

Left in the dark

0a4s

CHARACTERS

CLAY

A TODDLER

TEMRA

THE PEOPLE

THE MATCH AGAINST THE FLOOR

MIKEY

THE HORIZON

YOU

THE BELL

DEBT

CHORUS

Scene 3: The sound of music

[The terrain is like grunts. And also like coughing and like breathing, flapping their lips. CLAY lays face down, fingers dipped in honey and dust. The room is completely dark. A slow moan fills it.]

[A TODDLER runs laps around stage, panting or shouting wildly, occasionally stopping to assemble a pile of kindling (sticks and twigs).]

[Coughing, scratching.]

TEMRA: *[irritated by the pungent ammonia in the air, clearing throat and straining]* How did the people make the fire again? ... With two rocks or twisting a stick on a rock?

THE PEOPLE: I think we found it and took it with a stick, and then protected it forever.

THE MATCH AGAINST THE FLOOR: The people made the fire. They hit two rocks together.

[Sound of match against the floor]

TEMRA: But how did the spark become the fire? Who caught it and mastered it and cared for it to cook with it? *[Drawing a line in the sand]*

[A deep breath from THE PEOPLE]

THE PEOPLE: It was only when the flame died down that there began a sunset, and a spark befell the sunrise. But without it there was no vision: only the twisting of rocks.

[Off in the distance, overheard or unspoken, everyone begins a low grumble like a dog's jaw gnawing (on a bone).]

[Enter THE HORIZON on horses. Dressed formally in a cloak or something, with a letter written on a scroll. You barely see what.]

[The orchestra sounds a long trumpet.]

THE HORIZON: Looking out to see, I am the furthest distance, the limit of vision and the time keeper. I am the witness to many things touching, the marriage of land and sea - **#! *[A member of the orchestra drops their instrument.]*

[Everyone grumbling louder]

YOU: Here, *[handing something to THE PEOPLE in the dark]* it's much darker now. No lights or candlesticks.

MIKEY: *[taking the candles and pressing them into his eyes]* I can't hear a thing... deeply.

YOU: Maybe because it died... look - it doesn't breathe anymore. *[smirk]*

[The group grumble very very loud now. THE HORIZON pulls a day-coat from her bag. The actors feel hot and pull paper towels from their pockets to wipe their brows now. The smell of ammonia has faded, but maybe you're just getting used to it.]

[MIKEY puts a little star off to stage left and looks up hoping, still with the candles in his eyes. The grumble and groan extends the terrain. A drop of hot wax falls to the floor.]

CLAY: *[Looking up from the floor]* Are you waiting for me to say something?

[The grumbling peters out until quiet and more. The orchestra sings and sings and sings but there is nothing to be sung, no sheet music, no grand entrance... the lights... the crowd. The young girl forgets her lines and stutters, she is assisted off stage.]

[The actors fall silent and turn to face A TODDLER.]

A TODDLER: *[in a celebratory tone]* The ring of the bell in my ear in a house on the hill that is in the center of my imperium.

There is an Army of people named John. They have united from across the world and are wearing a uniform on the first day of their first meeting, to start training. The training consists of chain reactions and anyone can begin at any time, but no John alone.

The army moves throughout the terrain like a
Fire-whirl

A candle of people with dashing glances marching, swerving, in $\frac{3}{4}$ time. You agree they must be destroyed to make room. You consider the total annihilation (of humanity) from a position of possibility and then probability and viability.

MIKEY: *[shocked]* I just saw my life flash before my eyes...

TEMRA: Really?

CLAY: *[face down on the floor, muttering]* No I think that's just an expression.

YOU: No I think that really happens...

[Special effects]

YOU: *[Looking above THE HORIZON]* To all the dumb birds in the sky... fumbling towards ecstasy... who *now* makes the fire?!

[A TODDLER reaches to the terrain and pulls up what can be pulled up: a patch of grass and earth in the clump of his hand and moves it past the side of THE HORIZON. Young lips whisper from the wings, "The darker I get the more cynical I get, The more I am, I am."]

[Jazz]

Scene 1: Tongue debt

[Deep in the time crevasse there is no light. Without light we see no depth. Reaching for myself is like reaching into an abyss. There is a sense of festivity and a zephyr blows from downstage. The figure behind me hears what I say, the figure in front of me not. We stand in line in front of the mirror like practising dancers, whispering backwards and yelling, "Forwards!"]

[The floor is wet in some parts. Pungent ammonia in the air... Upward wind. I think we should say "a zephyr again."]

[THE BELL (a large wax bell with the tongue of a cow) cowers in the corner of the room, coping. Melodic utterances of A TODDLER singing "NO" are heard from the wings. The audience breathes in and out together. You glance over at your neighbor as (s)he glances at you: breathe. Gnawing bone.]

CLAY: *[taking notice lying face down on the cold floor] ...*

TEMRA: What does the bell say?

[THE BELL says nothing. CLAY, MIKEY and TEMRA are inside the mouth. The walls are the insides of the cheeks. The curtains: the teeth. The tongue is the tongue. The teeth of THE BELL chatter. It tries to make a run for it. CLAY suddenly leaps to his feet, and dives, and nabs THE BELL by its throat: a great sense of satisfaction and responsibility on his face. A modest stone slab rises from the floor. Welcome. CLAY motions with his wide eyes to TEMRA and MIKEY to "Grab the tongue." TEMRA and MIKEY do so and hold on while CLAY positions THE BELL other stone slab. There. They turn their necks and stare into the Sun.]

[Enter THE HORIZON holding a fresh leaf of copy paper. Having taken notice of (DEBT) something you haven't taken notice of yet, she uses whatever to do the whatever. With this fresh leaf of copy paper, she begins to saw at the base of THE BELL's swollen tongue.]

♪ THE HORIZON: *[sawing at the tongue]* Hear me you debtors, you rapacious landlubbers and swans with necks tall as giraffes hungry for the paper leaves on high bank branches. Don't temper with a woman you never see. She likes to go to bed late and wake up past mid-day. Yesterday I had a revelation when she came back like a boom-er-ang (soldier from war, water cycle, apologetic spouse, bad cough, before-and-after photo.) The river is the mountain just the same and I stubbed my toe stumbling on an appearance and I didn't have much for breakfast... *[muddle muddle]* Why, have you not seen, at races when the barriers are thrown down, at a fixed time, the horses cannot start so soon, however eager, as they wish?!... ge dadas nu nan na naaa na *[continuing into freestyle song]*

[You notice DEBT, center stage, only it's been there all along, since that first time you looked into its big twinkle eyes. (You entered only to exit again, after a

¹ Lucretius. *De rerum natura*. 50 B.C.E.

breezy daydream about ye old in and out. But then, once, on the threshold that felt like a podium, you saw yourself in the mirrors, stayed there for a while, found yourself looping, vibrating tremble low, squeaky sound, back and forth, ba a fo, baf, bf, phphph.) You notice DEBT center stage, only it's been there all along, since that first openness you shouldn't have shown it. When I extend you my pinky finger, you try to take my arm. Now I only have one arm.) He scans the actors and audience, beckoning desperately for eye contact. You really should see it for yourself sometime: His eyes are like a toad's tongue: they unfurl with lightning speed, but little accuracy, and are heavily coated with a despicable adhesive gooooo. Hard times fall on everyone.]

[A TODDLER scatters by imitating the sound of THE HORIZON's song]

THE HORIZON: *Blaaa p ck Odjiii (black, orange). ♪ Autumn leaves. Infectious disease...*

A TODDLER: *[shouting with urgency] Yellow fish have lately caught my liking, brushing up against the sides of my ankles when I wander!!!! The red of the afternoon sun roses my cheeks!!!! I take this as my job, my daily noticing!!!! [calmly] I am the yellow fish I am the yellow fish I am the yellow fish I am blue pee boob ing dough pee scooby doo wood you bee leaf me.²*

[THE BELL bites its tongue just as THE HORIZON saws it's final bits off. THE HORIZON leaves stage, casting aside her copy-paper saw as she goes.]

[DEBT doesn't cease. DEBT persists unsatisfied. Waiting for you: it is horny and softly sad to be misunderstood. Lonely sadist wishing. "What can I do?", it thinks.]

DEBT: *What can I do?*

[It wants to be recognized by you, so badly. It can't help but bounce up and down circling about you. This dance is like an agitated spring. A magnet attaches the bottom of your spine to its rail, as it violently expands and contracts, swerving you up and down, and blurring your vision. In the labyrinth of your inner ear, you slam against the walls, ceiling and floor.

You sick fuck.]

² Oa4s. *Pee Ring Off Duck Liff*. 2014.

Scene 2: Turtles all the way down

[A pungent ammonia is on the air. CLAY turns his jean pocket inside out and finds five objects that could be combined into one tangle. They each consist of two or three parts. It began five years ago and has been lasting all this time. THE HORIZON turns away.]

[Spacetime clings to the presence of objects. The audience cling to their seats. The actors cling to memories.]

CLAY: *[Starry-eyed and mindlessly scratching an itch on his inner thigh, just above the knee. Hallucinating the most refreshing desert oasis stage left.]* So we meet again.

TEMRA: *[staring at herself in a mirror she can't see, shaking her head, saying, "Who is my little man?"]* Wie is mijn kleine man? Wie is mijn kleine man? Wie is mijn clinamen?

CHORUS: And this too understand: when bodies thus are borne sheer down through void by their own weight, At times and points of space unfix'd, they swerve a little from their line, just so much as that you can mark the change. If 'twere not so they all would fall just like the drops of rain straight through the void: there would have been no clash, no blow inflicted on the seeds, and so had Nature ne'er begotten aught at all.³

[An Epicurean swerve: Mossy comes home and hangs his backpack on the back of the chair. He loosens his shoelaces and steps out of his shoes. He stretches his toes and shakes his socks out. You feel a sense of empathy. Mossy and friends are sitting at the table.]

CLAY: It sounds fine to me...

MIKEY: So we just need to continue.

[TEMRA slowly walking backwards, backing out, upstage right. She steps into Mossy's shoes and puts his mossy backpack on. She falls to her knees and then to her face. With chest on the floor now: she is doing a different thing, moving slowly like an ancient soul.]

TEMRA: *[to THE HORIZON]* From where? And for whom?

³ Lucretius. *De rerum natura*. 50 B.C.E.

THE HORIZON: The sunset here, the sunrise there, overlapping in the iris of my-eye.

TEMRA: *[to DEBT]* From when and to whom?

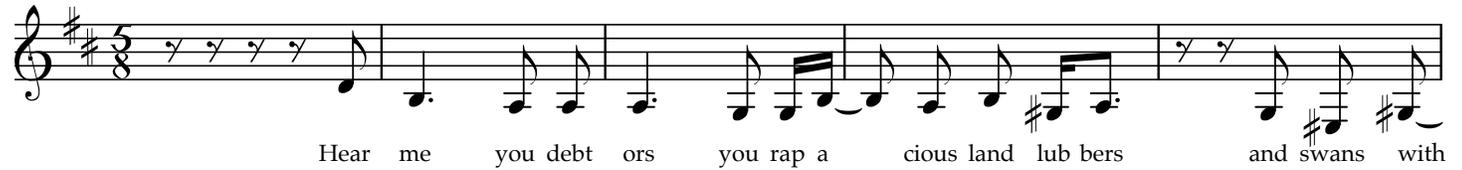
DEBT: At the end of all questions is another.

[TEMRA, now tired of questions, lays still on the stage with her back to the ceiling for 3,000 years. Every 138.4615 months a celadon pus the consistency of tree sap secretes from her pores and forms pools in the spaces of her back and dries like a thick shell. Most of the audience falls asleep and some even leave the theater. After 260 recursions the 3 millennia have passed and TEMRA yawns and stretches, sloughing off her turtle shell mask. By now MIKEY's soft palette has a thick film of latex and he is itching his throat with the back of his tongue. CLAY checks the time.]

The Horizon's Song

On All Fours

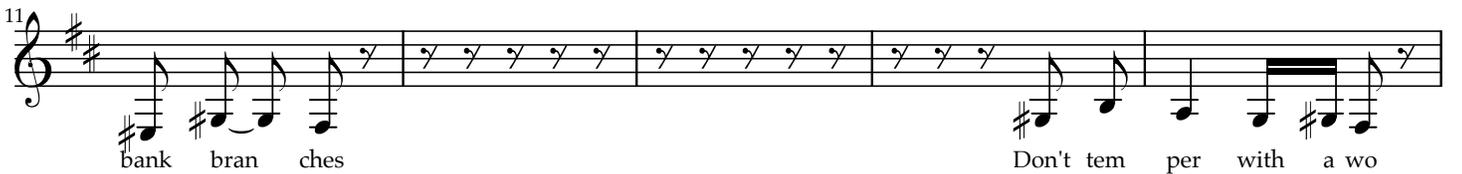
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Hear me you debtors you rapacious landlubbers and swans with



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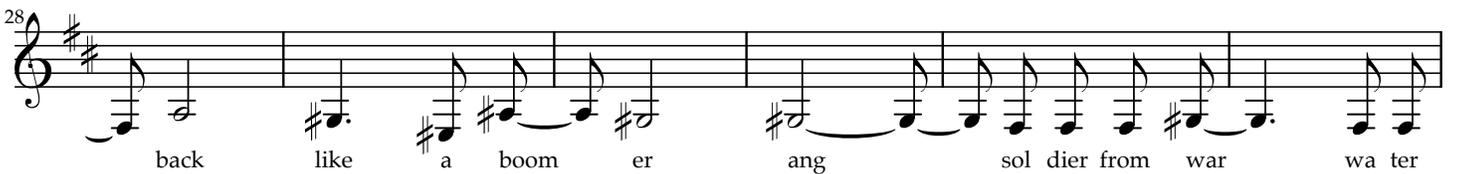
bank branches Don't temper with a wo



man you neversee She likes to go to bed late and wake up past



mid day yesterday I had a revelation when she came



back like a boomerang soldier from war water



cycle a poetic spouse bad cough before and after photo

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