

Flight into Safety

Will Owen

play in two acts

*

Introductory Information

Concept: *Flight into Safety* is a play about a man and woman and infant fleeing murderous political violence -- as old, and contemporaneous, a story as there is. This script does not set any particular place or time for the play, giving productions' creative teams great leeway for devising the material and evocational context etc. of their re-presenting the old stories of the play.

Synopsis: A man, a woman, and an infant -- only weeks old -- run-for-their-lives, fearfully seeking refuge from murderous persecution. The action begins one night, in the place where they were living, and ends the following evening, at a militia-checkpoint/border-crossing/airport etc., as they might -- or might not -- be about to escape to safety.

Cast Breakdown: An actor and an actress (and a "baby" -- most practically, a very lifelike-sound engineered-proprobot -- that need not much be seen "in the flesh" because wrapped and carried in swaddling/baby clothes/blanket slings or other devices etc. but that is very much heard and attended to etc. The "baby" can be onstage throughout.) There is also a chorus/crowd represented in the dream sequence portion of the play.

Scene Breakdown: The action takes place in a continuously changing background -- evocative of times and places past, present, or fictional, or a combination thereof -- as the three press on, evading pursuit.

TIMES AND SCENES

THE ACTION TAKES PLACE DURING TWO NIGHTS AND THE INTERVENING DAY
ALONG THE ROUTE OF THE CHARACTERS' FLIGHT

CHARACTERS

A MAN (**H**), A WOMAN (**S**), AN INFANT

A CHORUS/CROWD IS ALSO REPRESENTED

*

Flight into Safety



I *The man, woman and child are asleep. A dream -- or something...a grating/knocking/beeping/or distant sirens and rioting/or far-off airstikes or artillery fire/or close by sounds of armed men approaching etc. -- wakes the man, who half awakens or sleepily goes to window/door/phone, and half-way registers/in denial wishes-it-away etc. He goes back to sleep. Then suddenly bolts awake.*

H

Wake up. Wake up. Right now! We have to go.

S

What?

H

Quickly! Quickly! Now!

S

What!?

H

Take up the child, and leave the rest; there is

S

Oh!? Ohohoh!?

H

no time. Their henchmen now are on their way!

S

Oh my beloved son! My darling one!

H

Right now!

S

But why!?

H

To kill him. Yes, it's so. I know; I know.

S

Oh--ohh! And why!? How do you know!?

H

There is no time -- no, leave it, leave it all!
Our money -- where did I...?!

S

But for the baby?

H

No! There is no time.

S

We can't without...and where?

H

Now! Can't you hear them? They're there!

squad of soldiers/police/paramilitaries heard from off

S

Now come with me beloved one -- don't cry.

H

Give him to me. I'll take him. I'll take him.
This way. Run! Run! Come follow me.
And if you stumble call to me and I
will turn and come to help you -- if I can.

S

Take him. Leave me. I'm with you now.

They rush off. Dark onstage. Soldiers/police/paramilitaries heard/perceived ransacking/searching etc., then departing to give chase. The man, woman and child then come on, breathless, collapsing from exertion and stress in a field/side street in the night.

S

I can't, I can't go on. Oh stop and find
a place to hide and rest and catch our breath.

H

Go there. Go there. We'll hide, and look, and see...

S

Give me the child. He is too small for this.

H

Here take him then. He is so small. I thought
I knew how small in their first days they were,
but oh how even now in stress like this
amazement at perfection and at life
yet seizes me as I see him and you --
and I, despite my fury and my fear,
am raptured by the breath of life in you

S

and him and you, and breath of might-that-is,
whence all, all life depends -- so now
I close my eyes and pray and pray we keep
this child alive to live and serve the right.
And they will kill him if they find us, oh...

H

I see them now advancing in the dark.
This won't be safe -- so now we go! Again,
give me the child and you, you run! We go!

S

I can't, I can't. I now am not so strong.
My little lovely one, what strength -- what life --
is left in me, for you, oh I would give...
But even now no matter what -- don't cry --
oh here, don't cry. I'll find the strength, the love --
the milk somehow despite my state -- oh if
they find us they will kill him -- say it's not so!

H

We have to flee! To stay here is the greater risk.
Oh... Oh, so it is, we'll hide a moment here,

and pray they miss us in this so unhappy but
so welcome cloaking night -- where we,
like timored creatures of the forest floor
all frightened fits of stops and starts hold still,
so still, almost afraid to breathe, sensing
the silent owl tipping its head to hear
our slightest sound, to through the dark
from boughs above plunge down to make us prey.
So keep him silent, keep him silent oh
for his own sake and ours keep him silent now.

S

It will be right. It will be right. My one,
and only one; my love, my love, don't cry.
Your loving father's here to keep us safe
and he -- what do you see, are they

H

His father, huh?

S

How can you think of that now?

H

How can I not? Reminded always by them all?
If we should ever get back home and live
again with kith and kin, they will -- oh yeah --
as always, look at me reminding me.
Despite my proud indifference to them,
it irks me, mock'ry in their knowing eyes --
the accepting, bastard-father -- and all know it.

S

What if, in fact, they just don't care?

H

Hah.

S

So when their eyes they turn, haughty at you,
but think you look in mine, as now, that in
this danger look at you fervent with love's fire --

and gratefulness for you yet making me your wife.
And why would we not ever get back home?

H

Shshshsh... They may be closer and

S

And if they now should come and end our lives,
you would, we would leave them to end
not fully, open, humbly reconciled?

H

You would I would, forgive, forget as if
our shames and angers in times of peace --
of daily life -- did not stay on with us in time
of war -- of fear and turmoil times -- like now,
that is as if the gently heaving ocean swell
that was our lives swayed up into a gnarling curl
of breaking roil and smashed upon the stones of shore?
Are you not seeing what's happening to us?
So quick -- our lives now flung to desp'rate flight,
all shatt'ring fear, hiding and humiliation...
I from here can see nothing now,
and tremble at their coming closer like
a creature cornered, cowering at bay.
And yes, are these to be the last moments of time
together, aching with close tenderness,
before our lives are struck from us, and so --
oh yes -- we should be quick -- save pride --
to fully make our peace but

S

so defiant, won't.
Shshsh...my little one, my little one do not cry,
do not cry now, do not cry now, I pray.
Do you hear them? You can hear them can't you?

H

Yes I can hear them; I can hear them just like you.
They are not so near us yet. Theirs seem the shouts
and noise of common soldiers wishing they
were somewhere else, but officers will soon

step in to press them on. They then may well come closer and may find us. Oh if then...

S

Then if they find us what must I do? And him?
And you? What if they kill you? Then what of us?
What of the child? Will they kill him? And why?

H

Before our eyes as blindly ordered they
will hack the life from living bones and flesh
of him, and you -- that too -- before the end:
and then, it might be best to just be killed,
and left a brace of carcasses so like
so many tossed aside so dead -- so at
an individual end -- in wake of some
so fearful blind, mad policy of state.
And when you think that even states most just
gloss over all their crimes of fear --
they just shrug off onto necessity
all killings seen as needed for security
and preservation of unchallenged rule --
we will need luck as much as prayer to live
delivered of such a human, stupid end.

S

Don't say such things; we will lose hope.

H

And as for those young soldiers on their way,
once we have served their thrills of cruelty,
for them, what's left of all we were would be
the strewn, and smashed and gutted, butt of jokes --
like we were dogs, bloated dead, passed by
unburied on the ground. What matters why
when now we know it's so and must survive?

S

So if they come what do we do? Tell me.
We'll beg them spare his life and yours and mine.
From common human kindness they will see
he is a child, that we love so.

H

Don't cry; don't cry. Be silent, silent and...
and I'll not trust myself or you or him
to mercy of any armed minions of state.
No, I'm of no mind to bootless beg
for anything from mindless, fearful men.

S

So you will fight, be killed, and left alone
we'll face their ends for us without you here?
It would be best if first they killed us two

H

and only then killed me? You'd have me turn
the other cheek so they could strike it too?
I'll fight. Despite our weakness and their strength?
Silence! Oh silence, silence, silence now.

*Soldiers/police/paramilitaries heard/perceived coming close, then
moving on.*

S

Is it, as it seems now? They're gone? And oh,
my one and only one you were so good,
oooh weren't you? And you, what are you doing?

H

Trembling, bent in prayer like all frightened men.

S

That have been answered, answered now?

H

For now, til they come back again.

S

And will again be answered.

H

This is all we have as money, and we

S

have saved our lives thanks to your prayers, yes?

H

I cannot see how much we have. I took so quickly what we had. And we will need it all -- as much as answered prayers in what now lies ahead for us.

S

We can confront what comes and can prevail, as long, like now, so our most faithful prayers are now again

Soldiers/police/paramilitaries again are heard/perceived coming close, then moving on.

H

by nameless might-that-is be answered and we live to re-begin, and re-begin again.

S

Come, my little one, come; we are safe for now. And when will we be safe for good? Where can we go if here they are after us to death?

H

Wherever we can reach, and that is why we need the money; we have to make our way beyond the border of this place -- at least the pillagers and haters there won't be after us in..hah!..the execution of a policy of state.

S

What do we have and how much do we need?

H

Far from enough, I know -- and it's too dark to count it well.

S

So if we go how will we reach where we

H

We can't stay here so we

will -- will we? -- find a way. We will -- my hands
and mind are able, and my utmost effort will

S

in all the firmness of our trust and faith
whereby strong providence she keeps
all beings living in life and grace

H

Yeah, right -- so only pray'rs can save us now?
For even if we kept to ev'ry letter of...
who knows...

S

You doubt, now do you in this that we

H

Were I not so afraid in this catastrophe
by our own countrymen visited on us,
I'd doubt, I would, that

S

Don't. Oh, don't. For then I'd too despair,
and tumbling down in formless emptiness
of lightless fear...my love, my love, my dearest love.

H

We have to go. We walk until the dawn
and then a rest upon our flight we'll take
to then see what tomorrow brings. Come now,
with me, take up the child -- see how he trusts
so utterlessly our love, but speaking with
the eloquence that's only found in children's eyes.

S

Look again to see
if they are gone, and we will follow you --
my eyes like his, all silent trust in you.

H

Then come. I think the way is safe for now.

They walk through the night.

S

Oh stars sewn soft in heaven's coat,
like spangles strewn through mantled dark,
what hand embroidered you to float,
on high, each one a constant spark?
Do you look down on us so cold to human sorrows,
that there's no loving God tied to that hand
that inclines his mind to our destiny's tomorrows,
and kindly, caring guides us to our end?
My heart is heavy and my feet run pain
up through my body, but like a candle springs
a light through dark, my faith, so strongly sane,
within in this travail, like a heavenly angel sings.
And to prevail, I'll keep on best as I know how,
somehow, loving you ever more with every now.

H

I love you. I do. And I love him, despite
my rage at what has now been done to me --
to us -- that makes us run without respite
lost wanderers beneath the indiff'rently
high cold and distant stars and face behind
of him who though I've hewed my best to his
stern ways yet turns turns his face to hide
from this the human world he made that went amiss.
Is it some strength of faith or just my own
that pulls each new step from the last --
so sternly wanted, willed by a self alone?
Or is it for my love for you that I hold fast?
So we'll go on, prevailing, at least for now,
believing that we'll triumph only God knows how.

S

Where are we going?

H

Away from here.

S

Where are we going? Do you know?

H

No, not for certain, but I think I do.

S

What? Then we should stop, and rest, and plan
and feed the child, and find some food and

H

No. We just go on. At least until the dawn.
So long as this dark hides us well from eyes
bent on suspicion, we must use it,
until the break of day, and then we'll rest,
until the streets again are filled with crowds
and we can pass unnoticed among the many.

S

But where then are we going to go? That too

H

I think I've thought of. What else can we do?
The nearest border we will make to, there
where friends or distant kin may harbor us,
I hope -- but there where safety can be found.

S

And how will we pass, without papers or patron,
weak, poor, nameless and alone?

H

I know. I know. How well I know.

S

And if we turned for home -- your father's house
there we would be sheltered and the child

H

There we would be looked for and surely found.

S

They would not betray us. You know that well.

H

How long would you -- or I -- last silent if

bent down and locked in torture's pillory
under interrogation's lash withstand
the pain, and not speak and betray? Best not
to put your kin or your true friend to that.

S

I could die for those I love.

H

If death comes painless quick so could we all.

S

I cannot think about that now, oh no,
not feeling him so close to me this way
and knowing I would live, live, live to love him so.

H

Yeah, so first we live, so we can love, until

S

My darling, darling princely one, oh yes --
he wakes -- and must be hungry. We must stop.

H

Not yet.

S

No. Now. Don't cry, oh-oh-oh don't cry.
And we took nothing to change him -- oh no,
we must stop now and find some water for
no well-loved child must ever

H

No! For what's that matter if by stopping now
we risk, and risking lose what we

S

We must at some point stop. I can't go on
without at least -- ooh! no, no, no my son --
my beloved and extraordinary one --
and nothing, nothing matters but your face
in radiance facing my own. Ohohoh...

H

Not even fear breaks that spell of face
to face, mother and child like earth to sun.
If now we should be found and killed and not
again see light of day, this night would still
become the day -- indiff'rent and untouched,
dead, to all this life of love that radiant springs
from the gazing of your eyes and recognize to recognize?
I see. I see there may be water there;
the dawn is close but not yet come,
so if I build a fire for warmth, the smoke
can't yet be seen and our hiding place suspected.
Wait for me here and I will see

S

Oh, no! No not alone, don't leave us, no,
not for an instant for what if an accident
or violence from others met with you,
and you did not return, and we would live,
forever questioning what did happen, not knowing
if to mourn you, and left alone to face this world?

H

And what of me if I returned, and found
you here no longer, and so had to live
so hollowed out by anxiousness, distraught
forever by what bitter, senseless end
might have befallen you?

S

Remember then
how I loved him, and I loved you, and you
loved us.

H

Once you have there washed him clean,
bring him to this the fire I have built

S

Be careful, those after us may see it.

H

Why do you always tell me what to do?

S

I don't. You just hear that way.

H

I don't; no. Okay. Okay. But no. No.

Nah, we'll be lucky; but yeah, the way it bursts,
a sudden flame -- so hot it shocks us back
as it shoots through these bramble twigs and crackling leaves --
might yet be seen, a glinting in the night.

S

It does burn bright, but is so quick consumed.

H

A flame of fire held in a bramblebush --
that burns so bright and yes, is quick consumed

S

so keep it burning brightly, studying,
its ev'ry state to keep it steadily

H

Yeah, alright. I'll observe it closely and
make sure it does not go out. ... Like this
it could be kept forever unextinguished, and

S

so brightly burn away the dark of night

H

and soon, mindlessly tending it, I would,
a creature shackled to an endless task,
rebel, and cast myself out from its glow --
or grow so numb, out-of-my-skull so bored,
another rote-living primate on the planet's face.

S

What?

Come -- oooh yes my one and only one, I know --

beside it here together we all will take
the nourishment of its bright warmth, and rest.

H

Alright. We stop and steal a moment's rest
upon our flight...to what uncertain end?

S

What? ..Oooh yes, yes, yes...

H

These are the hours that only those
debauched are still awake, and the powermen
are with them, fed and drunk, serving their lusts.
And we will risk they're not a prowl, a watch
for glints as of this fire to scurry up, snarling,
to put out those it may be comforting.
And we, like refugees beset by war's destruction,
the racing fear worn off, discover now
our desolation -- iced with dread this happened --
now stung by depth of hunger and discomfort.

S

But not our thirst, for you found water here.
As much as humanly we can, leave vengeance
for past injustice in forgetfulness outside,
and strive to step across the threshold in
the radiant present of our father's house --
for if we hold, unrelenting, to our tells of woe
their weight leadens so wingbones in flight
that no more than corpses lift their arms
can human spirits lift to fellow-feeling
and not, souless, plumb dead to ground.

H

So say your prayers then, and let me hold you.

S

Amen.

H & S *together, as baby squalls*

Amen.

S

Oooh yes, yes, yes...here, here...

H

This water source, we have no thing
to drink it with so we...can lap it up like animals?

S

Here look what I have found, we can a cup
make out of this I think, while I find how --
oh stop, oh stop, my lovely one, I will
come quick to feed and tend to you -- I will.

H

No, give me that; I'll try to find a way,
and here, use this to rest him on while I

S

Alright. Oh yes, oh yes, my little one, I know, I know.

H

To those so suddenly with nothing how
necessity does make of others' cast off trash
such precious, improvised, new tools.
And I should groan with cold despair as I
look at you now in this the ruins of
what feels as quick ago as this brief sigh
and was the lives we lived with doings of
such carefree, routine habits of hope.
So this is how for refugees or those
upheaved by a disaster, down the slope
of maddened errance their sane selves depose,
as breaking down, despairing, see at last --
that all is gone -- that shock and disbelief
kept hid, like when a loved one's death, just past
for long can leave us blind to crippling grief.
In this inaction now, I face despair
and it becomes too hard to hope or care.

S

Oh no; my love, you are too strong to cry.
Or strong enough to cry and may, for us,

you gather strength from it, or so I pray.
Here, take this cup of water from my hand

A noise, as of armed men approaching, etc. is heard.

H

What was that? The fire! Did you hear it?

S

They..again..oh no -- to me, oh my beloved one.
And oh it may be best in our weak state
to stay and kneel before them and entreat
their human kindness, and accept

H

No. Never. Give him to me. You now go!
I have him. There! Run! Now!
Before they see us, and I'll follow. This way, this way.

*They rush off. Again, all dark. Soldiers/police/militia men etc.
heard/perceived ransacking/searching etc., then departing to give
chase. The man, woman and child then come on, breathless,
collapsing from exertion and stress in a field/side street in the night.*

H

Go on. Go on. We cannot risk to stop.

S

I can't. I can't. Do you not see how spent
I am? And him? Do you not hear him cry?

H

He cries. Yes it is hard for him with me.
My arms are rough and jolt him so, but here
the heart I hold him to is calm and soft,
so like the love in your arms I once knew.

S

God willing, that we'll know again once this
comes to an end and you to safety lead us to...
But now

H

Oh my love for you despite

S

Look! Did you see? There. I thought

H

What? No. They should not be that close.
We have run far; it's still not day nor night,
so still so hard to see so they should not
have found their way to follow us. But I will look.
Though in our tired, sleepless state what we
may think we see, could be not there at all.

S

Yes I, incline my head and wave on wave of dark
exhaustion drapes me down to where I feel
nothing could prick me from collapse in sleep.
Oh, no, no, no, don't cry my little one,
and come to me. Come, let me take him now.

H

Here take the child; hide there and quiet him.
How even now, and here as I breath in
your closeness -- as my senses touch on yours
quick'ning to the promise and the perfume of
impassioning with kissing and embracing all
of you -- I close my eyes and could be back
so safe at peace at home in bed, your body
asoftly heave in breaths beside as Spring
in sweetest rain and warming breezes brings
new life to groves and gardens reaching down
and tumbling fragrant to the edges of
the river glistening in its valley's cleft
among the outspread shanks and belly of the hills.

S

Here? With me as I am now? You make me laugh.
Oh there there my so beloved and extraordinary son.
I close my eyes, so aching tired my head
rolls off your shoulder, and I want so to sleep
that I could standing, crumple, one with the dark,

to never more unwrap my body from your arms.
I only wish there was more love that I
could give you for your taking me -- and him --
oh yes your taking both of us to heart --
out from the turmoil of what would have been
my life of single motherhood with him.

H

A choice I gave myself and took, and don't
regret when I am with you both like this.

S

I close my eyes, you dearly draw me on
as does the hart in wooded glen beckon the hind,
doe-eyed, startled, at the proud antler horns
raised up like dancer's hands aligned,
their spikepoints upward like the cedars stand
straight heaven-tineing from the greensward grove.
And as if down a steepening hillside all --
as fateful frenzy mounts and they succumb --
the world feels wracked and wrought like this,
as darkness of desire closing in
tumbles us down the deepening precipice.
Comfort me with closeness for I am sick with love.

H

You are more comely than new-made Eve
when Adam saw, waking from his first sleep,
the center of the world his eyes would never leave
dark curled, beneath the splendor of her form, and deep.

S

You think only of that and even now?

H

Damn right.

S

And I am laughing now again.

H

Don't laugh. Oh even here oh how
I'd lift the clothes that veil you and I'd then

shake loose your hair in such abandon it would
lead me dearly on to there where love
is seared and quelled -- I know, if here we could --
wrenched both in torso below and mind above.

S

So now we go, we must; you would not know
distracted so, if they were near, or no.

H

I would -- but here's no place to rest and stay.
Give me the child and we'll go on our way.

S

But you could not know. You are so, oh so
sure of yourself you know. But we must go.

H

No, they are nowhere close. I know.

S

And even if mistaken I still trust
in you. But even if so slowly we must
wrench ourselves to action and leave now.

H

Come by my side and I will hold you so,
so closely, you will laugh for me and lighten
all the darkening terrors that so frighten
those who close with senseless death, too soon,
and lose, this joy of love, God's greatest boon.

*They go off. Again, all dark, as ransacking etc. soldiers/police etc. -
- just missing them -- are heard/perceived etc., and then depart. In
the deep darkness before dawn, the man, woman and child then
come on, staggering, bedraggled, dirty and exhausted in a field/side
street.*

H

Come. Come both of you. This is as far
as we can go. So here will have to do.
This arc of tilted earth, where we happen
to stand now breaks into the sun and all

asleep along its dawning rim will soon
bestir themselves awake

S

and rub afresh
their wounds, recalled from yesterday

H

that cry
for vengeance -- for just retaliation -- like
for what they did to us tonight -- just look
where we are now -- I want to kill them all.

S

Cry for vengeance then, shall we? And who
will hear our cry? As all who wake
for a new day upon this planet's face
recall anew only the story of their own

H

struggle for justice.

S

Yes. But don't those stories nearly all
their tellers also serve to carry on
ooh, yes yes, I know I know, my little one --
their will to wreak their vengeance on
their enemy that hurtled them? And in
that part of pitying ourselves don't we
awake, recall our martyred story, all
to spur ourselves to endlessly begin
again, always again, our human hating,
our angry fears and our endless wars?

H

We will sleep here, unfitting as it is.

S

We will sleep here, unfitting as it is,
because -- exhausted -- we cannot now go on.

H

With sleep -- yes, any sleep -- we will renew

our strength enough to persevere tomorrow.

S

And so begin again tomorrow what
we cannot end today. Say you one of
those youthful killers killed -- numbskulled
and cruel as they may be -- wouldn't still
his mother mourn him cheeks burnt raw
by salt-hot tears of bereavement's pain?

H

And I -- oh I -- if here new slain before me now,
he lay, some reeking bundle of stiff'ning gristle,
still leaking, heavy with ebbing warmth,
wouldn't I, as triumph's rage relents, invent
a shared tale of glory as a mask
for shame, aghast before my victim now?
Better keep at looking up again -- alert and fearful --
find another -- and kill again lest we be killed.

S

And so will parents ever, ever wail
their children sent to death in vengeance' fray.

H

And when you look what we have come to since --
all, all we had and were in the world destroyed
by a fearful power's angry whim -- can you
honestly say you would forgive, let go
what they have done? Before the cold, and reasoned
pow'r of justice I would still make them respond,
forcing them to face their actions --
be they the pulsive, stupid crimes of persons or
the meditated, ordered crimes of state --
and eye the consequence of what they've done --
providing reparation that conciliates,
and returns our social bonds to peace.

S

So be sure to kill them bloody quick and questionless,
should any of them stumble in your reach.

H

With what? I know. Sometimes, I know. But now --
look what has been done to us --
wouldn't you lash out burning with rem'brance?

S

So tired as I am now I almost couldn't care.

H

And when you wake, and you remember?

S

We'll look away from that and face the tasks
of getting through the day as best we can --
and also count the new day's blessings to
forget the bitter pains of yesterday...
and love as best we can this child of ours --
there my golden and resplendent one --
oh God, if people knew where some children sleep...
Here, mine is the shoulder you've got to sleep on

H

and yours the shoulder I have to weep on.

S

Don't. Don't. It's not your fault.

H

So maybe... But what I could've done...
And why do those so guilty go so free?

S

Here. This is for you.

H

How did you save this?

S

I did. Somehow.
Take this cup of water from my hand.
This is the way we welcome in our land
all strangers, with this gesture like a band
of human siblinghood, to make them understand

that here, now our guests they can risk trust,
and in our doorway in their wand'ring, fearless stand.

H

Right, and this door with sky for lintel must

S

What? But be wherein 'spite time's fast falling sand
each one of us -- like you and him and me --
when from the womb we cross its threshold and
we cry

H

for life we would from fear live so free,
but human violence will not let stand.
Give me my son that I may bless him now
that that may save him from that doom somehow.

S

And as we sleep blind to our pains at last
may God's almighty love our tiny lives hold fast.

*They sleep. As dawn comes on, theirs -- and others -- voices are
heard -- variously, separately and together.*

H & S

This dark, deep vast -- despite this dust of stars
wherein somewhere in milky mist this Earth spins bound
beside her tiring spark of Sun in arcs
of graceful gravity's pull round and round
dancing from night to day and back until
grim entropy so fatefully will reap
return to new-found chaos silent and still --
will drown at last all life's renewing sleep.
Can light, before -- or are we condemn'dly bred
to vie and counter-vie until that end
avenging wrong with wrong with new blood shed --
from heavensent human consciousness ascend,
and of each one of us a justice' counselor make
who feels what only bloody striking back can slake,
yet sets equity and peace in place, as for our sakes
a share, in wisdom, of the blame just takes?

The baby cries, and as they wake to take care of him, all dark/curtain.

*

◆ ◆

II *The man, woman and infant arrive at a place to stay/emergency accommodation/cheap hotel/refugee camp etc. With evening they depart, and the action moves to a crowded border crossing/checkpoint/ferry landing/airport terminal etc.*

H *to inn-keeper/official etc. (indistinctly heard muttering and proposing/or on phone etc.) as they come in, hiding the child in a bundle/coat.*

Well maybe...no, not for long. ... Yes. Thank you. ... What? ... You want to help us, you say? ... Why would we want clothes from you? ... Well, maybe. ... No, we'll leave tonight. ... And yes, documents yes; those we need. ... You'll help me find someone who can? ... Yes, we have what we need to pay. Well, how much? ... And maybe, you know...for protection? ... Yes, that can work. ... fine. ... And soon I will come to ask you help me find them...for that. ... Yes. Thank you.

S
Is that it?

H
Yes. For now. Quickly. Is the baby alright?

S
Oh my little one, my little one.

H
And I say "Yes, thank you. Yes, thank you" -- making eyes docile and trusting like those of lambs led to the coyotes' exploitation house.

S

Come, come, come, come. Here we are one with you now. And oh, you were so good, being so sleepy and so quiet.

H

What can I do? This took more of our money than I thought -- as everything always does.

S

We have enough left -- for what we need for the baby? Hold this. We need everything.

H

Why can't you...? Alright, alright... And we have some left...for what we need.

S

Help me...here. Ohh...and I am yours and here to play with you now. Coucou, coucou -- oh my most most extraordinary and beloved prince!

H

I'm trying. And here's what we got for you -- and him -- on the way this morning. With something more to eat, for later on.

S

No, this is not going to work. He must be bathed after all this. Is there a way to use the water there?

H

I just brought you this. You just ignore me.

S

I'm not ignoring you, my love, I'm busy.

H

Whatever. Anyway, I got to go now, see if I can get papers for us and...

S

Can you hold him for me there if it's not too cold? We have time.

H

Yes but, it's early yes, but it's better if I go and get it done...and get it...

S

What? Hold him. He can't stay like this.

H

Alright. ... Ohhh...your prince is also mine. But I'll be quick...I hope...

S

Don't even say like that... You sure? You have to go -- leaving me with him alone?

H

How else can we travel by tonight?

S

And until then?

H

We wait here -- and hope their informers...are not informed, by whoever...who bring their betrayals to the bossmen like dogs bring their pleading cringes, so beaten, hoping by more groveling to appease the master's power to make them fear another beating. The longer we stay the more likely someone will question us -- as we run out of money -- and like so many seeking refuge find ourselves spiraling down to permanently suspended in what was to be a temporary flight. So we'll try for tonight.

S

How do you know -- use this -- ohhh, yes, yes, yes -- those you'll see to get us papers won't take our money and betray us too? Or even have them ready for us in time?

H

The risk is there, but the taffickers and document purveyors too have a business to protect.

S

How will you find them?

H

They are there -- and the keepers of this place they know them -- they're here like everywhere there's violent displacement -- and refugees, poverty and fear, borders and authorities -- look how they know, exactly how to prey on us.

S

How did he know? Like we weren't like lovers on the run?

H

What lovers would arrive at morning?

S

Many. With their husbands gone to work that's when wives are free.

H

Very funny.

S

Gently. Hold him turned just a little bit.

H

And even so? Why would he have then offered that he could bring us clothes?

S

Except to help us look less like poor refugees?

H

For a price of course. We'll look alright, I think -- or close enough.

S

Not like this. But first the papers? Can we pay for them? To have them right away?

H

I don't know.

S

You'll have to take this ring you gave me too and the marriage presents' jewelry that

H

You wore to bed our wedding night and I

S

It doesn't matter. I'll remember our wedding still. As long as you also do.

H

I do. And always will.

S

Bring him here. Quickly.

H

Is it that cold?

S

Oh yes, but we have these clothes to wrap you in your father brought. You did well to get them; and for me.

H

You are so beautiful this way.

S

Ohh... You're worried, and want to get on with what you have to do. And you will leave us here alone?

H

I have to.

S

Put him there. I'm so afraid something will happen to you, and then, without you?

H

We can't stop now.

S

Before you go, stay with him and give me a moment for myself.

H

No, let me get ready first -- so I can think through what I have to do.

S

Alright. Embrace me even now to give me courage.

H *going off*

I will though I'm in such an agitated, worried hurry.

S

The thought of facing all of this alone
with only you my son to comfort me
is such a bleak expanse of anxiousness
that I will think not of it, but of you.

And I will take you in my arms and up
above me like an ever-burning firelight,
a blessing like a flame aloft, your face
I'll hold to me and you to nameless God,
beyond and all-creator -- that also must
so lovingly have made beloved you --
I will an off'ring make to him of you,
and with you also of my life, so small,
that yet I'll live a handmaiden who serves
the good and right with steadfast acts
to be the best mother I can for you.

Oh I who grew so free of anger and of sorrow
one with the kinship band around my father's tent,
my life there all safe, brave adventure tomorrow,
how came I now to this travail, so afraid and spent?
I lived in unquestioned piety and respect
for honored ways, never late to light
the household tapers, plead the Lord protect
our house unfurled beneath the canopy of night
and fuel within loveslight-of-learning brightly,
as glowing 'yond the threshold in the dark
they burnt like off'rings on a household altar, lightly
whisp'ring up to heaven to our devotion mark.
And now -- the trouble I'm seeing Lord -- so why
have you so forsaken me Adonai, oh Adonai.

H *from off*

Do you have like a towel or something like that I can use.

S

No. We have nearly nothing -- but what we have we'll be thankful

for. For all we have, in both of you, we'll be thankful for.
Here...wait...use this.

H *from off*
Good. I will.

S
And you my golden and beloved prince,
now is the time for you to sweetly sleep --
so may my singingsong you soft convince
to fall fearfree aslumbering so deep.
Oh happy he who lives to pluck the harp,
and at each string mark the words he sings
as dancing gently with arms angling sharp
and swift-stepped turning oh such beauty brings
as all three things of music poetry and dance
in moment fusion in the mind to bring
inside your ears behind your sight a trance
that even God might find a pleasing thing --
as if a king, before an alter, half in jest
might tempt Him recognize His humans' quest.
I'm just a poor girl, but all my love's for you,
so laughing, proudly as I can, I play
these notes and words and gests, I pray will do
to make you feel more love than I can say.
So sleep, sleep sweetly to this song that I
sing for you my son, a mother's lullaby.

H *coming on*
Alright. I'm ready.

S
Shshsh...the baby's sleeping.

H
I hope I won't be long.

S
You have to go, and leave us?

H
What else can I do?

S

Have you really asked yourself?

H

That there might be some other way? Yes. No, not really. But I don't see one. You will be safe enough here.

S

So you have to go?

H

Yeah, I have to go.

S *going off*

So wait, and just give me a minute; I won't be long -- just to bathe myself and change, at last.

H

Alright. Go. Go on. I'll wait for you with him --
as he so calmly sleeps as if all this
was some bad dream he does not share.
With you now my son, I empty out my heart.
I wish to you bright days of peace in this
dark world of war. What else might break apart
the spell of rage in men, but this father's loving kiss?
But restless, angry, oppressed and rivaling,
even I, who so detest violence's gyre
am yet intent on slaying them unraveling,
weapon in my hand, all self-consuming ire.
I would kill them, kill them, kill them, I would --
amok! feral unselfconsciousness recovered:
but if they killed me, then you, what good
would I have then to you left proffered?
We name the carnage sacrifice and glory,
to turn brute shame into a shining story.
These thoughts that all men have that they
should never speak, are always here within:
how seeing you so innocent I can yet weigh
an action so...so frenzied angry -- as if I'd been
that old man, harried so relentlessly
by violent quarrels stubbornly unresolved,
that he'd buy back, redeem, lost peace and comity --

and by a blameless victim's death absolved
our kinship band re-found new blessed peace
and by that killing end our rivalries anew?
So he, and we, may wish, but killing's gyre will not cease
to be unbroken -- save by all, so me and you?
But yet what was with blinding faith, or anger, then begun,
when he bound to kill, then spared, his only son?
And rising up, up trudge by trudge upon
the slab of mountainside toward the place,
the sun so hot, the lad, such nimble brawn
the claved wood shouldered, framing his face
that dripped with sweat, he turned up his eyes to ask
"But Father, where is the lamb for offering?" and I,
I silenced him: "God will provide for that bloody task,"
Said I. And I...did I believe that from on high...?
Hah! I felt nothing but that, that does not falter,
raging intent or I would not have brought
him there to bind him thus upon the alter
a human sacrifice by God commanding sought.
Who did I think He was that He should test me?
Who do I think I am blind faith should best me?
My hand set down the fire bringing up the knife,
its blade my fingers here beside your ear
set to feel the warm and shock of red ebbing life --
ohhh! what light of reason held then my arm in fear
of trespass, compunctionless ending your throbbing life?
The flare that there suffused my mind did speak,
and bade me stay this act of human killing,
learning to me that from then on we need not eke
reconciliation out from our children's blood unwilling,
but can by ritual repeat, making that act
a sacred, secret fount of culture ever returning
upending, for a time, the cold, hard fact
of wronged self-pity, again renewed, within and burning.
And now do I desist, forgive, forget
or do I act and, justly venging, more violence beget?

S *coming on as baby squalls terribly*
What have you done?

H
Nothing...just thinking that's all.

S

About what? It must be then the stress we're under -- he sounds so terrified. Ohh, now, now, my little one. So, what were you thinking about?

H

What I got to do.

S

What? What's wrong? You've changed our plans.

H

No.

S

What have you got to do?

H

Nothing, I just...

S

Yeah, you just...? Tell me. ... You're not lying to me, but you're not telling me something.

H

Trust me. ...

S

I do. Completely. ... Come. Hold me. I need you with me, now most of all.

H

Look, yeah... ... Yeah, but I got to go.

S

Why so fast? What are going to do?

H

What I got to do.

S

Tell me.

H

No...nothing. I'll be back. Just as fast.

S

What do you have to do? What if you don't come back?

H

I'll be back. Don't worry -- just got to do the deal to get the papers.
We can't go without them, right?

S

No. ... And nothing else?

H

Don't worry about it.

S

I'm worried. You're debating something else.

H

Not any more.

S

So what are you so intent on? ... Are you sure you're right?

H

Yeah. I got to go.

S

So why don't you tell me? Why? What's not right?
You could for just a moment, think it through again,
stay here with me, now he's asleep. ...
Here again beside and with me, in my arms as when

H

so often I have found myself so taken,
not thinking, and in love and closeness shaken
so free of second thoughts and business left
unfinished. No, I got to go, and now.

S

Give me your hand -- your arms give them around me
and give your time to quell my fears in loving care.

H

I can't -- not now. Oh I, how can I turn away
from you like this, the way you blind me now?

But all men do, as when they leave for war,
drawn, despite all they sense is best in them,
to crawl their head under the mask
and helmet of command, girding on
steel-glanced focus and hardheartedness
to be admired and brave life's fray outside,
leaving home and loved ones far behind.

Oh I, how can I break me apart from you now?

You are as lovely as the light of day,
and the love that from your eyes shines on me
suffuses me exactly in the way
brightness itself quenches dark away.

That spirit, that will -- your idea of your
love for me transmutes both my mind and body
like light, on exactly what was there before
in darkness, shows it to be so much more.

These familiar beck'nings of your arms and eyes,
the curls and perfumes by your face and hair
all sing to me of bliss and children's happy cries,
and humbly I should beg you keep me there.

But, to act and brave the dark we know,
so fatefully, now makes me have to go.

S

Then go. Then go. And no, it's not alright. But I'll wait for you; with
him.

H

I'll be back. And lock the door behind me. And be careful should
any come.

S

What else would I be? And are you sure it's best
to go and leave us here like this?

H

There is
no other way and I have weighed the risk.

S

Risks well weighed, still go way wrong.
But be careful and be safe and come back quick.

H *going off*

I will.

S

Be careful and be safe and come back quick.
So, so many so often say, so fraught
with all that hope and hopelessness that stick
like alternating stabs into our self that sorely caught
between those joy and fear contending thoughts
finds that uncertainty itself is now become
the anxious state that trusses up in knots
our mind and heart, clamping them into one.
Sleep, sleep then, sleep soundly while you can,
so may my cares not wrack your tiny nerves,
upset you though of why you know no more than
springtime's birdlets know of winter wind's marauding swerves.
But yet they'll learn, as we all so sorely will
of tragic news that so, so surely leaves us living still.
And then, if he should not come back, what then? What end,
and desp'rate shameful one at that will I
find I'm constrained to undertake, to fend
the wolf off from the door to staunch your hunger's cry?
Alone, a child to care for in her arms
what's there, without money, for a girl
to fall on for a living but her charms,
and fallen, worn and baleful, eye the bitter whirl
of men's lucred lusts and quest for dominance
that arrogantly sated stay unsatisfied,
since driving them's possession's thrill and trance --
love sold for money wounds human feeling til it's died.
Who in that world can harbor gracious pity,
embrace the storm-tossed poor's hapless dignity?
So anxious then for the wreckage of my life
if we by blind misfortune are so left alone,
I turn like I could pray somehow by life
that so does run through me and you as I intone
the nameless echo of the name whence all
life's blessing's from His sight do flow.

The kiss caresses from my lips that on you fall
each sings your name with ev'ry sigh of my dark woe.
And if it comes to sacrifice my honor's pride
for you, the sum of my abasement then
will be the brightness of the glory deep inside
that at my death you'll bless, sadly but proud -- Amen.
So now to sleep, to face awaking, again to strive
in light's cold day, determined to survive.

*As they sleep, the following dream sequence is presented. Played are the Bride **B**, the Groom **G**, the Magnate **M**, a chorus of Courtesans **CTNS**, and a chorus of Bodyguards **BGDS**. These can come on or go off in the usual way, or otherwise appear and disappear from the attention of the members of the audience -- as in dreams, transitions are abrupt. In particular, the courtesans and bodyguards quickly transform into citizens and wedding guests, and back again.*

A Courtesan *to the magnate*

Kiss me with a kiss deep from your mouth,

CTNS *to the magnate*

your hands like cinnamoned wine thick thrill
the tongues of our rosebudwelled desire,
your breath, your skin exude your power,
your name is like a trance of sweetest myrrh
so we, young things, vy in eagerness to serve
the knowing labyrinths of your lusts.

B *calling to the absent groom as wakened by bodyguards and brought to the magnate*

To me! To me! I have been taken, oh my best-beloved!
My brothers sent me tending the flocks,
and I was taken, taken forced this way
to shackling here in luxure's cage.
The vineyard of my honor's now scorched earth.

CTNS *to the magnate*

Our pleasure's swoons are yours to savor,
your touchings headier than purpled wine,
your body's labors, panting, please us still --
we are right, ripe, to love your likes.

B *having fainted, and regaining consciousness, again calling to the groom*

Where, where now, are you my heart?
Where lead you, freely wandering,
in roundlet hills or froned gullies,
cedared slopes or stubbled deserts
your lambs to graze and lap the rivulets?
So I can find you ending my errance
here in the herdpens of the land lords?

A Courtesan *to the bride*

Oh silly girl, so is the way of the world.
Be not so simple, see your beauty overpowers,
making tremble men in urgence to possess.

A Courtesan

These clothes they so become you

A Courtesan

as artisans'
most masterful mouldings of scalloped gold

A Courtesan

frame, unnoticed, the light-flashing facets

A Courtesan

of precious beauty, brilliant to desiring eyes.

A Courtesan

Your feet, like jewelstones set in filagrees,

A Courtesan

are so beautiful with shoes.

M *to the bride*

When my minions, fine appareled
in myriad array they serve before me,
I compare you to the awe of their display.
Your cheeks russlet like wild applets
with silver spanglets I will grace;
droplets of coral for your veilband,
and pearls and amber will bedeck

the gorgeplain by your breastlets
that like budded towers nipping stand.

B *withdrawing from him and returning to sleep*

I am the rose of Sharon, and would no baubling from you.
My love is like the kingdeer that hurtles mid the trees --
none touch his majesty -- and like a music
of fragrant winds he arcs up between my breasts,
his left hand cradling my head,
as his right holds below my back the way the earth
sustains through day and night the work of life
beneath the canopy of sky.

G *appearing beside the bride*

Oh daughters of the city, I beg you wake
wake not my love who breathes so nimble lightly
in our blessed marriage bed. Roes and gazelles
that spring like dancers, wake her not
that she may sleep.

B *waking*

My love has come to me, I hear his voice,
and I am with him. He braves the entrance
to my father's house, fearless if he's found,
and speaks to me by the vines beneath the window
of the women's rooms -- through the trellis
I hear him say, and exult in fear for him:

G

Wake, wake, get up and come with me.
The winter now has ended and the rains have stopped.
Spring flowers soon will bloom across the hills,
and bring the season of courtship songs.
And ours I sing you now, my dove with eyes
that black jetted beads peer from the ston niche --
in first flight mount away with wings above the walls
alighting on the boughs of my verdant garden's trees.

B *laughing with the groom, then suddenly alone again*

The redfurred little foxes snap
jumping at the grapes that sway
down from the vines drenching

their sharp muzzles as with wine.
Cover me with kisses for I am sick with love.
Where have you gone my best-beloved?
Have I lost you, and you abandoned me?
In the garden of my Eden bed,
I searched for him I love;
I woke in the parching desert
of his having gone from me.
"Get up, get up," I said to me,
and run to ev'ry city gate and market place,
and see perchance someone has seen him
in his certain search for me --
and I will take him back into my mother's house,
into the room where she gave life to me.

BDGS & CTNS *as chorus citizens*

Look! Look now! Oh wonder!
The awe and fear of the sight of power!
Like a tower of clouds beyond the city,
with thunder-sounds of armor and of engines
like the columns of an army comes the pageant
of those who wield the riches of strong rule.

B

You? And you? Or you? Have you, tell me
seen my love for whom I ache in soul and heart?
You? And you? Or you? Have you, tell me
seen him who stands apart from the sons of the city --
more honest, and more kind, more true?
He is my love, and I will take him back into my arms,
and will not let him go.

BDGS & CTNS *with the magnate, first as citizens, then as
bodyguards and courtesans again*

Look in wonder at what ravishes our eyes.
The burnished convoy of our ruler
blatant fills the street and public square.
His guards are like fierce athletes
who make us cower from their looks.
Expert in war they touch their weapons,
handling them like amulets to excise fear
of rememb'ring bloody killings in the night.

When he appears, stepping into light
their eyes they turn to look on him with ardor,
worshipful, as if his power absolved them.
Look! Now see! As in a swirl of myrrh and frankincense
he stands, alone, regaled, his face uplifted
as if for us he might now re-don the crown
of his election -- see, he smiles.
Our pride submits; our rage is quelled,
our hearts so thrilled now docile sway
before the majesty of wealth and fame.

B

You? And you? Or you? Have you, tell me --
oh daughters of the city if you see him,
oh tell him, alone for him, I am sick with love.

BDGS & **CTNS** *variously, individually and in unison*

What is so better about your love that you
would keep him? You, a beauty in your prime
that can make your own the power of men?
Why is your beloved more than any other
that we should heed your plea to find him?

B

My love is a proud tower above the warren-fields
of cityscape; my love is a thing made for beauty
among ten thousand artifacts made for use.

CTNS *laughing*

Any beloved can be changed like shoes.

B

You? And you? Or you? Have you, tell me,
seen my love whom I am seeking?
I opened all to him and now... Why has he gone from me,
and left anxious calamity and desperation?
His voice as calm as the murmur of the sea
bestirred most soaring hope in me,
and I called to him, and silence answered me.

A Bodyguard

You search for someone, my turtledove?

B

Uuohgh... Oh, leave me, please.

A Bodyguard

You are distraught? Tears stain your face?

A Bodyguard

Sister, let us be the ones to help you.

B *struggling to get away, but constrained by them, calling to the groom*

No! No! No leave me. Please... Oh!

To me! To me! My best-beloved I have been taken.

A Bodyguard

Bow your head! Not toss and turn from us so restless.

B

The strongmen of the city found me,

tore away my veil and forced me.

The vineyard of my honor's now scorched earth.

A Bodyguard

If she is our sister, how will we earn from her?

A Bodyguard

She will be a wall upon the ground like this

A Bodyguard

and we will build a pile of silver on her.

A Bodyguard

Her breasts are small

A Bodyguard

but her hips are comely

A Bodyguard

made for fucking.

B *fighting them*

Aaaghghgh!

A Bodyguard

Little whore! Who are you to fierce defy us?

B *overpowered by them, as they take her off etc.*

My rights are smashed, my heart is bludgeoned,
my body gutted, like carrion in the street.

Why have you forsaken me my best-beloved?

A Bodyguard

And if she is a door, with stout woods of cedar

A Bodyguard

we will seal her shut!

B

Aaaghghgh!

G *appearing, cheerful and oblivious, surrounded by wedding guests*

Aye, aye, at my wedding feast my friends
drink, full-hearted, to me and to my brothers,
to my father and his house, firm-founded,
here, in the good grace of our state.

Prosperity and happiness are the work
of policy and peace, and our, yes work
as citizens is shoulder the burdens of consent
while tireless, pay the price of vigilance
against all encroachment of our rights.

Who bear, from responsibility not fear,
the chores that keep our liberty secure
well earn the admiration of all brave and free.

To them, to you, my friends, I then
now raise my glass that in the vineyard of your lives
love, long life and happy children may --
as for my bride and I so earnestly
we hope the grace of providence will bring --
yes, justly be the fruits of labor shared
in ties of lasting community and peace.

BDGS & **CTNS** *as wedding guests, going off with the bridegroom*

Sing the wedding song
of family founded and renewal.

Looking at the young beginning,

the old can smile on death and ending.
Here again, again in grateful tears
the wail of song like incense
within suffuses as from spinetip spiretops,
rising heavenward we trow.
The groom stands like a hero,
arriving home at first return;
the bride, gracious beauty,
blushes with childbearing's bloom.
Happy, happy the wedding day,
here we lace the ties that bind
us up into community, and newly mended,
gird again for survival's fray.

G

Again, again to me my friends,
and I will lead you to my father's house --
through the mighty portal in it's ancient walls
that still withstand the disorder of the world --
to speak each with the others
in the calm and shade under mighty trees.
Bring my bride tonight
to the garden there
where beneath the canopy of stars
I will lift her veil, and we shall be one.

BDGS & CTNS

Happy, happy the wedding day,
here time, a gate closing behind us,
yet opens, again, a threshold to the new

G

To me, my friends, and walk with me this way.

*All go off. The bride, near death from their violence, is brought
back on by bodyguards and left like a body dumped in the street.*

B momentarily regaining consciousness

Ahogh...

The wonder of pain unbearable, to those
who have till now known only health and peace...

ahogh...

Am I still me who knew not this, how such
destruction will be done to soul and person by...
ahogh...

Why have you forsaken me, my best-beloved?

I have lost you, and you abandoned me.

I do not weep to die alone, unheld
but weep for you, unknowing, who remain
like children playing, intent with glee,
such true believers in your gameworld,
sweetly laughing, slipping on the edge
of a grave-pit slick with tears. Aogh...

Come to me my love, come now, one last
embrace of consciousness before this arc
of body pulled so taut by life is loosed.

I seem asleep in life's brief dream, but I
within am waking, heart and mind, alive
for my love's reach to me. I hear his voice.

He calls out to me, and I am at his side.

The redfurred little foxes snap
jumping at the grapes that sway
down from the vines drenching
their sharp muzzles as with wine.

Cover me with kisses for I am sick with love.

Cradle my face that faces yours, our smiles
of happiness about to break, in triumph
into laughter, our own, and then our childrens',
playing, in the precinct of our marriage bed.

*The Groom comes on, distraught, as if searching. Finding the Bride,
he wails in pain; then, suddenly displaying a weapon, goes off
brandishing it. Bodyguards and Courtesans, as Citizens, come
on. They shroud the Bride and carry her off as if to burial. The
Groom comes back on and joins the funeral procession.*

G

To me, my friends, and walk with me this way,
and take another step upon the path that leads
each one of us to wait the night of our last day,
that leaves in light only our actions and our deeds.

And yours were those of love's greatest gifting,
so deep in selflessness, soulful in personalness --
at every glance of child or husband uplifting

our hearts and minds to stronger consciousness.
To bear, alone, the way life now hurts without you
there's only ev'ry remb'rance I recall about you.

BDGS & CTNS *as funeral marchers, going off with the bridegroom*

Wail the burial song
of dead-cold, lifeless closure,
transmuted by mind's loss and pain
into transcendent hope of life eternal.
Here again, again in grateful tears
the dirge of song like incense
within suffuses as from spinetip spiretops,
rising heavenward we trow.
Our beloved, like a crumbling stone
lies ready for discarding in the ground,
but beyond any blessing and song
the mighty name we praise with cries
of for ever and ever brings sweet hope consoling
and abundant peace, at last, upon us all.

*As the dream sequence ends -- gradual transition -- the audience
members' attention is returned to the place to stay/emergency
accommodation/cheap hotel/refugee camp etc. and as it was before
with the woman and baby asleep.*

A Bodyguard *as a groom/husband/citizen*

My best-beloved, our guests are on their way,
our children returned, your welcome greatest grace
upon all come here for this joyful day --
they hear your voice of wisdom and gaze upon your face.

A Courtesan *as a bride/wife/citizen*

The play of hearth-flame fires here lap their light
upon the table-set of cups and cutlery --
as ever, does honoring and kindness serve the right,
a rampart, mighty against savagery.

A Bodyguard *as a groom/husband/citizen*

Your eyes like pools drink deep of Earth's myrrhed sweetness,
your thighs are cleft with jewels where they burgeon
joined at belly-swell of womb -- I evanesce,
and wake within and speak as I set on.

A Courtesan *as a bride/wife/citizen*

My love came running to the doorlock;
his voice, an ache or hand fast held me.
Opening, so strong released me I in shock
trembling, dripping woke breathing the life within me.

A Bodyguard *as a groom/husband/citizen*

The lovemaking of dawn is done; let us
rise up, go to the vineyards and see --
the fruits only of work and time can set us,
in human liberty, free -- and there I will stand beside thee.

A Courtesan *as a bride/wife/citizen*

Set me as a seal upon thy heart --
seas cannot quench love, implacable like passion.
Love is strong as death if not sundered apart,
and jealousy a grave where fools reap dark confusion.

A Bodyguard *as a groom/husband/citizen, going off*

Our friends are in the garden, with us by choice.
So come, come now -- we harken to your voice.

A Courtesan *as a bride/wife/citizen, going off as sounds of squad of
soldiers/police/paramilitaries heard from off*

Run, run, flee my best-beloved arcing alive --
a king-deer leaping at the weapon cry, survive!

H *coming on carrying package/bundle/backpack etc.*

Still sleeping, huh?

S

Ohh... You're back.

H

Yeah.

S

The wonder of it. God. Thank God.

H

Yeah?

S

Oh my love, my beloved love.
Oh thank God, thank God, you're here --
I who only dream of you!

H

Yeah.

S

Hold me, hold me, hold me.
Embrace me deeply for I am fraught with fear.

H

Yeah.

S

Is everything alright?

H

Yeah.

S

What's the matter?

H

Nothing.

S

What's that?

H

Nothing.

S

What did you get?

H

Nothing. Something I had to get!

S

Shshsh...not so loud. The baby's sleeping.

H

Yeah.

S

So what happened? Did you get everything?

H

Yeah. And then some.

S

Can I see?

H

I got the papers, alright? We can leave tonight.

S

Did you get us anything to eat?

H

No.

S

What? Why not? So how

H

I couldn't.

S

Okay, but how do you think we're

H

I just couldn't. That's the way it is.

S *indicating package/bundle/backpack etc.*

And in there's the clothes we'll be wearing? Well, they better

H

what clothes?

S

What? So what is that? We can't go like this, you know that -- we won't get past any -- they'll see right away that

H

yeah! And then they'll see alright.

S

Huh? Why didn't you get us anything to eat?

H

I told you

S

what is that? Let me see.

*They struggle momentarily over the bundle/package/backpack;
sword/handgun/rifle/weapon etc. falls/is taken out etc.*

H

That's right. I'm going to get them. If I have to.

S

Where's the rest of the money? Aieaie! If it's all gone how're we going to going to take care of the baby? What are we going to eat so I can feed him? How could you?

H

I'll find a way.

S

No you won't! You'll just fall into violence and get us all killed.

H

No, I won't!

S

Yes you will. It's always that way. You fool!

H

What do you know, you

S

I know, and what I know I have to say.

H

You can say what you want, but I'm still right.

S

And still reckless, selfish and destructive!

H

Shut-up! I don't want to hear it.

S

Oh! And what you were going to say?

H

Nothing.

S

"Nothing." "Yeah." "Nothing." Stop it already with your lying self-deceptions!

H

I'm not lying, God knows I'm not. This is what life requires.

S

Killing and more killing. Stupidity and more stupidity.

H

What do you know? You're a stupid little girl, and if it hadn't been for me, you'd still be like some soldiers'

S

What? Ahgh! And some knocked-up little slut on top of that, that's what you're thinking, still holding past against me?

H

No! Now there's now! Damn you! Now shut-up!

S

You think I don't regret it, that I should need to be forgiven?

H

That's not the issue, not with me anyway -- and you know it.

S

You sure?

H

Yes. God, damn it!

S

I love you so.

Baby squalls. She picks up the baby and moving away, turning her back to him etc.

H

Look at me.

S

No.

H

Look at me.

S

No. I'm too ashamed of you.

She busies herself with baby as he stands silent, perplexed, hesitant and at a loss.

H *catching sight of/picking up etc. sword/handgun/rifle*

About what?

S

About this. About that. About me. About you. Oh, yes yes, my extraordinary prince -- you must be so hungry.

H *putting sword/handgun/rifle etc. back in package/bundle/backpack etc. and then going off*
I'll be back.

S

Where're you going!?

H

I'll be back, I said!

She breaks down, crying with the baby. Recovering, then consoles/feeds/walks him etc. as the following song is heard from

outside/as she turns on radio/TV/tablet etc.

*The love that we lived
felt so right and so strong
that I never believed
it could ever go wrong.*

*Now my story's as old
as love that faithless destroys
vows to have and to hold --
new loving hearts left old broken toys.*

*Yes the love that was ours
sustained my hope in life here below;
it stood a proud fortresses towers,
that now in ruins time's laid so low.*

*My workday world where love did reign,
are now this valley of trial and pain;
here where hurt and heartbreak only remain
do I in darkness, desperate pray in vain?
In rays of light like pity then
that love may live for me again,
sweet blessing from God above,
extend your solace, oh love.*

*Someone to trust with, with all our might;
someone entwined with through tireless night;
someone who changes in every way
what all we live for through night and day.
Someone's warm caring like your's did then
for making plans then descend again
to sweet surrender's untamed release
in true love's mighty peace.
But here I see faithlessness reigns
in this valley of tears
where with your memories' remains
I walk these dark lonely years.*

*My workday world where love did reign,
are now this valley of trial and pain;
here where hurt and heartbreak only remain
do I in darkness, desperate pray in vain?*

*In rays of light like pity then
that love may live for me again,
sweet blessing from God above,
extend your solace, oh love.*

He comes back on carrying other bundles/packages/bags etc.

H

Well, I'm back.

S

That was quick.

H

It's their business here, vulturing on the desperate -- and now let's go.

S

Now?

H

Always better than later and we put all this on and look like -- we hope -- like nameless others in the flux of streaming travelers and change and there's tickets and passpapers and with these maybe we'll get through -- but yeah, yeah now.

S

Yes, now -- always better now than later

H *as busying themselves with opening bundles/packages/bags, looking at papers/passports/ID cards, preparing to change etc. they fall into an embrace for reconciling too?*

S

I love you.

H

I do too. I do.

S

So what's our name now?

They laugh.

H

Now? Here? With me as I am now? You make me laugh.
I wish. We have nearly no money -- at all.
And less time. I've also arranged someone to take us.
Now. This time this better work -- we can't afford another.
But we -- oh God -- got to take our chance now
before..our friends and fellow-citizens..
I traded near all we have for this one chance --
and knowing bad luck and benightedness, why they'd
as soon both fleece and turn us in. For what?

S

I'll get the baby ready. If it's to be now,
then time is running.

H

I can do that, you get ready.

S

Okay.

H

C'mon, c'mon -- make you look like a traveling prince, why not?

S

Circus prince, in this get-up.

H

Fits him fine. Whoa, yeah -- no doubt about it.

S

Doubt about what?

H

The splendor of your beauty -- and of how...
what if we don't make it? What happens

S

May not be in our hands.

H

Yeah, yeah. But looking at you I'm tempted to believe.

S

Listen to me. God willing, we'll make it fine. Don't worry about it now.

Worry doesn't change a thing, preparing does

H

Yeah -- but I'm worried...but I got you to distract me.

S

Not now, my love. How do I look?

H

I give up.

S

Still, it's a little tight, but still I appreciate it.

H

Yeah, it is a little but

S

I am not getting fat.

H

How can you think of that now?

S

How can you?

H

Do we take this?

S

We should take everything, look like we have something.

H

What if they search us and find it?

S

There'll be no deceiving them once they look. If we're stopped, then

only God knows.

H

Right. This time this better work.

S

Yeah, you're right. Here, give that to me. All that's ready.

H

And him? Now. Here, can you?

S

Yeah, yeah. Oooh and you're being so good. If we could even hurry more, we should. I feel

H

we can't do this any faster -- though action is its own enabler.

S

What?

H

I'll explain later -- if we get the chance.

S

We will.

H

We hope. We have to go, right now.

S

Now come with me beloved one -- don't cry.
Your father's here, and will keep us safe.

H

We'll see about that. Now we go.

They go off, and all dark/curtain for scene change.

The man, woman and infant arrive at the crowded waiting area of a checkpoint/border crossing/ferry landing/airport terminal etc. They make their way through the crowd -- jostling, hubbub, hurly-burly

*and confusion -- to go wait in line with those waiting their turn try
and get past the armed men/police officials/immigration window etc.*

S

They're all looking at me.

H

Yeah -- and will your beauty just distract them
or spur them on to time-passing harassment
until they stumble on a reason to detain us?

S

What? Why? Who?

H

The checkpoint guards and others there --
and how so many more there will be
to get past somehow before we can breathe free
beyond oppression's strangling fears?
Come -- walk closer -- and you take the baby --
and look the part of woman with newborn, it might

S

what's to look when it's what I am?

H

What's to see when fear makes us blind?

S

Watch my purse.

H

Yeah, alright.

S

Watch it, these

H

yeah, alright!

S

You don't have to get upset.

H

I'm not, it's just..I'm stressed, stressed... Isn't it bad enough having all these..shouters bossing you around?

S

I don't shout.

They laugh.

H

There -- this way -- I think I see where we can wait -- and observe how this is working.

S

Observe what? We have to get through here. I'm coming. I'm coming.

H

Let me look at how it works.

S

I'm letting you, I'm letting you.

H

Here, just for a moment -- and if we just get past them...right there, and we're free -- and how often have all of us so wanted...and the breaks just broke us the other way?

S

Ohh...ooohh...oh yes, yes, my little one -- right away.

H

What? No!

S

Yes.

H

What? No!

S

No what?

H

We can't change him now, here. Can't you wait?

S

No. And so what? And some things in life don't wait;
either children are cared for or they're not.

So here, we can do it quickly; hold this.

My one and only prince, oh yes, I know.

Ooohh, ooohhh -- so beautiful, like everything you do.

And what could be more normal for us
the way we are in life, in our performance
for them there. Take this.

H

What do you want me to do with this?

S

I don't know; look around and put it somewhere.

Use your imagination -- and surprise yourself.

And in one instant we'll be ready..ready --

chook, chook, action, action, done, done --

oooh...yes yes yes, my one and only extraordinary one.

H *indicating guardgroup/controlpoint/stampingwindow etc.*

And now we're done and ready, so nonchalant we just pick up and
pack up, stroll over calm and natural as you please..as we're not...

S

I know. We're coming, slowly --

unlike our racing hearts inside fevered sick

with hopes and prayers...ooohh...aargh...

no, no...we shall not be forsaken now

our faith and prayers' strength and power *suddenly interrupting
herself* do you have all our papers?

H

Yes! What? Do you think I threw them away?

What makes you laugh?

S

That we don't have a care or fear in the world.

H

And pray with strength inside, why not?
We all by right, justice expect, and yet
look what, by wrong, we with so many get.

The ambient crowdsound/murmur has been slowly growing louder and louder. It crescendoes as they reach the front of the line. As they are walking over towards to the guardgroup/controlpoint/stampingwindow etc., an instant of spotlighting catches them for a moment at all dark/curtain.

*