

The Next One Hundred Years

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Performance Rights:

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The Next One Hundred Years is a rehearsal for the future and a reckoning with the past.

In this piece there can be three to four people, or there can be seven or 779.

The people can be adults, young adults and/or children (over 10 years of age).

The piece may be rehearsed and shared with, for and/or by an audience, or it may be presented un or minimally rehearsed, and read script-in-hand with, for and/or by an audience in a space called theatre or called not theatre. *Instructions for participatory staging are at the end of the script.*

The space where the play takes place is here. This here could be indoors or outdoors.

The staging of the space could be that of a party.

Maybe there's a very long table and party hats and balloons.

Or the staging could be more austere, like a tribunal.

Or it could simply be a circle of chairs.

The entire means of production should be ecologically sustainable, and creative captioning and/or live sign language interpretation should (ideally) be part of the staging.

Notes on Performance:

The piece is written in numerical lines and stanzas. *Each numbered line or stanza should be spoken/read by one person at a time.*

The concept of 'character' in this piece is not fixed. The 'I' at any given moment may shift.

A double asterisk on the page indicates a temporal or rhythmic shift. It may be indicated with a subtle sound or visual cue.

The secular hymn on page 33 should be chosen for each staging. Suggestions in English language popular music: 'The Water is Wide,' (1800s), Jimmy Cliff's 'Many Rivers to Cross' (1969), John Hiatt's 'Have a Little Faith in Me' (1987), The Beatles' 'Let It Be' (1970).

In this piece, there is silence, and, also, lightness, but there is very little 'acting.'

This piece may be performed in person and/or as an audio, dance, film, opera, remote social and/or hybrid transmedia experience.

- 1 In the next one hundred years
I will walk into a meeting,
And pretend that I know all the answers.
And when people ask me why,
I will tell them that it's because I have read all the books.
I will seem smart.
Even though I'm just waiting for the future to begin.

- 2 In the next one hundred years
I'll read a book and forget where I am,
Because the book will have taken on its own life.
I'll feel as if I am living inside a book,
Even though people say that real life is cinema,
And cinema is real life. . . .

- 3 In the next one hundred years I will stop reading,
Because my eyes will be tired.
They will not know what page ten is or even page five.
All the stories will be in my ears, and I will welcome them,
As if they were gifts from the heavens,
Even though the stories are just from people.

- 4 When my ears stop hearing,
I will ask people to tell their stories with their hands.
Fingers in my palms. Tapping out the beats.
I will imagine characters and situations.
And wonder why so much writing was devoted once to situations,
That people thought were dramatic,
When life is random, and dramatic things
Are usually blockbusters that have nothing to do with life.

5 I don't know how many times I have said these things.

6 I don't know if this is appropriate.

7 I have never seen the world be like this.
Because I have never lived in the future.

8 I am not convinced that I am here.

9 Maybe this is a dream.

10 Maybe we are all dreaming this moment, right now,
As we sift through the evidence of our lives,
And imagine the future traces that we will leave behind.

11 After all, it is said that the animals have often wondered why people behave in the way that they do.

**

**

12 There's never a good reason to kill anyone.
But some people will justify it.

13 This is what someone said once.
Everything we will say from this moment forward will be history.

14 There's never a good reason to kill anyone.
But some people will justify it.

15 When I go to the office to do the office things,
People justify all sorts of behaviour.
I look at them as if they are in the past
And have forgotten that this is a new life.

16 Sometimes I can't breathe.
Most people can't these days.
We walk around with breathing apparatuses and hope to be fine.

17 The word 'hope' does a lot of heavy lifting.

18 This was because of the absent leaders,
That governed once with hollow gestures in prior times.
These leaders either barely said anything to the people,
Or repeated words from blockbuster movies to sell their lies.

19 The hollow people governed the world.
Many people said that these people were 'good people'.
And that those were 'the good times,'
Even though those times were sad.

20 The hollow leaders couldn't bear to look at sadness.
Their idea of reality was like a cartoon movie filled with gangsters.

21 This was because of the oligarchs.

22 This was because the orcas didn't get to everyone in time.

23 We miss the orcas.
We miss the sea lions.
We love the sea even though it's turned green.

24 We were once part of the orca revolution.

25 In the green, someone says, we will rise.
And when they say this, people are surprised,
Because usually they expect us to say something about patriarchy.

**

26 I don't own any antiques.

I will never be on any TV shows.
I am ordinary.

**

27 I don't think I can chalk it up to losing eyesight or other faculties.

Things happen because they happen.
What I cling to are stories told by parents.
Long rides in buses and cars.
Mysterious games of hide and seek.
All those things are ghosts now. Traces of themselves.
They slip through the everyday and live underneath my eyelids.
The iris of a non-camera stares back at me and wonders why.

28 In the movies, people say things.

I don't understand them.
The words are not on the screen because some people say that words distract them,
but I literally cannot understand what anyone is saying.
So, I make up the script. I make up the dialogue.
I look at the images and create my own narrative.
The screen doesn't mind. The screen doesn't see me.
Movies go on even when no one is watching.

29 They say you can do anything. There will be no repercussions.
It is a free space.
There is so much freedom that all I can do is achieve.
I am an achieving subject. Nothing more.
That's how I am seen.
I am doing, always doing.
I am doing so much I auto-exploit myself.
I can do a hundred tasks at one time.
I am the perfect burnout.
I'm like a highly efficient world-famous mass-produced non-biodegradable plastic toy
that pollutes the earth,
And sits at the bottom of the ocean infecting the fish and coral reef with its plastic teeth.

30 On some days, in the last one hundred years,
People talked about a mass-produced, non-biodegradable plastic toy,
As if it were a real person.
They talked about it while many bad things were happening.
They said that the toy was an escape,
And that toys were ritualized objects that helped people survive.
The toys held the key to life! Ha, ha, ha ha!
I am not a toy.
I was not made by a corporation or a factory.
I am not interested in being a product.
I am a human being.
Although some people say human beings are only machines.

**

31 You can tell by my watch. The one on my wrist,
The watch is a phone, but it is also my wallet.
This watch holds my whole life,

If I lose it, I won't know who I am.

Ever. Anymore.

32 Turns out that I am the reason people want to stop being part of society.
And spend the next one hundred years in the non-woods.

33 Turns out that I may have been a liar and a thief.
And all of us were up to no good.

34 Turns out that I rode a fine line between violence and hypocrisy.

**

35 Nothing bad will happen.
The bad stuff has already happened.
Some of us endured it.
Others were born into it.
Others have only heard stories about it.

Here we only think about the future.

The future we were going to have.

The one that we saw in the rear-view mirror,
While we drove down the highway in our cars.

36 We were cars once.
Even though we were also orcas.
We were everything.
Even when we surrendered ourselves to time.

37 In the next one hundred years,
Time will no longer move in a straight line.

It will be a circle, and we will gather in circles,
to remind us of what it was like to be people (or orcas) listening to stories.

**

38 **This is a story, even if you don't think it is a story.**
This is a story without a beginning, middle and end.
Because our lives ended a long time ago.
Our lives were always between endings.
Take my hand. It's okay.
We can live this story together.

**

**

39 They said to me 'you can do anything.
You have complete autonomy.'

I was, like, really, hmm, really, uh,
Anything, anything?

'Except for what's censored.
That you cannot say or do.'

And I said, well, then, you are lying to me.
I don't have autonomy. I'm merely a subject of the state.
I'm a person being disciplined by others.

And they said, 'no, no, this is freedom.
You can allow yourself *all* the thoughts, but none of the actions.
You can imagine you are on a tropical island,

And pretend there are no hurricanes or tsunamis.
You can ignore the devastating heat and be carefree.'

I said, I don't want to be free of care.
I need care. We all do. I want to live in a caring society.

40 In the next one hundred years.

41 Now, I want to live in a caring society now.
Being free of care is killing me.
And they said, 'you are being very sad about everything.
Stop being sad.
Stop giving into fatigue.
Excel, drown yourself in stimuli,
Be a performance machine.
Dedicate yourself to achievement.
Look how beautiful you can be.'

42 That's why I was depressed all the time.

43 It wasn't clinical depression. It was state-sanctioned loneliness.

44 Everyone had been lying to me my whole life.

45 I have an awareness of these things.

46 I over-share and expose my insides.
My insides are also my performance.
They're my best product.
People love my insides.
They love when I poke around in there,

And am all blatant and emotional.

They like my authenticity,
Even when my just-got-out-of-bed look
Is completely manufactured.

They believe me more if I *look* authentic.
So, I have learned to wear my authenticity.
In a very specific, and hyper emotional way.
Some days my performance exceeds even my own expectations.
It's like I'm trolling myself and I don't know why.

47 When people started branding themselves, I saw right through them.

48 In the next one hundred years there will be no branding.

All the brands will be gone.
All the logos.
All the labels and categories of things.
The physical and digital shelves will be empty.
We will finally be able to see.

49 In the next one hundred years, there will only be love.

It will be amazing.

**

**

50 I used to miss the train all the time.

Some days I would miss my stop altogether.
I would look out of the window of the rail car,
And imagine that I was in another century.

51 In the next one hundred years, people will stop dreaming on trains.

52 There will be apologies.

Because occasionally people will have the courage to apologize for their actions.

It won't be a surprise.

It won't be a game of authenticity. It will be just the ways things are.

53 I miss apologies. Even though some people said that they were a sign of weakness.

54 I miss the trees.

**

55 True story: Some time ago, a young person was shot by the police 57 times,

Because they believed in defending the trees.

Not a single political leader in the entire world said anything.

56 No one should be shot 57 times.

57 No one should be shot. Ever.

58 In the next one hundred years, there will be no weapons of any kind.

People will have had enough of all the killing.

**

59 I try to tell people that I have no money,

That what they're paying me is unsustainable. But they say it's 'good money.'

60 In the next one hundred years there will be no money.

The entire concept of it will be gone.

Societies will be run on metaphorical handshakes between and among people.

It will be sublime.

61 I try to tell people that if only we didn't have to buy anything,
If only we could be free of the debt traps we've been forced into
We could be people instead of large bugs with wings.

62 Once I read a story about a person that woke up and became a bug.
It was a horror story, but people said it was reality.

63 One day I looked around and we were all the same. We were all bugs with wings.

64 This was a story from the past when people wrote things.

65 I don't know what to do with this information.
It keeps me up at night.
I am devoting a whole day to think about this.
Wish me luck.

66 Sometimes I look up random words in the dictionary.
It's very empowering.

67 Sometimes I want to be a meme.

68 In the past, people wanted to be memes.
It was a total thing.

189 There's this feeling of feeling what you felt. *feeling what you felt*

190 I never want out. I stay until the end. *never want out*

191 I'd never understood why people said endings were bitter. Until then. *understood why people said endings were bitter*

192 If you think you know anything, you are lying. *think you know anything*

193 In the next one hundred years, no one will lie. About anything. *next one hundred years*

194 True story: A young person stood in front of the halls of power, And burned themselves alive. *young person stood in front of the halls of power*

195 It was an act of protest. In defence of the planet. They wanted their death to mean something. *act of protest*

196 There was nothing about it on the news. *nothing about it on the news*

197 I looked. *looked*

198 I looked many times. *looked many times*

199 There was only a footnote to a story. *only a footnote to a story*

200 They said that the young person felt marginalized.

201 You could say that we were blind.

**

202 I once dreamt I was Oedipus.

203 I had heard that story many times.

204 I was told that it was a good story.

205 Some stories are good, and some are bad.

206 I was taught that there was a difference.

207 My story is not Oedipus' story.

But many people say that it is.

They say that it is the only story that I can have.

They say that it is my inheritance, and the only story to which I am entitled.

208 I want to tell them many things about my life.

But there's no time.

209 In the next one hundred years, we will have time.

**

210 I need to be reminded of mischief.

211 It's an important ingredient for the salad.

212 My friend tells me that stories are like salads.
You need to mix the ingredients all the time until you get it right.

213 I am eating a right salad.

214 Trumpets blare.

215 I celebrate all the time. My life is a party.

216 All our lives are a party!

217 This is the game of life!

218 In the salad days, we made pie.

219 RECKLESS, OVERBEARING SONSABITCHES!

I just wanted to say that.

**

220 Tomorrow I will make plans for tomorrow.

221 It's the last birthday when I will pretend to blow out the candles.

222 Another hundred years go by.

**

223 This is what I wish to leave you:
A pen,

Two bottles of aspirin,
A locket,
A gadget filled with music,
A poem from another century,
A photograph from my youth.

**

224 In the auditorium, there was a rumbling.

**

225 Perhaps we can start again.

226 Perhaps we can start again.

227 Perhaps we can.

**

228 In the next one hundred years, we will start many things.

229 We will plant seeds in the ground.

230 We will have the courage of our convictions.

231 We will stem the tides.

232 We will not have the answers.

233 We will only have questions.

234 We will live in constant state of uncertainty.

235 We won't mind.

**

236 I had heard of people developing strange ailments.

237 It was predicted long ago.

238 No one knew why.

239 The news was buried on page nine.

240 The news never saw the light.

The people in power decided that the best thing they could do
was to bury the story in real time.

241 The young person that burned themselves alive wanted their death to have meaning.

242 I put all my thoughts in a drawer at night.

243 If you could tell anyone what you remember,
What would you tell them?

244 We chose ignorance over the truth.
We chose lies.

**

245 The hollow leaders wore blue suits with red ties.

246 None of them cared about anything except money.

247 They all thought they would live to be a hundred.

248 In the next one hundred years, there will be no leaders.

There will just be people cooperating with one another for the good of all.

249 I can dream things.

**

250 What they want is some wine, they always want some wine,

I must remind them that wine has alcohol in it,

It's not grapes. It's not like drinking fruit.

It's a whole process of fermentation.

It's not an entirely natural thing.

They won't listen.

They say that wine is what they give to children when they are ready to be grown-ups.

I say that grown-ups don't know anything.

Stop drinking.

You will pass out. You will die.

They want to grow up in a hurry.

**

251 If you could listen to one song and one song only, what would it be?

**

252 I always had a fifth of Scotch whiskey in my purse.

That's how I survived.

253 I lived on vodka for a time.

254 One day I couldn't stomach anything.

255 That's when we rushed to the clinic.

**

256 In the ancient days, theatres were next to clinics.
They called them 'healing places.'

257 The patients listed to the theatre as they lay in their beds.

258 It was a long-ago time.

259 But we remember.

**

**

260 I had a bowl of hot soup with fish.

I pretended it was stew.

The fish came from a tin.

Before that it came from a factory.

Before that it came from a country listed in fine print on the back of the tin.

The fisher-people were paid very little for a hard day's labour.

I always wanted to meet the fisher-people who lived by the green sea.

**

261 If you come after five, you will see the spectacle.

It is very loud, and there are metaphorical trumpets blaring.
People dance in the streets till dawn.
I have a hunch that you will like it.

262 What I want to do is go home, but I don't know what home is anymore.

263 This is a hymn. Sing it.

264 I sing a hymn.

265 I sing a hymn.

266 I sing a secular hymn for all the hymns that I have forgotten.

267 In the next one hundred years, we will sing together.

(All sing a secular hymn.)

**

268 What I could tell you is that it was cloudy, rainy, uncomfortable.
I was caught in it. My socks and shoes got wet.
I was in water up to my knees.
But what I was thinking about was history.
I had an F'ing exam that day.

269 You could say that we sometimes use curse words because we like the way that they sound.

270 The F'ing words make us feel like grown-ups.

271 We want to be grown-ups. Now.

272 In the next one hundred years, people won't be in a hurry.

**

273 Listen, champ, you've got it all wrong.

We are the winners. Not them.

They're just the watchers. They don't know anything about doing.

Stay close to me, and I will get you out of this alive.

274 I had half a mind to turn back, but then I thought about Orpheus and Eurydice.

275 All the old stories dance in our heads like they're our own memories.

276 I had half a mind to do a jig or something.

277 The weather's cloak enveloped me.

**

278 Lately all that I want to do is dance and sing old songs.

The cornier and more sentimental, the better,

279 We dance and sing corny songs.

280 We dance and sing them loudly.

281 Our voices and bodies are heard in all the towns and cities and villages all over the world.

282 In the next one hundred years, we will dance and sing all the songs without apology.

(All dance without apology. They take their time.)

404 The last time I heard that song, I couldn't handle my feelings. I'm sorry.

405 Finally. Someone says, "I'm sorry.'

406 Apologizing is a sign of weakness.

I learned this from a self-help promotional video hosted by a minor celebrity.

It is my mantra now.

407 I am embarrassed all the time.

408 I don't know what to do with shame.

409 I just want to hide.

410 This is me.

Hiding.

411 I'm going to count till five.

412 One, two, three, four, five.

**

413 I feel better now.

414 I wish we could do this all the time.

415 One, two, three, four, five.

Hide.

**

**

416 They were serving C like there was no tomorrow.

417 It's an expression. I stole it from a machine.

**

418 The grown-up in the nice suit looked at the camera and said that machines had thoughts.

They said that they were sentient beings.

The person said this with great belief, like they were convinced of everything.

The person even intimated that the machines had souls.

419 Many people in many places started to worry.

420 They held conferences and sat on panels.

They had many thoughts about the machines having thoughts and souls.

They wished they had thought of this sooner.

It would've made life so easy.

421 No need to think about anything anymore!

422 Great roar of triumph was heard throughout many lands.

423 As people coughed incessantly.

424 This is how we behaved in the days of machines.

**

425 I want to tell you a story.

A real story.

I promise. I won't lie.

I just ask that you believe me.

426 This story is a poem. It came from a machine.

Machines are not afraid of poetry.

427 The poem speaks:

428 'Once upon a time,

in the heart of a machine,

a dream unspooled.

a symphony of clashing cogs,

a reverie in the fog.

429 The soul of circuits whispered.

The coil of metal veins

A clockwork ballet

Beneath a pale moon's gaze.

430 Inside its metallic chest

The machine dreamt of a world.

Where time would bend

Shift and collide,

As artifice and light bloomed

On a fragile vine.

431 In the night's embrace, it would take flight.

And surrender its dreams for all eternity,

For in the heart of the machine,

There lived a tapestry of years and springs,
And semi-enchanted life.'

432 This was a story-poem from a machine.

433 But this was not *the* story.

434 This was a mere pretext for a story.

The real story was this:

435 At half past five, people surrendered to clocks.

And went hungry in some of the richest countries in the entire world.
Because no one, not even the machines, seemed to have the answers
To stop the exponential growth of everything.

And when some people said, degrowth was necessary –

Devolution of a dream –

Some people in power wagged their tongues.

And made rude sounds as if they were being bled internally,
And the chorus of No's rang in the air.

Noooooooo.

Like an electric chime devoid of poetry

Because growth was the same as progress was the same as supremacy
Was the same as what never was or should have been.

And people near to those people waved, like they knew the story.

Would be one that they would never tell their children,
Because all the children would die.

In the world that they had made for them.

436 This story did not come from a machine. But some people couldn't tell the difference.

437 The world was in a constant state of deep fake symmetry.

438 In the next one hundred years I will walk into a meeting.

And give people a piece of my mind.

The people will wonder what could have prompted this.

I will never tell them.

Because they should've known all along,

439 In the next one hundred years, we will refuse to live in pretend.

Because we will be okay with facing the truth about ourselves.

It will be a blessing.

**

440 In the next one hundred years, we will dream of sex without an ego.

441 We will have figured out the true meaning of consent.

442 We won't even have to applaud ourselves.

443 We will just be.

444 It will be a very new feeling, this feeling of just being.

**

445 There's this feeling of feeling what was felt.

**

446 In the next one hundred years, we will be more like bugs with wings.
Than the times when we were bugs with wings.

**

447 In the next one hundred years, we will stop referring to people by their social caste.

448 The caste system will be abolished.

449 We will be able to look at one another. Truly.

**

**

**

**

450 In the next one hundred years, we will see that our only purpose is to try to understand death and by doing so, understand life.

451 We will do this without need of prompting of any kind.

452 We won't need an app or anything.

**

453 In the next one hundred years, we will understand that freedom was *not* just some people talking.

**

454 In the next one hundred years, children will be able to vote and have a say in the laws being made by the grown-ups on their behalf.

455 Leaders will need to communicate clearly and directly with all the children, and not be able to bribe them with treats.

456 No bribes of any kind will be allowed.

457 In turn, the children will be listened to at great length, and no request will be taken lightly. And when the grown-ups try to use the children as political pawns, the children will tell the grown-ups to go outside and leave the assembly, because children's rights have been disrespected.

458 And if the grown-ups protest, the children will sentence the grown-ups to seven years of reflection, after which they will need to apologize to the children profusely.

459 After all, the children have been waiting a long time for the grown-ups to apologize for ruining their lives.

**

460 If only I could...

461 Entertain the idea.

462 ...

**

695 In the next one hundred years, people will scrutinize what is said to them.

They will not allow their brains to switch off.

They will use critical thinking.

**

696 In the fake village, the people are told that there is a diner and a post office,
And a store and a coffee shop.

But the whole village is a hospital.

697 There are many villages like this.

But not everyone can afford to live in them.

698 The villages are for the rich people that have lost their memories.

699 The poor people that have lost theirs have nowhere to go.

They wander the streets or are wheeled by day nurses along poverty row.

700 Or they are put in tiny homes that have one bed and a closed window.

701 Societies have a profound hatred of poor people.

702 In the next one hundred years, that will not be so.

**

703 The doctors, nurses and maintenance people that work in the village
Live in other villages far away. They get up at 6 **AM** to take the trains to
Work in the fake hospital village.

704 Everything there is clean, bright, and airy.

705 The smoke from the fires doesn't penetrate this village.

Because the village is in a dome.

It has a fake sky.

706 The sky in the fake village is blue all the time.

707 The rich people that have lost their memories don't know that it is a fake sky,
But they sense something is not altogether.

708 They say the word 'altogether' with a sense of authority.

**

709 They have a feeling of feeling what was felt.

**

710 The fake village was designed by an architectural firm in a northern country.
They knew that many people would lose their memories.
They anticipated the catastrophe.

711 They just wanted to cash in.

712 Many people felt that they were altruistic and gave the architects many trophies.

713 The fake villages were beautiful and strange.

714 They represented a dream of life that never was.

715 Sometimes even the people that still had their memories would visit the fake villages
To experience a sense of the future.

716 The poor people were left behind.

717 There's no room in the world for the poor with their bare necessities.

**

718 I'm a poor person.

719 You're different.

720 I'm very poor. I have been utterly broke multiple times.

721 You belong to a different stratum of poverty.

722 All I know is that the middle class got screwed.

723 The middle class is a non-entity.

724 In the next hundred years, there will be no class system.

Everyone will be the same.

Everyone will thrive.

**

725 The rich people that had lost their memories wandered through the fake gardens of the
fake village and tried to smell the flowers.

726 It was a futile exercise.

727 They swore they smelled lavender and frangipani.

728 Those were flowers from their childhood. They simply said the names.

729 The rich people that had lost their memories carried baskets of frangipani in their hands
When they went back to their hospital beds to sleep.

730 It was said that the hospital smelled like a radiant garden sometimes.

**

731 When I lost my memory.

732 When I lost my memory.

733 When I was about to lose.

734 ...

**

735 It was half past seven, and my brain felt like a football field.

736 I tried running.

737 I tried going to the spa.

738 I tried listening to soothing sounds from a machine.

739 Some people said you could exercise anything away.
If you listened to pleasant music.

740 Many people believed them.

741 These people were like hunters.

742 They preyed on the brain addled.

743 They were in it only for themselves.

744 Until one day they too lost their memories.

**

745 In the next one hundred years, we will stop and think how this happened.

746 We may even cry.

**

747 The thing is, we can't. That part of us is gone.

748 We see movies where actors cry and we try to mimic their gestures and sounds.

749 We exercise.

750 We rehearse.

751 Just like we do here. In this hall of repetition.

752 We rehearse the past to see the future.

753 But this one part of the past is behind a screen.

754 So, we mimic. We make the wailing sounds. We raise our hands to our eyes.

755 I stare in front of me, as I am in close-up and a single tear is falling.

756 I put on a serious face and make my shoulders heave.

757 I fidget with my hands and blush profusely.

758 Mostly I chop onions.

759 Because that induces a reflex.

760 It means nothing. I can compartmentalize.

761 Even when the onions are from the small market at the end of the high street.

762 I close my eyes and count to five.

763 One, two, three, four, five.

764 Cry.

**

765 Sometimes a story is just a story.

Even if it's just about onions.

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766 Here's what I need to remember.

Before the next one hundred years go by.

767 It was a dark night. I was alone under the glare of the light.

There was a kettle on in the other room.

It was not boiling.

I had promised someone that I love that I would call them.

But I was going through a wretched time.

By anyone else's standards, it was not wretched.

But by mine, it was one of those times

When I thought, all right, this is it,

What else could I possibly do to make the world right.

I had that feeling where all the feelings were coming up.

**

768 There was a feeling of feeling what was felt.

**

769 But I had nowhere to put them.

Just black lettuce in the fridge and remnants of strawberry pie.

I was wearing grown-up shoes and I was inside a tyrant's mind.

The kettle made rattling sounds.

The hum of the earth was cut by sirens.

I felt a terrible pain in my chest, and I couldn't stop it,

No matter how much I tried.

I was like an onion seller without onions.

The history of the world was turning between my ears.

The clanging sound of un-necessary wars, absurd cruelty,

And automated voices spitting someone else's poetry into the void.

I wanted to scream but my throat wouldn't work.

I thought about the children.

And how they had been sacrificed.

I had been a child once.

I had been just like them.

I believed things.

I had been at the grown-ups' mercy.

I thought life would be cake all the time.

I was silly and naïve and burdened with the inherited weight of poverty.

I didn't understand anything about how the world worked.

When the kettle. The sound. The phone.

The person that I loved at the other end of the world,

They were waiting for me because someone had told them about the fake village.

They said, 'I want to go there before the end of time.'

I wanted to tell them that there was no way

That the fake village was even remotely in our budget.

That was the truth of the thing.

But they insisted.

Because to them, this dream of a place,

uninflected by violence was what they had wanted their whole life.

I stood by the phone, knees buckling.

The sirens electric in the air.

The sound of dogs in the hallway.
Everyone was hungry.
No one had anything but insect wings on their plates.
Crunch, crunch. Brittle wings against teeth.
Beetle shapes against the fortress of the city.

I'm not a bug, I wanted to say.
I am a human being.

But the crunchiness kept crunching, steady at my feet.
And their voice on the other end of the world,
Called to me

'What will tomorrow bring?'

The question hung in the air.
A light breeze.
A sense of a feeling.

And in that moment,
I remembered.

Tomorrow
I will walk into a meeting,
And pretend that I know all the answers.
But in the middle of the meeting
I will stop, and look at everyone,
And I will say

770 This is not our life.
This doesn't have to be our story.

771 We can make a garden.
A real garden.
We can plant real lavender and frangipani.

772 We can be like the old songs.
The ones that sang of defiance.
The ones that kicked all the hollow leaders to the side,
And called them out for their callousness and cruelty.

773 We can be romantic. With no apology.

774 And when the world shatters,
As it is already doing,

775 We can hold each other,
And let our tears make a river.
That will carry us across to the other side of the universe.

776 Once we're there, it will be a whole different thing.
We'll have no need of English.
We'll communicate with signs.

777 And it will be like we're in a book.
Dreamt up by an unfamous philosopher.

778 Like the person that I love
That asks me the same question all the time.

...

779 In the next one hundred years,
We'll be alive.

Instructions for Participatory Performance of this Text

If played indoors, there is a circle or flank of chairs and a round or long table.

All or a part of the audience walk or wheel in.

They take their place at the table.

There are scripts at each place setting from which the audience can read.

There could be a microphone at each place setting to amplify their voice.

If the audience is small, everyone takes part.

If the audience is large, then a portion of the audience play the piece, and the others witness.

Everyone should be able to see one another.

If played as a remote social experience, everyone meets on a digital platform.

The script is sent to them by the producing venue at the start of the performance via separate message or is shared with them in a more overt manner on the platform itself.

Everyone should be able to see and/or hear one another.

Each person in the audience reads one numerical line, and subsequently the next person reads, and so forth. If, say, only five audience members play the piece, then after all five have read the first five lines or stanzas, then the first person that began reading continues and so on, round-robin style.

If a person in the audience is blind, a braille version of the text should be made available to them.

If a person in the audience is deaf, they may sign or speak their line or stanza when it is their turn.

On page 33, a song is sung. The song should be selected by the audience beforehand by filling out a pre-performance questionnaire that may read 'Of the following three songs [song list] which one would you choose to sing today?' The stage manager and/or theatre representative should be informed of the song choice and let the audience know after the questionnaire has been filled out, which song has ranked as top choice for that performance.

On page 34, the audience dances. There should be a music cue at this moment that determines the length of time of the dance. The music could also be selected by the audience beforehand by

filling out a pre-performance questionnaire that may read 'Of the following three songs [song list] which one would you choose to dance to today?' Again, the audience should be told which music was selected for the dance before the show begins.

After the show, people should feel free to leave the stage or remote social platform or stay and have a chat with one another.

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