voice – repeating herself) Wolf, badger, fox

Short pause

And it's so dark that your eyes hurt
You cannot see clearly, but you can smell it
the fear
Waiting for you
fear was all that was

377

JUST GET ME OUT OF THIS

378

THE MEETING

I was going to this meeting – I'd finally managed to get this meeting, – and they had asked me to be there by half past five and I knew as soon as they'd suggested it, that they were not giving me the time of day – because everybody gets ready to leave the office at five o'clock. And I kept thinking – that gives me half an hour, that gives us half an hour, and *that* is a *very* short meeting.

I mean, people have a life – I get that.

Even I feel like leaving the office at five –

And I get there – and I stand there – and I can't get in. I am stuck between two doors. You need the code to get through the second one – so I have to wait there until somebody can come and get me. And when they finally come they are all flustered and they say – great to see you, reeeeeeeally great to see you, but could you just hold on for a minute, we are closing up a meeting with so and so, – who is like a real player.

– Could you just hang around here for a while?

– Just grab yourselves a cup of coffee, – and then I stand there, and it's soon 16.35, – and when they finally gets out of the office, we all have to say hi, and how nice to see you, and what are you up to these days and all that. And before we have managed to sit down there is only 17 minutes left.

17 minutes.

17 minutes – and I sit there – and I listen – and one of them is having this endless monologue, explaining to me how much they would have loved to work with me, but why and how that is just not possible at the moment and that they really, really would have loved to make this happen, and how special I am, – and what an asset I am, – and I say, ok. OK – if you do not have the time, you do not have the time, and they end up compensating me with bringing up an alternative, like cash, – and it's not bad. The cash. It is just not what I came for. And they promise me this cash, and I don't know what to say, and I realise that I have a headache, and that I feel kind of – All of a sudden I feel nauseous, and rejected, and invaded, and disappointed, and pissed off and grateful at the same time. And when I leave there, when I leave them, I just feel like hitting something.

I mean, we had talked about this
They'd agreed, made promises –
We were going to do this together
I had thought they were interested
I had made plans !

Long pause

And I stand there
And I can hear them talking
And I know that I should be grateful
After all, they have given me all this cash
And at the same time:

What the fuck is wrong with them!
Are they complete idiots!
How can they?!?
Are they just completely braindead?
What the fuck is wrong with them!

Long pause

And you stand there
And you can't get in
You just have to wait
You don't know the code
You just have to wait until somebody comes down and get you

Long pause

And you stand there
And you wait
And you can hear them

And soon there is only 17 minutes left

379

DEPRESSION 2

70,000 buildings, 31,000 houses, 90,000 vacant lots

380

THIRTEEN ACRES

thirteen acres we cultivated that year
thirteen acres
six acres of wheat
five acres of rye
then tomatoes and sweet peas and herbs

we are taking over the coal-yard now
down in Greek town
planning on ploughing fresh ground
for potatoes
and cabbage
and this new single-mothers-program
taking people down from the north
and from up the river

381

WE'RE GOWING CORN AGAIN

382

MY SISTER DOES IT

No, they've started doing it
My sister does it
they grow tomatoes, and carrots,

and some greens sometimes,
you know.
Somewhere over at Midtown I can't remember the name of the place –
but there was this neighbourhood
and there is just no one around anymore
all the houses just -
So they have this program,
a single mothers program,
and they take them there,
in busses
and they grow tomatoes,
and vegetables,
and all sorts of stuff.
and feed it to their kids, you know.
So they won't – get deficiencies and shit.
And she does that
All that gardening – on the balconies
and the rooftops.
In the front yard of some of the houses.
And one of them is kind of hers.
Somebody had just left the place and now she can do what she likes with it – they had
tomatoes growing there and bees for honey and all
She says she wants to grow flowers
Sell them at the market

383

NO VOICE

I can't stay here – like this
It's like – if somebody
Just anybody at all as much as open his or her mouth, or walk funny or look at you
Just as much as look at you
You feel like bashing their face in

You feel like bashing their faces in
You do

You feel like loosing it

You feel like shouting
 Shut the fuck up!
You feel like whispering
 I'll make your life fucking chaos
You feel like grabbing them by the hair
Stepping on their hands
Putting your thumbs on their eyeballs
You feel like spitting in their faces
You feel like *sitting* on their stupid face
You feel like jumping on their souls
You are jumping on their soul, their faces, their hands
You don't want to kill them – you want to destroy them, reduce them, beat them into pulp
And you keep on kicking
And you just keep on kicking
Stepping on them
On that pulp
On that mess of meat and blood and nails and knees and hair
Until there is nothing
Until there is less than nothing
Until they're gone

384

THAT FEELING

That feeling
When you stand there
Bent behind 7 – 11
Puking you guts out

385

DICKS!

They can just sit there in that dried out armpit that they call work and jerk themselves off
into oblivion!
Dicks!

386

YOUR MUM'S GONNA DIE

Your mum's gonna die
Your dad's gonna die
Your grandmothers gonna die
Your dogs gonna die

387

THE GANGS ARE MOVING SOUTH AGAIN

They say the gangs are moving south
That the streets here soon will be safe again – all along the green corridor
And over to the market

That it's going to be alright
That we are going to be alright
That this town is going to be alright
That we all – all of us
That it's all going to be fine

388

NO PLAN

No
No
That's not true
I never planned it like that

No

That's not on me

No
That's on you

It's on you I say
This ones on you

That's your fucking mess

I know

I know

I know

Yes – We all know!

Just make sure its alright, ok?

Just make sure it stays like the holy mother of mercy – blessedly unfucked

389

THIS IS IT

This is it

This is it

This is fear

This is real fucking fear

Full on

pure

fucking –

just

full on fear

390

I CAN NOT

I cannot live in this house all alone

I cannot take on all that responsibility

I cannot take care of Lee and Leoni

I don't know how to do it

I don't know how to pay the bills

I couldn't drive a car if I had done

I am afraid of the dark

I don't know what came over me

I don't know what came over me

I don't know what came over me

I don't want to do this anymore

391

THE CRISIS

When the crisis happened I was completely shocked about how

it effected me – I just kept on running to the TV

and another bank had gone – down,

and I could not use my card, my credit card

and people started to make fun of my country, and I –

I had been the one doing that, making fun of my country –

And then I had to tell them, and be vulnerable and tell him –

this guy that was making the jokes – That: I am really worried

I am really worried about my grandparents

About my mother

About my friends

About me

Researchers have found that the ‘crust’ (or outer layers) of a neutron star has the same shape as our cellular membranes. This could mean that, despite being fundamentally different, both humans and neutron stars are constrained by the same geometry

397

SOFT SHELLS ON WHEELS

My uncle has this repairshop in an old casino and at the back
Fusing cars with modern technology, making these bat-mobiles that people surf around in
these days
Like softs shells on wheels

398

ELECTRICITY

And at the top of the old helicopter-deck by the hospital
Some people are trapping wind in these huge sails
like floating, bouncing, brilliant white spheres

For fun I thought at first
But now
Now I think I’ve sassed it out
I think it’s for energy
Catching energy straight out of the air
Producing lights
Lighting up thousands of little led-lights in the evening – down in that old swimming pool
When everybody just gets together and gets down to it dancing and making a lot of noise

399

A NEW EARTH

So what do we know -
Some say they have found a new earth
In space
Floating around out there – just like us

400

END MONOLOGUE

and behind the heavy cover of clouds and the snow that might still be falling, the sky is littered with tiny, tiny speckles. All the way above the cloud cover, high above the atmosphere. Littered with suns, and firestorms, and galaxies, and twin planets. With moons and asteroid belts and strange electrified phenomenon’s, and patterns resembling brainwaves maybe, or our nerve systems, all lit up and alive. And far far away, really out there, deep in the deepest space everything keep on swirling ever so slowly. Swirling and sparkling and glimmering like gold dust. There it is. Strange symmetric swirling patterns of pulsating gold dust all lit up in the dark – all lit up –

[i] Chaudhuri – Una: 1 Land/Scape/Theatre and the New Spatial Paradigm page 23, University of Michigan Press 2000

[ii] <https://web.resist.ca/~kirstena/pageunderground.html>

[iii] Hans Rossling