

# ROOTS, RANTS AND REELS

## Textual Transformation 2



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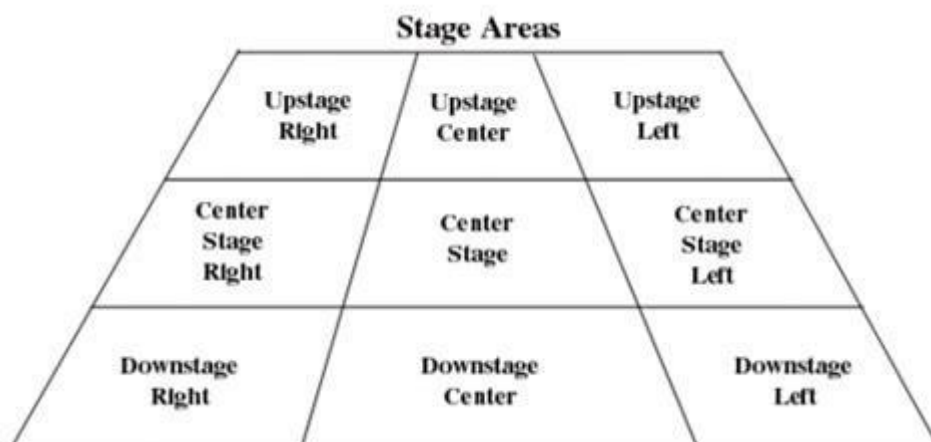
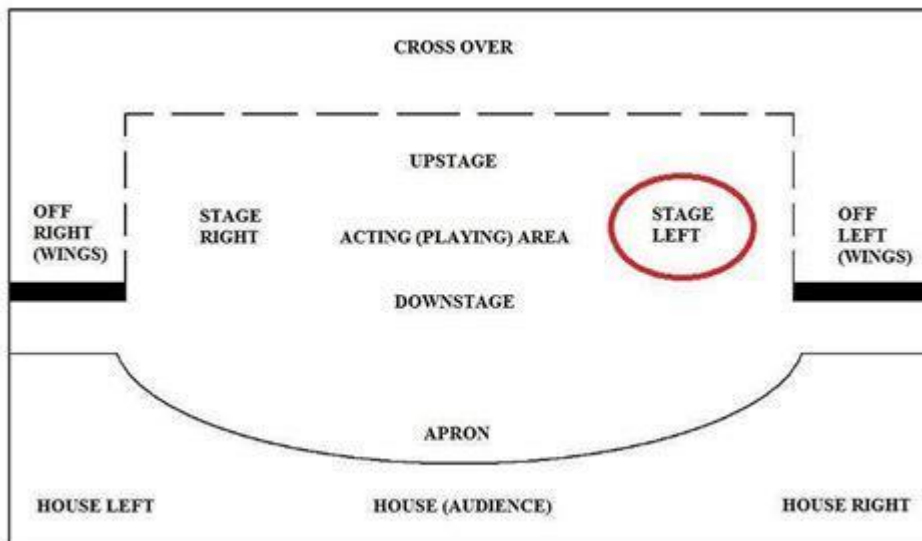
Brittany Hall

## STAGE DIRECTIONS

Stage directions help performers situate themselves on stage. Movements on stage are referred to as **blocking**.

During rehearsal, a grid can be overlaid on the stage, dividing it into 9 - 15 areas (see diagrams below).

- 5 Notations in the script, in brackets, indicate where to sit, stand, move about, and enter and exit. The directions are written from the perspective of the performer facing **downstage**, or toward the audience (also referred to as the **house**). The rear of the stage, called **upstage**, is behind the performer's back. A performer who turns to his right is moving stage right. A performer who turns left is moving stage left.



## WARM-UP EXERCISES

### POSTURE

The best voice is produced when body posture is erect yet relaxed. Throughout breathing and voice exercises, the spine should be straight, the head facing forward and the crown of the head parallel to the ceiling. This posture supports the body's respiratory system so that it can function smoothly.

### VOICE WARM-UP

Before beginning voice exercises, a good warm-up routine is important. A long and slow warm-up allows the muscles to activate and can reduce strain during a performance or exercise session.

#### 1. **Neck**

Massage the muscles of the jaw and face to further reduce tension.

Stretch the neck lightly by leaning to the sides, front and back.

#### 2. **Tongue**

Stick the tongue out, point up and down.

Brace the tongue behind the front bottom teeth and push the centre out.

Pant like a dog.

#### 3. **Lips and Jaws**

Flap your lips by blowing air and producing a "BEE" or "BRR" sound.

Yawn widely to stretch the jaw. Smile while you are yawning.

Make a sighing sound for as long as you can.

#### 4. **Whole body**

Bend at the waist and let your arms hang freely.

Shake your arms while making the "AH" /a:/ sound. Gradually straighten up.

Repeat with other long vowel sounds. /i:/ /u:/ /ɜ:/ /ɔ:/

Make a "mmm" /m/sound with your lips closed. Maintain the "mmm" sound steadily for as long as you can.

#### 5. **Projecting sounds**

Open your mouth and release an "A" /æ/ Think of shooting the "A" across the room like an arrow.

Repeat with all the short vowel sounds /ɪ/ /e/ /ʌ/ /ɒ/ /ʊ/

## IMPROVISATION EXERCISES

### Activity 1

Maintain eye contact with those in front of you for a full minute, without speaking, as if you are deciding whether or at what moment to speak. Be conscious of the way you are sitting and of any movements you make (fiddling with your hair, biting your finger, jiggling your legs etc). These actions should probably be slow.

If you are asked to do this in character, you should make sure that your posture and movements belong to your character and are not your own.

At the end of the minute, you can introduce yourself: My name is ....

### Activity 2

Experiment at home with a brief monologue:

- a) sitting in a comfy chair
- b) standing
- c) standing, wearing a blindfold
- d) lying in bed
- e) in front of the bathroom mirror

**Observe what changes in the different contexts.**

### Activity 3

In pairs, stand opposite one another. One person leads, making slow movements with arms, legs, head, body and changing facial expression. The other person must mirror exactly the movements and expressions of their partner.

### Activity 4

Everyone sits on a line of chairs immobile, impassive and silent. At a signal from one person outside the group everyone starts to communicate with the audience. You each have something very important and urgent to communicate. You are desperate to be heard. Gesticulate, speak as loudly as you like, get up.

Continue until the person in control makes a second signal. Repeat.

This can also be done without sound.

### Activity 5

Put on a piece of recorded sound or music. Move in response to the music.

Do this as yourself and as a character you want to play. Observe the different way you move.

### **Activity 6**

#### **A) Numbers**

a) singly b) in twos c) in threes d) the whole group

#### **B) Actions**

a) walk diagonally across the room

b) sit on the floor, put your head in your hands, then stand up

c) run, climb over a chair, jump in the air

#### **C) Responses**

a) completely absorbed in yourself, no response to other people

b) responsive and aware of other actor(s) on stage

c) responsive and aware of audience

#### **D) Emotions:**

a) anger b) anxiety c) joy d) depression e) confusion f) serenity g) horror

### **Activity 7 THE HOT SEAT**

This is a warm-up that helps you get into a character which you have to play.

Sit in front of a group of people. Remember to sit and move in character.

The people in front of you will bombard you with questions.

Your aim is to answer as quickly and as spontaneously as possible and never lapse into your own self.

## Writers' Diaries

What sort of diary should I like mine to be? Something loose knit and yet not slovenly, so elastic that it will embrace anything, solemn, slight or beautiful that comes into my mind. I should like it to resemble some deep old desk, or capacious hold-all, in which one flings a mass of odds and ends without looking them through. I should like to come back, after a year or two, and find that the collection had sorted itself and refined itself and coalesced, as such deposits so mysteriously do, into a mould, transparent enough to reflect the light of our life, and yet steady, tranquil compounds with the aloofness of a work of art. The main requisite, I think on re-reading my old volumes, is not to play the part of censor, but to write as the mood comes or of anything whatever; since I was curious to find how I went for things put in haphazard, and found the significance to lie where I never saw it at the time."

Virginia Woolf, from a diary entry dated April 20th, 1919, as printed in [\*A Writer's Diary\*](#).

### **Keeping your own writer/actor's diary or logbook.**

1. Make short entries as often as possible.
2. Your main focus should be research, thoughts, experiments and experiences outside the classroom rather than on what happens in class although you may reflect on what we have done.
3. At the end of the course you will select the most interesting entries to hand in a log that is a personal record of your work on the course.
4. You can include images, texts that you find etc

N.B. **Don't** write 'Dear Diary' . **Don't** report everything we did in class.

## **Come and Go** - A dramaticule by Samuel Beckett

CHARACTERS : (Age undeterminable)

• FLO

• VI

• RU

*Note: Exits and entrances slow, without sound of feet.*

*Note: Voices - As low as compatible with audibility. Colourless except for three 'ohs' and two*

*lines following.*

Sitting centre side by side stage right to left FLO, VI and RU. Very erect, facing front, hands

clasped in laps.

Silence.

VI : When did we three last meet?

RU : Let us not speak.

[Silence.

Exit VI right.

Silence.]

FLO : Ru.

RU : Yes.

FLO : What do you think of Vi?

RU : I see little change. [FLO moves to centre seat, whispers in RU's ear. Appalled.] Oh! [They

look at each other. FLO puts her finger to her lips,] Does she not realize?

FLO : God grant not.

[Enter VI. FLO and RU turn back front, resume pose. VI sits right.

Silence.]

Just sit together as we used to, in the playground at Miss Wade's.

RU : On the log.

[Silence.

Exit FLO left.

Source: <http://www.drama21c.net/text/come&go.htm>

Silence.]

Vi.



VI : Yes.

RU: How do you find FLO?

VI : She seems much the same. [RU moves to centre seat, whispers in VI's ear. Appalled.] Oh!

[They look at each other. RU puts her finger to her lips.] Has she not been told?

RU : God forbid.

[Enter FLO. RU and VI turn back front, resume pose. FLO sits left.]

Holding hands . . . that way.

FLO : Dreaming of . . . love.

[Silence.

Exit RU right.

Silence.]

VI : Flo.

FLO : Yes.

VI : How do you think Ru is looking?

FLO : One sees little in this light. [VI moves centre seat, whispers in FLO's ear. Appalled.] Oh!

[They look at each other. VI puts her finger to her lips.] Does she not know?

VI : Please God not.

[Enter RU. VI and FLO turn back front, resume pose. RU sits right.

Silence.]

May we not speak of the old days? [Silence.] Of what came after? [Silence.] Shall we hold

hands in the old way?

[After a moment they join hands as follows : VI's right hand with RU's right hand. VI's left hand with FLO's left hand, FLO's right hand with RU's left hand, VI's arms being above RU's left arm and FLO's right arm. The three pairs of clasped hands rest on the three laps.

Silence.]

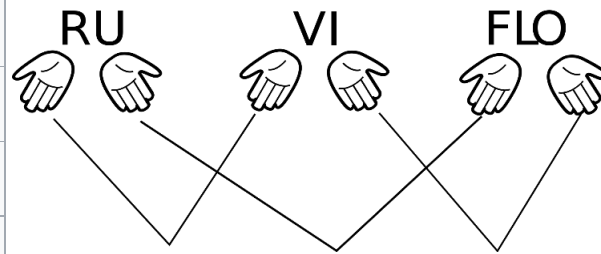
FLO: I can feel the rings.

[Silence.]

CURTAIN

Successive positions<sup>[2]</sup>

1	FLO	VI	RU
2	FLO		RU
		FLO	RU
3	VI	FLO	RU
4	VI		RU
	VI	RU	
5	VI	RU	FLO
6	VI		FLO
		VI	FLO
7	RU	VI	FLO



## PART B ROOTS

On the stage, a **monologue** is a long speech delivered to other characters while a **soliloquy** is a long speech in which a character talks to themselves or voices their thoughts aloud for the benefit of the audience. Despite this differentiation, it is actually very common to refer to soliloquies as monologues.

We will also work on **Duets**, **Trios** and **Group Soliloquies**. The extracts from the Ali Smith novels which are our main source all centre on unexpected connections between people.

### Discussion.

1. How much do you talk about people, stories and places in your family's past?
2. Does your family give space to its older members to recount memories?
3. Do you have any collections of documents or pictures that are a source of information?
4. Have you ever been curious to know more?
5. Do you think it is important to ask and listen?
6. How much do you trust the stories and memories family members recount?
7. Have there ever been disputes over different versions of the same events?

### **A Roots ‘maps’**

Make a kind of roots map for yourself. First do it geographically and show places that represent your roots. Then concentrate on names and relationships. Organise these ‘maps’ in any way you find interesting. Start collecting memories, family stories, photos documents and mementoes. If you would prefer to focus on friends rather than family you can create an interesting personal map in the same way.

### **B Songs, Rhymes and Proverbs**

Recite or sing a song, rhyme or proverb. Then translate or explain it in English and say who and what you associate it with.

### **C Mementos/ Keepsakes/ Treasured Objects**

Bring a photo or an object that you can hold in your hand as you speak. Talk about the object and what it means to you.

### **D I remember...**

Choose one person in your family. Speak in your own voice and recount a specific memory involving that person in the past, a story that they told you or a song, rhyme or saying that you associate with them. The other people in the class can then ask you questions about what that person was like to form a complete picture of them. You all want to form a complete picture of their physical appearance, voice, way of moving, language.

**Duet      No, it wasn’t quite like that...**

**I remember...** monologues interrupted by another person in the class who will impersonate the person you were talking about and interrupt you **Well, it wasn’t quite like that, actually...** The original speaker can then interrupt again **No, that’s not right...** or even impersonate another member of the family such as the spouse of that person who remembers it differently. Here, obviously, we are moving into fiction

*Look at some of the BLOOD AT THE ROOT monologues on Youtube*

My first degree was in English but I very quickly began to see that you have to cultivate even your mother tongue as deeply as you would cultivate a foreign language, with as much trouble, as much labour. Without it, one does not really reach any full expression nor any insight into either one's own culture or  
5 any other culture. In my opinion, the mother tongue reaches deep into one's childhood on the one hand and deep into all strata of society on the other.

I became aware that for an Indian there is not only the culture of the book,  
The culture of what I call the father tongues like Sanskrit and English but also  
10 the culture of the mother tongue. The culture of the mother tongue contains not only what you call literature but also folk materials.

The house in which I lived as a child has several storeys. We spoke Tamil downstairs with my mother, grandmother, the cooks and so on and upstairs  
15 with my father, who was a mathematician, we spoke English and he had Sanskrit. And then there was a higher story which was open to the sky, and from which you could also see the road. If there was any big quarrel, we would go all the way up and watch it. So the house was a symbol of multiple culture and it became important to me to learn about the whole range of our culture as  
20 much as possible.

Freely adapted from an interview with A.K. Ramanujan by  
T.N.Shankaranayana and S.A.Krishnaiah

## FAMILY BIBLES

Imagine the intense feeling of heritage, history, and connection to family that comes from opening a well-loved Bible with its ancient cover and faint musty smell. Inside as you carefully turn the stained, wrinkled pages you read the entries your great-grandmother had carefully written. You see on the pages the date of her wedding to your great grandfather, the name of their son and when he was born, the name of her father and where he is buried, your name and birth date, and the date their granddaughter was christened.

Do you remember a family Bible in your house as you grew up? Were you the recipient of this treasure trove of family history, or have you discovered your family Bible while cleaning out a basement or an attic? Has your Bible been in the family for generations? If you don't have your family Bible, do you know who has it? Have you asked other family members whether they know of any old Bibles in the family? If you're fortunate enough to have a copy of your family Bible, have you shared those family history pages with others? Do others know you have the family Bible? Does your family have a plan to ensure it will pass to the next generation for safekeeping? If you don't have your family Bible, but know it exists somewhere, you can get tips for finding it in a post in Family Tree Magazine entitled, "Ways to Find Family Bibles."

In the days of our grandparents and before, family Bibles served as a central focal point of family life providing spiritual guidance. They also were places where mothers and grandmothers carefully recorded significant family events including births, christenings, marriages, deaths, and burial information. These Bibles were passed down from one generation to the next to continue documenting important names and dates. Some family Bibles even show Church membership and birthplaces. Many have been in the family for generations and contain information that may not be found at the local court house. These Bibles are very valuable and, when hand-written as the events occurred, are most usually very accurate, although the accuracy of the information should still be verified.

## PART C Extracts from *Autumn*, *Winter* and *Spring* by Ali Smith

### **Historical Characters:**

Pauline Boty

Christine Keeler

Charlie Chaplin

Katherine Mansfield

Rainer Maria Rilke

Tacita Dean

### **Fictional Characters;**

Daniel Gluck

Elisabeth Demand

Art lecturer

Brittany Hall

Florence Smith

Patricia Heale (Paddy)

Richard (Doubledick)

That was the Monday she unearthed an old red hardback catalogue in an art shop on Charing Cross Road. It was cheap, £3. It was in the reduced books bin.

5 It was of an exhibition a few years ago. Pauline Boty, 1960s Pop Art painter.

Pauline who?

A female British Pop Art painter?

Really?

10 This was interesting to Elisabeth, who'd been studying art history as one of her subjects at college and had been having an argument with her tutor, who'd told her that categorically there had never been such a thing as a female British Pop artist, not  
15 one of any worth, which is why there were none recorded as more than footnotes in British Pop Art history.

The artist had made collages, paintings, stained glass work and stage sets. She had had quite a life  
20 story. She'd not just been a painter, she'd also done theatre and TV work as an actress, had chaperoned Bob Dylan round London before anyone'd heard of Bob Dylan, had been on the radio telling listeners what it was like to be a young woman in the world  
25 right then and had nearly been cast in a film in a role that Julie Christie got instead.

She'd had everything ahead of her in swinging London, and then she'd died, at the age of twenty eight, of cancer. She'd gone to the doctor because  
30 she was pregnant and they'd spotted the cancer. She'd refused an abortion, which meant she couldn't have radiotherapy; it would hurt the child. She'd given birth and she'd died four months after.

Malignant thymoma is what it said in the list of  
35 things under the word Chronology at the back of the catalogue.

It was a sad story, and nothing like the paintings, which were so witty and joyous and full of unexpected colour and juxtapositions that  
40 Elisabeth, flicking through the catalogue, realized that she was smiling. The painter's last painting had



been of a huge and beautiful female arse, nothing else, framed by a jovial proscenium arch like it was filling the whole stage of a theatre. Underneath, in bright red, was a word in huge and rambunctious looking capitals.

BUM.

Elisabeth laughed out loud.

What a way to go.

The artist's paintings were full of images of people of the time, Elvis, Marilyn, people from politics. There was a photograph of a now-missing painting with the famous image of the woman who caused the Scandal scandal, whose sitting nude and backwards on a designer chair had had something to do with politics at the time.

Then Elisabeth held the catalogue open at a page with a particular painting on it.

It was called *Untitled (Sunflower Woman)* c.1963.

It was of a woman on a bright blue background.

Her body was a collage of painted images. A man with a machine gun pointing at the person looking at the picture formed her chest. A factory formed her arm and shoulder.

A sunflower filled her torso.

An exploding airship made her crotch.

An owl.

Mountains.

Coloured zigzags.

At the back of the book was a black and white reproduction of a collage. It had a large hand holding a small hand, which was holding the large hand back.

Down at the bottom of the picture there were two ships in a sea and a small boat filled with people.

Elisabeth went to the British Library periodicals room and sat at a table with *Vogue*, September 1964. *FEATURES* 9 *Spotlight* 92 *Paola, paragon of princesses* 110 *Living doll: Pauline Boty interviewed by Nell Dunn* 120 *Girls in their married bliss, by Edna O'Brien*. Alongside adverts for the bright red Young Jaeger look-alike coat, the Goya Golden Girl Beauty Puff and the bandeau bra and pantie girdle cut like briefs to leave you feeling free all over, was: *Pauline Boty, blonde, brilliant, 26. She has been married for a year and her*

husband is inordinately proud of her achievements,  
boasts that she makes a lot of money painting and  
90 acting. She has found by experience that she is in a  
world where female emancipation is a password  
and not a fact – she is beautiful, therefore she  
should not be clever.

95 The full-page photo, by David Bailey, was a large  
close-up of Boty's face with a tiny doll's face, the  
other way up, just behind her.

P.B. I find that I have a fantasy image. It's that I  
really like making other people happy, which is  
probably egotistical, because they think 'What a  
100 lovely girl', you know. But it's also that I don't  
want people to touch me. I don't mean  
physically particularly, though it's that as well.  
So I always like to feel that I'm sort of floating  
by and just occasionally being there, seeing  
105 them. I'm very inclined to play a role that  
someone sets for me, particularly when I first  
meet people. One of the reasons I married Clive  
was because he really did accept me as a human  
being, a person with a mind.

110 N.D. Men think of you just as a pretty girl  
you mean?

P.B. No. They just find it embarrassing when you  
start talking. Lots of women are intellectually  
more clever than lots of men. But it's difficult  
115 for men to accept the idea.

N.D. If you start talking about ideas they just  
think you're putting it on?

P.B. Not that you're putting it on. They just find it  
120 slightly embarrassing that you're not doing the  
right thing.

Elisabeth photocopied the pages in the magazine.  
She took the Pauline Boty exhibition catalogue to  
college and put it on her tutor's desk.

Oh, right. Boty, the tutor said.

He shook his head.

125 Tragic story, he said.

Then he said, they're pretty dismissible. Poor  
paintings. Not very good. She was quite Julie  
Christie. Very striking girl. There's a film of her.

130 Ken Russell, and she's a bit eccentric in it it I remember rightly, dresses in a top hat, miming along to Shirley Temple, I mean attractive and so on, but pretty execrable.

Where can I find that film? Elisabeth said.

I've absolutely no idea, the tutor said. She was gorgeous. But not a painter of anything more than

135 minor interest. She stole everything of any note in her work from Warhol and Blake.

What about the way she uses images as images? Elisabeth said.

Oh God, everybody and his dog was doing that

140 then, the tutor said.

What about everybody and *her* dog? Elisabeth said.

I'm sorry? the tutor said.

What about this? Elisabeth said.

145 She opened the catalogue at a page with two paintings reproduced side by side.

One was of a painting of images of ancient and modern men. Above, there was a blue sky with a US airforce plane in it. Below, there was a

150 smudged colour depiction of the shooting of Kennedy in the car in Dallas, between black and white images of Lenin and Einstein. Above the head of the dying president were a matador, a deep red rose, some smiling men in suits, a couple of the

155 Beatles.

The other picture was of a fleshy strip of images superimposed over a blue/green English landscape vista, complete with a little Palladian structure. Inside the superimposed strip were several images

160 of part-naked women in lush and coquettish porn magazine poses. But at the centre of these coy poses was something unadulterated, pure and blatant, a woman's naked body full-frontal, cut off at the head and the knees.

165 The tutor shook his head.

I'm not seeing anything new here, he said.

He cleared his throat.

There are lots and lots of highly sexualized images throughout Pop Art, he said.

170 What about the titles? Elisabeth said.

(The titles of the paintings were *It's a Man's World I* and *It's a Man's World II*.)

The tutor had gone a ruddy red colour at the face.

180 Is there, was there, anything else like this being painted by a woman at the time? Elisabeth said.

The tutor shut the catalogue. He cleared his throat again.

185 Why should we imagine that gender matters here? the tutor said.

That's actually my question too, Elisabeth said. In fact, I came to see you today to change my dissertation title. I'd like to work on the representation of representation in Pauline Boty's work.

190 You can't, the tutor said.

Why can't I? Elisabeth said.

There's not nearly enough material available on Pauline Boty, the tutor said.

195 I think there is, Elisabeth said.

There's next to no critical material, he said.

That's one of the reasons I think it'd be a particularly good thing to do, Elisabeth said.

200 I'm your dissertation supervisor, the tutor said, and I'm telling you, there isn't, and it isn't. You're going off down a rarefied cul-de-sac here. Do I make myself clear?

205 Then I'd like to apply to be moved to a new supervisor, Elisabeth said. Do I do that with you, or do I go to the Admin office?

A year on from then, Elisabeth went home for the

210 Easter holidays. It was when her mother was thinking of moving, maybe to the coast. Elisabeth listened to the options and looked at the house details her mother had been sent by estate agents in Norfolk and Suffolk.

After the right amount of time talking about houses had passed, Elisabeth asked after Daniel.

215 Won't have any help in the house, her mother said. Won't have meals on wheels. Won't let anyone make him a cup of anything or do his washing or change his old bed. The house smells pretty strong, but if anyone goes round there offering anything, offering to help out, he makes you sit down, then  
220 makes you a cup of tea himself, won't hear of anyone even doing that for him. Ninety if he's a day. He's not up to it. I had to fish a dead beetle out of the last cup of tea he made me.



225 I'll just nip round and see him, Elisabeth said.  
Oh, hello, Daniel said. Come in. What you  
reading?  
Elisabeth waited for him to make her the cup of  
tea. Then she got the exhibition catalogue she'd  
found in London out of her bag and put it on the  
230 table.  
When I was small, Mr Gluck, she said, I don't  
know if you remember, but when we went on walks  
you sometimes described paintings to me, and the  
thing is, I think I've finally managed to see some  
235 of them.  
Daniel put his glasses on. He opened the  
catalogue. He flushed, then he went pale.  
Oh yes, he said.  
He leafed through the pages. His face lit up. He  
240 nodded. He shook his head.  
Aren't they fine? he said.  
I think they're really brilliant, Elisabeth said.  
Really outstanding. Also really thematically and  
technically interesting.  
245 Daniel turned a picture towards her, blue and red  
abstracts, blacks and golds and pinks in circles and  
curves.  
I remember this one very clearly, he said.  
I wondered, Mr Gluck, Elisabeth said. Because of  
250 our conversations, and you knowing them so well,  
the pictures. I mean they've been missing for  
decades. They've just been rediscovered, really. And  
no one in the art world knows about them, except,  
from what I can gather, from people who knew her  
255 in person. I went and asked about her at the gallery  
where they showed these pictures, like seven or  
eight years back, and I met this woman who knew  
someone who used to know Boty a bit, and she told  
me that the woman she knows still sometimes just  
260 finds herself in floods of tears, even nearly forty  
years later, whenever she remembers her friend. So,  
I was wondering. It struck me. That maybe you  
knew Boty too.  
Well well, he said. Look at that.  
265 He was still looking at the blue abstract called  
Gershwin.  
I never knew till now she called it that, he said.

315 Elisabeth will have looked like she was listening,  
but inside her head there was the high-pitched hiss,  
the blood going round inside her making itself  
heard above any and every other thing.

320 *Not a person.*  
*Daniel does not –*  
*Daniel has never –*  
*Daniel has never known –*

She drank the tea. She excused herself. She left  
the book on the table.

325 He came hobbling after her into the hall holding  
it out to her as she was unsnibbing the front door.

I left it on purpose, for you, she said. I thought  
you might like it. I won't need it. I've handed in my  
dissertation.

230 He shook his old head.  
You keep it, he said.  
She heard the door shutting behind her.

## Chaplin *Winter* pp 260-61

He tells her about Charlie Chaplin's father singing songs about pretty girls in the music halls and dying young and a drunkard, and Chaplin's mother singing songs in the halls too and growing madder and madder till she was too far out of her mind to work, and how Chaplin went on stage instead of his mother one night though he was still a very small child, because he knew the words of the song his mother'd been singing and his mother, there on the same stage, was staring into space as if she'd forgotten them or forgotten where and who she was, so the child Chaplin sang the song and did

a dance and the crowd who'd been booing his mother showered him with pennies and applause.

He hated Christmas, he says. No wonder he died at Christmas. When he was a child and was in a home for orphans, when his mother was in the asylum, the man in charge gave all the boys an apple for their Christmas except him, and this man said to him, you can't have one, Charlie, because you keep the boys awake telling them your stories. After that, he was always looking for it, always knowing he'd be denied it. He called it the red apple of happiness.

What a sad thing to know, she says. To have to know.

He apologizes for passing on a sadness.

He blames his own sadnesses.

He tells her how the boy Chaplin also played a cat in a pantomime at the Hippodrome in London, when the Hippodrome was a new theatre and had a pit which could fill with water, and all the dancing girls, dressed in armour like knights of old, would dance into the water till they disappeared under its surface, and how there was a clown who'd come out after they did and sit on the edge of the pool of water with a fishing rod using diamond necklaces for bait to try to catch a chorus girl.

## Katherine Mansfield, Rilke, Chaplin *Spring* pp 281-285

*I prefer this kind of uncanny myself: you and I were just talking today about how they lived so close to each other, Katherine M and him, and never met, or if they did probably never knew they did. But after you went I was online having a browse for you and I found a letter that Rilke wrote, he was still in Sierre in Switzerland, and the letter is dated 10 Jan 23, which is the day after the day Katherine M dies in Fontainebleau, France.*

*He is writing to a friend in it about how much he's been moved by reading some D H Lawrence in*

*German, the novel The Rainbow. He loves it, he says, and reading it has opened a whole new chapter in his life.*

*Now, I know that Katherine M was good friends with Lawrence and his wife Frieda, and one day she'd confided in them some stories of her own erotic times when she was younger. And something very close to her own stories of her life – I mean close enough to make her very irate when she read it herself – definitely slipped into one of the characters in The Rainbow.*

*So guess who Rilke finally met? In fictional form, at least.*

*Now I've only one more afterlife for you, and I know I'll annoy you Doubledick with this final life after death. Sometimes I talk about Chaplin just to watch you so sweetly pretending it means nothing to you that I'm talking about him.*

*But there's a strange afterlife connection between Charlie Chaplin and Rilke. There's a sort of connection with Katherine M too, who called her cat Charlie Chaplin, and then that cat chanced to have a couple of litters of kittens, which gave her quite a surprise, the first time anyway. (And I think one of those first kittens of Charlie Chaplin the cat might even have been named – April.)*

*In the 1930s Charlie Chaplin is visiting St Moritz. He makes some well-heeled new friends, an Egyptian businessman and his wife, a lovely clever*



*woman called Nimet. One night at dinner Chaplin takes a napkin off the table and ties it round the beautiful Nimet's head like she has terrible toothache. Then he pretends to be a dentist taking out a tooth, and he holds the tooth up, a lump of sugar out of the sugar bowl.*

*Now, I'm pretty sure this Nimet is the same beautiful Egyptian woman Rilke picked the roses for, the day the rose thorn pricked his finger with the fairy-tale real-life consequence.*

*My beloved Chaplin. He moved to Switzerland for good, you know, in the 1950s, when the US threw him out for being too bolshevik and for telling the workers some truths about the machine age in Modern Times. He bought a grand house and grounds, only about an hour away these days from the place Rilke and Mansfield had lived 30 years earlier. He used to come out of his house and shake his fists at the Swiss army practising their gunfire in the valleys and the mountains round his new estate.*

*He's got a ghost or two wandering the world – one particularly lucrative haunting is the one making money for the Hollywood bar owner who says Chaplin still regularly visits a booth in his bar that used to be reserved for him.*

*But my own favourite of the Chaplin afterlives is the adventure his own mortal remains went on after he died.*

Do you remember how his coffin was dug up from its grave and stolen? This is forty years ago, when we were still young. He died in the December and they stole him in the March. The police told the journalists, like something out of the bible, The grave is empty! The coffin is gone! It was missing from March till May, with a great number of fraudsters phoning the Chaplin family all the time asking for money and promising the return of the body, before the police caught two mechanics, dirt poor, political refugees. They'd dug him up, taken a photo of the coffin covered in mud, loaded it into the back of their old car and rattled it a mile down the road from where he last lived, where they buried it in a farmer's cornfield.

The silent remains of the silent star.

Quiet as the grave, in a grave that's not a grave, on what's his 89th birthday in the middle of April 1978, under the earth under the green shoots under the birdsong under the air under the cold spring sky.

Expect the unexpected afterlives, Doubledick.  
Life goes on.

For today, I hope you dried those socks and shoes. For tomorrow, may your feet always be warm, old friend.

Your own,  
your ever,  
your earwig,  
P.



WHAT WE WANT *Spring* pp. 3-6

5 Now what we don't want is Facts. What we want is  
bewilderment. What we want is repetition. What  
we want is repetition. What we want is people in  
power saying the truth is not the truth. What  
we want is elected members of parliament saying  
knife getting heated stuck in her front and  
twisted things like bring your own noose we  
want governing members of parliament in the house  
of commons shouting kill yourself at opposition  
10 members of parliament we want powerful people  
saying they want other powerful people chopped  
up in bags in my freezer we want muslim  
women a joke in a newspaper column we want the  
laugh we want the sound of that laugh behind them  
15 everywhere they go. We want the people we call  
foreign to feel foreign we need to make it clear they  
can't have rights unless we say so. What we want is

20 outrage offence distraction. What we need is to say  
thinking is elite knowledge is elite what we need is  
people feeling left behind disenfranchised what we  
need is people feeling. What we need is panic we  
want subconscious panic we want conscious panic  
too. We need emotion we want righteousness  
we want anger. We need all that patriotic stuff.  
25 What we want is same old Scandal Of The  
Alcoholic Mothers Danger Of The Daily  
Aspirin but with more emergency Nein Nein  
Nein we need a hashtag #linedrawn we want  
30 Give Us What We Want Or We'll Walk  
we want fury we want outrage we want words at  
their most emotive antisemite is good nazi is great  
paedo will really do it perverted foreigner illegal  
we want gut reaction we want Age Test For  
35 'Child Migrants' 98% Demand Ban New  
Migrants Gunships To Stop Migrants  
How Many More Can We Take Bolt  
Your Doors Hide Your Wives we want zero  
40 tolerance. We need news to be phone size. We  
need to bypass mainstream media. We need to  
look past the interviewer talk straight to camera.  
45 We need to send a very clear strong unmistakable  
message. We need newsfeed shock. We need more  
newsfeed shock come on quick next newsfeed shock  
pull the finger out we want torture images. We need  
50 to get to them we need them to think we can get to  
them get the word *lynching* to anyone not white.



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We want rape threats death threats 24/7 to black/  
female members of parliament no just women doing  
anything public anyone doing anything public we  
don't like we need How Dare She/How Dare  
He/How Dare They. We need to suggest the  
enemy within. We need enemies of the  
people we want their judges called enemies of  
the people we want their journalists called  
enemies of the people we want the people we  
decide to call enemies of the people called enemies  
of the people we want to say loudly over and  
over again on as many tv and radio shows as  
possible how they're silencing us. We need to say  
all the old stuff like it's new. We need news to be  
what we say it is. We need words to mean what we  
say they mean. We need to deny what we're saying  
while we're saying it. We need it not to matter what  
words mean. We need a good old slogan Britain  
no England/America/Italy/France/  
Germany/Hungary/Poland/Brazil/  
[insert name of country] First. We need the dark  
web money algorithms social media. We need to  
say we're doing it for freedom of speech. We need  
bots we need cliché we need to offer hope. We need  
to say it's a new era the old era's dead their time's  
over it's our time now. We need to smile a lot while  
we say it we need to laugh on camera ha ha ha  
thump man laughing his head off hear that factory  
whistle at the end of the day that factory's dead

we're the new factory whistle we're what this  
country's needed all along we're what you need  
we're what you want.

What we want is need.

What we need is want.

Instead, she and the girl have spent the last while playing what the girl calls Lucky 13.

The game is, I ask thirteen questions, then we both have to answer them. Right? the girl said.

Right, Brit said.

What's your favourite colour, song, food, drink, thing to wear, place, season, day of the week. What animal would you be if you were an animal. What bird. What insect. What one thing are you really good at. How would you most like to die.

Oh, that last question's a bloody depressing question, Brit said. Who invented this game?

I did, the girl said. And that last question's precisely why the word lucky's in the title of the game.

What's lucky about having a favourite way to die? Brit said.

If you don't know how lucky you are to be even discussing the chance of a choice, the girl said, then all I can say is, you're really really lucky.

Here are the girl's answers:

Favourite colour turquoise.

Favourite two songs Self by No Name (Brit's never heard of No Name, but she's not exactly got time to be up on the music scene these days) and Ooh Child by Nina someone (Brit doesn't know that one either).

Favourite food pizza.

Favourite drink orange juice at breakfast time.

Favourite thing to wear the jeans embroidered with flowers she got for her birthday this year.

Favourite place home.

Favourite season spring.

Favourite day of the week Friday.

If she was an animal she'd be a pink fairy armadillo (apparently there is such a thing).

If she was a bird she'd be one of the robins that sing in the middle of the night in December.

If she was an insect she'd be a dragonfly because of what she knows about their eyes.

The penultimate question is a trick question,

she says, because most people are good at way more than just the one thing and this is supposed to get them thinking about it.

And she would most like to die before anybody else that she loves, so she won't have to miss them.

TAKE MY FACE *Spring* pp 125-127

Any time at all. Here, take it. Take my face.

I'm not surprised you want my face. It's the face of now.

What I mean by my face is the face on this A4 photocopy, the proof I exist. Without it I officially  
5 don't. Even though I'm bodily here, without this piece of paper I'm not. If I lose it, wherever I am I won't be anywhere. It's getting a bit worn – not surprising, just an A4-size sheet of paper – and because it's folded at the place where the face  
10 happens to be copied on it, some of the photocopier ink that makes my face has flaked off in the crease of the fold.

But I'm here. I exist because this piece of paper with my face on it proves I'm not able to study here  
15 or work here or live here without permission or earn any money here.

My being ineligible makes you all the more eligible.

No worries. Happy to help.

20 Also you'll notice this face resembles the drawings on the posters that tell you to report anything you think looks suspicious.

Tell the police if you see anyone who looks like me, because my face is of urgent matter to your  
25 nation.

Not at all. No problem. Glad to be of service.

And it's this face, like the faces on the poster-lorry the white man in the suit posed in front of, of  
30 a great queue of people, I mean non-people, at a border, which proved once and for all that all the people on the poster were faceless nobodies while his was the face of a somebody. He had the only face that matters.

My face is a breaking point.

35 Don't mention it. Any time.

It's the face you see on dramas, films, or you picture in your head in the novels about people who aren't you, the books you read because you love literature, or to kill some free time, the ones that  
40 tell the stories that let you feel that you've felt, you've been really importantly moved, more, you've understood something major about the history, the politics, of the time you live in.

45 It's nothing. My pleasure. My face is all about you.

My face trodden in mud,

My face bloated by sea,

What my face means is not your face,

By all means. You're welcome.



*One afternoon –*

*this is Torq telling her the story of the only other day that'd been anything like this one, way before her time, a day from back when he was a newbie himself –*

*I'd been here about six weeks. Four o'clock. I was on break, we were in the staffroom, and there was this weird noise through the wing, it got louder, it was, like, a wave when you watch a wave bigger than the other waves coming in on the sea, then we realized it was the deets, it was the deets laughing. We looked at each other. It wasn't crazy laughing or drug laughing or fight laughing, it was a whole different kind of laughing. We were all, like, what?*

*So we got into riot gear.*

*The deets were crammed into every room with a working TV and they were all watching this old*

*black and white film. I could see over their heads. The silent movie guy with the Hitler moustache and the bowler hat was sitting on a kerb holding a baby wrapped in blankets and looking like, what am I doing holding a baby? and he lifted this drain cover by his foot in the road like he was going to drop it down a drain into the sewer, but then he decided against it, there was a policeman, and then I was laughing too. There was all this laughing, the wing was all the echo of them, and us, laughing. Deets in here I've never seen laugh before or since, deets I've never actually heard speak, the ones who can't speak English and never say anything, the violent ones. The fucked-up Iranian guy usually in isolation, even he was laughing, everyone was, they were like kids. He didn't drop the baby down the drain, he took it home to a really minging poor room, where everything was broken, and he worked out how to feed it and keep it clean, and then it grew into like a clever toddler who went round throwing stones and breaking windows so that the poor-guy character, who was kind of a father to him, and who was a glass mender as a job, could pass a broken window minutes after it got broken with a new pane of glass on his back and get paid by the housewife for mending it.*

*There was nothing to it, Britannia, stupid story about a child, a man, a pane of glass, a stone, a policeman. After it this place was like I've never*

*seen. People in tears at the end of it. People wandered round the wing after it like we were all normal.*

*Sure it all descended pretty fast to the other normal again.*

*But I remember thinking it must've been a bit like it on the Christmas day in the trenches, remember in the video for the Paul McCartney Christmas song, when they played football with each other and gave each other their rations of smokes and their chocolate.*