

Passing Over

By
Taylor Dodd Geu

Taylor Dodd Geu
319 East 5th Street, Apt. 10
New York, NY 10003
605-677-9325
geut@kenyon.edu

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CHARACTER NAME	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	AGE	GENDER
Bo	Boris	5	M
Lanya	Boris's Mother (V.O.)	30	F
Donald	Boris's Father, 40s then 60s	40	M
Boris	A Sweetheart	17	M
Malthy	A Monk of Lepidoptera	17	NB, AMAB
Nigel	Exuberant old man, 60s-70s	60	M
Stacey	Teen girl (V.O.)	17	F
Rine	Survivor and Malthy's Roommate	30	F
Elias	A Worker who works less	30's	M

Many characters can be double/triple cast

SETTING

Another world, more alike than different.

TIME

Contemporary

Act I

Scene 1 - Bo's Childhood Home

Scene 2 - The Pier

Scene 3 - Ferry Deck

Scene 4 - Ferry Cabin

Scene 5 - Ferry Deck

Scene 6 - Ferry Deck

Scene 7 - On the Shore

Scene 8 - Ferry Deck

Act II

Scene 1 - On the Shore

Scene 2 - A Hospital

Scene 3 - Malthy's Apartment

Scene 4 - Malthy's Apartment

Scene 5 - Malthy's Apartment

Scene 6 - Isthmus Bridge

Scene 7 - Malthy's Apartment

ACT I

SCENE 1

Boris's childhood residence. A long light representing the crack of a door. It cuts along the dark stage onto a small bed, belonging to BO, age 5, sleeping in his pajamas. We hear voices, and so does Boris.

LANYA (O.S)

What did they have to say?

DON (O.S)

Nothing, like I told you they would Lanya. Nothing to say.

LANYA (O.S)

What do you mean nothing?

DON (O.S)

I mean they looked at the evidence, and there is nothing to be afraid of.

LANYA (O.S)

But what about the bodies, Don?

That gets Bo's attention. He gets up, begins to creep to the door at the edge of the stage.

DON (O.S.)

Deep sea animals.

LANYA (OFF STAGE)

How can you believe that?

DON (OFF STAGE)

So it's a little warmer this winter. And yeah, it's weird that there's been some ice flows at this temp.

LANYA (OFF STAGE)

Don, please.

DON

Listen, my dad was a fisherman, and the weather got fickle all the time.
Probably just a jet stream gone rogue or...

LANYA

Don, a *fucking iceberg* is on the beach, and it's so hot that dogs are dying.
Don, people think this is just the start.

DON

People's always/ saying that.

LANYA

Don.

DON

People just nervous.

LANYA

Don, please.

DON

What do you fucking want from me woman? Don't/ be fucking hysterical!

LANYA

I'm/ not.

DON

WE'RE GOING TO BE FUCKING FINE LANYA!

(Sharp silence. Everyone listens for a
moment, then Don continues in a hiss.)

We are fine! There is nothing wrong, there is nothing out there! Just a bunch of rumor
mongers making up-

Bo sneezes. He runs to his bed, buries himself under the
covers. Beat.

LANYA

I'll...

DON

I got it Lanya. I got it.

Beat. The lights rise a little as DON enters, a baby face and baby fat, but worn and tired despite it. Walks to his son's bed, kneels down.

DON

You awake Bo?

(Boris doesn't move.)

You're not in trouble, if you are.

Beat. Bo sits up.

BO

Why were you yelling?

DON

I... sometimes guys get steamed up, you know? We get a little angry, like girls get weepy.

BO

Mama isn't weepy.

DON

Not always. She's a good woman your mama.

BO

She just wanted to know things and you got steamed

Beat. Don inhales a thick wad of anger, lets it stew before releasing it.

DON

I was... I just sounded steamed.

BO

But you said you were.

Don slaps the ground. Hard. Too hard. He winces and grabs the hand, begins to massage it. Beat.

BO

You're scaring me.

DON

Don't... I'm just frustrated when people get silly. People are being silly these days.
And it gets me steamed, because there is no reason, you understand Bo?

BO

About the world ending?

DON

No Bo, the/ world is not...

BO

Why do people think the world is ending?

DON

Bo stop-

BO

Daddy I don't wanna die!
I don't want to die, Daddy. Are we going to die?
Are we?

Silence. Don sits on Bo's bed, holds him.

DON

I won't let anyone hurt you, Bo honey. I will never ever let anyone hurt you.

BO

But what if the world ends?

DON

Then I'll stop the world from ending.

BO

How?

DON

With my fists.

(He play hits Bo's stomach, Bo laughs.)

I'll punch the end of the world and say, "Hey End of the World! You leave my son
and his mama a lone! You leave my family alone before I END YOU!"

BO

Then I'll help!

DON

Yeah you damn will, and we'll punch the end of the world so hard it'll bleed out its nose!

BO

Bleed out its BUTT.

DON

Yeah, out its *butt*. So scared it'll poop its pants.

He blows a raspberry on his son's belly. A moment as they both calm down.

BO

Why do people think the world is ending?

Beat.

DON

Some folk are just spreading a rumor. Think a monster is swallowing the world. But it isn't. There is no monster eating the world. It's silly.

BO

Why would they think a monster is eating us?

DON

Because people are dumb, Bo. And dumb people are scared.

BO

Is Mama dumb?

DON

We're all kind of dumb, Bo.

BO

Even you.

DON

I work hard to be less dumb.

BO

How do you know when you're not dumb?

DON

When you're not scared.

BO

How do you stop being scared?

Silence.

DON

How about... you go to sleep.

BO

Why?

DON

Because I want to go to sleep.

BO

But I want to stop being scared.

DON

And you won't be tomorrow. Trust me. You do trust me don't you?

(Bo doesn't answer.)

Bo Baby?

SCENE 2

The pier. Represented by the sounds of water, a chain link fence, and a few benches. On one lays MALTHY, presents feminine, whatever that means to you. They are young, late teens or early twenties. They wear a robe, much like a Buddhist, but scarlet in color. They have shaved their body close and hairless. Their sandals have been kicked off.

Malthy has closed their eyes, is listening to an iPod.
Silence.

From stage right enters teen Boris, dragging a heavy suitcase. He wears a fishnet top beneath a leather jacket, jeans. His hair is long or cut unevenly. Punk as fuck and eager to show it. He huffs as he drags his bag, before finally laying it down. He sits on it, closes his eyes. He reaches into his pocket and brings out a cigarillo and lighter.

He smokes, and enjoys it immensely.

Silence. Boris checks his watch, gets up, walks to the far edge of the stage, but stops, seeing Malthy. He tries to find an unobtrusive, nonthreatening angle to ogle them, without obviously ogling them. He is not very good at it. After a moment, he moves on to the far side of the stage, looks out. Quiet.

He looks over his shoulder again. He takes a deep breath. Looks back at the sea. Beat.

MALTHY

Wow.

Boris startles, intensifies his gaze off stage.

Beat.

MALTHY

Lepidoptera in heaven, you are sick.

BORIS

(mumbling)

I'm sorry/ I know it was.

MALTHY

YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO ME!

AFTER SIX SEASONS YOU DON'T KILL HER OFF LIKE THAT!

Boris sighs, relaxes, rubs his face.

BORIS

Okay then.

MALTHY

Oh, A LITTLE LATE TO APOLOGIZE PHIL.

A LITTLE LATE TO...

Fuck this.

Malthy sits up, takes out their earbuds, huffs.

MALTHY

Swear to every hell and heaven, up and down the chain, I will cancel ALL MY subscriptions...

(And they notice Boris. Awkward beat.)

Oh shit, sorry my dude.

Beat. Boris tentatively looks over his shoulder, points to self.

Malthy nods.

BORIS

No worries.

MALTHY

How loud was I?

BORIS

I didn't hear... were you saying something?

MALTHY

I won't tell Lepidoptera if you won't.

Boris sits down next to Malthy, passes them the joint.
Malthy, very excited, puts the joint to their lips and
SUCKS. Just, inhales to the point you are worried they'll
pass out.

They begin to have a coughing fit, barely grabbing the
joint before it is launched from their lips.

They pass it to Boris.

He stares at them, unsure what he should do as Malthy
coughs and coughs and coughs.

Eventually the coughing ends.

BORIS

I'm an agnostic.

MALTHY

Neat, like philosophically or have you just not decided on atheism yet?

BORIS

... Good question.

I guess, I dunno.

It seemed silly that we think the gods would be animals?

Like, why would something beyond comprehension/ be a goddamn bug?

MALTHY

It's more of/ a metaphor.

BORIS

Obviously! But/ still I...

MALTHY

Like, this is dumb, but the churches don't...

There's all this brilliant stuff locked in cabinets.

Scrolls.

Just of smart people trying to talk themselves into belief.

Like, they're fucking geniuses, they know this is stupid.

To worship a moth, or a heron, or even a fucking wolf.

So they write... write, write/ a thing.

Essay?
BORIS

Naaaah/ naaaah.
MALTHY

Disser/tation?
BORIS

MALTHY
Stop giving me words, it makes me forget the word I'm forgetting.
Is this high?
Am I high?

Probs.
BORIS

Awesome.
MALTHY

I wanna hear you talk more.
BORIS

About what?
MALTHY

Are you leaving the country too?
BORIS

Oh yeah.
A hundred percent.
Fuck the fascists.
MALTHY

I punched a fascist!!
BORIS

AWESOME!
MALTHY

BORIS

Yeah, he was all in my face saying, “You shit, why are you dressed/ like a slut?”

MALTHY

Punch him!

BORIS

Not yet.

He goes on like slut shaming me, just on and on.

But then he like, goes after the boys I was seeing.

And he says how I’m why he’s voting for the Heron.

Because the youths are insane little pussies.

And that’s when I punched him and said “Fuck off Dad!”

And I punched him again.

And he.

He is like.

He tripped I think.

I was really angry.

And I check to make sure Dad is still breathing.

Then I stole his wallet and packed this bag.

And now I’m leaving the country.

Beat.

MALTHY

That’s kind of cool.

BORIS

I’m kind of guilty how good it feels.

He’s been such a shit since...

I dunno.

MALTHY

I too ran from the tyranny of adult authority figures.

BORIS

Ooo/oo.

MALTHY

But I’m not telling you the story.

BORIS

Why not?

MALTHY

So you have reason to talk to me again.

Boris is stunned, Malthy takes the blunt from his fingers,
puffs while smirking.

BORIS

Oh my/ god.

MALTHY

You are not a good flirt.
You're/ really bad.

BORIS

Okay.

MALTHY

Like for a guy in a fishnet top you/ are quite the virgin.

BORIS

I get it! I/ get it!

MALTHY

It's kind of hot.
It's really kind of hot.
Because usually I'm the shy one.
Who has to be led by the hand.

BORIS

I'm glad I could be inexperienced for you.

MALTHY

Me too.

A foghorn blasts. The two of them startle, looking off at
the pier.

BORIS

There's the ferry to the Coast.

MALTHY

Yeah.

BORIS

Where are you going?

MALTHY

The Sunlit Peninsula.

I hear they got a monastery down there that worships a Dung Beetle.

BORIS

Really?

MALTHY

Yeah.

I mean they call it a scarab, but everybody knows.

Everybody knows they worship/ a bug with a poop fetish.

BORIS

Well, let's go then.

MALTHY

Alright.

Malthy picks up their sandals, Boris grabs his bag. They begin to walk off, but then a voice shouts.

DON (OFF)

BOOORRRIS!

Boris startles, looks over his shoulder. Fuck. Malthy pauses, looks off stage as well.

DON (OFF)

BOOORRRIS! ANSWER ME BO! BORIS!

Don enters, on the other side of the fence, hair grey, older. He has one hell of a shiner over his eye. He peers through the fence, trying to find...

DON

BORIS! There you are boy! Get over here this fucking instant!

Boris stares at his father petrified.

DON

Boris, come here!

Son!

Malthy reaches over, grabs Boris's hand. Boris looks to the monk, looks back to his father.

And he lets Malthy lead him away by the hand.

Don begins shaking the fence, pushing against it.

DON

Bo baby? Bo! I'm sorry, come back Bo!

BO!

BO!

He yells, but is drowned out by the blast of a steam whistle.

SCENE 3

The deck of the ship. Sound of seabirds and waves.
Malthy and Boris sit together on a bench, sharing
Malthy's earbuds. Whatever they are listening to,
Malthy is far more invested in it. Their head bops a little,
while Boris is giving himself a headache trying to "get it."

Behind them enters NIGEL, an older man in a thick
jacket. His body is hunched, scrawny, and leathery, but
he is suspiciously energetic and optimistic despite it.

He is dragging/carrying a large statue of a heron. He is
twenty years too old and the statue twenty pounds too
heavy for this to be a good idea.

Boris and Malthy don't notice.
Whatever they were listening to ends. Malthy looks at
Boris, grinning. Boris gives a tight, fake smile.

BORIS

That was interesting!
I think.
I don't get it.
Was I supposed to get it?

MALTHY

(trying to hide disappointment)

What didn't you get?

BORIS

The... the part where... it was kind of/ around the time.

MALTHY

What *did* you get?

Boris makes sad little sounds and gestures, trying to
communicate the ineffable sense of "creepy in a happy
way."

Beat.

BORIS

Can you explain it to me?

MALTHY

I thought you liked my music?

BORIS

Oh no, was this a piece/ you wrote? I'm so sorry.

MALTHY

Dude, dude, chill.

I didn't write the song.

BUT.

This is the song that made me start composing music.

BORIS

Oh.

It does sound a bit like your early stuff.

MALTHY

Yeah, I moved on.

BORIS

So/ why?

Nigel drops the statue onto his foot.

NIGEL

GOATFUCKING SHITDEMON!

Boris and Malthy startle at the sound. Turn to look at Nigel who is sitting as he massages his foot.

MALTHY

You ok/ay, sir?

NIGEL

(embarrassed)

Yeah, sorry, sorry, sorry, damn thought I was alone.
Shitfarting Goatfucker, I think the nail came off my toe.

BORIS

Oh/ damn.

NIGEL

Second time I dropped this evil fucking thing on my fucking toe.

Boris gets up and walks to Nigel.

BORIS

You need help?

NIGEL

Yeah, help me pull this boot off.
Think my foot's swelling.

Boris blanches a bit, grabs Nigel's boot.

BORIS

Okay I got it.

NIGEL

On three you pull.

BORIS

Okay got/ it.

NIGEL

Onetwothreego!

Nigel pulls his leg back before Boris has a strong grip on the boot. The old man's foot flies out of the boot.

Nigel gingerly feels his toe.

NIGEL

Alright... Alright.

Nail still there.

Can't feel the damn things.

But that's normalish.

(Beat. He extends a hand to Boris.)

Name's Nigel Gillson. Good pull son.

Boris shakes the old man's hand, a little confused.

BORIS

Boris.

It was literally nothing?

I think this boot is big for you?

NIGEL

Oh probably, probably. I bought them off the back of a truck.

BORIS

Oh.

(He looks at the statue. Seeing what it is he
tenses a bit.)

Is that a statue of/ the Heron?

NIGEL

Ah, don't worry lad, I don't support the Cult of the Heron.

You think I'd be on this ferry if I voted Heron?

BORIS

Oh.

NIGEL

Fucking fascists.

BORIS

Yeah.

That's Malthy, over there. They're my...

Well, we've only known each other, what, two or three hours.

MALTHY

Something like that.

Nigel, noticing Malthy, stands up, bows.

NIGEL

Greetings your holiness.

MALTHY

Oh my god/ please.

NIGEL

Forgive me for not paying my respects.

MALTHY

Nij, can I call you that? Nij?

NIGEL

Whatever suits/ thy Holy...

MALTHY

I'm just a monk, okay?

I'm not, like, an abbot, or an Aspect of the Moth, or anything.

Please don't, okay?

I shit once a day, just like you.

Beat.

NIGEL

Is this one of those generation gaps I keep reading about in the post?

MALTHY

Probably, yes.

NIGEL

But you're still ordained?

Like, you are sacred?

MALTHY

I mean, every/one is sacred.

NIGEL

Okay, I need to narrow that question down.

See I need some spiritual advice, it's nice you're here actually.

MALTHY

I can do that, if you need it.

NIGEL

Great!

Beat.

MALTHY

So... what? Is it?

NIGEL

Well, you see...
I have this statue.

MALTHY

I didn't notice.

NIGEL

Haha.
Yes.
Well anyway what is the proper way to throw this thing overboard?

Malthy considers.

MALTHY

Like right now?

NIGEL

Yes.

MALTHY

In what spirit are you chucking it?

NIGEL

Ooooooof.
Is there a right answer?

MALTHY

Well no. I mean, unless you're cool with lying to a monk.

Beat.

NIGEL

Alright. Well then. I wish to toss this fucking eyesore overboard with extreme prejudice.

MALTHY

Ah, see. That's not okay.
That's kind of sacrilege.

NIGEL

Well, in for a penny, is there a way to mitigate the damnation?

MALTHY

I'm pretty sure damnation can't get mitigated.
Unless you apol/ogize to the Heron.

NIGEL

I am not apologizing.

MALTHY

Alright..

NIGEL

It's an asshole god.

MALTHY

Oh, no argument, the Heron is a fucking asshole.
But it is a god.

NIGEL

Of fascists.

MALTHY

Essentially it/ is but...

NIGEL

I mean, it is! It's always been. When I was a lad there was a Heron shrine on my corner. Like, five people worshipped it weekly.
Then ten people.
Then twelve.

(MORE)

NIGEL (CONT'D)

And they started threatening people. Telling them to repent.

They beat up people they thought were the wrong color.

The people who spoke a little funny,

walked a little funny.

This went on for a month with the mothers of my neighborhood asking kindly to move the shrine, and to stop hurting our friends. That they could worship the Heron, just not act on it.

And the Heron guys laughed and asked, "What else are you supposed to do? If you believe in something with your whole heart, when you want to make this a world worth living in? You act, you don't let evil prosper, you act."

And then we had twenty people on the street corner, and in the night they broke the shop windows of immigrants.

They went after mixed race and queer couples.

Then they ran for office.

And then the fathers of my neighborhood visited them.

And they asked them to move the shrine. They asked with clubs and hammers.

And now the Heron Cult's windows were getting broken, their children were being bullied. THEY had to repent to US.

They had to crawl begging for us to pretend they were never Heron boys.

We didn't forgive them, we chased them out of our neighborhood.

That's what you fucking do! When you see a Heron, you break his beak! You don't shake his hand, you don't protect his right to speech, you don't elect him to parliament!

You don't burn down my neighborhood and call it an accident!

(Nigel kicks the statue. Silence.)

Isn't there a way?

I need this.

I need this small thing.

Beat.

MALTHY

I understand, Nigel.

I hear you.

How did you acquire the statue?

NIGEL

I nicked it.

MALTHY

You nicked a sacred icon of the Heron, God of Victims?

NIGEL

Yep, yep.

Beat.

MALTHY

How?

NIGEL

Election night. Everyone was so drunk off winning and booze.
They didn't think it weird when I hoisted it off.

Beat.

MALTHY

Alright. That complicates things.

I don't think there is a way to wipe that sin off, but...

We can minimize the damnation.

(Malthy gets up, walks to the statue.)

Take my hand.

(Nigel tentatively takes it. Malthy stretches
another hand to Boris. Of course, Boris
takes it. They bow their heads to pray.)

Heron, God of Victims, Slayer of Monsters,

We care not for your teachings or words,

But still acknowledge your truth.

For you, as a god, are an aspect of eternity.

And though we find your truth unpalatable,

and name you king of tyrants, torturer of outcasts,

we know that this truth cannot be ignored,

that you exist despite us.

For everything has a season.

So with love must come love's loss

and with pain the relief of pain's passing.

For times of Lepidoptera, a time of Wolves.

And a time for the Heron, which is given now in this silence.

(Beat. They look up in unison, taking a deep
breath.)

(MORE)

MALTHY (CONT'D)

Amen.
Alright chuck the fucker.

Boris and Nigel chuck the fucker. They all lean over the side to watch the statue disappear beneath the waves.

BORIS

Bye/ Heron!

MALTHY

Au revoir!

Bo and Malthy laugh. Bo's hand instinctively grabs Malthy's. They both startle at the gesture, but don't let go.

Nigel notices. Smiles, look out to sea.

Silence.

MALTHY

It's so beautiful out here.

NIGEL

You should have seen it before the ice flows came in.
There were whales.

BORIS

Holy shit, did you see any?

NIGEL

A few times! They keep away though. They haven't forgiven us for the hunting. Even before the weather started getting warmer, they were disappearing. And now this unnatural ice... Boiling the sea as it melts. Whales boiled in the churning waters.

MALTHY

Were you a sailor?

NIGEL

Nah.
Just a worshipper.

BORIS
Of what?

NIGEL
The Holy Mackerel.

Beat.

BORIS
I'm not familiar with that one.

MALTHY
He worships the/ world fish.

NIGEL
God don't PC it up, I am a proud worshiper of the Holy Mackerel, gentle be his undertow.

BORIS
I'm still/ not...

MALTHY
They were before our time.

NIGEL
Oh god, has it been that long?

BORIS
What happened?

NIGEL
(gestures widely)
This happened!
The climate, and the boiling snows, the fetal dreks washing ashore.
The end times.
The World Fish is dead.
What use is praying to a rotting fish?

Beat.

MALTHY
I'm sorry.

NIGEL

Ain't your fault.
You didn't kill my god.
Like you said, to everything a season.

BORIS

Well maybe it's not dead!

MALTHY

Bo/ don't.

BORIS

I mean how do we/ know?

NIGEL

We know.

BORIS

How?

NIGEL

Don't show your age.

BORIS

What does/ that mean?

NIGEL

You weren't really alive when all was right with the world. I was.

BORIS

So was I.

NIGEL

Really? You remember when winters were cold?

BORIS

Yeah!

NIGEL

You, a kid who's never seen a wh/ale?

BORIS

I have seen a whale.

NIGEL

In an aquarium maybe, but that isn't a fucking whale, that's meat/ waiting to die.

BORIS

No! I saw it when my dad took me out on his last trip to sea!

Beat.

NIGEL

When was that?

BORIS

Six years ago, Autumn, just before festival.

NIGEL

That really *was* the last trip.

Your dad a fisherman?

BORIS

He was, yeah.

He was.

That was like...

The saddest best time of my life.

It was like one big vacation: One of Dad's friends brought a trumpet, and another a guitar. We sang with them, played old games, told stories.

They gave me all the beer I could drink.

... We could only do those fun things because the nets kept coming up empty.

And there were rumors already at the dock that fishing was dead in the North.

So we were celebrating, because the end was too close to do otherwise.

But yeah, one day we looked out, and my dad hissed, "looklook."

He grabbed my head and turned it too hard.

Because a whale was breaching in the distance.

This gray speck, surrounded by glittery white.

You could barely see it, but still.

I felt... I felt.

Every time it rose and fell. I felt.

My dad whispered, "You saw the last whale, Bo Baby.

(MORE)

BORIS (CONT'D)

Hold on to it.”

...

So I knew what it was like when things were alive, asshole.

I was there when they died.

Beat.

NIGEL

I'm sorry.

BORIS

It's fine just... don't assume shit, Nigel.

Beat. They look out to sea.

BORIS

I don't think the world is ending because I can still feel that feeling.

When I dip my foot in the sea, warm from a passing iceberg.

Or looking at street lamps glitter in the rain.

Or when I'm...

(He looks at Malthy briefly, looks back out.)

When I'm happy.

I don't think a dead world feels like that.

Isn't there anything that makes you feel, Nigel?

Even a little?

Nigel stares out to sea for a long while. He spits, and walks away. Boris and Malthy stay, feeling together.

Music, an 8-bit rendition of “Keep the Home Fires Burning” plays into the dark.

SCENE 4

The music continues as lights come back up on Malthy's cabin on the ferry. There is a bed with tacky sheets, and a closet that doubles as a toilet.

Malthy and Boris lie in the bed, holding each other. Next to them is an iTunes speaker. Boris's eyes are closed, and Malthy keeps taking nervous looks to see how they are reacting.

The song ends suddenly.

Beat.

Boris nods, looks at Malthy.

BORIS

That was good.

MALTHY

Did you like it?

BORIS

Yeah! You said it was unfinished?

MALTHY

Yeah but what you heard so far/ was good?

BORIS

I mean yeah, but I've heard that song before though. Somewhere.

MALTHY

... Yeah it's an adaptation.

Eventually I'm making a medley of these old war songs played as Chiptunes.

It's going to be like... each song? Represents a side in a war. These melodies weaving in and out according to the rhythm of the war.

BORIS

What's a war rhythm like?

MALTHY

I'm actually trying to figure it out.
You'd think it would be a flashy, bombastic thing, yeah?
When researching wars for this, I was surprised how boring they are.
And slooooooow. You're mostly waiting, you know?

BORIS

I've heard a few people say that yeah.

MALTHY

I want to get that feeling, like it's a steam roller slowly crushing us.
We're just waiting for the moment we pop.

Beat.

BORIS

Know what my mom would say to that?

MALTHY

What?

BORIS

"Gods, don't remind me."

Malthy smacks his stomach.

MALTHY

Be serious, I want you to like it.

BORIS

Well, I do, so yay!

MALTHY

You don't sound like you *like* it, you sound like you appreciate it because I made it.

BORIS

You said you hadn't even/ finished.

MALTHY

Just tell me if you don't like it! That's all/ you have to say!

BORIS

I like it I like it I like it I like it I like it!!!

Beat.

Malthy gets up from the bed.

BORIS

Why are you angry?

MALTHY

I'm not, I'm going to pee!

BORIS

Why are you angry with me?

MALTHY

I'm not angry, I'm scared and insecure!

BORIS

Seriously?

MALTHY

Why would I lie? I'm being/ honest with you because I like you a lot!

BORIS

It's just nobody does that! Nobody I know/ does that!

MALTHY

When I argue I like/ to be honest.

BORIS

Nobody does that, they just want to hurt each other!

MALTHY

I'm not trying to hurt you!

BORIS

Me neither!

MALTHY
THEN LET ME PEE FOR HEAVENS' SAKE.

Malthy enters the bathroom and slams the door shut.

BORIS
STOP BEING ANGRY!

MALTHY
PEEING!

Boris puts his face in his hands. Deep breath. Squirms on the bed. Malthy comes out.

BORIS
Please don't be angry.

MALTHY
Can we just not argue?

BORIS
But we're arguing because you're upset.

MALTHY
I'm not...!!
(composes self)
It's been a lovely past couple days.
We're almost to the Coast.
I don't want this to end with an argument.

Beat.

BORIS
What do you mean end?

Beat.

MALTHY
I mean... physically.
We'll vidchat and stuff maybe.
But like it's hard/ for long distance.

BORIS

Where are you going?

MALTHY

The Sunlit Peninsula remember? With the poop god?

BORIS

But I'm going there with you?

Beat.

MALTHY

I thought you were...

I don't understand.

BORIS

I told you I was going with you.

MALTHY

When?

BORIS

On the pier.

MALTHY

No you didn't.

BORIS

I said, "Let's go then!"

Beat.

MALTHY

I thought you meant on the boat!

BORIS

I meant both!

MALTHY

Why are you going?

BORIS

Because I want to be with you.

MALTHY

You can't.

BORIS

Why not?

MALTHY

Because! We just met! That day!

BORIS

Yeah.

MALTHY

That day you decided to just upend your entire life to follow me?

BORIS

No, I upended my life when I knocked out Dad.
Then I followed you.

MALTHY

What will you do when you get there?

BORIS

Be with you.

MALTHY

And if that doesn't work out?

BORIS

Why wouldn't it?
I think I...

Silence. Malthy looks a little scared.

MALTHY

Say it.

BORIS

No.

MALTHY

You were going to say it.

BORIS

I don't want to say it okay!

I know okay, I'm not a child.

I know it's dumb.

I don't want to say it yet.

I don't want to make this weird.

Beat.

MALTHY

I think I love you Boris.

Beat.

BORIS

How?

MALTHY

I don't know.

This is so fucking stupid we only met two days ago.

That's not how this works unless you're an idiot.

Beat.

BORIS

I'm an idiot so that makes sense.

MALTHY

Oh my God you aren't! You're kind and kind of poetic and like a baby deer and I just want to nuzzle you and smell your armpits.

Lepidoptera we are fucked.

This is so bad.

Why did I say that? You asshole.

Beat.

BORIS

Well I think it's cool how you're this, like, super monk with nice eyebrows who is like everybody's cool older sibling.
Unless you think I don't like your music.
I think you need to work on that.

Beat.

Malthy climbs back into bed, holds Boris.

Beat.

MALTHY

You know... there's a proud history of erotic poetry in the Lepidoptera faith?

BORIS

No. How erotic?

MALTHY

Really erotic.
But it's usually, like sandwiched between romance stories.
Because fucking would ruin the tension in a romance, and in erotic poetry we just want to get to the cumming

BORIS

'course.

MALTHY

But, these poems are super weird.
They don't really care about the people.
What they care about is the *feeling*.
They think Lepidoptera is felt in Love.
And that Love is in and of itself holy.
That being in love is the best thing possible, better than the people who feel it.
I thought that was really dumb.

(beat)

I think if Lepidoptera spoke to us they would say we should have this now.
Someday it has/ to end.

BORIS

It doe/sn't.

MALTHY

Things end Boris.
That's how it is.
They end and something else starts up.
Maybe we'll fall out of love.
Maybe I'll die.
Maybe the world ends.
However it goes, our love dies.
But, that doesn't make it fake.
It's real right now.
It's real.

(beat)

Please come to the Peninsula with me, Bo.

Beat.

BORIS

Well, like I said.
I was planning to anyway ...
I love you too.

They kiss. Blackout.

SCENE 5

On deck again. Malthy is listening to their iPod. They've retied their robe so that their torso is bare apart from a tank top.

MALTHY

(singing to himself)

Keep the home fires burning
Though your heart is yearning.
Though your boys are far away
They dream of home.
There's a silver lining
In the darkness, shining.
Turn the dark cloud inside out
Til your boys come home.

(Looks at iPod, rewinds track.)

Keep the home fires burning
Though your heart is yearning.
Though your beau is far away
They dream of home.
There's a silver lining
In the darkness, shining.
Turn the dark cloud inside out
Til your beaus come home.

(Rewinds track.)

No, no, sounds like I'm singing about ghosts.
Okay.

Keep the home fires burning
Though your heart is yearning.
Though your babe is far away.
Alright I'll stop that right there because it sucks.
Uughghghghghgh
Maybe if I just alternate the pronouns every few verses?

(beat)

UGHGHGHGHGHH

No.

No.

This isn't hard.

Enter Boris, in fishnet top and boxers. Fanning himself with some paper.

MALTHY

Okay.
Kids for sure not.
Maybe if I rewrite the entire song?
That would suck.
Maybe I need to just quit, go back to bed, and snuggle.
Boris could be my muse.
Totally not a distraction.
Totes.

Boris sneaks behind Malthy.

One.

Two.

Three! He grabs them from behind in a lifting hug.

Malthy screams, turns in Boris's grip and gouges his eyes with their fingers.

Bo drops Malthy clutching his eyes and yelling.

MALTHY

Oh my/ god Bo are you okay?

BORIS

OWIE!

Malthy gently brushes Boris's hands from his face.

MALTHY

Let me look, let me looky.

BORIS

Am I blind?

MALTHY

I don't know are you?

BORIS

I can't tell!

MALTHY

Hold still hold still.

(quiet as they look)

They're fine.

Are you blind?

BORIS

No.

But that hurt.

MALTHY

I'm sorry it's just...

Like, we're trained to do that.

And I wasn't expecting it.

Malthy kisses Bo's head, takes a step back.

BORIS

I thought monks were pacifists?

MALTHY

We are unless someone tries to hurt us.

It's an easily abused loophole.

BORIS

Why would someone want to hurt you?

Beat.

MALTHY

I love you.

BORIS

Thanks? I love you too.
What were you singing?
It woke me up.

MALTHY

That song from last night?

BORIS

The one we almost broke up over.

MALTHY

Yeah.

BORIS

Why? We nearly broke up over it.

MALTHY

Well it's the best song in the damn thing.
In my opinion.
I just need to make it less sexist.

BORIS

Why is it sexist?

MALTHY

Well, it's this propaganda piece. It's a song instructing women to be less sad that the men are being murdered for no good reason at all very far away.
The song says, "Take those feelings and convert it into keeping the economy going, so when these men come back physically and emotionally broken the seat will be warm."

(beat)

I think it's sexist because women and people like me could *also* go to die senselessly for the state while *men* swallowed their trauma in the name of industry.

Beat.

BORIS

Maybe nobody should die senselessly?

MALTHY

Bo be realistic.

BORIS

Well, people decide to have wars.

MALTHY

Wars are actually started in very complex ways fluctuating between economic, political, and ecologic factors.

BORIS

But still, if every one said no more wars, there would be no more wars.

Beat.

MALTHY

...That's true
If you ignore all those/ things I said.

BORIS

I mean yeah.
But so, you want to make tragedy gender inclusive?

MALTHY

Don't be dismissive, but yes.
The refrain, the best part goes:
"Keep the home fires burning
Though your heart is yearning.
Though your boys are far away
They dream of home.
There's a silver lining
In the darkness, shining.
Turn the dark cloud inside out
Til your boys come home."

Beat.

BORIS

So it's a different word than boys?

MALTHY

Yeah, but it also has to speak to parental *and* romantic feelings.

Beat.

BORIS

What about beloved?

(singing)

Til your beloved come home?

MALTHY

... that's good.

But it's two syllables.

How about... your loved?

Until your loved come home?

(beat)

Fuck that's it, that's fucking it!

BORIS

Yay! We did it!

MALTHY

Now we just have to rewrite the rest of the songs!

Malthy hugs Boris, he hugs back. A moment, then both
let go, wiping sweat off their chests.

BORIS

Hells below, why is it so fucking hot?

MALTHY

A storm's coming in. East way.

Boris looks off to the east. Grimaces.

BORIS

Damn those are dark clouds.

Big iceberg must have vaporized.

MALTHY

Should we be out? I don't want to get snowburned/ or anything.

BORIS

Nah, nah. Look. See how the clouds have that dark haze beneath them?

That's rain. Not snow.

(MORE)

BORIS (CONT'D)

Evaporated seawater coming back down.
Should actually cool down this FUCKING heat.

MALTHY

And the humidity?
How long will the humidity keep up?

BORIS

Uhhhh.
I dunno?
It's... were we even expecting storms this week?

MALTHY

I think so?
It's almost winter, the snow storms should be starting.

BORIS

Still. Do you have your phone?

MALTHY

Yeah, but it isn't getting a signal.
Why?

BORIS

I'm just not sure about the...

Nigel bursts onto stage in only his tight underwear.
There's a bulge, god help us all, and the sweat has left a
stripe along the crease of his butt crack.

NIGEL

Fin and weather how is it hotter out here?

BORIS

(looking away)

Ah/ man, Niij!

MALTHY

Look/ing good, sir.

NIGEL

Been fiddling with the Shit Steak of an AC unit all fucking morning.

And now it's even HOTTER.

Holy Mackerel hold me down, I fucking hate the FUCKING ICEBERGS!

GO BACK TO BEING COLD YOU FUCKING WITCH TIT WATER ROCKS!

(beat)

How are you kids doing? Keeping cool?

MALTHY

You have AC?

NIGEL

I have the dial but not the cold.

BORIS

Malthy we have AC.

MALTHY

What? Since when?

BORIS

It's in the back of the closet.

MALTHY

Why?

NIGEL

Mine's on the wall.

MALTHY

What the hell! Are you guys gaslighting me?

BORIS

It doesn't work, so you/ didn't miss anything.

NIGEL

Isn't there a prayer we can do? Like a rain dance or something?

MALTHY

I mean, if it makes you feel better.

NIGEL

Shit tit nit.

MALTHY

Okay look, let's all take a deep, cleansing breath.
Just take all the frustration.
Breathe in. Then out.

(beat)

This works better when you do it, too.

NIGEL

Fuck calm, it's hot.

MALTHY

Okay Nij, I hear you, I see and validate the truth of your emotions.
But it is way too hot for your bullshit.
And I don't want to ruin this lovely immigration experience over seasonable heat.
So take the breath.

In.

Out.

(beat, threat)

In and out.

Boris does the breathing. Nij grumbles but does it too.
A moment.

BORIS

I'm still really hot though.

MALTHY

Well how about some guided meditation?

NIGEL

Can't we just do a rain dance?

MALTHY

Nobody does that Nigel.

NIGEL

Yeah they do.
In the South.

BORIS

Who does?

NIGEL

Them naked people with the ear holes.

BORIS

Like.

Are.

Are there ears that don't have holes?

NIGEL

They do that circumcision thing.

BORIS

On their/ ears?

MALTHY

Anyway there is a storm coming, a rain storm.

So we don't need to do a...

Whatever it is you're being racist about.

NIGEL

Storm? Rain or snow?

BORIS

I'm pretty sure rain, it's off the Port side.

(Nigel looks in the opposite direction of the storm.)

That's Starboard.

NIGEL

Why don't they just call it boatleft?

Ah, how the hell did I miss that monster?

BORIS

See how it's kind of hazy under it? That's/ rain

NIGEL

Weird. I've never seen clouds that... *dark* before.

Must be a hell of a storm.

BORIS

Maybe a typhoon, they keep saying that we're going to be getting typhoons eventually. OR was it hurricanes? I always forget.
Last time a storm passed like this...
That was the first Iceberg Summer, remember?

MALTHY

Lepidoptera don't bring that up.
I still get nightmares.

BORIS

Did they ever figure out what those things were?
The sea creatures?

MALTHY

I do not care.
I remember Festival that year, we got *soooo* many people.
Mostly women, because of the rumors.

BORIS

What rumors?

NIGEL

That the things were stillborn babies.
(beat)
Just saying. That was the rumor.
They were fetuses swam ashore to live the life they were promised.

BORIS

Like... how does that work?

MALTHY

Well that's actually an interesting/ theological question.

NIGEL

You never feel that way? That there was a life you were supposed to have?
That... there was a plan. That you had this beautiful thing coming.
But someone gets sick, or the economy goes bad, or the snow goes hot.
And you get lost, you look around and try to find that plan again.
Because, it's just waiting there for you.
If you can just find it again. And you can live your real life again.

Beat.

MALTHY

Nij.
Do you want/ to talk about...

NIGEL

I'm good.
Well, no of course not.
But I'm good.
Thank you though.

Beat.

MALTHY

Depression is actually a real problem back in the Monastery.
And they always said the best cure/ was other...

BORIS

Is that storm getting bigger or is it coming closer?

Beat. Everyone comes forward to get a look at the storm.

NIGEL

Oh fuck, oh fuck.

MALTHY

It's coming in fast, should we/ get below deck?

BORIS

Why is it so dark? You guys see this right?
There's no light under the clouds, there's...
...
Those aren't clouds.

NIGEL

Gods in/ Heaven.

BORIS

What the fuck is/ that thing?

NIGEL

Run! Run kids fucking run!

Nigel dives to the floor. Boris grabs Malthy to run but...

The darkness washes over them. There is a VHUMP like water collapsing a bubble. Stillness, then sound. Everything is muffled, dampened by the strange pressure. Churning, rumbling, thundering, crackling, humming, breathing, keening. A strange mix of tempest and bodily functions, the organs of a thunderhead.

Maybe there is light, but it is so dim it is unnoticeable.

A moment, then a spotlight. In the center are Boris and Malthy, curled into each other. The light grows brighter, brighter. Boris opens his eyes, looks up.

Whatever he sees in the light, it freezes him. He cannot move from the terror. He tries to scream, but there is no air to scream in. There is silence.

Malthy covers Boris's eyes with their arm. They pull him down, and bury his head under their body.

The spotlight fades out.

The sound quiets.

Then we hear Nigel praying.

NIGEL

(quick and desperate)

May my body not wash upon the shore,
But sink into the vastness below
To be reborn, a new cell in thy body.
Remember me o World Fish
I am a cell within your flesh.
I feed you with my breath and excrement.
I clean you with my mouth and nails.

(MORE)

NIGEL (CONT'D)

Someday I will die, and on that day
May my body not wash upon the shore
But sink into the vastness below

He prays over and over.

The lights slowly rise. Still the ship. The storm has passed. Malthy and Boris lie in the center, Malthy curled over Boris's head. Nigel is hiding beneath a bench.

A moment as they wait to die.

Time passes.

Malthy uncurls. They slowly sit carefully, checking for an unknown danger.

Boris doesn't move.

Nigel's prayers quiet. He watches Malthy move.

NIGEL

(croak)

What was that?

Malthy doesn't notice. They rise to their feet peering at the sky. They kneel down, squeeze Boris gently to wake him. Boris opens his eyes, but stays still.

MALTHY

Bo?

NIGEL

What was that? I don't know who that was.

Bo reaches a hand up, and Malthy pulls him to his feet. Malthy buries their face into his chest. Bo clutches them, and they rock together.

NIGEL

I don't know what that was, what was that?

MALTHY

(Face still buried in Boris's chest.)

NIGEL SHUT UP!

Beat.

NIGEL

What do we do?

MALTHY

(spinning head to look at Nigel)

NIGEL I DON'T KNOW I'M SCARED AND I WANT TO GO HOME!

Boris hugs Malthy.

Beat.

Nigel stares at something, confused.

He walks past them, stares at a spot in the floor.

He touches it, blinks rapidly.

NIGEL

What's wrong with the floor?

MALTHY

What?

NIGEL

Can't you see?

The grain of the wood

The knots.

They're...

He stares, begins to follow a trail only he can see. He crawls, eyes focused on the floor. He stops at one of the benches. He feels it, looks around and counts benches.

NIGEL

This bench wasn't here before.

And wasn't that sign, the one for the bathrooms.

Wasn't the men's before the women's?

MALTHY

Nigel stop.

NIGEL

This isn't right, none of it's right, look at it!

None of it's right, none of it's right.

(Nigel winces, clutches his head.)

I need to check.

I'm going to check the rest of the ferry.

Something's wrong.

I need to check, something is wrong.

He exits at a jog.

Beat.

Boris looks up to where the spotlight shone.

MALTHY

Boris?

Is there something wrong with the ship?

I'd look but...

Is there something wrong.

(beat)

Bo talk to me, I need to hear your voice.

Bo please, don't be crazy too.

Boris closes his eyes, gently rubs circles on Malthy's back.

BORIS

I can still see it.

MALTHY

What?

BORIS

The eye.

The shadow of it.

And when I close my eyes.

I see it looking right at me.

(MORE)

BORIS (CONT'D)

But it didn't see me, Malthy.
It didn't see me.
It saw nothing.
I'm nothing.
We're nothings/ to it.

MALTHY

Please stop.
I can't.

(beat)

Bo, I need help sitting down.
I feel dizzy. Every time I move it feels like falling.

Boris slowly crouches. Almost immediately Malthy dry heaves. Boris stops, gives Malthy time to settle, before lowering again. Malthy dry heaves again, but is now on the ground. Malthy spits.

Beat.

MALTHY

Lepidoptera in Heaven.
God of Change
I ask: take pity and turn thy wheel.
Make this moment pass for I cannot take it.
Let this hour become a second,
let this wound become a scar.
Let this child find your succor
In the sweet times always ahead.

(beat)

Amen.

BORIS

Amen.
That was pretty.

MALTHY

It's a good one.
Do you know any prayers?

BORIS

No. My dad... didn't like the gods.

MALTHY

You said he was a Heronite?

BORIS

Yeah. But that's...

He doesn't pray.

Long as I could remember my family has bounced between faiths.

Whatever was close, or had the best school.

He's in it less for the faith than for the community.

MALTHY

Some gods hate that.

BORIS

I think my dad hates them back.

(beat)

My mom's dead.

That's why.

MALTHY

Oh baby, I'm sorry.

BORIS

I... came home from school.

And what sounded like a gurgling drain, like bubbles popping...

The felt like a bruise, silent.

Soft.

My parents' bedroom door was open

And when I went in

I saw my parents naked.

My dad was holding my mom close.

That broken pipe was him crying.

My mom's whole body was blue.

And she shat the bed.

Daddy was just laying in it with her.

(MORE)

BORIS (CONT'D)

Crying.

I can't remember the rest of the day.

Beat.

MALTHY

Let's go inside and into bed.

BORIS

We should stay out.

MALTHY

I don't want to be/ out here.

BORIS

If the boat sinks while we're in the hold we'll drown.

MALTHY

Boris!

BORIS

We don't know what's happening.

For all we know that was...

Was.

The start of it?

The first.

If it comes again, and sinks the boat.

MALTHY

It didn't sink the boat!

BORIS

BUT IT DID SOMETHING.

You felt it right?

It felt like /when my mom died.

MALTHY

SHUT UP SHUT UP SHUT UP!

(beat)

Stop telling me this stuff.

I don't want it.

Beat. Boris gets up, leaves. Malthy sits alone on the deck. They bury their face in their knees.

SCENE 6

Malthy is no longer on stage. Boris is standing on a bench, cellphone to his ear.

As he speaks, Nigel comes in. In one hand he holds candles, a book, and a marker, the other carries a small bag of food.

Nigel takes a bench, turns it towards the audience. He begins placing the candles in accordance with instructions from the book. When done, he begins drawing symbols on his face with the marker. He is drawing extra mouths.

BORIS

Hey Corkey,
You probably don't remember me
I'm Boris Prokofiev, I dated Consin before you.
We were at that party in his basement.
Did all the drugs.
I had blue hair back then.
Anyway, we don't know each other.
But, see.
I'm on this boat?
And this dark thing passed.
Fucked with my head.
So, so I wanted to check if it came at you guys too.
Because... I think it was headed? To you.
I've been like *calling everyone*.
You're like the tenth person I called.
Nobody is picking up.
Call me back ASAP.
Please, I'm kind of... I'm freaking out?
Could you check on my dad?
Like even if everything is fine
Please, make sure he's okay?
Also, I'm sorry if he's drunk and says shit to you.
I kind of stole his wallet because...
Tell him I'm fine, I don't want to see him, but I want to know he isn't dead.
Thanks, tell Consin I still listen to that play list he made me.

(MORE)

BORIS (CONT'D)

Byebye.

(Beat. Boris dials.)

Hey Stacey!

It's Boris.

From middle school.

I have your number from that choir trip to the Coast ages back.

I spent most of it in the hotel eating peanut butter crackers.

I had red hair and a nose ring back then.

Anyway.

I wouldn't call you but I'm on a boat and this dark thing passed.

And now I think it is headed your way?

Like. I'm kind of FUCKING PANICKING.

Because I can't get anyone on the fucking phone

I'm like, going to call the sandwich place next or *something*.

Just to make sure you all aren't FUCKING DEAD.

FUCK.

(He hangs up. Breathes. Dials.)

Stacey it's me again. Sorry, call me back, bye.

Boris hangs up.

He checks his phone, raises it up to catch a signal.

Nigel steps back from his handiwork, begins lighting the candles.

Malthy enters, smoking a joint, stumbling a little.

They walk up to Boris, sit on his bench.

MALTHY

So.

How are you bitches.

I'm not good.

(blows out smoke)

This stuff isn't working Boris.

BORIS

How long you been smok/ing?

(He changes position slightly.)

Come on internet.

MALTHY

I dunno, I got high almost immediately last time, now I'm...
Soberish.
It's helped my vertigo at least.

BORIS

Good.
Still no internet.
And no one is picking up their phones back home.

MALTHY

Nobody was picking up at the Monastery either.
How many people you call?

BORIS

Everyone in my phone.

MALTHY

Well.
Well. Fuck.
Guess this is what you get for voting Fascist.

BORIS

The fuck/ Malthy?

MALTHY

I'm just *saying* you know, if it's between a homophobic, xenophobic, phobic/ phobic.

BORIS

Fuck off!

MALTHY

What? What?

BORIS

People could be dead?

MALTHY

Forgive me if I don't cry for a fucked up shithole.

Boris kicks Malthy in the ribs. Malthy hisses, clutching their side, rolls onto the ground.

NIGEL

Could both of you please BE QUIET?!

I'm almost done.

(Nigel kowtows to the candles. Beat. He rises again.)

There we are.

May it be enough.

(He walks over to Malthy, helps them into a sitting position.)

Listen. I know you two think little of me.

I'm old and emotional and out-of-touch.

But *this*?

Boris, Malthy might be your lover or something, but they are still a monk of the Lepidoptera Order. You don't fucking kick a monk!

Malthy, as a monk you need to get your shit together.

We need/ Lepidoptera.

MALTHY

Well *you* pray to them then!

I'm not some fucking/ phone.

NIGEL

Then *do something* instead of trying to go numb from not giving a shit!

(beat)

You'll both get through this. You just/ need to try.

MALTHY

How do you know?

NIGEL

Because it's not a choice.

People get through things.

Life lives.

Until it stops.

Beat.

BORIS

It isn't fair.

NIGEL

I'd tell you life ain't fair,
but people only say that so you stop reminding them.

Beat.

BORIS

I'm sorry we were mean to you.

NIGEL

You weren't mean, you were ball/ busting.

BORIS

I actually just found you obnoxious and overbearing.

Beat.

MALTHY

Speaking of which.
Nice shrine.

NIGEL

Thanks.
You're supposed to use tallow candles, but they only had cheap ass ones, so I rubbed
'em down with bacon grease.

Beat.

MALTHY

I don't recognize it.
Which... given my background...
Who's it for?

NIGEL

The thing that passed us over.

MALTHY

That's...
Did you just make up a religion?

NIGEL

No. I...

(silence)

You're not going to believe me anyway.
So why bother?

BORIS

Well don't assume!
I mean... not like anyone else knows where you're coming from.

NIGEL

I just... know.

I know.

When I was... tracing the floorboards.

I saw the instructions written for me.

Not in words, not in the alphabet.

But in the grain of the knotholes.

(beat)

I told you. I'm sorry if it's scary, I'm... I'm so scared too.

I've never... not even with the Mackerel... but yet it feels so logical.

Like arithmetic.

A little chain of obviousness and at the end is... Holy.

It feels so right, and natural and *pure* to believe. I've never had this in my life.

I've never actually felt a flame for anything. A light with anything like this.

And you can't tell me you don't feel it either.

Silence.

MALTHY

So.

Does it love you?

Beat.

NIGEL

No. It just is.

MALTHY

If it doesn't love you why worship it?

NIGEL

Why not? After what you saw how/ could you not...

MALTHY

You shouldn't just worship something because it's bigger than you.

You shouldn't just look at things and go "maybe if I ask nice it will notice!"

Faith isn't something you can put in *anything*. That's how people end up suicide cultists or stockbrokers.

That's how you end up with the shit fire that was Our Island.

Fucking goose stepping into/ the sea.

NIGEL

This is different! That fucker *changed the world*. You can't argue /what happened.

MALTHY

I mean, yeah like most weather patterns do.

NIGEL

Weather patterns move my room to a different deck?

Weather reshuffled my laundry?

MALTHY

You're misremembering/ things.

NIGEL

Then *where's the captain?*

(beat)

I mean, there had to have been one? Yes?

It wasn't just the three of us here, it couldn't have been, that makes no sense.

BORIS

(slowly as if to a child)

No, I remember it was just/ us it was the last boat...

NIGEL

But *that doesn't explain the captain*.

A ship needs a captain, because I know I didn't fucking steer this thing.

Which means, we *had* to have had one, but now we don't and don't remember having one.

Meaning when God passed us/ over it.

MALTHY

Maybe you're just fucking old Nigel. Your brain's rotting, bladder shrinking, sight fizzling. You live in a world completely different than the one you were born in, with people whose beliefs are completely incompatible with your own. Then some weird ass weather blows through and panics you and suddenly all those rotting brain cells turn into paranoid oatmeal because I can tell you, *this is only happening to you!*

Silence.

BORIS

What happened to the captain though?
I mean... if you think about it...
It doesn't make sense... why I can only/ remember the three of us.

MALTHY

Boris do not go down this crazy hole. Do not even begin.

BORIS

But maybe we should just... you're a monk! Hasn't something like this happened before?

MALTHY

No.

NIGEL

Well what does the Order have/ to say on this?

MALTHY

Why do you keep trying to make me into this thing I'm not! Both of you treat me like I'm this wonderful fucking creature but I'm *not* I'm fucking *not*.
Why does everybody do this?
Tell me I'm good and wonderful when I don't do anything.
I don't do jackshit for anything! I'm a nobody just like everyone, just a nobody!
Well here I am, *fucking look at me*.
This is me and I want to *die*.

Malthy exits.

Silence.

BORIS

Who was that? Who was that asshole?
Is that who they are?

NIGEL

Ah, lad.
Give it time.
None of us are good people right now.
Fucking look at me! Face painted up like a heathen, crawling around for messages
from a god... If I wasn't me, I'd assume I finally cracked.

Boris nods, checks his phone reception.

BORIS

Anyone on the island you wanna try to reach?

NIGEL

No.
I didn't really have anybody back there.
Sounds like you had a lot of people.

BORIS

Eh, just people I know or slept with. My dad.

NIGEL

God, who was the last person I slept with?
Got their face. It was on the beach.

BORIS

Which one?

NIGEL

Birstle.

BORIS

The one made of pebbles?

NIGEL

We had a blanket, it actually helped work out some muscle kinks.

BORIS

Was it good?

NIGEL

Oh I didn't cum. But it was just nice to be intimate.
Have... pardon me prying... but you and the monk?

He bounces his eyebrows and whistles.

BORIS

No.

NIGEL

Why not?

BORIS

Just...

I dunno. I love them so much I'm scared to fuck I guess.
Scared it will break something.
And we've only known each other a few days.

NIGEL

Find sex does the opposite, makes things seem better than they are.

BORIS

Yeah. That would explain high school.

NIGEL

Doesn't it though?

(beat)

Look, there isn't going to be a good time to say this.
But I'm leaving. Taking the life raft soon as you and the monk settle.

Microbeat. Boris laughs a little, unsure what to do.

BORIS

Yeah what?

NIGEL

Boris, forgive me, but it's hard to explain.
This new faith of mine.
It's the first thing I've *gotten* in years. Everything else: family, nation, even my god.
Is gone.
Been gone so long I haven't known the reason I'm breathing.
I still don't know why. But I think it's in that darkness. What it's all about.

(MORE)

NIGEL (CONT'D)

I want to know if we had a captain, and I want to know where they went.
Because I think it's what the world has been leading up to.

BORIS

Okay. You're /scaring me Nij.

NIGEL

Just let me, for a little longer, let me.
This faith is brimming over in me.
Let me tell you what I'm seeing.
I'm seeing that the horrors of these years, the hot ice, the fetuses on the beach, the
Heron and the dark, it's all a path. A process. *A culmination.*
This is my Last Whale. This my *feeling.*
Don't you want to know why/ everything is breaking?

BORIS

Not in the fucking least.

Silence.

NIGEL

I know it's a calm, what's coming is calm. And dark.

BORIS

So it's nothing?

Beat. Nigel considers this. Really considers it.

NIGEL

Yes. Nothing.
That's what my God is of.
Nothing.

Malthy reenters. Somewhat shy, Nigel and Boris look at
them.

Beat.

MALTHY

So I went and cried for awhile.
And then I thought I should apologize.
(MORE)

MALTHY (CONT'D)

And then I fucking whatever the hell Nijj is jabbering about and you know what, no. Fuck you.
No apology. It's a death cult.
You are going to go die and you're going to try to take my boyfriend/ with you

BORIS

Holy shit I'm your boyfriend?

MALTHY

Boris of course you are you ate my ass.

Boris's phone rings, startling everyone. Boris fumbles with the phone, but manages to answer.

BORIS

Daddy?
... Oh Steph. No. No it's fine. What is...
Stacey slow down, Stacey slow... Stacey/ I can't

NIGEL

What's/ she saying?

MALTHY

Is every/one okay?

BORIS

Stacey hold on I'm going to put you on speaker phone. I'm going to... Okay. One sec.

Boris sets his phone onto a bench. He taps the screen.

STACEY (SPEAKER PHONE)

Boris hello? Boris are you still there talk to me/ are you

BORIS

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. I am, I have, uh, two other people here.

MALTHY

H/ello!

NIGEL

Evening!

BORIS

Stacey, what's happening over there?

STACEY

The fucking Apocalypse Doris!

MALTHY

Boris.

STACEY

Who gives a shit any more? Who gives a shit!

It's all gone. It's...

It's gone.

BORIS

Like how bad is it? Any buildings still/ standing or?

STACEY

I said it's gone Boris!

It's gone. The entire Island it's...

I'm right next to that Darkness.

Bo it hasn't moved.

It's just sitting here. It isn't moving.

If anyone's/ in there.

NIGEL

Stacey, where are you now?

STACEY

I'm in my dad's boat.

We ran here when everyone first saw it.

NIGEL

How many people are there?

STACEY

Me, my dad, my mom, and my dog.

Everyone is...

I really thought my dad was going to kill us.

He was screaming about how we weren't his real family and what did we do with them, then he just sort of fell asleep.

(MORE)

STACEY (CONT'D)

My mom has been lying in one place with the dog, not speaking.
And I can't stop crying.
Lepidoptera let this pass, I feel like I'm losing my mind.

MALTHY

That's actually...
That's actually/ really common.

STACEY

But that's only in my boat.
We joined up with a bunch of other boats.
We're all sticking together.

MALTHY

Are there any Monks? The Siblinghood of the Lepidoptera Order?

STACEY

... No.
I'm sorry.
I don't know what happened to them.

Malthy's head dips.

BORIS

Is my dad there?

STACEY

I'll tell you when I know.
But... was he in the Heron?

Cold silence. Bo swallows.

BORIS

What happened?

STACEY

The Heron was...
So we saw a storm was coming.
Like for most of the day it was just a big storm coming.
Then... the TVs just turned blue, all the phones were ringing, the radios cut off.
And the Weather Service said the storm would be worse than expected.

(MORE)

STACEY (CONT'D)

That we all needed to stay in our homes until they gave the all clear.
But the phones...
Whoever was in charge of that, they were contradicting the TV.
They said the military was mobilizing to shell whatever was coming.
The phone told everyone we should be evacuating.
My folks argued if we should listen to the TV or the phone.
And that's when the Heron came.
These men and women with outstretched wings holding staves.
Paper Heron puppets flopping while firecrackers snapped.
They were singing old hymns for the blood of our enemies.
That's when we knew this was bad.
Because whatever the TV said, the Heads of Herons had told their boys something else.
So we ran to the dock where Dad kept his boat, along with everyone else.
For the first time ever, the Heronites were polite.
They let us pass, they said they were going to fight the end of the world.
They were going to rip out its guts.
They were laughing while the rest of us were screaming.
Running.
The dock was so crowded.
People pushed into the sea or jumping in.
Boats sinking from all the people piling on.
My dad always carried a gun.
So he scared off the lady trying to hot-wire our boat.
Which might actually be impossible?
But even then, as Dad was starting up the boat.
Even then.
....
....
It was... it was fuck.
It just rolled over us.
There were sirens playing, old air raid ones.
Just screaming as this tidal wave of night...
You know what it's like.
The pressure and this feeling
This feeling the substance was washed from the world.
That we were just color, auroras drifting.
We were lucky we were in a boat.
Because the people on shore, the longer they stood there...
I couldn't see, but I heard splashing.

(MORE)

STACEY (CONT'D)

I heard screaming.
I shone a light into the ocean and it was boiling.
Not just with heat but with things.
Like floaters in your eye.
Amoeba or worms.
Curling and uncurling, swimming to shore.
With darker shapes made of teeth and slime.
I don't even know if that stuff was real.
You know how it is.
Everything was becoming colors.
Then.
We came out the other side.
Sweating from how cold it feels after that fever heat.
That's when my dad...
I'm hoping my family will wake up.
I seemed to hold out better.
But until then... I dunno.
I guess we're floating away.

Pensive quiet.

BORIS

Did you see what happened to the Heronites?

STACEY

No, does it matter?

BORIS

... I'll see you in a bit. Okay?

STACEY

What?

BORIS

I'm going to stop by on my way to the Island.

STACEY

... Whatever dude.

Who's going to stop you?

The call ends. Quiet.

MALTHY

You didn't say that.
Bo. Bo look at me.
You didn't say that.

Silence.

BORIS

(to Nigel)

How were you planning to get back to the Island?

NIGEL

Lifeboat. Its got a motor.

(He glances at Malthy, then Bo, noting the
tension.)

I'll go check on it. Maybe pack some more. Tell me if you change your mind.

He exits.

Silence.

BORIS

Malthy... It's my dad.

MALTHY

So? I'm sorry but so?

BORIS

I didn't think I'd lose/ him yet.

MALTHY

I don't *care*.

I don't.

I don't care because no matter what Nigel thinks is going on? Whatever he's going to
drag/ you into.

BORIS

He's/ not dragging..

MALTHY

He is going to go *die*.

Nigel will fucking *die*. And if what we felt? If that just a few minutes...

What do you think you'll find after a week? What's going to be waiting there for you?

BORIS

You said it was just weather.

MALTHY

Yeah so's a/ fucking hurricane.

BORIS

We'll find a way to survive!

MALTHY

Isn't this good enough for you?

(beat)

Isn't... Isn't us. Enough for you? It isn't much but there is so much potential here.

BORIS

Malthy this has /nothing to do...

MALTHY

What do you need? What will make you stay? Marriage? A third person? A/ fucking face lift or...

BORIS

This isn't something/ you can...

MALTHY

Everyone I loved is probably dead, except you!

(beat)

We've barely even started. I barely even know you yet.

Beat.

BORIS

This isn't that kind of goodbye.

For someone...

Remember how I said I was an agnostic and you chewed me out for being wishy washy?

MALTHY

That *is/not* what...

BORIS

Well if you have enough faith to believe that *bug* rules over life and death.

If you can believe in that, how is it so hard to believe in me?

Believe that I'll find him, and come back.

And the three of us can...

I don't know?

Live?

I can have faith in that.

I already have faith in it.

Enough faith for both of us, if you can't.

Malthy goes up to Boris and takes his hands.

They look him in the eye.

MALTHY

I wish I was brave. I would follow you any where, if was only brave.

BORIS

You're probably too smart is all.

Malthy kisses him on the lips. Beat

MALTHY

... And if you can bring Nigel home too.

Lepidoptera fuck it, I've grown attached.

BORIS

I'll figure something out.

They embrace. Long moment. Then:

MALTHY

(gentle)

Lepidoptera in Heaven.

God of Change

I ask: take pity and turn thy wheel.

Make the coming trials pass.

(MORE)

MALTHY (CONT'D)

Let the hour become a second,
let the wound become a scar.
Let my love find your succor
In the sweet times always ahead.
Protect him as he tumbles into mystery.
Bring him home on wings of glass.
Because this moment is almost passed.
And I want ten thousand more.

As they speak the light grows dimmer.

Dimmer

Dimmer.

Dimmer.

Dim.

And Dark.

SCENE 7

We sit in the moment for a long while.

Then

VHUMP

We're back in *that* Darkness, the nightmare churn of sound playing in the background. It begins to snow. Flashlights come on from the back of the theater, their beams dance on the ceiling and stage.

BORIS

Fuck me.

It's gone.

My neighborhood is gone..

Boris and Nigel walk from the back of the theater, carrying flashlights.

NIGEL

It may not be yours. We coulda/ got turned...

BORIS

I mean... I mean I thought it would be bad, but...

NIGEL

Bo. Keep moving.

BORIS

DAAAAD!

NIGEL

Shh!

BORIS

DAAAAD where are you?

No response.

They make their way towards the stage.

NIGEL

God... gods help us.
My head...
I forgot how nauseous it makes you.
I forgot how bad the air tastes.

BORIS

I can't see anything.
Fuck.
We can't stay too long.
Just a moment and we'll leave just a moment.

The flashlight beam scans the stage again.
Now there is a rope dangling from the ceiling.

NIGEL

Wait. What's that?

They walk to the stage, lights trained on the rope.
Boris helps Nigel clamber onto the stage.
Hops on himself.
They both walk to the rope, point their lights into the ceiling.

BORIS

Can you see what it's attached to?

NIGEL

No.

BORIS

Shit.
Well.
That's that.

He turns to leave.

NIGEL

I can climb this.

Beat.

BORIS

Don't be stupid.

NIGEL

Bo, look at it.

It's a fucking rope tied to the sky.

This is something out of a fairy tale.

BORIS

Nigel we can just keep going..

NIGEL

I'm getting that feeling again, that inevitable logic. Boris this is what all of it is/ leading to!

BORIS

Or it could just be, like, a rope tied to a tree branch that will break.

Then your back will break, because you fell and are old.

NIGEL

Boris, have faith lad.

Nigel climbs the rope. Boris following him with this flashlight beam, tracing his climb until he disappears.

The sounds in the dark fade away.

We wait.

We wait.

Boris stares up the rope, peers into the rafters.

BORIS

You see anything? Nigel? Can you see...

And blood gushes from the ceiling. It is quick, violent.

Boris steps back, wiping it from his eyes. He blinks, looks down at his hands. They shake, as he blinks.

The rope falls to the ground.

Beat.

Boris begins trembling. He leans down slowly, picks up his flashlight. He scans the darkness.

The stage is filled with corpses.

A moment.

Boris is about to break.

Instead he sings to himself. His voice is as tentative as his steps, attempting not to trip on the bodies. His light weaves through the dark as he makes his way to the back of the theater.

BORIS

Keep the home fires burning
Though your heart is yearning.
Though your loved are far away
They dream of home.
There's a silver lining
In the darkness, shining.
Turn the dark cloud inside out
Til your loved come home.

He finally makes it to the back of the theater and exits.

SCENE 8

Spotlight.

We're back on the ferry.

Malhy sits on a bench, peering off to sea. Waiting for Boris and Nigel.

We wait with them.

Only the sound of waves and seabirds.

Minutes passing.

A foghorn sounds.

Malhy waits.

End

ACT II

SCENE 1

The stage is still covered in corpses, not moving in the bright lights. Beat.

A furnace starts, and stays on. The sound of bucking pipes rings out. From offstage enter two sanitation workers wearing ball caps and coveralls. They walk to a corpse, one grabbing the feet, the other under the armpits. They walk back towards where they came, towards the orange light.

They swing the corpse. Once. Twice. Toss it off.

The orange light brightens and crackles.

Trash bags fall from the ceiling.

Projection: FIFTEEN YEARS.

The figures stare at the bags. More fall from the ceiling.

It is a steady avalanche.

One of the figures speaks. It is Malthy.

MALTHY

Aw fucksake.

(they pull down their mask, shouts at ceiling)

Ey! EY! Stop that! Stop that, we got enough down here! We got enough!

The bags keep falling.

Malthy, pulls out a walkie-talkie.

MALTHY

Hey, this is Malthius down in incineration, we're waste deep in corpses down here-

(The other end responds, we can't hear it.)

Ah shit, uh...

(MORE)

MALTHY (CONT'D)

(Malthus struggles to put together the sentence)

Tro... Tro multe da... mortaj haltaj... haltoj?... haltaj ne povas-

(Malthus looks to the other figure)

Help?

Their co-worker sighs, lowers the mask. Her name is RINE, and she snatches the walkie-talkie from their hand.

RINE

(fluently into the walkie-talkie)

Saluton, Sendo jes ne jes? Jen Forno dudek tri. Tuj nun ni estas kadavroj enterigitaj. Vi povas peti dispozicio doni nun tempon, ke ni povas sveligi kadavrojn multajn en la fornon, jes ne jes?

(Beat. She listens.)

Jes. Jes. Ne. Ne ne ne ne ne ne, Ni... Ni povas. Ni komprenas. Bedaŭras geni vin.

(Click. The walkie-talkie is off, she looks at

Malthus with dull frustration.)

One of these days you're gonna have to learn Coastal.

MALTHY

What, I'm almost old enough for it to be charming! Just a little old monk from the old country.

What did they say?

RINE

It's flu season.

MALTHY

No shit.

RINE

And dead bodies piled on a street corner with the trash looks bad in foreign papers.

MALTHY

There's no way we're going to get all this done.

RINE

Not if we take time bitching it won't.

Beat.

They begin to dispose of more bodies, garbage, tossing them into the offstage furnace.

MALTHY

Of all the damn days Elias doesn't show up.

RINE

What you think the excuse will be this time?

MALTHY

The reason he tells us or the actual reason?

RINE

Actual reason.

MALTHY

Drugs.

RINE

What kind?

MALTHY

Wouldn't know, I'm a bit old/ for that scene.

RINE

Oh my god enough! You are three years younger than me!

MALTHY

Wait, really?

RINE

Yes!

MALTHY

Weren't you/ born in 10?

RINE

I was born in 95.

MALTHY

No!

RINE

I'm sorry you had to learn this way.

MALTHY

I cannot believe you are that old.

RINE

Why not?

MALTHY

Because I aged like shit!

RINE

You're/ fine!

MALTHY

How are you not aging?

RINE

I eat salad.

MALTHY

Bullshit!

RINE

I do! I eat salad and that is it!

They toss the garbage off in unison. Big roar.

RINE

I think Elias snorts cocaine.

MALTHY

Mmm.

RINE

You don't?

MALTHY

He's awfully mellow for doing cocaine.

RINE

Not necessarily.

MALTHY

Cocaine is an upper though, right? Wouldn't he be...

(fidgets in mimicry of a crack addict)

Right?

RINE

Drugs affect people differently.

MALTHY

What?

RINE

Different drugs do different things for different people. Maybe for Elias it relaxes him.

Beat.

MALTHY

You're shitting me.

RINE

Well, you ever get paranoid smoking weed?

MALTHY

Once.

RINE

Same idea. Drugs can do a bunch of things.

Beat. Malthy has stopped tossing trash.

MALTHY

Everything I've believed is a lie. I/ mean...

RINE

It only took you thirty something years to realize that?

MALTHY

No, but sometimes it's nice to pretend I can still be surprised.

RINE

Monk thing?

MALTHY

No, that's being surprised constantly.

(beat, he looks up)

Been awhile since something dropped.

RINE

I guess.

MALTHY

Call dispatch, and ask why the dumps stopped.

RINE

Malthy, you gotta/ learn Coastal.

MALTHY

We'll practice when we get home, I promise. But ask them what's going on.

RINE

Why?

MALTHY

Just a feeling.

Beat. Rine pulls out her walkie-talkie.

RINE

Sendo, la rubujo cesis fali. En la pasinteco okazis tie jes, ne jes?

(beat)

Sendo, la rubujo cesis fali. En la pasinteco okazis tie jes, ne jes?

(looks to Malthy)

They aren't picking up.

MALTHY

Mmm.

RINE

I'll try again in a few.
Look, I'm not going to say it's nothing.
It's obviously something.
Still.

MALTHY

You think the strike went violent?

RINE

No.

MALTHY

They were pretty angry today when I passed the picket line.

RINE

They always get worked up when we cross.

MALTHY

I know, but they seemed especially barky.

RINE

I didn't think so.

MALTHY

It is going to escalate though. Those uptown fucks are not going to put up with their garbage piling up forever.

RINE

Malthy, please. I don't want to think about it.

MALTHY

Well, at some point we're going to have to, and figure out where we stand.

RINE

You're so dramatic.

MALTHY

I'm not.

RINE

You're like one step away from standing on some barricades.

MALTHY

Well aren't you?

Beat.

RINE

Can we drop it? I don't even know why we're talking about this.

MALTHY

Trash stopped dropping, and I think it's because there might be a riot.

RINE

... yes. I know.

MALTHY

... don't you ever wonder if things could have been different?

RINE

Every day.

Every day when I'm putting on these ugly ass jumpers I think about it.

How the fuck I got here.

When I was a lawyer back home.

And if home was still there how I'd be living so differently.

I imagine myself in the line at a cafe, looking at my watch and panicking over running late.

I imagine drinking red wine with my still alive friends, and getting bitchy and fighting.

Because I miss being angry at their spoiled rich girls asses.

And maybe I'd be miserable and tired and angry all the time.

Because I was struggling to not spend every moment at a fucking desk.

It was hard to have a healthy relationship, because you know guys.

Don't understand how I *have* to be a workaholic.

Or else I'd be living with my Still Alive Parents.

Who call me every weekend to talk about some horse shit at temple.

Dad will ask me when I'll have a kid.

Then me and mom would laugh behind his back about it.

And I'd tell them I'd drive up to see them soon.

But never will.

Because a part of me is scared I'll never leave there if I visited.

Because when I'm with them, I feel like a full person.

And I'd never have to decide between the power bill and the water bill.

Between anxiety meds and food.

(MORE)

RINE (CONT'D)

I'd take everything for granted until I died.
Then I'll know.
Instead of knowing now.

MALTHY

You feel better?

RINE

Fuck no.
Kind of.
Fuck you.

MALTHY

Okay.
Want to know what I regret?

RINE

Sure, why not.

MALTHY

I only had the love of my life for a week.
(beat)
And all the boys who gave good head went down with the Island.

RINE

(laughs)
They're no good for/ you either?

MALTHY

I am on the verge of doing an anthropological study on their asses.

RINE

Every one of them.

MALTHY

Have you slept with any women?

RINE

Haven't the inclination.

MALTHY

Me neither, but I'm tempted just to see if *they* know how to give head.

RINE

God what if it's the whole country? What if we're the only two people who know how to go down left?

MALTHY

At last, marketable skills!

They both laugh. Beat.

RINE

Do you ever wish you had been on the Island?
You ever wonder if it's worth living here?

MALTHY

...
No.
Do you?

Rine shrugs. They toss another body to the fire.

RINE

I just... I wonder if we ever "escaped."

MALTHY

We didn't. We survived.

RINE

Well yeah, I mean...
The Dark Spots are growing.

MALTHY

The Wolf is always growing.

RINE

I wish you'd stop calling them that.

MALTHY

I think “Wolf” is a far more descriptive way to describe Hell Storms than “Dark Spots.”
As if it’s fucking melanoma.

RINE

I mean it is kind of like a cancer.
Grows. Mutates. Kills.

MALTHY

Just because it’s bad for us doesn’t mean it’s evil.

RINE

Oh my god first you’re calling for the rise of the proletariat/ now...

MALTHY

I am not some ecological doomsayer!
This isn’t a punishment for fucking up the planet.
Punishments aren’t natural.
Evil is not natural.
Those are things we bring in.

RINE

Whatever.
It is growing though.
And a new Dark Spot might be forming over Cape City.

MALTHY

Don’t you think there’s hubris in believing we are the last of a dying species?

RINE

...No?
You think dying makes me happy?

MALTHY

Just...
Sorry.
I get scared too sometimes.

Beat. Rine pulls out her phone.

RINE

Wanna see what's washed up on shore this week.

MALTHY

You can read it to me, we should at least get some minimum work done.
But make sure it isn't some click baity shit.
Go to WolfWatch. They don't do that weird "Hey immigrant, we speakie your language" thing.

Malthy starts picking up smaller trash/bodies. They don't work that hard.

A moment while Rine searches the internet.

RINE

(Reading from her phone.)

Satellite images taken this morning show that the Dark Spots over the Island, the Steppes, and Fallow Tips will be up wind from numerous ports. Eschatologists warn this may result in "altered neurostates" and recommend wrapping yourself in a...
Wait.

Sorry that's just the weather.

(Swipes.)

Looks like WolfWatch got shut down again.

MALTHY

Goddamnit.
Censorship or hate mob?

RINE

404 page not found. So... Gov.
Yeah.
We're going to have to do a listicle.

MALTHY

Fuck me.

RINE

Oh good, my dad posted one already.
(sarcastic)

"Artifacts from the Isle this week. You'll never guess number ten!"

MALTHY

You know, I really hoped to outlive listicles.

RINE

Hey, don't give up, you still might.

Malthy laughs. Rine taps her phone.

A VOICE BOOMS

ANCHOR (SPEAKER PHONE)

WELCOME TO IMMIGRANT TIME NEWS SLOT. NEWS FROM THE
MOTHER TONGUE TO/ YOUR IMMIGRANT EARS.

RINE

Ah *fuckfuckfuckfuck*.

(Taps.)

If I wanted a video.

I would have clicked it.

MALTHY

But Rine! The *mother tongue speaks*.

RINE

They know how to sweet talk a gal, don't they?

Holy shit the Wharf Ferris Wheel survived!

MALTHY

Seriously?

RINE

The fucking whole damn ferris wheel!

Fifteen years.

MALTHY

I think I feel patriotism.

RINE

Lepidoptera look at it...

I used to ride that with my grandpa!

I threw up on it every time!

MALTHY

The paint's still on it too.

RINE

Pink and white.

All these years it's still pink and white.

Beat.

MALTHY

What's the next one?

RINE

Uhhh.

A car. Guess it was fancy?

MALTHY

Skip.

RINE

Sure.

Next is...

ANCHOR (SPEAKER PHONE)

WHEEL LARGE FROM HOME COME ASHORE, THE HAPPY-SAD IS FELT
BY IMMIGRANTS THAT ARE YOU WHO FONDLE ITS /IRON RIVETS.

MALTHY

You hear that? We should get down there before all the good rivets get fondled!

Rine mutes.

RINE

Lepidoptera, I wish they'd just hire one of us to translate.

Surprise! Your janitor used to be a newscaster! Pay him!

Anyway number two is... Seriously?

A doll outranked the Wharf Wheel?

MALTHY

(Peeks over Rine's shoulder.)

Oh hey, a holy icon to the Forgotten Lady.

RINE

Who's that?

MALTHY

I don't know. She's forgotten hence...

RINE

Oh.

MALTHY

Even forgotten gods deserve respect.

RINE

Did she do miracles?

RINE

Nah just... it was a pity thing?

You burned some incense as a "sorry you're irrelevant" sort of thing.

ELIAS

Sad.

MALTHY

It's all part of the cycle.

ELIAS

Yeah, "Lepidoptera turns your wheel."

Alright, you ready?

"You'll never guess number one!"

MALTHY

It better be a painting or a severed head or something.

Rine swipes.

Beat.

She's processing.

RINE

Holy shit.

They were right.

(MORE)

RINE (CONT'D)

...
It's a body.

MALTHY

Oh?

RINE

“Although uncertain, witnesses claim the unidentified person walked out of the sea before collapsing. The Potential Survivor is...
Somebody came out of the *Wolf*.”

MALTHY

That's not funny.

RINE

I'm not joking!

MALTHY

What fucking site are you looking at?

RINE

Coastal State Media, bitch!
Malthy, someone survived.
Oooo they got a picture!
Malthy take a look!

MALTHY

Rine, this sounds like a PR stunt.

RINE

It's not, it's a person! You gotta see!

MALTHY

I don't want to see.

RINE

Are you serious?

MALTHY

Rine.

RINE

It might be someone you know, though?

MALTHY

Shut the fuck up my heart can't take it!

Silence.

RINE

I'm so/rry Malthy.

MALTHY

Just... I can't have them all die again.
Please, don't make me lose them again.

Beat.

RINE

Okay.
Okay.
That's fair.

Malthy chucks the garbage into the furnace with all their strength. The fire pops, and flares.

Beat.

ANCHOR (SPEAKER PHONE)

TALKING TO BEACHCOMBERS ABOUT/ BODY . JUST IN JUST IN
MYSTERY UPGRADED WITH MUSIC. HERE IS HIM, RECORDED BY
BYSTANDER.

RINE

Oh fuck me really, shit shit shit.

Over the speaker we hear humming. Malthy pauses listening.

RINE

Malthy I'm /so sorry let me fuck fuckfuck.

MALTHY

Rine shut up. *Rine*. Shhh.

Rine clasps a hand over her mouth. We hear very quietly the humming. Dry, cracked, tired.

We can hear the ocean threatening to drown the sound out.

Then the singer is able to croak.

BORIS (SPEAKER PHONE)

...Dream. Of home.

There's a silver lining.

In the Darkness... Shining.

Turn the Dark Cloud in...

Silence

Malthy walks to Rine, takes the phone from her hand. They study the screen.

Study intensifies to a wide-eyed dissociation.

They lower the phone. Stare forward, for a moment before screaming.

Screaming.

Screaming

Rine runs over, grabs Malthy as they begins to fall to the floor

RINE

Malthy? Malthy can you hear me?

Malth.

Malthy can't.

They just scream.

The sound of the machinery grows louder, and louder.

And then it is gone.

SCENE 2

Blinding light, a tinny buzz like tinnitus. We are left to stew in the brightness for a moment before a voice, Don's voice, booms kindly, but muffled. It has an accent now.

DON

Hallo again, Mister Doe. How are you today... big day for you, huh? Big day.

Rattling of wheels on linoleum.

DON

I'm going to miss our little chats Doe. You're a good listener, even if you're a fucking Illegal. No offense, I mean, I only have problems with the ambulating ones. Not like you!

(laughter, beat)

I sometimes get jealous of you catatonic folks. You get to sleep so fucking much! HA. Seriously though, I've been thinking of killing myself.

Things have just gotten so bad.

And I'm hungry. So hungry.

And scared.

And I don't wanna die.

But I don't wanna live.

Seems like you got the happy medium.

You ain't dead, but you ain't here.

You don't even feel yourself shitting.

You just ARE.

You Illegals, ya always blabbing about meditation, and living in the now. That seems nice, but eventually you gotta stop right? You gotta move again.

You gotta eat.

And that one-ness breaks back into loneliness.

I think you got the better deal.

(The wheels stop.)

Alright. Here we are. I'll go get... that cousin of yours.

A long silence. Just the blindness and the ring.

But

then
their
voice.

MALTHY

Bo?

The lights immediately dim. We're in a doctor's office at a hospice. Bo sits in a wheelchair.

His eyes are locked on Malthy. Instead of their monk robes they wear a t-shirt and jeans, though their scarf is still wrapped around their neck. Malthy looks back at Bo, so joyful they're in shock.

Don is not seen, only heard.

A quiet moment.

Malthy walks to Bo, kneels at his feet, to look in his eyes. Bo tilts his head to follow. Malthy puts a hand on Bo's cheek, trying not to break down.

MALTHY

It's him... It's him.
It's my Boris.

Beat.

DON (OFF STAGE)

Never seen him stare at anyone else before.
I feel jealous.

Malthy speaks to Don is just off stage.

MALTHY

He stared at you?

DON

Only occasionally.
It was...
But so, you want to take him out of hospice?

MALTHY

Yes.

DON

That'll be some paperwork. And I'm not gonna lie, there's going to be a bribe if you want him out quick.

MALTHY

Of/ course.

DON

Not to me. My supervisor.

But, you know, if you wanted...

(He laughs. Malthy stares befuddled.)

Joking.

That said... we have to follow laws.

MALTHY

Of course.

DON

And it's important, that he only goes to his family. Otherwise, there's going to be a prison sentence.

Beat.

MALTHY

He's been like this ever since they found him?

DON

Yeah.

MALTHY

How did they...

They didn't have a lot of details, just... found him on the beach.

DON

Yeah.

That's really all you have.

Somebody found him and called an ambulance.

There's scars.

On the soles of his feet, and his palms.

Malhy gently touches Boris's feet.

MALTHY

But there weren't any signs how he got there? Was there... an older man?

DON

I don't know.

MALTHY

So there wasn't any sign of how he got there?

DON

Like I said, no.

I think he's the only one who knows how he got here.

MALTHY

Hmmm.

Beat.

DON

Where do you live?

Malhy looks at Don, cautious.

MALTHY

(obvious fact)

Harbor District.

DON

I hear it's pretty bad there. Streets filled with walls of garbage. Big rat problem.

MALTHY

Well, you're only six feet away from a rat in any city.

DON

So during a trash strike that's, what?

An inch?

Either way... there's not a lot of trash around here.

Everyone's clean.

Beat.

MALTHY

Hmm.

DON

I mean. We have him set up well here.
It isn't heaven. But it isn't the Harbor District.

MALTHY

My home is very nice believe it or not.

DON

I'm sure.
But it isn't as nice as here.
And he's safe.

Beat.

MALTHY

From what?

Beat.

DON

You are family?
Because, don't get me wrong, I don't really care what you do in the Harbor District.
But I care about my patients.
And I don't want him taken advantage of. I don't want...

Beat.

MALTHY

He is my cousin.
I have the documents for your *supervisor* to look over.
Thank you for your time.

They grab Bo's wheelchair and pushes it off stage.

SCENE 3

Bare stage, apart from a bed. Malthy pushes Boris in.

Beat.

Malthy looks around, anxious.

MALTHY

So.

This is the apartment.

(They begin to give a small tour. None of these objects or features are actually on stage, but the apartment's interior is *always consistent*. It exists even if we don't see it.)

Over here, obviously is the kitchen. You can tell because it has a fridge, and oven, obviously. But... what you might not know is that we can't have the oven and the fridge on at the same time or else we'll bust the fusebox. The lights are on a different circuit? We've tried to get the super to explain how that works but...

I think it's fair to call him a slumlord?

He lives on the other side of town.

And we don't get good wireless out here.

But.

We can talk about that later.

We found the futon on the curb before the sanitation strike.

I know, I know.

Corduroy?

What is this the fucking eighties?

But it is pretty comfy. And it doesn't smell as much in the winter.

It's my roommate's bed. Rine.

I'm kind of excited for you to meet her?

She's nice. We met in the visa line.

We have a similar passion for things, but not the same things?

And we're both kind of...

I think she'll really, really like you.

She always says, "I wish I could meet Boris, he's a catch..."

(Break, Malthy needs a moment to compose himself. They look at Boris, really look. Malthy is trying not to mourn.)

The bathroom.

(MORE)

MALTHY (CONT'D)

Is down the hall.

And our neighbor has irritable bowels.

(almost breaking)

So it smells bad all the fucking time.

But he's really sweet, and he's made taking care of the bathroom kind of his deal.

Penance for the smell.

Everybody is pretty nice.

Once you decide to like them.

...

I wish I knew you could hear me.

Did you hear me say I love you?

I want you to know.

So much.

How much I love you, and...

We keep snacks in the cupboard.

For when we get some weed or company over.

Sometimes both.

...

That's all you need.

(Malthy looks at Boris again. They walk
over to him, kisses his forehead.)

I need to get you some clothes.

(They lay their head in Boris's lap.)

We'll make this work.

I'm just glad to know where you are.

They hold this position for a long time. Then shakily,
Boris puts a hand on Malthy's face.

Malthy startles, falls back, staring up at Boris.

Boris's hand stays in position, but he's blinking rapidly,
jaws chewing his cheeks.

He looks at Malthy.

Beat.

MALTHY

Bo?

Malthy crawls on their knees to kneel in front of Boris.
Boris has begun to hyperventilate.

A microbeat.

Then.

BORIS

I don't like this dream.

(beat)

I fucking hate this dream I hate it I hate it I hate.

(He begins hitting himself in the face.)

WAKEUPWAKEUPWAKEUPWAKEUPWAKEUP.

Malthy grabs his hands. A small struggle as Boris tries to pull away. He begins keening.

Malthy kisses Boris's hands.

MALTHY

I'm here. I'm here I'm/ here. I'm here.

BORIS

I CAN'T DO THIS DREAM AGAIN! I CAN'T GO THROUGH THIS AGAIN. I
CAN'T GO THROUGH THIS AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN AND
AGAIN.

Malthy holds Bo's hands to their face, making soft sounds. Boris begins to quiet, if not calm.

A long moment.

MALTHY

I love you.

Boris pulls his hands away, covering his mouth.

BORIS

I can't... I can't do/ this again.

MALTHY

This is real Bo. We're together again.

I promise.

I promise I'm here with you.

I'm not going away.

(Malthy kisses him on the lips. Leans back.)

I'm right here.

Beat.

BORIS

You've said that before.

And then I woke up in the dark, hot snow.

Beat.

MALTHY

You don't need to believe me now, baby.

I can wait with you.

Until you can know this is real.

I've already waited fifteen years for you.

I can wait another fifteen if you need it.

Beat.

BORIS

You're older now.

MALTHY

Yeah.

You are too.

Beat

BORIS

No I'm not.

Tense beat. Then Boris starts laughing. It is happy, honest. Malthy is quiet, trying to figure out if this is mad cackling or just a weird joke.

It is a weird joke.

Now they are laughing too. We let them have the laughter for awhile. Boris stops laughing first, takes in Malthy as they struggle to catch their breath.

BORIS

How long?

Beat.

MALTHY

How long?

BORIS

Has it been?

How long?

MALTHY

...

Fifteen years.

A little over, like maybe a quarter?

BORIS

Fifteen...

Felt longer.

MALTHY

Yeah.

BORIS

Fifteen years...

Nigel's been dead. For fifteen years.

Don't worry. He... found what he was looking for.

He found it.

MALTHY

I'm glad you didn't.

I'm glad you lived.

BORIS

I'm glad you lived too.

(beat)

(MORE)

BORIS (CONT'D)

Is it still there?
Over the Island?

MALTHY

Yeah.

BORIS

Did it grow?

MALTHY

A little just now, why?

Beat.

BORIS

Why are you here?
On the Coast?

Beat.

MALTHY

I was waiting/ for you.

BORIS

No you weren't. Not completely.
Why are you here?

Pause. Malthy takes a deep breath.

MALTHY

Let's not talk about it. You've been/ through a lot.

BORIS

I WANT TO KNOW.
Fucking TELL ME.

(beat)

Fuck. Fucking shit fuck.

(He clutches his face, tries to breathe.)

Tell me why you're here.

Silence.
Knocking.

RINE (O.S)
Ey! You okay in there?
Malthy? You okay?

BORIS
Who/ is that?

MALTHY
Rine, I'm fine!

BORIS
Malthy who is that?

MALTHY
Nothing/ it's...

BORIS
Malthy who is she/ who is?

MALTHY
Bo she/ is fine.

RINE
Mal?

BORIS
Don't open the door, don't open it until you tell me what's going on, I/ what's happening what's fucking happening?

MALTHY
Shh shh!
(Gets up, walks offstage.)
One sec, I'll be there!

BORIS
Tell me who she is tell me for fucksake Tell me!

We hear a door open.

MALTHY (O.S)

(barely audible)

We're fi/ne, please...

RINE

I heard shouting.

Boris grasps the wheels of his wheel chair, tries to figure out how to turn it.

MALTHY

We're fine that's my boyfriend, we're fine Rine.

Boris can't move the wheels. He clinches at them as hard as he can, trying to budge them even an inch.

RINE

... Wait what?

MALTHY

I told you. I told you before I/ left who I was getting.

RINE

It was *really* him?

Boris puts his full might into it pulling the wheel, and falls on his back. Head colliding with the ground.

BORIS

Fuck!

VHUMP.

The soundscape of the Wolf.

He clutches at his head. Holds it. Beat. He looks around. Confused.

BORIS

Mal?

Malthy?

Silence.

Then Don and Nigel can be heard.

DON (OFF STAGE)

I can't believe he actually did it.

NIGEL (OFF STAGE)

How far do you think he walked?

DON

Far? He was far from everything.
Farthest you can get without falling out.

NIGEL

I can't believe he walked that far.

DON

He didn't.
Everything else came to him.
They're all down the drain, and don't even know it.

...

You wanna make out, Nigel?

VHUMP

Malhy rushes in.

RINE

Should/ I?

MALTHY

Shhh! Just Shhhh!

(They go to Boris's side.)

You okay?

Bo you okay?

(Boris looks around hand gingerly touching
where he hit his head. Malhy looks at the
spot.)

Oh, baby. That's gonna be sore. That's gonna be sore as hell.

They try to help Boris up.

BORIS

Wait.

(Malthy pauses)

Wait.

Beat. Boris grabs Malthy's shoulder, uses it as leverage to get into a crouch. He rises slowly to his feet, off balance.

His breathing becomes hard from strain. Malthy immediately positions the wheel chair closer. Boris takes it. Sits himself down.

Beat.

BORIS

How long was I up?

MALTHY

Like three, four seconds.
That's really incredible though.
Are you okay?

BORIS

... Yeah, yeah. Tried to stand up and... yeah.
(lying)
I'm just fine.

Beat.

MALTHY

My roommate, Rine, is at the door.
Do you want to meet her?

Beat.

BORIS

Did she hear me screaming like a fucking crazy person?

Malthy weighs their options. Truth wins out.

MALTHY

Yes? She did?

BORIS

Can she still hear me?

MALTHY

Yes.

Beat.

BORIS

(to offstage)

I'm sorry, I thought you were a murderer!

RINE (OFF STAGE)

It's cool! Shit happens, you're going through a lot.

Beat.

BORIS

I'd like to meet you, if you're okay with that.

RINE

...Sure, sure.

I'm... I'm unarmed so you know.

I'm/ safe.

BORIS

Okay. Okay sure.

A moment, as Rine tentatively steps in, still in work overalls. She's keeping her hands where Boris can see them.

MALTHY

This is...

This is Rine.

BORIS

Hi Rine.

MALTHY

This is... Bo.
Rine it's really Bo.

RINE

Hells Up and Down the Chain.
Malthy I thought you were claiming his body?

MALTHY

I did too.

RINE

Holy shit... Holy...
Can I sit down? Is it okay to sit down?

BORIS

I mean, I'm sitting.

MALTHY

You can sit Rine.

Rine sidles to the futon facing Boris at all times. She sits.
She continues to stare. Beat.

RINE

Up and Down the Chain. Just... Up and Down it both ways.
Malthy.

MALTHY

It's almost too big for feelings, right?
Almost too much to hold onto.

RINE

I can't even imagine what this must feel like. To have him... here.
The world split open and spit your boyfriend out.

(beat)

Why? Did it do that?
What did... Boris? How did you get here?

Boris scrunches his face, rubs sore places as if to circulate his thoughts.

MALTHY

You don't/ have to...

BORIS

I
walked.
I walked out.
I just...
Nigel... Nigel died and I looked around... I looked around and I was alone.
So I turned around and walked back to the boat.
The ocean had frozen over, so I wrapped rags around my feet.
And I walked across the scalding ice.
I thought I was just walking back to the boat.
And knew I couldn't stop walking, because if I stopped to sleep I'd fry on the ice.
So I didn't sleep.
For fifteen years I suppose.
I dreamt though.
I... I've told this story to so many people already.
I've told Nigel, and Malthy, and dad, and mom, and boyfriends whose names I forgot.
And sometimes I spent years living with them, living life on the island.
Living life like I thought I would.
Then the shapes would lose their edge, and the world went like watercolors.
And I was suddenly back.
Just walking to the boat.
It's all I could do, even after I started to realize that the ice wasn't ending.
That it had been a long, long time since I walked away from Nigel's place.
I wasn't getting back to the boat...
So Instead...
I was coming back...
(He looks at Malthy.)
Again, and again. I was coming back
I was coming back to...

Malthy hugs him. Quiet.

BORIS

This time it's real, isn't it.
I came back.

MALTHY

Yes, baby.

BORIS

What did I come back to?

VHUMP

Wolf sounds. And soon Nigel and Don.

NIGEL

I don't think it's real.

DON

Of course it's real, you can feel their breath on the nape of his neck.

NIGEL

He could feel the breath the other times though, or his brain said "now you're feeling
breath on your neck." And it was close enough.
When you're walking for fifteen years...

DON

Longer than, longer than.

NIGEL

When you're walking for fifteen years you take what you can get.
I think he should kill them, and if they die we know it's real?
Kill them or else we'll never know if he's still walking.

BORIS

Shut up.

DON

But he already has. Several times.
He's killed you and me and them so many times in his sleep.
And even then...

SHUT UP!
BORIS

Even then...
NIGEL

Shut the fuck up!
BORIS

It never really ends, does it?
DON AND NIGEL

SCENE 4

The apartment. No one is here.

Beat.

Beat.

Door slams.

Beat.

ELIAS steps on stage.

He is bleeding from his nose profusely, and is trying to stop the bleeding with his wife-beater. He collapses onto the futon takes in deep breaths.

Beat.

ELIAS

Hey guys.

I think I started a riot?

(Beat. Puzzled by the universe's lack of response.)

Guys? Hello?

I THINK I STARTED A RIOT!!!

Beat. Elias grumbles, but is not motivated to get up and find help. He pulls back his wife-beater, looks at the blood. Ew. Touches his philtrum (just below the nose), looks to see if there is blood on his fingers. Closes his eyes.

Boris walks in, shambles really, wearing big, thick headphones. They are connected to a cellphone.

Elias sees him come in, says nothing.

He looks in the generality of where Malthy says the snacks are. Reaches out, but his hand goes through confused, he tries again.

Then again but a little to the right. Then a little to the left.

Beat.

Boris, takes off his headphones.

BORIS

Malthy, could you help me find the cupboards again?

I just can't seem to...

He startles seeing Elias. Beat.

ELIAS

Who are you?

Beat.

BORIS

Boris.

ELIAS

That sounds familiar.

BORIS

Who are you?

ELIAS

Elias.

Is Malthy around?

BORIS

Maybe, why do you need them?

Beat. Elias gestures to the blood covering his face and shirt front. Lets hand flop onto the futon. Beat.

ELIAS

I started a riot.

BORIS

Oh.

ELIAS

I need Malthy's strongest blessings.
I think this fucked up my karma.

BORIS

Your what?

ELIAS

My aura, spirit energy, qi, luck... you know?
That fate thing, determines how bad life gets.

BORIS

Lepidoptera's Wheel?

ELIAS

Sure, why not.
Would prefer some sort of, like, "sorry to fuck up the civil order" god.
But I'll take Lepidoptera.
Is Malthy in?

BORIS

No, they/ aren't.

ELIAS

And you are?

BORIS

Boris. Malthy's boy friend.

ELIAS

Damn din't realize they were available. How long you been an item?

BORIS

We got back together a couple days ago.
How did you get in here, the door was locked?

ELIAS

Oh, Rine gave me.

(He pulls keys from his pocket, jangles
them.)

Just in case. She got a set for my place too, in case the shit goes down.
(MORE)

ELIAS (CONT'D)

And it did.
Because, I started a riot.

BORIS

Oh. Alright.

Beat.

ELIAS

Sooooo. They aren't here?

BORIS

No, turns out they aren't.

ELIAS

Fuck.
Look you're their boy friend right.
Could ya...
(Makes vague blessing gesture.)
Need to get home. Feed my kid.

BORIS

I don't think it works if I do it.

ELIAS

I mean, don't you think you got second hand holy?

BORIS

I don't think Divine Favor is spread like the clap.
(beat)

You wanna tell me about this riot while we wait?

ELIAS

Don't want to repeat myself, so the quick notes are:
Going home from work.
Picket line is blocking off the Harbour District.
Counter protest of immigrants yelling to be let back in.
Bricks and bottles exchanged.
I get first blood.
I get concussed.

(MORE)

ELIAS (CONT'D)

I woke up.
My kid's baby-sitter is going to kill me.

Beat.

BORIS

I've been... trying to catch up.

Beat.

ELIAS

I started a riot.

BORIS

Okay.

ELIAS

You don't think that's...
Exciting? Scary? Intense?
Interesting?

BORIS

I don't really have the context.

ELIAS

I started a riot!

BORIS

Yep.

ELIAS

What more context do you need?

BORIS

Why would you start a riot if you needed to go home and feed your kid?

Beat.

ELIAS

You trying to start something?

BORIS

Nope. But I'm kind of getting sick of hearing "I started a riot" every six seconds.

Beat.

ELIAS

You are lucky I am trying to get my wheel flow flowing.
Or I'd beat your ass.

BORIS

I do not care.
I was gay in a fascist nation.
I'm still gay despite its best efforts.
I'm still alive despite life's best efforts.
One dude ain't scaring me a shitlette.

Beat.

ELIAS

Do you want me to get you some snacks dude?

BORIS

I'm good.

Beat.

MALTHY (OFF)

Hey Bo, you okay? The door's open and...
(Malthy steps in, sees Elias.)
Elias? The fuck happened to your face?

Rine follows Malthy close behind just as shocked by the sight.

ELIAS

Oh someone punched me.
I think I started a riot.
Your boyfriend seems nice.

Beat.

RINE

Are you high right/ now?

MALTHY

RINE!

RINE

Well I think it matters if...

ELIAS

I just need a blessing for my wheel flow, folks.
Then I can leave.

RINE

How did you even get in here?

ELIAS

(Looks at Boris.)

Oh, Horace let me in. Didn't you bud?

Beat.

BORIS

This guy seems like a shitbag.
But, I think he needs help.

Beat. Malthy sighs, walks to lay hands on Elias.

MALTHY

You're lucky my boyfriend is a cinnamon roll. Rine could you get wet toilet paper?

Rine stews but exits.

ELIAS

Towel?

MALTHY

Your blood is not touching any of my shit.

(collects themselves, then...)

I pray to Heron, God of Victims,
Where face meets cobblestone is the touch of your hand,
the heat of the torch is the heat of your breath.

(MORE)

MALTHY (CONT'D)

The roar of the crowd the beating of your wings.
Look upon the target of your ire, and release him.
Let him walk from your gaze, and out of your memory.
Amen.

Beat.

Rine walks in and tosses a large wad of toilet paper to
Elias. He is a little insulted.

ELIAS

Thanks.

(Begins wiping away the blood from his
face.)

So when does my wheel flow get going?

MALTHY

It's a prayer not a pill, Elias.
We just have to assume it works until it doesn't.
Also, wheel flow isn't a thing.

Elias glares. Boris is about to speak.

BORIS

I didn't call it that.

ELIAS

... Then why did I call it that?

Boris shrugs.

Beat.

RINE

Elias, where have you been?

ELIAS

Like I said.
I started a riot.

RINE

That's still a lot of unaccounted time.

ELIAS

Like three hours, chill.

MALTHY

Elias, the most recent riot was two days ago.

Beat.

ELIAS

No.

RINE

Yeah.

ELIAS

I was out for two days?

RINE

A little over actually. We just kind of assumed you were gone this time.

Beat.

ELIAS

My kid's baby-sitter is going to kill me.

RINE

Oh yeah, she hasn't slept in *fuckin' days*.

Elias.

You can't keep doing this.

Understand?

ELIAS

I was in/ a riot!

RINE

And the first thing you do is try and get absolved /for it?

ELIAS

Yeah, because if anything happened to/ me my kid.

MALTHY

Elias.
Just tell us.
Are you on drugs?

Beat. Elias laughs, rubs at the blood harder.

ELIAS

Just the normal shit, you nosey fucks.
Booze, weed, but that's it!
Don't think I don't hear the rumors you bitches spread about me!
I don't need it, I'm a single fucking dad at the end of the world.
I don't need any of it.

Beat.
Elias tosses the toilet paper on the floor, begins to exit.

MALTHY

Nice/ Elias.

BORIS

Wait, Elias what about the riot?

The door slams and Elias is gone. Beat. Rine picks up the toilet paper between two fingers, exits to toss it out.

BORIS

There was a riot?

MALTHY

Yeah, we've been getting those lately.

BORIS

Two days ago.

MALTHY

Yep.

BORIS

The day I came back.

Quiet. Malthy looks away from Bo.

Rine steps back in.

RINE

I cannot stand that fucking asshole! How did he even get a...

(Senses the charge in the air.)

What'd I miss?

BORIS

There was a riot two days ago, and I somehow missed it?

But that doesn't make sense because I remember the cab ride over and we entered the Harbour District no problem.

How did we miss them?

MALTHY

Bo... Can we talk about this in a little bit?

Please?

BORIS

No we can't.

Why are there riots?

MALTHY

B/o.

BORIS

What is happening, Malthy?

Please. Please just tell me.

Why was there a riot?

Silence.

MALTHY

Because people are scared, Bo. And scared people are dumb.

Beat.

BORIS

It's coming isn't it? The Wolf is coming.
It's all going to happen again, the fascists, the icebergs...
Why did nobody tell/ me why?

RINE

We did tell you.
Yesterday.

BORIS

No you didn't.

MALTHY

Bo.

BORIS

You fucking didn't, I remember/ yesterday I rem...

MALTHY

Bo, I'm sorry, I should have written it down.

BORIS

But I'd remember you telling me I'd remember you...

RINE

Dude, they did tell you.
They've told you twice. Yesterday, and just before.
You just forget sometimes.

Beat.

BORIS

No.

MALTHY

Bo it's okay.

BORIS

I would remember! I would know if I was/ forgetting things.

RINE

You can't notice what you/ don't remember.

MALTHY

Rine/ please stop.

BORIS

I can list every thing from the/ past two days, I can run through every moment I can...

RINE

Boris, dude/ I'm sorry .

MALTHY

Rine *please/ stop.*

RINE

Boris you've been here for a couple weeks!

Beat.

MALTHY

Why do you/ keep doing this, Rine?

RINE

Boris. You haven't been here for two days.

It's been two weeks.

I'm sorry Boris, I'm sorry .

But you keep forgetting that.

Beat. Boris looks at Malthy for a denial, to say it isn't true.

Malthy looks away .

Beat.

BORIS

No. No. No.

MALTHY

Bo/ baby.

BORIS
THIS IS HORSESHIT THIS IS FUCKING HORSESHIT THIS IS FUCKING
HORSE..

Blackout

SCENE 5

VHUMP

The familiar sounds, the familiar voices.
As they speak lights rise dimly enough to see Malthy set
up the futon into a bed, lay out pillows and blankets.
Boris watches, but isn't there.

DON

I can't tell how much danger we're in.

NIGEL

World's ending, so probably the maximum amount.

DON

People keep saying there was a riot but did you hear any screaming?

NIGEL

It's been very quiet.

DON

Look out the window, there isn't a person in sight.

NIGEL

If this were a story we'd find out everyone was already dead.

DON

Garbage keeps piling up in black plastic ridges, but where are the flies?

NIGEL

I guess flies have gone the way of the whale?

DON

It's so fucking quiet.

NIGEL

Why aren't they screaming?

DON

It's so fucking quiet.

NIGEL

I thought there'd be a war in the end. I thought there'd be a fire at the end. But here we are at the end, and it seems like we're sleeping?

DON

It's so fucking quiet.

NIGEL

I thought death would be louder.

DON

It's so fucking quiet.

NIGEL

I thought I'd be louder.

DON

But I've gone fucking quiet.

VHUMP

Boris takes a deep breath. Blinks, takes stock of things.

Malthy fusses over the futon. Gets it ready.

Silence.

MALTHY

(gentle)

You ready for bed Bo?

Bo? Bed?

Boris startles, then nods.

Malthy wiggles under the covers, Bo just sits on the edge.

Beat.

BORIS

Is it still the day Elias visited?

Beat.

MALTHY

It is.

BORIS

It is really?

MALTHY

I wouldn't lie Bo. I wouldn't lie.

Beat.

BORIS

I'm sorry I yelled at you then, especially if it wasn't today.

MALTHY

Thanks.

You want to get under the covers?

Boris shakes his head. Stares straight ahead.

A moment, then Malthy sits up in bed. They lean in, begin kissing Boris's neck.

BORIS

(quiet)

Malthy?

MALTHY

Remember the ferry cabin?

BORIS

Yeah...

MALTHY

Remember what we did?

BORIS

Argued about the direction of our relationship?

MALTHY

Before that?

BORIS

You peed?

MALTHY

Boris I'm trying to turn you on.

BORIS

I know.

Malthy breaks off, scooches back.

MALTHY

You could have just said no.

BORIS

Would you have stopped?

BORIS

Then hurt you.

Fuck.

Fuck I can't even say I wouldn't.

(beat)

I can't find your music.

I've been looking, maybe for longer than I remember.

But I can't find your music, baby.

And I can't find anyone else's.

BottomsOut, Fran Two, Squoo, Dishy.

MALTHY

Everyone's servers were hosted on the island.

BORIS

Nobody kept it safe?

MALTHY

It's just how it happens Bo.

It's random what gets to survive.

Beat.

BORIS

You stopped making music.
(beat)
Or I... I couldn't/ find it.

MALTHY

Yeah.
I did stop.
Didn't seem... Didn't seem like a point any more.

BORIS

You can't just stop making/ art.

MALTHY

I did though Bo. I made art for other people, and all those people died.
And I'll never make music for some Coastal shit heel who wants some exotic tunes
for their soiree.

Beat.

BORIS

You really, really hate it here don't you?

MALTHY

No.
I'm a happy monk from the old country.
I just pray for everyone and hope it pisses them off.

BORIS

But you didn't leave.

MALTHY

It's all the same. All over. Heron's a popular god.
Just start all over in another place that hates you.

Beat.

BORIS

That's it?
That's all it takes to make you stay, that it might be worse.

MALTHY

It's a bit more than/ that but...

BORIS

That doesn't sound like you.

MALTHY

What?

BORIS

The Malthy I knew left everything behind to get something better.

MALTHY

Boris that Malthy was a teenager.

BORIS

Well that's the Malthy I fell in love with not whoever you are!

MALTHY

Fuck you!

VHUMP

Sounds of the Wolf. No voices.

Just Boris.

Then a steam whistle from a ferry.

Enter Don. Covered in blood. Smoking a cigar.

Beat.

BORIS

Dad?

Long pause.

DON

Sure.

If that's who you see, that's who you see.

I'm everybody's father in a sense.

(He stomps his cigar.)

(MORE)

DON (CONT'D)

I'll die soon.
Then I'll come back something else.
Until then.
Might as well say your peace.

Beat.

BORIS

Who am I to you?
I know people say that your parents love you no matter what.
You fucking told me you would.
All the time, "I love you Bo, you're a good kid, kid. I'm so proud of you."
But then...
I don't think me being gay did it.
I saw how you touched old school buddies' arms.
Held their smile with your own.
But it was around the time we knew who I was, things fell apart.
That's when you let yourself get steamed.
"Your dad isn't mad at you," that's what Mom used to tell me.
"He's just scared, and he doesn't know how to be."
Well good news, I learned from you!
Everyday I was scared when you came home.
Because it meant I had to second guess what would set you off today.
Would I say something wrong? Not talk to you enough?
What made you go from being happy to being so mad the veins on your neck turned
to tendons?
So many times I wished you just fucking hit me!
Then I could have called you a bad person.
I could go to therapy groups and tell them all about how you fucked me up.
Instead I had a great dad who made me afraid to breathe in my own home.
Who couldn't decide if he was a homophobe or my ally.
I know you grounded me some nights because you and your friends were cruising for
queers to beat up and you didn't want to run into me.
Did you also call your old boyfriends and drop them a warning?
How many people did you spare so you could beat faggots guilt free?
Fucking answer me you alcoholic bitch!
Who was I to you! In simple terms why did you even want me in this world if you
were never going to be around.
When were you your truest self, and when were you weak?
When were you trying to hurt me, or being honest about who I was?

(MORE)

BORIS (CONT'D)

Did you lie when you loved me or lie when you told me to die?
Daddy?
DADDY TELL ME!

Boris punches him.

Boris punches him.

Boris punches him.

Then stops because Don isn't reacting.
Don doesn't care.

He takes Boris's fist in his hand and lowers it.

DON

Bo.
I'm dead, baby.
Bury me already.

He backs away slowly, going off stage.

BORIS

No.
Come back.
COME BACK.

And he dashes after him.

VHUMP

Light back on, Malthy returns to motion.

Beat, as Malthy realizes Bo is no longer in front of them.

MALTHY

Bo?

(Malthy begins to search the apartment.
Frantic, quick, trying to find Boris.)

Bo where are you?

(MORE)

MALTHY (CONT'D)

Answer me Boris!
BO!!

A steam whistle sounds.

Darkness.

Boris stumbles back on stage, alone. We hear the steam whistle blare again, and again.

He's confused, lost.

Where is he?
Is this real?

He doesn't know, he just keeps walking.

Steam whistle, Boris walks back on stage, he trips and falls.

BORIS

Fuck!

But only for a moment he gets back up and walks offstage. The steam whistle sounds.

BORIS WALKS IN, A MOMENT LATER MALTHY COMES IN AFTER HIM.
BORIS IS NEARLY OFFSTAGE WHEN...

MALTHY

(with an accent)

Hallo! Cute boy!

Boris stops, he turns confused. Malthy waves.

BORIS

Malthy?

MALTHY

Cute boy you okay? You look
(searching for word, snapping)
(MORE)

MALTHY (CONT'D)

Kio-kio-kio-kio Sick! You look sick.

BORIS

I feel sick.

Malthy I told you to leave me alone.

MALTHY

Ohhhhh, you no mean it.

You no want, yes no?

I warm very.

BORIS

I can't hurt you again. I can't hurt you.

MALTHY

You hurt yes. You hurt very.

Mama make better.

Come here.

Let me sucula la venomon.

Lick your wound so nice.

Boris is confused, but trance-like stumbles to their
outstretched arms. He breathes hard.

BORIS

I'm so sorry.

A man begins creeping up behind him, holding a sock
filled with rocks.

BORIS

Malthy I want to go home.

The man behind Boris hits him over the head. Boris falls
to the ground, moaning. Malthy crouches over him.

MALTHY

(an apology)

Mi bedauras, sed ci tio estas la monda vojo, ne? La ratoj pluivas sur allaj ratoj.

The man kneels on Boris's back, raises his sock.

Steam whistle. Darkness.

Boris is lying on the ground.

The bastard took his shoes and jacket.

He doesn't move.

He doesn't move

He doesn't move.

BORIS

Maybe.

If I stay really, really still.

I'll sink into the ground forever..

(Beat. He gets up.)

Fucking stupid.

Just lie down.

Just lie down.

He keeps walking, exits. Blackout.

SCENE 6

Elias stands on the edge of a balustrade. He's very, very still. He is holding something, we can't see what.

Beat.

Boris walks in. Marches across the stage.

He stops before exiting. Reflects.

He looks back.

BORIS

Elias?

Elias startles, wobbles, finds balance.

ELIAS

Fu/cking hells.

BORIS

Sorry! Sorry. I just....
I didn't know if it was you.

...

You are Elias, right?
Malthy's friend.

Beat.

ELIAS

Boris right?

BORIS

Yeah. Boris.
I'm sorry but...
I kind of...
I think.... I... had a nervous breakdown.
Things are...
Oh wow I'm very, very hungry. So fucking hungry.

ELIAS

Hmmm.

BORIS

Yeah.

Could you tell me where I am?

ELIAS

Isthmus Bridge.

BORIS

Oh.

(He bounces on the floor experimentally.)

Sturdy.

ELIAS

See you around then.

BORIS

Well, I need directions.

You see, I...

I need something to eat.

Is/ there...

ELIAS

Go away you fucking *faggot!*

A baby begins to scream. A very, very still moment.

BORIS

Do you hear?

Elias.

ELIAS

Boris please leave me alone.

Beat.

BORIS

What's that you're holding Elias?

Beat. Elias turns around, wobbling wildly. He is holding a bundle. A baby. Elias is a fucking mess, unshowered, high or drunk. Maybe he was even crying.

BORIS

Elias.
What are you doing?

ELIAS

Dude.
Just walk away.
Please.
Just walk.

BORIS

Okay.
I would.
But I don't know where I am and I need something to eat.
Can you tell me where to get something to eat?

ELIAS

...
I saw a pretzel cart, two blocks back.

BORIS

Cool.
Do you want me to get you a pretzel?

ELIAS

No.

BORIS

Okay.
Now, I don't want to pry.
But what's the story with the baby?
It sounds cute.

ELIAS

The world is ending.

BORIS

It always does.

ELIAS

Yeah but now it's ending for us.
The... the dark thing.
The Wolf.
Is almost here.

BORIS

Oh.
But it hasn't touched land yet.
We can just run..

ELIAS

But, we're tired, aren't we?
Most of us Islanders I mean.
Coastals are running away hefting steamer trunks.
But...
You'd think losing everything the one time would make it easier.
But actually it makes it harder when you have to do it again.
All over again.
And there's no promise this will be the last time you do it.
It's fucking exhausting, isn't it?
Living these days?

BORIS

... Nothing harder.
So the baby, right?
What's up with that?

ELIAS

There's something...
Cruel in our evolution.
We're self-replicating machines that happen to be self-aware.
Like we're strapped to this car.
And the car keeps going.
It drives forward forever because it's built without brakes.
Passing on a road no one built.
I'm screaming, let me out, let me out I never wanted on this fucking car!
But the car keeps going, no matter how I feel. I just can't grab the steering wheel.
Boris.
I finally have it.
I have the steering wheel.

(MORE)

ELIAS (CONT'D)

For the first time I am in control.
But I don't know how long I can hold on, if I'm dying I have to die now.
I have to die now.
Let me.

BORIS

Okay.
I hear that, bud.
I think.
I think everyone hears you.
But/ Elias...

ELIAS

You don't have a right/ to stop...!

BORIS

I know! I know! Elias I will respect your right to kill yourself.
But dude.
The baby doesn't want to die.
The baby cannot/ consent to this.

ELIAS

He shouldn't have been born!

BORIS

...No.
No he shouldn't have.
But he doesn't know that.
He's a fucking, baby dude. He's too dumb to know anything.
You jump off this bridge, death will be terrifying.
We both know that, the machine, the car, whatever it is will try to save itself.
But you are *choosing* to go through that.
The baby will just be scared.
It will not know what is happening and it will be in agony for what feels like forever.
The baby wants to live Elias.
It's too dumb to know what's coming.
Please Elias.
Please.

Beat. Elias looks at his son, brushes hair from the baby's brow. He nods, holds the baby out. Boris quickly, but carefully, snatches the baby and backs away. He holds it close, catching his breath. Beat.

ELIAS

Am I a bad father, Boris?

Beat.

BORIS

I don't know, Elias.
I never met a good one.

Elias nods to himself.

ELIAS

He doesn't cry a lot.
He's a good baby.

BORIS

I can tell. What's his name?

Elias jumps.

Boris looks at the space where Elias was. He doesn't move.

We hold the moment.

Blackout.

SCENE 7

The apartment. Malthy is waiting.

Waits.

Waits.

Waits.

Rine enters, dressed in her overalls. She lugs a heavy back pack. She crosses the stage. Stops. Looks at Malthy.

RINE

Mal. Come on.

We have to go.

(beat)

Mal. Please.

Don't do this to yourself again.

Malthy sighs, rubs their scalp.

MALTHY

I know.

But if he comes back...

RINE

He won't though.

The guy you're waiting for is never coming back.

He's gone.

Beat.

MALTHY

I can't believe that.

Beat. Rine hugs Malthy tight, tighter.

Releases, steps back to try and memorize her friend

RINE

Goodbye. I fucking love you dude.

Rine exits.

Malhy once again waits.

Waits.

Waits for as long as they waited before intermission.

Then a door creaks.

And Boris enters, baby in tow.

Malhy and Bo see each other.

Silence.

Boris walks over to Malhy, sits.

Beat.

MALTHY

You know I didn't think I'd wait for you this time.

BORIS

That's fair.

MALTHY

Right up to the last moment, I was sure I was done.

Then I sat down to take a break from packing and...

Here I am.

Beat.

BORIS

I don't deserve me.

Beat.

MALTHY

What's up with the baby?

BORIS

He's Elias's. I met up with Elias.

He killed himself.

MALTHY

For once Elias gets the right idea.
Cute baby.

BORIS

Yeah. I think I love him.

Distant thunder, maybe an explosion. Boris and Malthy
wince, but don't move. Beat.

MALTHY

Looks like we aren't taking the ferry out this time.

BORIS

Looks that way.

MALTHY

Should of left when we had the chance.

BORIS

We had a chance?

Malthy and Boris chuckle. Beat.

Silence.

BORIS

I don't think we can have what we had before.

Beat.

MALTHY

I... get that feeling too.

BORIS

I'm sorry.

MALTHY

No it's...
I was the one who said it wouldn't last forever.

BORIS

It's because I'm broken/ though.

MALTHY

Shut up.

Just.

Bo.

Everything is that way. You aren't some special broken. I'm not some special broken.

Just broken.

(beat)

It just sucks because what do we have to live for but each other?

Beat. Boris holds Malthy. Malthy holds him back.

BORIS

I want you to still be the reason I live for.

I don't think I need to be in love for that.

MALTHY

God, why can't we live for ourselves, just fucking once?

BORIS

Because all the good reasons to live need other people?

MALTHY

Maybe.

(beat)

I don't want to die.

BORIS

Yeah.

MALTHY

I want to stay here with you

I want to make music again.

BORIS

You will. I will do everything possible to give you that chance.

MALTHY

What, are you going to punch the end of the world?

BORIS

No, but I can walk through it.
I did it once, so why couldn't we do it again?

MALTHY

Bo...

BORIS

We have outlived everyone we ever knew at least once.
Maybe twice now.
I think that means we have a lot of luck.
Good or bad, either way we have all of it.
I think we're too fucking gay to die.
If you get tired I'll carry you.
And I know with my whole heart you will do the same for me.
We'll carry each other for however long it takes,
the three of us.
We'll carry each other through the end of things and out the other end.
To whatever comes after this.
Good or bad, it'll be our place.
The place for things that can't stop living.

Beat.

MALTHY

When you put it that way I can almost see it.
You, me, and our baby.

Beat.

BORIS

What do you want the baby to call you when we get there?

MALTHY

(without missing a beat)

Nana Honey.

BORIS

Whoa/ okay.

MALTHY

Believe it or not I *have* been thinking about this for/ a long ass time.

BORIS

But that's like... a grandma?

MALTHY

I was born with an old woman's aura.
Monks told me so.

BORIS

Really?

MALTHY

No, they called me a brat.
But bitchy grandmas were always something I wanted to be.

BORIS

That explains... so much.

MALTHY

What about you?

BORIS

What about me?

MALTHY

What's this kid going to call you?

Silence.

BORIS

I... I don't really want to be a dad.

MALTHY

It's the end of the world Bo, you can be whatever you want.

Silence.

BORIS

Can I be a mom? Can I be a mama?

MALTHY

Of course you can.

BORIS

It's/ not...

MALTHY

Bo, you're a mom now. That's all there is to it.

Air raid sirens play in the distance. Malthy and Boris look toward the sound. Malthy begins rocking the baby.

MALTHY

Well, what are we going to call them?

BORIS

Him.

MALTHY

Oh, I'm sorry did the baby give you their pronouns?
Them.

BORIS

Alright, okay.
Little genderless grublet.

MALTHY

Fuck you.

Beat.

BORIS

Hope would be a bad name.

MALTHY

The worst name.

The wind blows harder, the sirens turn to static,
rumblings of things breaking.

BORIS

What about Leppy?
After Lepidoptera.

The lights are flickering.

MALTHY

Niij.
The baby's Niij.

BORIS

Nigel?

MALTHY

No Niij.

Beat.

BORIS

(To baby.)

Hi Niij. We haven't been introduced.
I'm your Mama.

MALTHY

I'm your Nana Honey.

BORIS

And we fucking love you.

Thunder. Malthy grabs Boris.

BORIS

I know it's scary Niij, and I can't say it's worth it.
But I'll be the best fucking mom to you, sweetheart.
When all this blows over.
I'm going to make this your best life.

(The wind roars. We hear the city's windows
shatter all at once.)

We deserve a good life!

We deserve it baby, we deserve something better, we...

Malthy puts a hand to Boris's cheek. Boris swallows, turns to Malthy. They stare at each other, and for a moment they are teenagers meeting on the pier all over again.

MALTHY

I LOVE US BORIS.

They kiss, holding the baby between them. We hear screaming from offstage. They don't stop kissing, even as the stage lights begin to pop out one by one.

They break off the kiss, and hold one another, hold Nijj, as the last light goes out with a VHUMP.

Quiet.

Dim spotlight comes back on to Malthy and Boris, holding each other on the futon. A still image.

Nigel comes in, maybe he was in the audience all along, maybe he found a trap door to crawl out of, maybe he just enters offstage. What's important is he enters as if this was just a play, not real life.

He is covered in blood, and smokes a cigarette.
He smiles. Waves.

NIGEL

Hello.

I stopped being dead.

I'm quite proud of it.

It's a tricky thing that most cannot do.

And I did it. With the help of the Wolf.

I'm here because, well, behind me?

There's the rest of the Wolf.

We're just in its mouth right now.

That's why it's so hot.

That's its breathing
metaphorically.

It doesn't have a mouth.

(MORE)

NIGEL (CONT'D)

And what we saw on the boat wasn't its eye.
Why would the end of all things need a mouth or an eye?
Metaphors are important.
But anyway. I'm back.
By the grace of the Wolf.
Addressing all you who felt so safe,
because the end was happening somewhere far away.
In some imaginary place.
Which is where all tragedy happens when it happens to someone else.
I'm talking to you now to tell you it's done.
I'm sorry to say.
The world is done with you.
And don't start blubbing, dying people are always blubbing.
We're so far from our best selves as we die,
don't start blubbing.
The world is just done with the human race.
This moment is terrifying for sure, but it's about to pass.
And then you won't be scared.
You won't be anything.
I should know, I was dead.
But, I came back.
I came back to hold your hand, and tell you a story.
The story is this:
You will be dead shortly.
More importantly, everyone else will be too.
Malty, Boris, they'll be dead, even if not today.
Even if they live to be a hundred on the dying earth.
They will die. They might even be buried together.
A lot of animals will have died around then.
The earth will become hot and cold.
Barren.
Lonesome.
The buildings will crumble to odd rocks.
The sea will sweat out the toxins you left in it.
Then,
sooner than you'd think,
grass will grow.
And things will eat the grass.
The air will grow sweet with the scent of bees.
The world will spin in the sun-freckled dark.

(MORE)

NIGEL (CONT'D)

Maybe some new thing will build fires.
Maybe they'll find rocks in the earth shaped like your bones.
Tell stories about you to their children.
It's just as likely there won't be anything so clever.
Just plants and animals, alive again.
The point is, nothing will notice our passing.
Despite the little affirmations we said to the mirror,
we really are tiny things.
Maybe this will give you comfort,
knowing your context.
A religious awe filling you as you remember: it wasn't about me.
We are survived by the universe, and life will always seek living.
Will always seek something like happiness, something like love.
But for most I expect this will be upsetting,
seeing how we measure on a geographical scale.
And like all people who know this, wonder: What can we do about it then?
And I can only give that old wet fart of an answer:
Live until we die, I guess.

End