

Forgotten Bread

by SEVAN

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FORGOTTEN BREAD

by
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+
<

SCENES:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Prologue: The Questions Begin | / |
| Scene 1: The Matriarch | + |
| Scene 2: Beans and Wine | + |
| Scene 3: The Sisters | + |
| Scene 4: The River Maidens | + |
| Scene 5: In the Ivory Tower | + |
| Scene 6: The Altared Saints | + |
| Scene 7: Sibling Entropy | + |
| Scene 8: The Jarbig | + |
| Scene 9: Sins on Skype | + |
| Scene 10: The Abandoned Mother | / |
| Scene 11: Pandora Suffers | / |
| Scene 12: The Intellectuals | / |
| Scene 13: In Plato's Cave | / |
| Scene 14: The Reunited | / |
| Epilogue: The Found Son | / |

CAST:

| | |
|---|--------|
| Man 1 - Lost Son | |
| Man 2 - Boghos, Jarbig 2, Soldier 1, The Philosopher | < |
| Man 3 - Brother, Soldier 2, The Scientist | + |
| Man 4 - Husband, Soldier 3, The Poet | + |
| Man 5 - Sarkis, Jarbig 1, Soldier 4, The Neophyte | < |
| Woman 1 - River Maiden 1, The Abandoned Mother, Takouhi | + / |
| Woman 2 - River Maiden 2, Vartouhi | / |
| Woman 3 - River Maiden 3, Aunt, Professor | / |
| Woman 4 - River Maiden 4, Halide, Friend | / |
| Woman 5 - The Matriarch, Wife, Mother | / |

* Though there are scene headings, the piece should be performed without blackouts or stops. The magic of this piece, I feel, comes from the visual and the aural in partnership with the text. To that end, feel free to explore and create the world at will.

<
<
<
<
<
<
<
+

'The real power of art is to help us remember that which has been lost.'

<
<

+
<
<

-- Paula Vogel

<

'History is not the past. It is the stories we tell
about the past. How we tell these stories -
triumphantly or self-critically, metaphysically or
dialectally - has a lot to do with whether we cut
short or advance our evolution as human beings.'

<

+

+

+

<

-- Grace Lee Boggs

+

+

'Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of
the Armenians?'

<

<

-- Adolf Hitler

+

PROLOGUE: THE QUESTIONS BEGIN

The lights pop on.

THE LOST SON

(reading off an iPad)

'My family tree is a stump. A stump from which there is no growth. A scarred stump that I feel but can never see.'

FRIEND

I like that.

THE LOST SON

It's good right?

FRIEND

Oh yeah.

THE LOST SON

A-thank you very much. 'In my childhood home there was a gold silhouetted figurine-'

FRIEND

Golden. Adjective.

THE LOST SON

It was made of gold.

FRIEND

Same difference?

THE LOST SON

Strunck & White might differ.

FRIEND

Go on.

THE LOST SON

'There was a GOLDEN silhouetted figurine of a dove with a clear crystal hanging in the middle. And engraved on the base was 'April 24, 1915. 1.6 Million' I asked my mother once what it was for. 'It's in honor of the Armenian Genocide. Your grandmother survived it. Now brush your teeth and go to bed.' I didn't give it a second thought. I was 8. I wanted to play with my He-Man figures.' Hopefully they laugh.

FRIEND sits confused.

THE LOST SON

Or not.

FRIEND

No no - it's funny.

Sure? **THE LOST SON** <

Well - witty. **FRIEND** <

I'll take witty. **THE LOST SON** <

Not sure a room full of academics will appreciate it. **FRIEND** <

I'm not writing it for them. **THE LOST SON** <

Well - I mean - hello? Who else are you writing it for? It's an academic conference. **FRIEND** <

Fine. I'll take it out. **THE LOST SON** <

You don't have to compromise. **FRIEND** <

I'll live. Anyway- 'I'm an American - born and -' **THE LOST SON** <

Also can we talk about this Armenian thing? **FRIEND** +

I am. **THE LOST SON** <

Your being one. News to me. **FRIEND** <

My last name ends in -ian. **THE LOST SON** +

So? **FRIEND** +

Standard Armenian indicator. Anyway- 'I'm an American - born and -' how about you not be on your phone right now. **THE LOST SON** +

Finding it on a map. **FRIEND** <

It's kind of under Russia. Close to Iran. **THE LOST SON** /

FRIEND +

Ambiguous...ahhhhh - ok - so...you're Middle Eastern. <

THE LOST SON /

Technically Caucasian? It's kind of a nebulous part of the world. So - 'I'm an / American - born and -' <

FRIEND /

Kim Kardashian! /

THE LOST SON /

What? /

FRIEND /

I-a-n. She's Armenian, right? <

THE LOST SON /

Thousands of years of history and we're reduced to The Kardashians, Dr. Kevorkian, and Cher. +

FRIEND /

Cher?? <

THE LOST SON /

Can I continue? +

FRIEND /

No. Why have you never talked about this before? <

THE LOST SON /

Wasn't relevant. <

FRIEND /

And your grandmother survived the Genocide. <

*THE MATRIARCH enters the stage slowly taking
in THE LOST SON and his surroundings.* <

THE LOST SON /

That's what I've been told. /

FRIEND /

And why did it happen. <

THE LOST SON /

Uh - not sure to be honest. <

FRIEND /

That's what the panel discussion is about, right? <

THE LOST SON /

Well - it's more about broken cultural identities in a mono-identity culture. <

FRIEND /
Yeah, fine, but events of that scale end up embedded into <
cultural identities. Passed down through generations. <

THE LOST SON /
Not in my family. Anyway, I'm writing it from a Western <
perspective. /

FRIEND /
Well that's boring. /

THE LOST SON /
I can't write from the Armenian perspective. <

FRIEND /
You just said you were Armenian. /

THE LOST SON /
I mean I come from that. But I was born here. +

FRIEND /
We all are. /

THE LOST SON /
Yeah, but I am - I mean - /
(closes cover on iPad) +
Let's do this another time. +

FRIEND /
I didn't mean to piss you off. /

THE LOST SON /
You didn't. /

FRIEND /
I mean I think it's interesting. Just trying to get a sense /
of the bigger picture. /

THE LOST SON /
I know. /

FRIEND /
Don't be angry. +

THE LOST SON +
It's fine. +

FRIEND +
That's anger. +

THE LOST SON +
It's ok. Really. +

A moment. +

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| | FRIEND | + |
| I'll go. | | + |
| | THE LOST SON | + |
| It's fine. | | + |
| | FRIEND | + |
| I can listen to the whole thing later after work? Promise | | < |
| I'll be quiet. | | + |
| | THE LOST SON | / |
| Sure. | | + |
| | <i>He escorts her out.</i> | / |
| | FRIEND | + |
| Look take this or leave it - but I think you'd have a | | + |
| stronger, and more interesting thesis, coming in from the | | + |
| Armenian angle. It's something we haven't heard before. | | + |
| | THE LOST SON | + |
| I'll think about it. | | + |
| | FRIEND | + |
| Angry. | | + |
| | <i>Kisses him on the cheek. As she shuts the door behind her a church bell rings three times.</i> | + |
| | | + |
| | <i>THE LOST SON moves to a desk sitting in a pool of light - frustrated - and starts to sift through all the books, stopping to stare at nothing in particular. He's inundated by all the books. He picks up his article and reads. THE MATRIARCH begins humming the Armenian 'Our Lord's Prayer' ('Hayr Mer').</i> | < |
| | | < |
| | <i>He doesn't seem to hear it. The pool of light starts to spread and THE MATRIARCH steps into the light. Voices pick up the melody singing the words. The cast begins to slowly flood the stage. The song crescendoes as more voices join in and church bells begin tolling. The cast surrounds THE LOST SON and at the end of the song sit cross-legged around him except for the MATRIARCH.</i> | / |
| | | / |
| <i>Hayr mer, vor hergeens yes,</i> | | / |
| <i>Soorp yegheetsee anoon ko</i> | | / |
| <i>Yeghetze arkayootyoon ko</i> | | / |
| <i>Yegheetsee gamk ko</i> | | / |
| <i>Vorbes hergeens Yev hergree</i> | | / |
| <i>Z Hats mer hanabazor door mez aysor</i> | | / |

Yev togh mez zbardeez mer, /
Vorbes eyv menk toghoonk merotz bardabanats /
Yev mee daneer uz mezee portsootyoon /
Ayl prgea zmezee chare. Amen. <

[Our Father, which art in heaven, <
Hallowed be thy Name. <
Thy Kingdom come. <
Thy will be done in earth, <
As it is in heaven. <
Give us this day our daily bread. <
And forgive us our trespasses, <
As we forgive them that trespass against us. <
And lead us not into temptation, <
But deliver us from evil. <
For thine is the kingdom, <
The power, and the glory <
For ever and ever. <
Amen.] <

****NOTE: In the event of a cast of non- /
singers the Komitas Hayr Mer recording could /
be used. /*

SCENE 1: THE MATRIARCH +

*THE MATRIARCH speaks to the gathering - /
walking around them. /*

THE MATRIARCH <

Forty days and forty nights. That is how long humanity +
wavered on the edge of emptiness as Noah's boat floated +
endlessly in the dark night. But not once did Noah waver in +
his belief for he had faith that humanity would find its +
mooring once again. And on the morning of that 40th day a +
little white dove brought them a message of hope. A single <
olive branch from the only piece of land to remain after the <
ravages of a flood. <

Ararat.

The mountain where humanity was cradled and brought back <
from the brink of destruction. The mountain from which the <
waters receded and the world was born again. The mountain <
which has stood silent witness to our nightmares. Ararat is <
our honor and our legacy and we were entrusted with its care <
and its memory. To tend to it like a fragile mythology <
always on the verge of silence. <

From the day I was torn from that mountain, I have never <
stopped seeing her. The smell of sweet spring flowers haunts <
my nostrils. <

Icy water lingers on my lips mocking other drops that never slake my thirst. And no other dawn I close my eyes for feels the same as one seen from the top of Ararat. We are the empty vessels on those dark waters left to float for eternity. We are an endless stream winding tirelessly down an infinite mountain. We are the gnarled branch in the still wind reaching towards Heaven pleading for a white dove to bring us salvation. A piece of my heart remains at the feet of Ararat, pinned to an unclaimed promise. A piece of your heart. And yours. And yours. And yours. And yours. And yours.

She looks at the LOST SON and kisses her hand before placing it on his head. He lifts his head sensing her but not looking at her.

THE MATRIARCH

And yours.

And forever will I yearn for that mountain - as will all my children. I will want until what was ours is returned. On this land we began, we set roots, we will come to rest. From this land we were driven, persecuted, erased. I will become that mountain and cradle my people. I will gather the lost and lingering memories. Our story will not be denied. It screams with no voice but carries every sound. It demands attention. Undying, uninterrupted, and unending. This is its claim. This is your legacy..

THE MATRIARCH begins to sing 'The Lord's Prayer' again. The cast rises one by one, kisses a hand and places it on the LOST SON's head, and leaves the stage. By the end of the song only THE MATRIARCH remains. She throws one more look to the LOST SON before leaving the stage.

INTERLUDE 1: THE LOST SON

THE LOST SON reads from the page again.

THE LOST SON

I'm an American - born and raised. At the heart of it though, I am Armenian. But I have no idea what that means. I can barely speak Armenian, although I can say hello, ask how you are doing, and bother you for directions to the bathroom. I am also illiterate. I can't even write my name. My name. I can't see it in the letters of my ancestors. I don't even exist in their tongue. I don't know how I fit into that picture. But as an American none of that matters. It lacks relevance in a post-colonial, anti-Imperial -

*He pauses to reflect. He sighs. He tears up
the page. He looks through the papers again.
He picks up a random pile and puts it in the
trash. He looks for and finds a mini-
recorder. He speaks into it wandering around
the room.* /

My grandmother died 10 years ago. I have trouble remembering
her face. I don't even remember having conversations with
her but I know we spoke. /

(he thinks for a moment) /

We must have. /

*He walks out of the pool which fades out. He
wanders the stage.* /

Our family tree starts and ends with her. I never realized
that she had a story. That she had struggled through
something and survived. I never heard it from her mouth. No
one in my family would speak about it either. Like it was
some dusty skeleton hanging in the far reaches of a closet.
Interrogating my mother and aunt has proven to be more than
a fruitless endeavour. Getting them to tell me any stories
is nearly impossible unless I liquor them up. It seems no
matter how I frame a question the answer is always going to
be: /

SCENE 2: BEANS AND WINE /

*Lights pop up on two women sitting at a small
oval table. MOTHER is preparing green beans.
AUNT is chain smoking and drinking a glass of
wine. The LOST SON joins them.* /

*[The AUNT is more jovial and convivial, even
in the light of telling such horrifying
stories. The MOTHER is more stoic and
austere - she firmly believes all things from
the past should be buried and forgotten.
There is a healthy sisterly rivalry between
the two, but also a tremendous amount of
love.]* * /

MOTHER

Why do you want to know about such things? You always ask us
about then instead of looking at now.

AUNT

Just tell him. He's curious.

MOTHER

What is there to tell? They came one day and marched them out and your grandmother escaped on her own.

AUNT

Mekhk-el-a akhchig. (Have pity, sis). /

MOTHER

Eench mekhk? Tseke lan. (What pity? Leave it alone). Be happy you are alive and strong and can walk on your own 2 feet. /

AUNT

He'll just keep asking.

MOTHER

So let him ask. His brother got tired of asking and so will he. Son, believe me, Nani did not survive so that her nightmares would become your memories. <

AUNT

She was very, very young. <

MOTHER

Oh-hoooooooooooo... /

AUNT

Maybe 5 or so. She was walking with her family and let go of her father's hand for one second, just ONE second, and then she wandered off. Some bedouins found her roaming the street and they kidnapped her. <

MOTHER

Eench kidnapped? (What kidnapped?) /

AUNT

Now you want to tell stories?

MOTHER

Do what you want. I'm not going to argue with you crazy people.

AUNT

They found her and rescued her so the Turks would not find her and kill her. They put these blue tattoos on her face so that if the soldiers stopped them they would see she was one of them. It was a couple and 5 sons.

MOTHER

Four sons.

AUNT

The mother was so sad she could never have a daughter so they adopted her. Mommy could not remember the name of anyone - not even her 8 brothers and sisters.

<

MOTHER

But 2 years later a Christian missionary found her and could tell she was Armenian. These missionaries were trying to find children that were stolen or lost.

/

+

AUNT

Can you imagine losing a family twice in your life?

MOTHER

They took her to an orphanage in Lebanon with other children.

AUNT

It was run by Italians. They used to teach the children how to make, uh, *eench bess gessen?* (How do they say?)

+

MOTHER

Crocheted lace.

+

AUNT

She was the best.

+

<

MOTHER

Do you always have to have that thing with you?

+

THE LOST SON

It's so I can remember all the details. Just ignore it.

/

+

MOTHER

You can't use your brain to remember it?

+

+

THE LOST SON

Think of it as a lifelong record of our family history.

/

+

MOTHER

Our history is more than these stories.

+

+

THE LOST SON

Which I'm only starting to hear about now.

/

+

MOTHER

What is all this for anyway?

/

/

THE LOST SON

Just an article I'm writing.

/

/

MOTHER

What article?

/

<

| | | |
|---|---------------------|---|
| | AUNT | / |
| Lie about my age. | | < |
| | MOTHER | < |
| Article for who? | | < |
| | THE LOST SON | / |
| It's nothing. Just an idea. Forget about it. Just keep talking. | | / |
| | MOTHER | / |
| I'm not saying anything else to you people. | | / |
| | AUNT | + |
| We spent so many years saying nothing. We couldn't talk about it when your Nani was still alive. | | / |
| | THE LOST SON | + |
| Why not? | | + |
| | MOTHER | + |
| Because it's disrespectful. | | + |
| | THE LOST SON | + |
| Ok - so what else? | | + |
| | MOTHER | + |
| What more do you want? Your NoNo just told you everything. | | + |
| | AUNT | + |
| That's not even the tenth of everything. | | + |
| | MOTHER | + |
| Sis. | | + |
| | AUNT | |
| He wants to know. Always he asks. So tell him. Where is the harm, huh? | | / |
| | MOTHER | / |
| Son get that glass of wine away from her. | | / |
| | AUNT | / |
| Sh! I'm fine. Let him know where he came from so he knows where he is going. | | / |
| | MOTHER | |
| He can't go forward if he keeps looking over his shoulder. Besides, she never spoke about it so why should we? | | < |
| | AUNT | < |
| Your mom and I would hear her late at night sometimes. Crying and singing this song, 'Oor Es Mayr Im' - 'Where are you mother?' An old song - thousands of years old. | | < |

She tries to find the melody. /

AUNT /

How did it go sis? /

MOTHER /

I don't know. /

AUNT /

Ah! I have it! *Oor es mayr eem kaghtsur yev anoush? Ser dznogheet zees ayreh.* /

[Where are you my most sweet mother? Your /
motherly love do I seek fervently.] <

AUNT & MOTHER /

Lutsan achkeem tarun ardasvok, voch zok ouneem vor srpeh. /

[My eyes are full of bitter tears, I have /
nobody to wipe them off.] <

MOTHER /

Mekhk. (poor thing) +

AUNT /

Mekhk. (poor thing) She used to cry that it was her +
punishment. /

THE LOST SON /

For what? /

MOTHER /

(stern) /

For nothing. /

*MOTHER goes back to her beans. AUNT gives THE +
LOST SON a face.* /

THE LOST SON /

I didn't mean to upset you. /

MOTHER /

You didn't. /

AUNT /

Believe me, *dhgas* (son). There are so many stories. Some we +
don't even know. Your mom and I were fed the stories of /
others.

MOTHER /

Always late at night after too much arak. Crazy people. /

AUNT /

Mothers leaving babies under trees and on rocks. Poor <
orphans wandering. No one coming for them. /

*They set THE LOST SON down on the bank and
begin washing his hands, his feet, and make
signs of the cross on his forehead.*

SCENE 4: THE RIVER MAIDENS

ALL

Düşmana avrat olmamaya, Yepratin içinde ölüm bulayım.
[Before becoming the enemy's wife, let us find
our death in the Euphrates.]

MAIDEN 1

The Euphrates...as old as the world itself. And when God saw
in his wisdom to paint the earth he used 2 long and delicate
strokes of his brush to bring forth the Euphrates and
Tigris. Water so sweet and tender and cold - brought to our
welcoming tongues hand after hand.

MAIDEN 2

Euphrates...who the Greeks saw as fruitful.

MAIDEN 3

Euphrates...who the Persians saw as the carrier.

MAIDEN 4

Euphrates...the wide...fed by waters freely flowing from the
folds of Ararat.

MAIDEN 1

The Euphrates...where we were born.

MAIDEN 2

Where we lived.

MAIDEN 3

Where we grew.

MAIDEN 4

Where we became women.

MAIDEN 1

Sang songs.

MAIDEN 2

Cleaned clothes.

MAIDEN 3

Washed ourselves.

MAIDEN 4

Watched ourselves.

MAIDEN 1

Promised to the chosen people.

MAIDEN 2

Cradling civilization after the flood.

MAIDEN 3

Bringing life anew to the holy and the lost. <

MAIDEN 1

Keeper of a thousand sacred secrets and tears.

ALL

The tears.

MAIDEN 1

Shed in joy.

MAIDEN 2

Shorn from sorrow.

MAIDEN 3

Shared in laughter.

MAIDEN 4

Shown in defiance.

MAIDEN 3

And the complete beauty in the spring when tender buds
struggled effortlessly to break free from their icy
blankets.

MAIDEN 2

The summer months as the sun beat down. Finding excuses to
run down to a secret place where we lay naked in our Edenic
glory.

MAIDEN 4

And how I prayed for the fall. Standing in the middle of
raindrops made of crisp yellow and red leaves lightly
tapping my temple as they fell. <

MAIDEN 1

And the death in winter and all the beauty of that dying. <
The cleansing of the earth. The warmth of my father's lap
and my mother's embrace. The smells of tobacco, rising
dough, sugar, cinnamon. And then...

MAIDENS 2, 3, 4

And then... <

MAIDEN 1

The winter when I was 17. <

When I was 16. **MAIDEN 2** <

When we were younger. 14. **MAIDEN 3** <

Maybe 13. **MAIDEN 4** <

*THE RIVER MAIDENS begin to pull away from THE
LOST SON.* <

MAIDEN 1
The winter when the Euphrates, struggling to flow, choked by
the icy hands of January, turned.

MAIDEN 4
No longer clear and sweet.

MAIDEN 3
The winter when the Euphrates became a river of blood.

MAIDEN 2
When the sky was surrounded by thick columns of black smoke. <

MAIDEN 4
The smell of burning tears. <

MAIDEN 1
The morning we dreamed the restless nightmare. <

MAIDEN 2
When they came for us.

MAIDEN 3
For me.

MAIDEN 4
For anyone.

ALL
For everyone.

*Four SOLDIERS enter the stage and begin a
macabre ballet of sorts eventually
interacting with the maidens in various death
pas de deux. THE LOST SON withdraws and
watches.* <

MAIDEN 1
Marched into lines with nothing but our clothes. Some <
without our shoes. Deafened by barked orders and frightened
screams.

MAIDEN 2

The fathers who barked back. The mothers who smothered their children's mouths with shaking hands. <

MAIDEN 4 <

Every hour punctuated by guns like the church bell. <

MAIDEN 3

And our homes. Disappearing into a gray haze. Our ears numbed by the sounds of guns. We shut the door on the misery of others. <

MAIDEN 4

Swallowing our relief and tasting their bitterness.

MAIDEN 1

Huddling close to each other, like a wall. Avoiding the stares of men and horses. Protecting each other. Never speaking. <

MAIDEN 2

Never laughing. <

MAIDEN 3

And the endless walking. With no respite. Praying for the few moments we would stop while the soldiers relieved themselves. Shaking themselves at us. Squatting over crying babies. <

MAIDEN 4

Carelessly stepping on the bodies that gave out. <

MAIDEN 1

And the nights.

MAIDEN 2

The nights.

MAIDEN 3

The stars had blinked out in sorrow. In sympathy. Empathy. Or maybe they were never there. <

MAIDEN 4

The nights when they would come. For the young, the old, the new. <

MAIDEN 1

Hearts beating through our chests as the boots would pass us. Silently mouthing prayers. [MAIDEN 2, 3, and 4 start echoing the following phrases under MAIDEN 1] Not us. Not this time. Please. We're not ready. <

ALL

Not ready.

| | | |
|--|------------------------|---|
| | MAIDEN 1 | < |
| They called us: | | |
| | SOLDIER 1 | < |
| | (grabbing MAIDEN 1) | < |
| Dirty. | | < |
| | SOLDIER 4 | < |
| | (grabbing MAIDEN 4) | < |
| Soiled. | | |
| | SOLDIER 3 | < |
| | (grabbing MAIDEN 3) | < |
| Unworthy. | | |
| | SOLDIER 2 | < |
| | (grabbing MAIDEN 2) | < |
| Whores. | | < |
| | MAIDEN 2 | |
| And the next day...the walking. Still the walking. | | < |
| | MAIDEN 1 | |
| But the Euphrates. | | |
| | MAIDENS 2, 3, 4 | |
| The Euphrates. | | |
| | MAIDEN 1 | |
| Always by our side. Just within reach, but never close | | < |
| enough. Taunting us with bloody ebbs and flows at the banks. | | < |
| | MAIDEN 2 | |
| The envy we felt at the bodies lying at the edge. | | |
| | MAIDEN 4 | < |
| The jealousy that those were not our hands, fingers, feet | | < |
| finding their final resting place in the calming water's | | < |
| cradle. | | < |
| | MAIDEN 3 | |
| And hunger came. | | < |
| | MAIDEN 2 | |
| The bread falling. | | < |
| | MAIDEN 1 | |
| The families falling. | | < |
| | MAIDEN 4 | < |
| Falling so slowly. And the mothers. | | / |
| | ALL | |
| Our mother. | | < |

And we walked. **MAIDEN 4** <

And walked. **MAIDEN 1** <

And walked. **MAIDEN 3** <

And...walked **MAIDEN 2** <

And then the boots returned. **MAIDEN 1** <

The SOLDIERS begin to corral the MAIDENS. <

They came for another. **MAIDEN 2** <

But not me. **MAIDEN 4**

Not me. **MAIDEN 3**

It should have been me. **MAIDEN 1**

They came for me. **MAIDEN 2**

For her. **MAIDENS 1, 3, 4**

Why her? **MAIDEN 1**

*The scene is re-enacted by all eight actors
each soldier corresponding numerically to his
maiden.* <

MAIDEN 2

I held my finger to my lips. So they would swallow their <
protestations. <

MAIDEN 1

And they made us watch. They forced us to our knees, arms <
locked behind us. <

MAIDEN 3

Heads tilted back.

MAIDEN 4

The hairs slowly pulled from their roots.

MAIDEN 2

And I found all their eyes.

MAIDEN 1

And they ripped her innocence from her. Angry with every thrust that she did not scream. A face beaten with every new soldier. A symphony of belts coming undone and trousers falling to the earth.

MAIDEN 4

But she stayed with us. Her eyes.

MAIDEN 1

Those eyes. And their voices.

SOLDIER 1

Whore!

SOLDIER 3

Slut!

SOLDIER 4

Worthless!

MAIDEN 3

And then they were done.

MAIDEN 4

And they left her there. They let us go.

The SOLDIERS laugh at the maidens and make their way off the stage.

MAIDEN 4

And we ran to her.

MAIDEN 1

And cleaned her wounds.

MAIDEN 3

And stroked her hair.

MAIDEN 2

And I wiped their tears with the back of my hand.

MAIDEN 1

And there we were left.

MAIDEN 3

They left us!

MAIDEN 4
Thank the Virgin's blessings, they left us...

ALL
And we slept.

MAIDEN 4
Dreaming of the fall.

MAIDEN 3
Dreaming of the spring.

MAIDEN 2
Of the summer.

MAIDEN 1
Unable to dream. And in the morning -

MAIDEN 3
We could not find her.

MAIDEN 4
So we ran.

MAIDEN 1
We ran along the Euphrates.

MAIDEN 2
And I walked.

MAIDEN 3 & 4
And we ran.

MAIDEN 1
And we saw her standing on a bridge.

MAIDEN 3
And we surrounded her.

MAIDEN 4
Begged her.

MAIDEN 1
And she spoke only one word.

MAIDEN 2
Free.

MAIDEN 3
Free from shame.

MAIDEN 4
Free from fear.

Free from choice. **MAIDEN 1** <

And we stood with her. **MAIDEN 1, 3, 4** <

The RIVER MAIDENS hold hands.

And I welcomed their hands. And we gave ourselves to the river. Never again. **MAIDEN 2** <

Never to me. For her. **MAIDEN 3** <

Never to me. For her. **MAIDEN 4** <

Never to me. For her. **MAIDEN 1** <

We will give ourselves to the Euphrates. **ALL**

Fruitful. **MAIDEN 2** <

Freely flowing. **MAIDEN 4** <

Carrying all of us. **MAIDEN 3** <

The treasures revealing themselves in the Euphrates. **MAIDEN 1** <

Listen. There. Finally. **MAIDEN 2** <

Silence... **ALL**
(whispered)

*THE RIVER MAIDENS breathe in deeply, closing
their eyes, they exhale, the sound of water
flowing, they smile. They sing their song
walking out, each circling THE LOST SON
before she exits. RIVER MAIDEN 2 is the last.
She pulls THE LOST SON to a chair and sits
him down before closing her eyes. Breathing
in and exhaling.* <

MAIDEN 2 /
(opening her eyes) /
Shhhhh....listen.... /

The lights cut to: +

SCENE 5: IN THE IVORY TOWER /

THE LOST SON <
Silence is the great murderer of history. <

PROFESSOR +
Silence is a source of great strength. +

THE LOST SON +
Silence does more damage than revisionists or the victors of +
wars. Not even the burning of Alexandria was as bad. +

PROFESSOR +
That's a bold statement. +

THE LOST SON +
Destruction is finite. Silence is the voluntary defiance of +
history. +

PROFESSOR +
Intriguing. But this is a bit digressive for your <
dissertation. <

THE LOST SON +
I'm trying to fill in the gaps. +

PROFESSOR +
Sure. There are several more books / that cover - <

THE LOST SON +
I'm drowning in books waiting to be read. Books don't have <
eyes that look into the past. /

PROFESSOR +
Most elder survivors don't find much joy in reliving those <
pains. +

THE LOST SON +
Believe me, Professor, I know. I deal with two of them. And <
you know what I think? It's selfish. This reluctance to /
speak is a poison. +

PROFESSOR +
That's easily said from someone of your generation. You <
haven't experienced their past. <

| | | |
|--|----------------------|---|
| | THE LOST SON | / |
| I've <u>tried</u> . | | < |
| | PROFESSOR | < |
| The past being what it is, trying seems impossible. | | < |
| | THE LOST SON | < |
| Stories are powerful memories. | | < |
| | PROFESSOR | < |
| Glad someone paid attention in class. | | < |
| | THE LOST SON | + |
| There has to be another way to get the information. | | < |
| | PROFESSOR | + |
| You could visit some of the senior community centers. The closer people get to the end the freer their tongues are. I can also direct you to some eyewitness testimonies that you might find useful. | | < |
| | | + |
| | THE LOST SON | + |
| They're in Armenian. | | / |
| | PROFESSOR | + |
| Yes? | | + |
| | THE LOST SON | + |
| I don't - I don't know how to read it. | | + |
| | PROFESSOR | + |
| I see. Perhaps someone in your family could - | | / |
| | THE LOST SON | + |
| My family would prefer I 'keep my nose out of matters that don't concern me.' | | < |
| | | < |
| | THE PROFESSOR | + |
| (chuckling) | | + |
| Community centers it is then. There's one not too / far from - | | < |
| | | + |
| | THE LOST SON | + |
| I can't really speak it either. | | / |
| | PROFESSOR | + |
| You haven't made it easy on yourself have you? | | + |
| | THE LOST SON | + |
| Not entirely. | | < |

PROFESSOR
Maybe you should consider starting from scratch. Take some language classes. You'll find that people will be more flexible if you share the same language.

THE LOST SON
You'll forgive my skepticism, but somehow I doubt that is the answer.

PROFESSOR
Your impatience will only hinder you.

THE LOST SON
It's like a ringing in the back of my head that's always present and always tugging. It pushes me to begin asking questions. And one question leads to another leads to another leads to another and more and more. But I'm not getting many answers. What I do manage to coax out just leaves me with more gaps or more questions. It's like trying to put together a puzzle of a white page and all the edge pieces are missing. So I don't think that wasting my time sitting in a remedial classroom is really going to help me.

HALIDE (OFFSTAGE)
Be seated!

PROFESSOR
You have nothing to lose by trying.

HALIDE (OFFSTAGE)
I will count to five and if you are not seated I will beat you.

The students in the following scene start running on with their chairs and setting up the classroom.

THE LOST SON
I don't have time for that, Professor.

HALIDE (OFFSTAGE)
5!

PROFESSOR
You're still young.

HALIDE (OFFSTAGE)
4!

THE LOST SON
This was meant to be simple.

HALIDE (OFFSTAGE)
3!

THE PROFESSOR +
Knowledge takes patience. +

HALIDE (OFFSTAGE) +
2! +

THE LOST SON +
Sometimes I wish I could just forget what I know. +

HALIDE +
ONE! +

A moment. +

THE PROFESSOR +
Now you know how it feels to be a survivor. +

SCENE 6: THE ALTARED SAINTS /

The lights switch to the classroom. The PROFESSOR pats THE LOST SON on the shoulder and walks off. His seat becomes another one in the classroom. The desk becomes HALIDE's. /

HALIDE +
SIT! +

The children all sit. +

HALIDE +
Long live Djemal Pasha!

ALL
Long Live Djemal Pasha!

HALIDE
Long live Djemal Pasha!

ALL
Long Live Djemal Pasha!

HALIDE
Good. We will begin every morning with those words and end each day the same. You will forget who you are. You will be given new names. Strong Ottoman names. Forget your families for they have forgotten you. If you are caught stealing, lying or fighting, you will be beaten. If you sing any of your homeland songs, you will be beaten. If we hear one word other than Turkish, you will be beaten. Is this understood? <

ALL
Yes, Halide!

HALIDE

Good. Name!

TAKOUHI

(with a deadened spirit)

Toprak.

HALIDE

Good. Name!

SARKIS

(a little overeager)

Sermet.

HALIDE

Good. Na-

VARTOUHI

(defiantly)

Vartouhi.

Without a thought, HALIDE backhands VARTOUHI.

<

HALIDE

Again. Name!

VARTOUHI

Var-

(HALIDE reels back for
another hit.)

Vurud.

HALIDE

Good. Name!

BOGHOS

(Quietly.)

Beker.

HALIDE

WHAT?

BOGHOS

(A little louder.)

Beker.

HALIDE

Good! You will all become good little Turks. Clean, educated Muslims - not street dogs biting at the ankles of every stranger. We are here to help you - to show you the promise of who you can be. This is very generous of us. Your parents have left you, abandoned you, thrown you to the streets. And here we have found you to bring you up. This is but a portion of the Djemal Pasha's merciful light shining on you.

<

<

We will all help keep the empire growing. The future will be built on your backs. You will be proud, no? Now. Repeat slowly after me. Allah. +

Allah. <

ALL

Look! A new one. +

SARKIS +

Story time! <

VARTOUHI <

Allahu <

HALIDE

He looks - sad. +

TAKOUHI +

TAKOUHI gets up and slowly walks around, smiling at the other students and humming something ethereal. She eventually make her way over to THE LOST SON and offers her hand. She pulls him downstage and sits him down facing her. +
+
+
+
+

Allahu <

ALL

Go say hi. +

VARTOUHI +

Allahhu Ak- <

HALIDE

No way! You do it. +

SARKIS +

Allahhu Ak- <

ALL

Never mind - SHE'S going first. +

VARTOUHI +

They quietly recite. +

TAKOUHI <
Don't be scared. This was all new for us once, too. I was so old when I came here. 15. My freedom was sold without my permission. But it's OK. My parents thought it would keep them and my baby brother safe. They thought it would keep me safe. So it's OK. A little suffering is nothing when there are lives to be saved. How I came here is not important anymore. It is enough to know I came here.

OK? She was already here - yelling. Beating when she felt like it. But I was already too old. 15. <

HALIDE

Hayya 3ala salatt (Come to prayer). Repeat. <

ALL

(quickly and sloppily)

Hayya 3ala salatt (Come to prayer). <

TAKOUHI

That is not our prayer.

HALIDE

SLOWLY!

ALL

Hayya 3ala salatt (Come to prayer). <

TAKOUHI

And after only a few months - I was given, no, sold, again. To a wounded soldier - missing his right eye, and his arm wrapped in a dirty cloth. She sold me when she could not erase me. She made me a whore. <

HALIDE

Hayya 3alal fala7 (Come to felicity). Repeat. <

ALL

Hayya 3alal fala7 (Come to felicity). <

HALIDE

Good.

TAKOUHI

He put his mother's ring on me. He put me in his bed. I took a large rock to his head. And I left. I was so old when I left. 16 already. +

HALIDE

Hayya 3ala salatt. Hayya 3alal fala7. (Come to prayer. Come to felicity.) Repeat. <

TAKOUHI

And no one found me in the woods. <

ALL

Hayya 3ala salatt. Hayya 3alal fala7. (Come to prayer. Come to felicity.) <

TAKOUHI

(heading back to her chair)

I think I am still there.

HALIDE

Almost. Try again.

*SARKIS jumps out of his chair and comes down.
TAKOUHI resumes her humming - this time a
more springing tune.*

SARKIS

My turn! I'm 13. +

From the back, VARTOUHI, turns around.

VARTOUHI

(in a loud whisper)

You're 14!

SARKIS

SH! That's my sister. We're twins. +

VARTOUHI

(turning around again)

Stop being so obvious.

SARKIS

Sh! It's my turn now. We lost our parents. <

VARTOUHI

(still turned around)

They died.

SARKIS

No they didn't!

VARTOUHI

(coming down to join him)

Let me tell the story. You'll just mess it up.

SARKIS

No, I won't!

VARTOUHI

Stop yelling or she'll hear us.

SARKIS

Fine.

VARTOUHI

We were -

(turning to TAKOUHI)

Stop that.

TAKOUHI stops. <

SARKIS

But I like when she does that.

VARTOUHI

It confuses you. Anyway, we were marched from our home one morning.

SARKIS

The moon was still in the sky - a half a moon. So pretty.

VARTOUHI

I looked left and I could not see the end of the line. I looked right - no end. <

SARKIS

It was me, her, mother, father, grandfather, cousin, aunt -

VARTOUHI

A lot of people. I don't know how long we walked. But every time I looked left I saw less people. <

SARKIS

No cousins. No aunt.

VARTOUHI

And when I looked right, the same.

SARKIS

No uncle. Grandfather gone. We lost him.

VARTOUHI

I told you they all died. <

SARKIS

Stop saying that. It's not funny.

VARTOUHI

One night my mother shook me awake - her hand was on my mouth. She put a bundle of food in one hand and shoved his hand in the other. Father hugged us both. <

SARKIS

His head was between us, sitting on our shoulders, right here.

VARTOUHI

And then he pushed us and said, 'Run!' <

SARKIS

We could not leave him.

VARTOUHI

Mother shoved us. Begged us to go. /

I did not want to.

SARKIS

I did?

VARTOUHI

You moved first.

SARKIS

No, I didn't.

VARTOUHI

Yes, you did!

SARKIS

They had guns!

VARTOUHI

All the other students turn around.

SH!

ALL

And back to reciting they go.

We should have stayed.

SARKIS

We would have died. We could not see where we were going, but we ran and ran.

VARTOUHI

And I heard guns behind us. And screams. And my father saying 'Go!' Over and over. Go! Go! Go!

SARKIS

But they found us. Took us. Tied our hands.

VARTOUHI

They made her-

SARKIS

No! We were brought here. I could not understand what she (indicating Halide) was asking me. And when I responded in Armenian she slapped me. She asked. Then slapped. My cheeks burned. She tried to burn my words out of me. But a cold flame is so useless.

VARTOUHI

They cut me. Down there. It hurt. They said Allah would love me more. I couldn't go to Heaven if I kept it. They held me down. Put a cloth in my mouth. Then gave me dry bread when it was done.

SARKIS

That's a little funny, no? Bread for body - body for bread. They took away a part of me and they never asked. And now, I'm lost. I'm so lost.

VARTOUHI

You're not lost. I already told you.

SARKIS

But-

VARTOUHI

(dragging him back to their chairs)

Come on.

HALIDE

3A-Salaatu Khayrun- (Prayer is better-) Repeat. <

ALL

3A-Salaatu Khayrun- (Prayer is better-) <

VARTOUHI turns to BOGHOS.

VARTOUHI

Hey! It's your turn.

HALIDE

Sh! *Min an-Naum.* (Than sleep.) Repeat. <

BOGHOS

What?

ALL

Min an-Naum. (Than sleep.) <

SARKIS

You have to tell him. <

HALIDE

Quiet! 3A-Salaatu Khayrun *Min an-Naum.* (Prayer is better than sleep.) Repeat. <

BOGHOS

I don't want to.

ALL

3A-Salaatu Khayrun *Min an-Naum.* (Prayer is better than sleep.) <

THE LOST SON <

You have to.

BOGHOS reluctantly comes around. He just stands there.

HALIDE

I said quiet! Repeat!

ALL

3A-Salaatu Khayrun Min an-Naum. (Prayer is better than sleep.)

<

SARKIS

Talk!

BOGHOS

(quietly)

I came here-

VARTOUHI

(turning around)

Speak up!

BOGHOS

I came here last. Just before they made me- I lived in the mountains. My father and me. My mom died when she gave me life. They told me I have her eyes. What color are they? I don't remember. I - I - I - have not seen them since - Since - since - since - since - since - since - since - since - since - since - since - since

/
+
+
+

TAKOUHI senses his oncoming panic attack and starts to hum another tune - almost a lullaby.

BOGHOS

(turning to smile at TAKOUHI)

Thank you. One morning my father saw smoke coming from the town. He told me to stay behind while he went. I didn't listen. The people screaming from inside the church. Banging on doors. Begging. Those soldiers standing around laughing. Lighting their cigarettes in the flames crawling up the doors. I saw my father try to save them. I saw how brave he was. I saw the soldier hold him while another one spit on him. I saw the tiny spark from the end of the gun before it went into his head. I cried out and they heard me. They beat me. They took me. They left me. Here. Alone. I did not speak for months. But they became like my family. Each of them. And then they started to disappear.

<
<
+
/

SARKIS

I told you we got lost.

VARTOUHI

He means we died.

SARKIS

But we're here now. No?

VARTOUHI

Never mind.

BOGHOS

She escaped (pointing to TAKOUHI). She was the lucky one.
The brother and sister - she held his hand.

<
/
/

SARKIS

You helped me go to sleep.

VARTOUHI

Better you not be in pain.

BOGHOS

You held a pillow to his face.

VARTOUHI

You weren't even there.

TAKOUHI

Is he wrong?

VARTOUHI

...No.

BOGHOS

I never got sick. They made us dig a hole. In the yard right
behind the church - facing the altar inside. I can still see
the dirt under my nails. They made me carry and push their
bodies into the hole. One after another. Wild dogs would
come at night and dig the hole. And take the bodies. And we
would find the bones. And the starving would take them and
grind them down for soup. But I kept them safe. After she
(indicating HALIDE) runs away I look after them. The priests
return and I look after them. I grow older - I look after
them. No one knows where they live. I keep their secret.

+
<
<
<
<
/

HALIDE

Repeat!

ALL

Allaahu Akbar. (God is great.)

<

BOGHOS

I don't remember who I am.

<

HALIDE

Repeat!

ALL

Allaahu Akbar. (God is great.)

<

BOGHOS
(to the LOST SON) <

Who am I?

HALIDE
Long live Djemal Pasha! Repeat.

BOGHOS
(to the LOST SON) <

I don't know who we are.

ALL
Long live Djemal Pasha!

BOGHOS
(kneeling down to the LOST SON) <
<

Who were we?

HALIDE
Repeat!

ALL
Long live -

BOGHOS
WHO ARE WE?! <

A moment.

HALIDE
(to BOGHOS) <

Good, Boy. Very good. Now...repeat. +

The rest of the students start to clear the stage except for BOGHOS who keeps looking at THE LOST SON. +
+
+

BOGHOS +

Tell me who I am. Please. +

THE LOST SON +

I don't - +

BOGHOS +

Who am I? Who am I? +

A cell phone starts to ring. +

BOGHOS +

Who am I? +

Ring. +

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| | BOGHOS | + |
| Who am I? | | + |
| | <i>Ring. THE LOST SON picks up.</i> | + |
| | THE LOST SON | + |
| Hello? | | + |
| | <i>BOGHOS gets up and walks off, keeping his eyes on THE LOST SON. A light appears on BROTHER at a desk, typing and going over papers.</i> | + |
| | | + |
| | | + |
| | | + |
| SCENE 7: SIBLING ENTROPY | | / |
| | BROTHER | + |
| You called? | | + |
| | THE LOST SON | + |
| Two days ago. | | + |
| | BROTHER | + |
| Been busy. Work. | | + |
| | THE LOST SON | + |
| You could have texted me. | | + |
| | BROTHER | + |
| Hate texting. | | + |
| | THE LOST SON | + |
| E-mail? | | + |
| | BROTHER | + |
| Takes too long to type. | | + |
| | THE LOST SON | + |
| Alright. | | + |
| | BROTHER | + |
| I'm busy, bro. What did you need? | | + |
| | THE LOST SON | + |
| Information. | | + |
| | BROTHER | + |
| On? | | + |
| | THE LOST SON | + |
| Us. Grandma. The family. | | + |

| | |
|---|---|
| BROTHER | + |
| (laughing) | + |
| Vague. What kind of info? | / |
| THE LOST SON | + |
| What did grandma say to you about the Genocide? | < |
| BROTHER | + |
| Not a damn thing. Woman was made of stone. | < |
| THE LOST SON | + |
| Did you ever overhear anyone say anything? | < |
| BROTHER | + |
| Those people don't say anything about anything. | < |
| THE LOST SON | + |
| Well what can you tell me? | + |
| BROTHER | + |
| I already told you I / don't know anything. | + |
| THE LOST SON | + |
| I mean what did you find out on your own? | + |
| BROTHER | + |
| You're not making sense, bro. | + |
| THE LOST SON | + |
| Come on, you were Mr. Armenian pride once upon a time. | + |
| Flying the flag and everything. Mom was actually afraid you | < |
| were going to join the revolution in Armenia. | + |
| BROTHER | + |
| I smartened up. | + |
| THE LOST SON | + |
| How is that being smart? | + |
| BROTHER | + |
| Because, dude, our people don't do anything. They all just | + |
| talk talk talk. | < |
| THE LOST SON | + |
| Not our family. | + |
| BROTHER | + |
| No they just sit there and expect you to honor a past they | + |
| have no desire to share with you. It's a self-fulfilling | + |
| self-defeating prophecy. They sit there and whine and cry | + |
| about the past but it's almost 100 years later and they | + |
| haven't done a damned thing to change it. | + |

| | |
|---|---|
| THE LOST SON | + |
| Kind of like what you're doing. | + |
| BROTHER | + |
| Hey I tried, I got nowhere, I found better things to do with my life. | < |
| THE LOST SON | + |
| I didn't realize there was a statute of limitations on trying. | + |
| BROTHER | + |
| You can only be an army of one for so long. | < |
| THE LOST SON | + |
| And that's why we're - our people - are in this mess. Complacency. | + |
| BROTHER | + |
| You're gonna see for yourself. | + |
| THE LOST SON | + |
| So you're telling me there is nothing at all you can tell me. | + |
| BROTHER | + |
| You know about as much as I do. Grandma is dead so she won't say much. Mom won't talk. And <i>tantig</i> exaggerates to the point where you're not sure when she is making shit up. | < |
| THE LOST SON | / |
| And now you're too proud to be an American to care. | + |
| BROTHER | / |
| What's with the sudden interest anyway? | / |
| THE LOST SON | / |
| Fell down the rabbit hole. | < |
| BROTHER | / |
| Have you tried reading - ? | / |
| THE LOST SON | / |
| Yes! I have the books! | / |
| BROTHER | / |
| Chill dude. | / |
| THE LOST SON | / |
| I'm not interested in the historical. | + |
| BROTHER | / |
| Might make you start a revolution. | / |

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| | THE LOST SON | / |
| I need the personal. | | < |
| | BROTHER | + |
| They're one and the same for our people. | | + |
| | THE LOST SON | + |
| But I want to know about us. Our family. You realize we have practically no family tree right? I'm trying to figure out just how many branches we have and where we are in that mess. History books aren't going to help me do that. | | + |
| | BROTHER | / |
| Preaching to the choir. | | / |
| | THE LOST SON | + |
| It's not supposed to be this difficult. | | / |
| | BROTHER | + |
| Let it go bro - it's just a lost cause. | | / |
| | THE LOST SON | + |
| Great encouragement. | | / |
| | BROTHER | + |
| You'll see. I gotta get back to work. Money to make. Wife to keep happy. | | + |
| | <i>The sound of coins being counted onto piles.</i> | + |
| | THE LOST SON | + |
| Yeah. Ok. | | + |
| | BROTHER | + |
| Don't think too much about this shit, bro. You're only going to make yourself miserable and go crazy looking for ghosts that don't exist. | | + |
| | THE LOST SON | < |
| Sure. I guess. | | + |
| | BROTHER | + |
| I'm out. | | + |
| | <i>The lights go out on BROTHER and come up on JARBIG 1 and 2 - the latter methodically and carefully dividing coins.</i> | + |
| | | + |
| | | + |
| SCENE 8: THE JARBIG | | / |
| | <i>***Bracketed lines are suggested lines to be delivered to THE LOST SON.</i> | * |
| | | < |

*Barring any specific pronoun indicators,
different choices can be made.*

<
/

JARBIG 2

Four. Four.

JARBIG 1

Hey, hey. You're not counting that right!

JARBIG 2

What are you talking about?

JARBIG 1

Look at the piles *eshegg* [stupid]. You've got more than me.

<

JARBIG 2

I know.

JARBIG 1

What do you mean 'I know'?

<

JARBIG 2

I did all the work so I get more than you do.

JARBIG 1

Kakess gerr lagod [eat my shit dumbass], you did not. You do this all the time.

<

JARBIG 2

No, I don't.

<

JARBIG 1

Start again. [You gonna stand all day? Come sit. Sit!]
(THE LOST SON joins them.)
[It's been this way since the beginning.]

<

/

/

/

*JARBIG 2 gathers up all the coins and starts
over. THE LOST SON sits between them.*

+

JARBIG 2

One. One.

JARBIG 1

And no cheating this time.

JARBIG 2

Two. Two.

JARBIG 1

You think I don't notice these things. [Just because he's smarter than me.]

<

<

JARBIG 2

Three. Three. No, I'm not.

JARBIG 1

Yes, you are. [You'll learn too - don't worry.] You've always been the one to keep us ahead of danger. <

JARBIG 2

Five. Five.

JARBIG 1

[Starting off as two scared 11 year olds.] <

JARBIG 2

Twelve.

JARBIG 1

How did you get to twelve already??

JARBIG 2

No. We were twelve, not eleven. Seven. Seven.

JARBIG 1

[Everyone thought I was younger because I was smaller than him.] We never really played together before all this, did we? <

JARBIG 2

Nine. Nine. This is not playing. <

JARBIG 1

You know what I mean.

JARBIG 2

(stopping)

I never know what you mean.

JARBIG 1

[We didn't really know one another.] <

JARBIG 2

What are you talking about? <

JARBIG 1

I saw you and your family once or twice. Always on holidays. <

JARBIG 2

Our fathers did business together. <

JARBIG 1

They did?

JARBIG 2

From the time we were three! Where was I? Dammit. /

JARBIG 1

Start again.

JARBIG 2

One. One.

JARBIG 1

Remember we used to play with the Turkish kids?

JARBIG 2

Three. Three. Yes.

JARBIG 1

[One day we are kicking stones to one another and the next day they are throwing them at us.]

<
<

JARBIG 2

Animals. Six. Six.

<

JARBIG 1

You know that's a button, right?

JARBIG 2

What?

JARBIG 1

THIS one. It's from my shirt.

JARBIG 2

Oh.

JARBIG 1

[His eyes have never been the same since the soldiers hit him in the head. A brick TAH! right in the head.]

<
<

JARBIG 2

It didn't hurt. Didn't bother me. Eight. Eight.

JARBIG 1

[When I lost my family he found me in a corner and grabbed my hand and made me run with him.] It was so dark I could not even see one foot in front of me. Remember?

<
/

JARBIG 2

Good thing the moon was on our side that night. Ten. Ten. Where are your coins from today?

<

JARBIG 1

Oh, sorry. Still in my pocket.

He fishes out some coins and bread crumbs and absentmindedly throws them on the floor.

+

JARBIG 2

ESHEGG! You totally messed up the piles. How many times do I need to count these!?!?!?

JARBIG 1 <
Sorry. Want me to do it? <

JARBIG 2
No, I'm fine.

JARBIG 1 <
[Neither of us speak about our families. We just keep our <
eyes open for money and food.] We could fool anyone. <

JARBIG 2 <
Three. Three. [He's the best at it. Those big sad eyes could <
fool the devil.] <

JARBIG 1 <
Always just long enough for you to twist your arms and hands <
around corners and in pockets to get what we need. Remember <
the blanket? Tell him about the blanket. <

JARBIG 2 <
Five. Five. Stupid old man. He thought he could catch us. <
[We saw a window open and crept to it very slowly and <
quietly. We never made any sounds. I pushed him into the <
window and he snatched the blanket and jumped out.] <

JARBIG 1 <
[But he woke up and chased us. Who can catch little kids <
running away?] <

JARBIG 2 <
[We slept warm that night.] Ten. Ten. <

JARBIG 1
It wasn't always fun and games.

JARBIG 2
That was fun and games?

JARBIG 1
At 12 it's fun and games.

JARBIG 2 <
Why are we talking about all of this? <

JARBIG 1
Because I don't like the silence.

JARBIG 2 <
I don't like to remember. <

JARBIG 1 <
Why not? <

JARBIG 2

(looking at him
incredulously)

Eleven. Eleven.

JARBIG 1

[It's not fun when we're starving.] But getting the food is fun, right? <

JARBIG 2

Thirteen. Thirteen.

JARBIG 1

Remember the old lady with the syrup? [We ran by and pretended to bump into her on accident. The syrup spilled everywhere.] You took the beating for it. [But later we went back and licked up all the syrup.] <
<
/

JARBIG 2

Like animals. Sixteen. Sixteen.

JARBIG 1

And the bread. What a brilliant idea. Tell me about it again.

JARBIG 2

You're better at it.

JARBIG 1

I like the way you tell it. [He's really good at it.] <

JARBIG 2

(reluctantly)

We would find workmen on breaks and I would go talk to them and distract them while you would steal pieces of their bread. /

JARBIG 1

I would only take enough for both of us, and then tear a little piece from the leftover and sprinkle the crumbs. So they would think a mouse had eaten the bread.

JARBIG 2

It's how you got your nickname. The little mouse. Seventeen. Seventeen. [That and because he's small.] <

JARBIG 1

[We called him the weasel.] We. [For a while there were three of us. Another boy we found]. What was his name? <
<

JARBIG 2

I don't remember. Nineteen. Nineteen.

JARBIG 1

He was with us only a month or two. Then he went to sleep in a cave. And we left him. I wish I could remember his name. [I feel bad sometimes when we steal.]

JARBIG 2

I don't.

JARBIG 1

No?

JARBIG 2

We run around dirty, no shoes, begging, beaten when we are caught, spat on. They did this to us. They can pay for it.

JARBIG 1

[He still carries a lot of anger.]

JARBIG 2

You're too stupid to know any better.

JARBIG 1

(Suddenly angered and lashing out, destroying the coin piles.)

DON'T CALL ME STUPID!!

JARBIG 2

(Looking at him with wrath but just shaking his head and starting again with a little more speed this time.)

One. One.

JARBIG 1

Sorry...I don't know any better. [But I like not knowing any better. It keeps me happier. Sometimes at night I cry] - I can hear you too. [I think of my family. I don't remember their faces very well. He is all the family I have now.]

JARBIG 2

Eleven. Eleven.

JARBIG 1

So many months have gone by. Some years. [Maybe more. 12 months, 24 months, 1 year, 2 years, 10 years.]

JARBIG 2

Stop - it.

JARBIG 1

Sorry. When all this ends we can try to find our family.

JARBIG 2
Seventeen. Seventeen. They're all dead. <

JARBIG 1
I don't like how the moon shows everything. Makes the dead
feel alive. Like tonight. <

JARBIG 2
Twenty-two. Twenty-two. [And it's harder to hide with the
moon.] <

JARBIG 1
But soon we won't need to hide. And when we find our
families again we will make sure to remain brothers. <

JARBIG 2
Twenty-eight. Twenty- No more. That's it. Just this one.
Who gets it? Give it to him? <

JARBIG 1
No...he hasn't earned it yet. <

They both look at THE LOST SON. <

JARBIG 2
Play for it? <

JARBIG 1
You keep it. <

JARBIG 2
That's not fair. <

JARBIG 1
Keep it. You counted it. There will be more for us. Right? <

JARBIG 2
Sure. <

JARBIG 1
Right. [So what do you think? Want to join?] <

*THE LOST SON shakes his head slowly. JARBIG 2
just smiles. They both gather the coins and
run off.* <

*A voice is heard singing 'Oor ess mayrim?' in
the distance and dawn begins to flood the
stage. THE LOST SON, on a mission, goes to
his desk and looks for a book.* <

OOR ES MAYRIM KAGHTSUR YEV ANOUSH, SER DZNOGHEET ZEES AYREH. <
LUTSAN ACK EEM TARUN ARDASVOK, VOCH ZOK OUNEEM VOR SRPEH. <
TKEEN, HAREEN, ABDAGUETSEEN, BSAG YETEEEN EE PSHEH. <

TCHOUR KHNTRETSEE, KATSAKH ARPEE HANOREENATS TSERANEH.
AZT ARAREK MORUN EEMOH ZOR YES SEEREM EE SURDEH.
OOR ES, MAYRIM, YEG ZEEM DZARAV GATAMPET ARPO KAGHTSRAKEEN.

[Where are you my most sweet mother? Your motherly
love do I seek fervently.
My eyes are full of bitter tears, I have nobody to
wipe them off.
They spat on me, beat me, slapped my face, and
crowned me with a crown of thorns.
I asked for a drink of water, but the wicked gave
me vinegar instead.
Inform my mother, which I love with all my heart.
Where are you, my beloved mother? Please come and
quench my thirst.]

SCENE 9: SINS ON SKYPE

THE LOST SON

(going to a tabbed section)

'It is interesting to note how the right to remember was to
permeate this century's ideological contests, with
democratic regimes denouncing the 'social amnesia' induced
by totalitarian systems. Why did the Communists hate the
Jews? It was because the Jews carried their memories with
them.'

(turns to the next tab)

'Here flourishes revisionism, whose historical narratives
feature a denial of the fixity of the past - 'Fixity? That's
a word? Fixity?

(yelling at book)

Why don't you make more sense?

He throws the book. Sighs.

The sound of a Skype call coming in.

THE LOST SON

Finally.

*He answers the call on his laptop as the
lights come up on AUNT sitting in a comfy
chair smoking and maneuvering a mouse and
keyboard.*

AUNT

Hello? *Dghas* [son]?

THE LOST SON

Yeah *tantig* [aunt] I'm here.

| | | |
|--|---------------------------|---|
| | AUNT | + |
| Can you hear me? | | + |
| | THE LOST SON | + |
| Yup - just fine. | | + |
| | AUNT | + |
| Where are you? I can't see you? | | / |
| | THE LOST SON | + |
| Dammit. Hang on. | | + |
| | AUNT | + |
| You should buy a really cheap camera so I can see your face. | | + |
| | THE LOST SON | + |
| No - I know it's just turned off. | | + |
| | AUNT | + |
| They have some really cheap ones at Radio Shack. | | < |
| | THE LOST SON | + |
| Hang on I'm connecting it. | | < |
| | AUNT | + |
| You should get your mother one so she can see you too. | | + |
| | <i>The cam clicks on.</i> | + |
| | AUNT | + |
| There you are! You have one. I thought you said you didn't have one. | | + |
| | THE LOST SON | + |
| I just didn't have it connected. | | + |
| | AUNT | + |
| How are you <i>dghas</i> ? Everything good? | | + |
| | THE LOST SON | + |
| Everything is good, NoNo. You? | | + |
| | AUNT | + |
| | (coughing) | + |
| I'm good. Did you eat? | | + |
| | THE LOST SON | + |
| Yes. | | + |
| | AUNT | + |
| When? | | + |
| | THE LOST SON | + |
| An hour ago. | | + |

| | | |
|--|---------------------|---|
| | AUNT | + |
| | (coughing) | + |
| That long? Eat again. | | + |
| | THE LOST SON | + |
| When are you going to quit? | | + |
| | AUNT | + |
| I'm too old for that. | | / |
| | THE LOST SON | + |
| That's not exactly logical. | | + |
| | AUNT | + |
| You want logic you talk to your mother - you want life you talk to me. So how are you? | | + |
| | THE LOST SON | / |
| Eh. | | / |
| | AUNT | / |
| <i>Eench</i> 'eh'? That's not a response. | | < |
| | THE LOST SON | / |
| I'm fine. | | / |
| | AUNT | / |
| 'Fine' is worse. You look upset. | | < |
| | THE LOST SON | / |
| Tired. | | / |
| | AUNT | / |
| You work too hard. | | / |
| | THE LOST SON | / |
| Apparently not hard enough. | | / |
| | AUNT | / |
| How is the thing - the speech? | | < |
| | THE LOST SON | / |
| It's not. I stopped. | | / |
| | AUNT | / |
| Why? | | / |
| | THE LOST SON | / |
| Didn't know what I wanted to say? | | / |
| | AUNT | / |
| So figure it out. | | < |

THE LOST SON /

Don't have enough information. /

AUNT /

Get it. +

THE LOST SON /

Well if SOME people would TALK - I could. /

AUNT /

Some people like me people? /

THE LOST SON /

And mom people. /

AUNT /

You'll be waiting forever. /

THE LOST SON /

Hence why the article is stalled. /

AUNT +

You know if I knew more I would tell you. /

THE LOST SON /

No you wouldn't. /

AUNT /

I might. Things fall out of my mouth all the time. /

THE LOST SON +

I'd have to force it out of you. +

AUNT +

No one likes to talk about such sad things. You shouldn't /
have to hear them. You should be happy in life. Are you /
happy? +

THE LOST SON +

That's a big question. +

AUNT +

It shouldn't be *dghas*. +

He broods. She looks at him. +

AUNT +

Come on now. Where is that happy child I remember always /
laughing? That's the nephew I know. Not this one with the /
eyes and mouth hanging to the ground. Smile for me. +

THE LOST SON +

I don't feel like / smiling. +

AUNT
Did I ask what you feel like doing? I said smile for me
eshegg! Don't think I can't come find you up there in your
big city and beat you.

He laughs honestly.

AUNT
There we go. I love that laugh. Just like your uncle.

THE LOST SON
(confused)
Uncle Ali never laughed.

AUNT
Not him *khent*. Your Uncle Arshag.

THE LOST SON
Who?

AUNT
What do you mean who? Arshag. Arshag!!

THE LOST SON
I hear what you're saying I don't know what you're talking
about. Who is Arshag?

AUNT
(under her breath)
Aman khent - you and your big mouth.

THE LOST SON
Who is Arshag?

She doesn't say anything.

THE LOST SON
Tell me.

AUNT
Forget it, *dghas*.

THE LOST SON
You can't take it back.

AUNT
This old age is shit. *Akh*. This was so long ago. Your mom
and I were very young. He was only five when he died. *Mekhk*
- he was the youngest. We were playing on the roof, and my
mother, your Nani, was sitting in a chair smoking, watching
us. She turned around for literally one second, and that was
it - he fell off. *Mekhk*. Can you imagine losing a child like
that after everything else she lost? I don't think she ever
forgave herself.

She used to cry that it was her punishment for the one
second she got that saved her life. One second to give and
one second to take. Always she repeated that. One second to
give and one second to take.

THE LOST SON looks ready to throw up.

THE LOST SON

I had an Uncle...

*THE ABANDONED MOTHER slowly walks on humming
'Oor Ess Mayrim'.*

AUNT

Listen, don't tell your mother I said anything. She wouldn't
like it. You know how she is. Sorry, *dghas*, my brain is all
mixed up with this medication nonsense. I thought you knew.

*The humming turns to singing. Loud and
echoed. THE LOST SON sees her. She sees him.
She sings to him.*

AUNT

Dghas are you there? I think the camera is frozen? Hello?
Hello? Damn this thing. Can you see me *dghas*?

*She is drowned out by the singing and the
lights go down on AUNT. THE ABANDONED MOTHER
looks at him with anguish in her eyes and
holds out her bundle to him. He stares at
her. She walk towards him and takes his hand.
She walks to the rock and sits him down on
it. As she speaks leaves/flowers start to
fall from the plane tree. ALTERNATIVELY:
women walk on and off stage carrying and then
depositing small bundles on the stage.*

SCENE 10: THE ABANDONED MOTHER

THE ABANDONED MOTHER

(speaking to the baby and
the LOST SON a-la bedtime
story)

Once upon a time I met a beautiful boy with bright green
eyes. We worshipped each other, drowning in one another's
love and affection. How the village celebrated for three
days and nights when we married. And for the first few years
there was no sadness but for the lack of a child of our own.

No number of whispered prayers on bruised knees brought
growth to my belly. For two years we tried and we waited.
And one morning, I woke up, and God finally answered.

I watched you grow in my stomach. Your father softly kissing +
my belly. My grandmother brushing my hair and singing. My <
mother making you little clothes. <

And before I entered my sixth month, they came. In the +
middle of the night they broke down doors and rounded <
everyone in the streets. <

Three hours. Three hours to gather our things. To pack +
lives. To say goodbyes. I watched my husband tied to the +
other men and marched from the town. Only a brief meeting +
of our eyes before he was taken from me. I can still see <
those green eyes. <

And then we walked. From our homes. Our ancient roots. Our <
hearths. Our hearts. We walked. One month. Food and water <
run out. You live. Another month. The Turkish soldiers turn +
their heads as Kurds attack us. You stir. One more month. +
People drop by the side of the road. You kick. Still another +
month. More are forced to join us from other towns. You are +
ready. <

I feel the pains as the sun goes down. I huddle against my <
mother, my grandmother rubs my hand and sings to me. The <
pushing and the pain. The prayers and the pulse. <

And then you come into the maddening world. Quiet. With the <
faintest sigh. I bring you to my breast and just before the <
sun disappears I see your eyes look up to me. So green. <

Five months we walk. We go up and down the mountains. I wrap +
you in my apron and hold one end in my teeth whenever we +
climb up, holding you in one arm while the other clings to <
rocks on the way down. Up and down. Up and down. <

Little bodies dot the mountain paths. Those who do not die +
are kidnapped at night. Others are traded for a few pieces <
of bread - their parents believing they will survive in the <
hands of their enemy. Some are found sitting next to the <
bodies of their dead trying to wake them up. +

My brother was very brave. Eleven and he sat down one day /
and refused to move. 'Leave me,' he said - without tears. <
'We will all be left behind, one by one.' <

I stop giving milk. No matter how I beat my chest, I cannot <
give you milk. And still you do not cry. <

Seven months. We pass Urfa. One by one, all the remaining +
mothers with their babies gather and speak. They all agree. <
Agree from grief, from emptiness, from insanity. <

And one by one as they leave, they place their baby in the shade of a giant and ancient tree, to be found and cared for by others. Hoping they will be found again after the madness ends.

I will not give you up. One of the soldiers says, 'You know, even when you're dead, you still don't want to die.'

And I walk. And I pray. And I sing. I soften pieces of rock-hard bread in water and let it sit on your tongue. And I walk. And I pray. And I sing. More bodies drop to the left and to the right of me. And I walk. And I pray. And I sing.

Eight months. And I cannot go on. I can't. And on a night when the moon is at its fullest I walk to a small rock next to a tree in front of a cave. I wipe the stone with my apron, wrap you in my shawl, kiss your forehead and place you sleeping on the rock. You do not wake. You do not cry. And I walk. And I pray. And I...

But the next day my grief overtakes me and I cannot leave you behind. The other women try to hold me back. But I run. The soldiers yell and shoot their guns. I don't care. I run. Sweat stinging my eyes. The sun boiling the air pulled into my tired lungs.

And I find the cave. I see the tree in front of it. The shawl placed on the rock. And I run. And I pray. And --

*She lets the bundle tumble from her arms,
unfolding into an empty shawl covered in
blood. She shows it to the LOST SON and moves
in closer brandishing it.*

THE ABANDONED MOTHER

There is no one to carry on the memories. No one to teach the songs. No one to wear the little clothes I make. No one to prepare favorite meals for. No one to cry for a wedding day. No one to sing back to me when I am old. No one to carry on our name. No one to tell our story. Will you? Will you do this for me? / Can you do this for us? Will you?

THE LOST SON

I'm sorry. I don't - I don't know how. I can't help -

| THE ABANDONED MOTHER | THE LOST SON | |
|---|---|----------------------------|
| Ooreh? Desahr bebekess?/ Bebekess goozem. Bebekess dur! Bebekess dur! Bebekess dur! | I don't - I can't understand what you're saying. Please, say it in English. I can't understand! I can't! | + + + + + + |
| [Where is he? Have you seen him? / I want my baby. Give me my baby! Give me back my baby!] | | < + + + |

*She primally screams in his face throwing him
backwards onto the floor. She picks up the
shawl and wraps into a bundle. She rocks it
and starts to speak her monologue again from
the beginning. She exits - her voice fading
out.*

+
/
/
/
/
/

SCENE 11: PANDORA SUFFERS

/

A light pops up on MOTHER.

/

MOTHER

What did you think you were going to find? Happy stories?

/
/

THE LOST SON
(stilling looking after THE
ABANDONED MOTHER)

I can't believe any of it.

+
/
/
+

MOTHER

You have no business putting your nose into other people's
stories.

+
/
/

THE LOST SON

I just wanted to find some answers.

+
/

MOTHER

Answers for what??

+
/

THE LOST SON

Who we are. Who I am.

+
+

MOTHER

You're not making any sense.

/
/

THE LOST SON

I wouldn't to you. You're sitting on a treasure trove of
information I want.

/
/
/

MOTHER

How do you know what I have and what I don't have?

/
/

THE LOST SON /

Exactly! /

MOTHER +

Son, do you know what your problem is? You care more about +
asking questions than the answers. +

THE LOST SON +

One day there will be no one left who remembers. Someone has /
to ask the questions. +

MOTHER +

Just like your brother. You think the answers will just come <
easily to you with no consequences at all. You are being +
selfish. +

THE LOST SON +

I am? All I've ever heard from you is: If you don't know /
what you're missing then you can't miss it. But then you and +
tantig drop these little surprise bombs on me. <

MOTHER +

Your Aunt should have learned to keep her mouth shut. +

THE LOST SON +

And now she's dead. <

MOTHER +

I don't need you to tell me that. <

THE LOST SON +

How much more am I going to miss? +

MOTHER +

We gave you everything growing up. +

THE LOST SON +

I'm not talking about material things! I'm talking about all +
the possibilities of things I could have had. Grandad died +
of cancer before you even married dad. My uncle falls off a +
roof taking with him the possible cousins I'll never hang +
out with. *Tantig* is gone and you won't even sit down to tell <
me where I come from. Why am I the only one who cares? <

MOTHER +

You don't think we did the same thing with our parents? We +
begged them - BEGGED them to tell us where we came from. And +
when they did we never slept soundly again. There is a price +
you pay for walking in the shadows of other people. You do +
not know what it means to carry the burden of a history. +

THE LOST SON +

That should be my choice. +

MOTHER +
And the guilt would have been mine. To disturb your life +
with them. Your life should be your own. You can't go /
forward / if you keep - +

THE LOST SON +
'You can't go forward if you keep looking back. How do you <
know where you're going if you don't know where you started <
from.' I know I know. I've heard this all of my life. But <
WHY? WHY did they do this? <

*THE INTELLECTUALS start to gather onstage and +
crowd around the LOST SON. +*

MOTHER +
Calm down, son. +

THE LOST SON +
What did we ever do that was so wrong? Why did they pick us /
to suffer? /

MOTHER +
Son, please. +

THE LOST SON +
I just want answers! +

SCENE 12: THE INTELLECTUALS /

*The lights cut to a small square of white +
that only the LOST SON and THE INTELLECTUALS +
stand in. The sound of a train. It is April +
24, 1915 - Red Sunday. +*

THE POET <
'Time Drops in decay, <
Like a candle burnt out, <
And the mountains and the woods <
Have their day, have their-' <

*Everyone breaks going to their positions. THE +
LOST SON takes a seat on the floor picking up +
a folio full of papers and starts sifting +
through them. +*

THE NEOPHYTE <
W.B. Yeats! 'The Wind Among the Reeds.' 1899. <

THE POET <
Correct. <

My turn! **THE NEOPHYTE** <
<

Try to make this one a challenge this time, eh? **THE PHILOSOPHER** <
<

I can do what I want with my turn. You do what you want with yours. **THE NEOPHYTE** <
<
<

Just go. **THE PHILOSOPHER** <
<

310! **THE SCIENTIST** <
<

'The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.' **THE NEOPHYTE** <
<
<

Karl Marx. **ALL EXCEPT THE NEOPHYTE** <
<

The Communist Manifesto. 312! **THE SCIENTIST** <
<

1848. **THE POET** <
<

Dammit. **THE NEOPHYTE** <
<

I told you so. **THE PHILOSOPHER** <
<

Ok then - you go. **THE NEOPHYTE** <
<

'At some future period, not very distant as measured by centuries, the civilized races of man will almost certainly exterminate, and replace the savage races throughout the world.' **THE PHILOSOPHER** <
<
<
<
<

Good one. **THE POET** <
<

Thank you. **THE PHILOSOPHER** <
<

Wait. I know this. Hegel! **THE NEOPHYTE** <
<

| | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| | THE PHILOSOPHER | < |
| How did you ever get into university? | | < |
| | THE SCIENTIST | < |
| Rousseau? 315! We're picking up speed. | | < |
| | THE POET | < |
| It must be Jean Baptiste Lamarck. | | < |
| | THE PHILOSOPHER | < |
| All wrong. | | < |
| | THE LOST SON | < |
| | (quietly from the corner) | < |
| Darwin. | | < |
| | <i>They all turn to look at him.</i> | < |
| | THE POET | < |
| He speaks. | | < |
| | THE PHILOSOPHER | < |
| Correct. | | < |
| | THE NEOPHYTE | < |
| No way! | | < |
| | THE POET | < |
| Of course! The Descent of Man! | | < |
| | THE POET AND THE SCIENTIST | < |
| 1871. | | * |
| | THE PHILOSOPHER | < |
| Correct again. | | < |
| | THE NEOPHYTE | < |
| Dammit. | | < |
| | THE POET | < |
| Don't be so hard on yourself. | | < |
| | THE PHILOSOPHER | < |
| That's what we're here for. | | / |
| | THE POET | < |
| A couple more years at the university and you'll know all this as well. | | < |
| | THE NEOPHYTE | < |
| Not anymore. | | < |
| | THE POET | < |
| Don't. | | < |

THE NEOPHYTE <
I'll never get to see those halls again. <

THE POET <
Don't. <

THE NEOPHYTE <
Smell the books in the library. <

THE POET <
DON'T. <

THE NEOPHYTE <
What a useless endeavour it's - <

THE POET <
DON'T! <

Silence. Just the sound of the tracks. <

THE SCIENTIST <
320. <

THE PHILOSOPHER <
Definitely moving faster. <

THE SCIENTIST <
Probably not much longer. <

THE NEOPHYTE <
How do you do that? <

THE SCIENTIST <
Simple math and figuring our position relative to our start <
point and the movement of the stars in the sky while looking <
out for any landmarks that I can see in this moonlight. I <
know we've been travelling east and then south and then east <
again. My guess is - Ankara. <

THE NEOPHYTE <
So how much longer? <

THE SCIENTIST <
About - <

THE POET <
It doesn't matter. <

THE PHILOSOPHER <
You! Silent Sister of the Corner. Do you have one for us? <

*THE LOST SON just keeps looking through <
papers and scribbling. <*

THE POET <
Leave him. <

THE NEOPHYTE <
Doesn't say much does he? <

THE PHILOSOPHER <
You have astounding powers of observation. <

THE SCIENTIST <
He hasn't spoken much since they put us in here. 322. <

THE NEOPHYTE <
Shoved. <

THE SCIENTIST <
Of course. <

THE POET <
He'll be fine once he accepts the situation. <

THE PHILOSOPHER <
Is that what we're doing? <

THE POET <
We are keeping clarity and sanity going. <

THE NEOPHYTE <
How much longer can they keep us cramped in here? <

THE PHILOSOPHER <
Be glad you're not in the front cars. Some of the others <
don't even have room to sit. <

THE NEOPHYTE <
We have no food or water. I'm freezing and don't have my <
coat. I've had to piss for the last 4 hours. <

THE SCIENTIST <
We designated the north corner for fecal and urinary waste. <

THE NEOPHYTE <
We're not animals! <

THE POET <
It could be worse. <

THE NEOPHYTE <
It's going to be. <

THE SCIENTIST <
You don't know that. 325. <

THE PHILOSOPHER
We could argue about this back and forth and it won't
matter. None of us knows what awaits.

THE NEOPHYTE
Does it look like this will end pleasantly?

THE PHILOSOPHER
You talk too much.

THE NEOPHYTE
Someone has to make up for those who don't raise their
voices.

THE PHILOSOPHER
You insinuate what?

THE NEOPHYTE
That you could have spoken up back at the station. You stood
there. Not a word of protest.

THE POET
Civility men. Let cooler heads prevail.

THE SCIENTIST
327.

THE PHILOSOPHER
Only a fool speaks at an unappointed hour.

THE NEOPHYTE
And only the coward hides behind his rhetoric.

THE SCIENTIST
328. We're slowing.

THE PHILOSOPHER
Heated words will only put you into an early grave.

THE NEOPHYTE
Why prolong the inevitable?

THE SCIENTIST
329.

THE PHILOSOPHER
Why drown in pessimism?

THE NEOPHYTE
Why ignore history's cycles?

*THE POET starts to sing the Komitas 'Oror'
['Lullaby'] The others join in one by one.
They finish the song - the silence lingering.*

Aghvor es, choonis khalad
Yertam ov perim bekhald
Oror
Yertam loosengan perim
Loosoon asdghere bekhald
Oror

[You are priceless, flawless too,
There is no one who can compare to you
Oror
I could go and bring over the moon to you,
The moon and the stars are flawless, too.
Oror]

THE NEOPHYTE

(starting to well up)
It's not fair. We didn't do anything.

THE SCIENTIST

331.

THE PHILOSOPHER

We were supposed to remain farmers and smiths.

THE SCIENTIST

And now we are a threat.

THE NEOPHYTE

To what?

THE POET

An educated mass is a thriving, independent one.

THE PHILOSOPHER

Empires don't take kindly to their subjects moving beyond
their stations. And when the control of money starts to
change hands - well then, that is quite the problem.

THE NEOPHYTE

But they gave us permission to leave for our studies.

THE SCIENTIST

They thought we'd fail. We proved their theory wrong. 335.

THE NEOPHYTE

And the others?

THE PHILOSOPHER

Probably safe.

THE NEOPHYTE

Probably?

THE SCIENTIST

You only focus on the infection not the healthy tissue.

THE NEOPHYTE

Lambs for God. Perfect.

THE PHILOSOPHER

At least you don't have to worry about being sheared little lambkin.

THE NEOPHYTE

This isn't time for jokes!

THE PHILOSOPHER

The entirety of the situation is one enormous slice of irony cake served in our honor. Enjoy the sarcasm frosting.

THE SCIENTIST

337.

THE NEOPHYTE

We're being led to slaughter and not one of you will take this seriously.

THE PHILOSOPHER

Being irrational will just lead to needless fear.

THE NEOPHYTE

Why can't we talk about what is going on? You're all just calmly standing there trading quips and queries like we're in a library. You refuse to acknowledge the situation. We don't have to stay silent about this! I won't stay silent! I can't!

THE POET

I will show you fear in a handful of dust.
April is the cruellest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain.

THE SCIENTIST

What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,
You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,
And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,
And the dry stone no sound of water.
After the torchlight red on sweaty faces
After the frosty silence in the gardens
After the agony in stony places
The shouting and the crying
Prison and palace and reverberation
Of thunder of spring over distant mountains.

THE PHILOSOPHER

He who was living is now dead
We who were living are now dying
With a little patience.
Here is no water but only rock.
Rock and no water and the sandy road.
If there were only water amongst the rock.
In this decayed hole among the mountains.

THE POET

In the faint moonlight, the grass is singing
Over the tumbled graves, about the chapel
There is the empty chapel, only the wind's home.
It has no windows, and the door swings,
Dry bones can harm no one.

THE LOST SON

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned.

ALL EXCEPT NEOPHYTE

Shantih. Shantih. Shantih.

THE NEOPHYTE

Keats?

THE POET

No.

THE NEOPHYTE

Wordsworth.

THE POET

No.

THE SCIENTIST

We're close.

THE NEOPHYTE

It's one of yours isn't it?

THE POET

No.

THE LOST SON

It hasn't been written.

THE POET

(he looks to THE LOST SON)

Yet.

The others follow suit and look at THE LOST SON who finally looks up, sensing their eyes on him.

The train comes to a halt.

THE SCIENTIST

343 miles. No more. I was right. Ankara.

A door opens and a bright light shines in.

THE NEOPHYTE

What happens now?

THE PHILOSOPHER

We get out.

THE NEOPHYTE

And then?

THE PHILOSOPHER

Who knows?

THE NEOPHYTE

I can't. I can't I can't I can't.

THE POET

Retain dignity. You are above this.

THE SCIENTIST

It's a funny thing isn't it?

THE PHILOSOPHER

What?

THE SCIENTIST

Knowledge - such a simple thing. And it scares them. Oh well.

He leaves the train car.

THE PHILOSOPHER

After you?

THE POET

Youth before wisdom.

THE PHILOSOPHER

'So wise so young, they say, do never live long.'

THE POET

Too easy.

THE POET smiles at him and exits.

THE PHILOSOPHER

Let's go.

THE NEOPHYTE

I never finished my studies. I don't know enough.

THE PHILOSOPHER

There's never enough time to know everything.

THE NEOPHYTE

I suppose not.

THE PHILOSOPHER

Come on.

*HE puts his arm around THE NEOPHYTE and they
exit.*

*THE LOST SON goes to the door. He stands for
a second.*

*The sound of gunfire and the light shuts off.
He turns and walks downstage slowly as the
lights dim to another pool. He moves to
behind a podium. He begins pulling out
sheaves of paper from the folio.*

SCENE 13: IN PLATO'S CAVE

*As he speaks, photos from the genocide stream
by. People, places, newspapers, documents.*

THE LOST SON

This is what is left of them. Of all of them. Nothing more than a collection of facts and eye witness testimonies. These faceless names. Disconnected voices. Numbers on a page to be ignored. Three thousand years of civilization nearly erased between April and October of 1915.

What was once globally decried, eliciting support from governments, calling missionaries to all corners of the genocide, is no longer publicly acknowledged - thanks to 'necessary strategic airspaces.' Toynbee, Morgenthau, the Kuenzlers, Woodrow Wilson - they all had their say. The New York Times printed photos and made pleas to help 'our Christian Armenian brothers and sisters.' 'Clean your plate. Think of the starving Armenians,' became a commonplace dinner-time warning. A massive ornate rug woven in appreciation by orphans of the Genocide still hangs in the White House. For a while even 'America the Beautiful' was adapted for the cause:

(singing - if possible) +
'Oh, beautiful for martyr feet- <
Who weary, bleeding stress +
A line of life in death hath beat +
Across the wilderness! +
Armenia! Armenia! +
To God thy dead arise +
And low at evensongs of heav'n +
Acclaim thy sacrifice.' <

And now. What Armenian Genocide? +

It never happened. +

Seven months. A race of over two million people cut down to +
500,000 in seven months. +

(As he lists each country he <
brandishes a page and <
throws it down quickly +
losing control) +

Dersim - 70,000 murdered /
Diyarbakir 150,000 murdered <
Bitlis 15,000 murdered <
Zilan 47,000 murdered +
Smyrna 100,000 murdered +
Menemen 1,000 <
Adana 30,000 <
Der El-Zor 165,000 <
Erzerum, Sivas, Urfa, Van, Ankara, Mus, Elazig, Marash, <
Tokat, Kayseri, Marash, Iskenderun, Antep, Yozgat, Giresun, <
Zeitun, Bahce, Amasya, Arapgir, Hozat, Haydaru, Palu, Siirt, <
Jermouk, Bashtash, Besni, Samsar, Malatya, Antioch. <

*He pauses for a moment to collect himself. An +
uncomfortable silence. He reaches for a glass +
of water and takes a sip. He wipes his brow. /*

Apologies. <

Numbers on a page don't mean anything outside of shock and +
awe. Numbers are disputable. Numbers are exaggerated. <
Numbers are ignored. But people were marched out. They were <
put into death camps. Shoved onto railway cars. And murdered <
just feet from their front doors in front of their loved <
ones. <
+

What an ironic twist that Hitler, less than 30 years later, +
thanked the Turks for his own final solution. 'Who, after <
all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?' If <
there is no one left to tell the story, then the story never +
happened. +
<

*The inhumanity of people - the disbelief that we can treat one another like this, the amazement that the world can forget so easily.

**His voice starts to mute out as applause takes over. And then there is silence. He stands there alone - the lecture over; the hall emptied. The BROTHER makes his way onstage and watches THE LOST SON for a moment.*

BROTHER

That was good, Bro.

THE LOST SON

Except for the part where I lost my shit.

BROTHER

It shows you're dedicated. Passionate. They should have made you the keynote speaker.

THE LOST SON

New kid on the block? Doubt it.

BROTHER

You shook a few of those old farts up.

THE LOST SON

Surprised you made it.

BROTHER

Miss a chance to watch my little brother take down the man? Nah. Grandma woulda been proud.

THE LOST SON

Right. Think it helped?

BROTHER

Is that what you wanted?

THE LOST SON

I don't know.

BROTHER

So then why speak?

THE LOST SON

Because I had something to say.

BROTHER

And?

THE LOST SON

I hoped it would make a difference - start a conversation.

| | |
|--|--|
| BROTHER | < |
| And if it doesn't. | + |
| THE LOST SON | + |
| Then...I don't know. I feel like this is all so pointless. I'm preaching to the choir, aren't I? | + / |
| BROTHER | < |
| To some degree. But people need a kick in the ass to remind them to look up from their books. | < < |
| THE LOST SON | < |
| And do you care again? | < |
| BROTHER | < |
| I'm too old for that. | < |
| THE LOST SON | < |
| That's the kind of reason that has us all in this mess. | < |
| BROTHER | < |
| Oh? | < |
| THE LOST SON | + |
| Our cousins have NO idea their great-grandmother survived the Genocide. They don't know what it means to be Armenian. They don't know the language, the idioms, the food, the behaviors. They just think of themselves as Americans. Like you. Like me. Worse than me. I'm just caught in the weird middle transition place. In three generations the Armenian heritage in our family will be gone. We will have finished the job the Turks started - there will be no Armenian identity left. | < + + + < < / < + + |
| BROTHER | < |
| You can't blame yourself for that. | < |
| THE LOST SON | + |
| Don't I - we- have a responsibility to care for the family's heritage? | < + |
| BROTHER | < |
| You're appointing yourself the caretaker. | + |
| THE LOST SON | + |
| No one else will do it. | + |
| BROTHER | < |
| Get off the cross, Bro. | < |
| THE LOST SON | + |
| I'm not pretending to be some kind of savior. | + |

BROTHER <

Yeah you are, dude. <

THE LOST SON +

What is the problem with knowing where you come from? +

BROTHER <

No one said there was. +

THE LOST SON +

A country of immigrants where the goal is to be like everyone else. The problem is that we're a people living on a hyphen. We can't rest comfortably on one side or the other. Hispanic-American (Brit). African-American (Brit). Arab-American (Brit). Armenian-American (Brit). We're in a cultural limbo. <

BROTHER <

You're angry. +

THE LOST SON +

The problem is that I have too many things to be angry about. I'm angry our family has kept history from us. I'm angry because none of the books I read help me get any closer. I'm angry because I didn't care enough sooner to start asking questions. I'm angry because I'm tired of people trying to protect me from the horrors of the past. I'm angry because no one will believe and acknowledge us. I'm angry because I just don't know what to do anymore! <

BROTHER <

Now you get it. But what do you want? <

THE LOST SON +

It doesn't matter. <

BROTHER <

Of course it does. +

THE LOST SON +

It doesn't matter because what I want is impossible to get. /

BROTHER <

You know Mom says: Nothing is impossible if / put your mind- <

THE LOST SON +

I want to run backwards and find grandma, to a time when grandad was still alive. To sit with them, locked in a room, until their silence is exhausted and breaks. I want to find freedom in their memories. <

SCENE 14: THE REUNITED

Lights up on a couple seated next to each other as the LOST SON moves into the scene.

LOST SON

Please tell me? Please.

The couple take a moment to look at each other before they turn and smile at the LOST SON, then slowly move to hold each other's hands. A breath. Then:

WIFE

We grew up together.

HUSBAND

She and I.

WIFE

At opposite ends of the village.

HUSBAND

Born one month apart - the last before the new century.

WIFE

The first after the new century.

HUSBAND

They celebrated our births all day and night.

WIFE

We were the blessings for the village.

HUSBAND

And even though our families were very different, they raised us together.

WIFE

We were goldsmiths. Twelve children total! I was lost somewhere in the middle of that. We had a house with two floors, a garden, a fountain.

HUSBAND

We survived well. Raising goats and sheep. Tending to silkworms.

WIFE

And how surprised our families were when they discovered we loved each other not as brother and sister. I was 11.

HUSBAND

I was clueless.

WIFE

It was a schoolgirl crush. I used to pinch him.

HUSBAND

I thought she was mean. And then I turned 13.

WIFE

And I started to ignore him.

HUSBAND

It drove me mad. She knew it. She loved it.

WIFE

He made me wait. I made him wait.

HUSBAND

And then at 14.

WIFE

Oh, god, 14. <

HUSBAND

She would sneak away at night, especially when there was a full moon.

WIFE

In my family, who would notice?

HUSBAND

She would visit me in the barn when I was done with my work. I smelled like animals and hay.

WIFE

I didn't care. He could have smelled like death and I would have still begged him to hold me. <

HUSBAND

And we would spend hours there.

WIFE

But not like that. We respected each other.

HUSBAND

She made me wait.

WIFE

We talked of life. Of the future. <

HUSBAND

Of running away together from our little village on the Tigris. Stuck in between a mountain and the river.

WIFE

We made promises to each other.

HUSBAND

To marry at 17.

WIFE

Have a child at 18.

HUSBAND

Another soon after.

WIFE

Not too soon.

HUSBAND

Our own place in the mountains. Nothing in between.

WIFE

My god how we laughed. Hours spent feeling his eyelashes on my cheek.

HUSBAND

Running my fingers through her hair, clearing the tangles.

WIFE

I never had tangles.

HUSBAND

I knew she put them in on purpose.

WIFE

And then that summer.

HUSBAND

Late summer.

WIFE

They came for us.

HUSBAND

For everyone. +

WIFE

They gathered all the men, tied them together and marched them from the town. They were to be taken ahead for safety. To make the march easier. I could not let go of my father. +

HUSBAND

I had to pry her fingers from his neck before the soldiers beat her. An hour later, as they gathered the rest of us into a line, we heard the guns. And we knew. +

WIFE

My mother took dirt and rubbed it all over my face, hands, and legs.

She dressed me in rags and told me to walk with my back hunched over. This way the soldiers would not try to rape me.

HUSBAND

My mother dressed me in my sister's clothes - my beard had not come in yet. She knew it would only be a matter of time before they came for the other men - the children and babies.

WIFE

And then we walked.

HUSBAND

My god how we walked. One month. Two months. My mother got too tired one day and stopped. 'Leave me behind,' she pleaded. 'God, will look out for me and take care of you.'

WIFE

My mother died from grief. Her heart broken from missing my father. One night she left to find some food. She never came back.

HUSBAND

There was no time to grieve.

WIFE

One morning soldiers came and took many of the young girls.

HUSBAND

I held onto her leg until a rifle came down to my face. When I woke up my brother was rubbing my hand, begging me to wake up. I panicked and starting running, trying to find her. When my legs could no longer move I turned and could not find the line. I did what I could to survive. I spent some time with two other orphan boys -- stealing and begging. I slept in caves, barns, wherever. One night a Turkish family found me. I was so scared. But they took me in, bathed me, fed me, and kept me safe. They called me 'Ahmed' to fool everyone else, telling them I was the orphaned child of an uncle. They were good to me for many years. But always - always my thoughts were on her.

WIFE

He was the only reason I survived. I was sold to a Turkish man who needed a wife. He had a plain face and a nice smile. I prepared his meals, cleaned his clothes, rubbed his feet, but I would never sleep in his bed. I slept on the floor. But his urges were so strong one night that he grabbed me from my sleep and...I never told him this.

HUSBAND

She didn't need to.

WIFE

I never told him how he forced me to marry him.

HUSBAND

I never asked because it was not my place.

WIFE

Of the child I had to bear.

HUSBAND

I never wanted her to feel shame.

WIFE

And how when I was 20 I saw my opportunity and ran from the house. I left the child sitting in the yard, playing with rocks, and I ran.

HUSBAND

I left with blessings and tears. Twenty and an orphan wandering the streets and walking - again. I sold sheep, tended silkworms, built houses, and delivered packages on bicycles. And every where I went, I looked for her. And by the time I arrived in Lebanon I discovered the freedom and joy of driving. I worked as a chauffeur for a fabric company.

WIFE

By God's blessing I ran into a missionary one day. She took me to an orphanage, the Bird's Nest, the largest in Lebanon, and trained me to be a teacher and a nurse.

HUSBAND

I took a room with a widow, helping her with chores whenever I was not working.

WIFE

I shared an apartment with 2 other girls from the orphanage. Both of them made women's undergarments for an Italian company in Beirut. And then one morning-

HUSBAND

It was spring.

WIFE

I went with my friends on their delivery. They had asked me many times but I never had any interest. This morning, for some reason only God can know, I said 'yes.'

HUSBAND

I volunteered for an extra route when the other driver's wife went into labor.

WIFE

So I waited with them downstairs, reading a book of French poems by Louise Labe.

+

HUSBAND

I got lost and was running late.

WIFE

And this beautiful shiny car with thin wheels arrived. I had never been in a car before in my life. I had seen them before, but they always scared me a little. I had grown fond of walking.

HUSBAND

I jumped out of the car apologizing, sweating, and opening the doors for them.

WIFE

Was it chance that made me trip on a loose rock and drop my book?

HUSBAND

One of the girls almost fell, I caught her arm to steady her but the book tumbled to the ground. I reached down to pick it up and when I handed it to her-

WIFE

When I reached out to accept the book, I looked up to say 'thank you'-

<

HUSBAND

Our eyes met.

+

WIFE

And I knew.

+

BOTH

It had to be.

WIFE

I couldn't say anything.

+

HUSBAND

All those years-

+

WIFE

So I said nothing and got into the car with my friends.

<

HUSBAND

I took my time, driving slowly, distracted by her face in the mirror.

WIFE

Seeing those beautiful lashes again.

+

HUSBAND

At the factory - she did not move from her seat. Back at her home - she did not move from her seat. She kept me company the whole day.

WIFE

I would sit there until God made my mouth work. <

HUSBAND

The day ended and I took her back to her building. I got out of the car.

WIFE

He opened the door for me and I slowly got out. +

HUSBAND

We stood there. +

WIFE

And then we fell into each other. Time completely standing still.

HUSBAND

And she wept. And I wept.

WIFE

Six years of yearning, of wanting, of needing all exploding in one embrace that I wanted to never end.

HUSBAND

And the next morning, I picked her up and she drove with me again.

WIFE

And the next the same. And on and on for months as we found our love again. +

HUSBAND

It had never been lost, of course. Just hidden away in a corner for safe-keeping.

WIFE

We married a few months later. +

HUSBAND

A simple ceremony. +

WIFE

And what better celebration of our love than the child that began to grow inside me.

HUSBAND

For every day we celebrated our love, we erased a day of horror. <

WIFE

One day, he mentioned America.

HUSBAND

So many of our people had escaped there. Set up communities.

WIFE

So we packed what little we had and left. +

HUSBAND

What did we have to keep us behind? Too many memories that <
could not be kept quiet. The two of us would be enough. <

WIFE

Three.

HUSBAND

The days were endless on the boat as it rocked left and right.

WIFE

Sliding up and over waves. I would have preferred crossing the desert again over not feeling solid land under our feet.

HUSBAND

I could not get enough of looking at the stars at night. I rubbed her belly, singing her songs, running my fingers through her hair again.

WIFE

He couldn't resist.

HUSBAND

I wouldn't.

WIFE

And when we finally arrived, oh god, all the people. <

HUSBAND

It was like a maze of bodies.

WIFE

But we were met with nothing but kindness and charity. They had heard of our people. Sympathy and kindness - this was so <
foreign to us.

HUSBAND

Such beauty of humanity. <

WIFE

Such graces of God. We ended in Boston. I became a teacher. +

HUSBAND

I opened my own store, selling Oriental rugs and furnishings. We lived in the apartment above the store.

WIFE

Not too large. Not too small. Enough for the two of us.

HUSBAND

Three.

WIFE

Then four. And finally five. All healthy. All happy. All together. +

HUSBAND

But...you can never run from your history. +

WIFE

It is who you are. It is how you become what you are. So trying to lock it away is impossible.

HUSBAND

Our children would ask, but we would never tell them. How could we?

WIFE

Why would we? It was enough that our dreams were disturbed every night. Why should theirs? <

HUSBAND

They needed a place to write their own history. To begin from something good. <

WIFE

And how we loved giving them every opportunity. To see them grow and succeed and love and flourish like wild flowers on a mountainside.

HUSBAND

She always did love her poetry.

WIFE

As much as I deny it, I think about my past all the time - it comes in front of my eyes like a dream. I see my past and I remember the things I saw.

HUSBAND

It is impossible to forget. It is part of your body. <

WIFE

Can one really forget such things? And why should you? For the Turks' sake? <

HUSBAND

We talk about these things now because our hearts have burned. The fire cannot go out. Ashes look like they are out, but when you stir it, they burn again. <

WIFE

We get together now every week, all the survivors: old, backs stooped over, grunting as we try to make our knees bend to sit. And we talk of our grandchildren. +

HUSBAND

Of the crazy world there is now. All these wars.

WIFE

More genocides.

HUSBAND

Muslims. Christians. Whatever.

WIFE

E-mail.

HUSBAND

Internet.

HUSBAND & WIFE

The YouTube.

WIFE

But always we end up talking about our past. <

HUSBAND

Who else could understand? <

WIFE

Others think our age makes us remember it differently.

HUSBAND

That our memories play tricks on us now. +

WIFE

But how can you make up such things? +

HUSBAND

Why would you? +

WIFE

But we are so thankful for each other. +

HUSBAND

And we cannot stop loving each other.

WIFE

When he sleeps, I put my face to his and feel his eyelashes.

HUSBAND

I still fall asleep with my hand in her hair.

WIFE

And that is how they will find us one morning. <

HUSBAND

Saying goodbye to another century. <

WIFE

And maybe our stories die with us. <

HUSBAND

And maybe it is better that way.

WIFE

But always.

HUSBAND

Always. <

WIFE

The love. <

HUSBAND

The love. <

BOTH

And the hope. /

A moment. /

THE LOST SON starts to move away from them. /

The WIFE stands. /

WIFE

This isn't your story. /

THE LOST SON

It could have been. /

WIFE

You can't have it. /

THE LOST SON

I know. But thank you for letting me borrow it. /

She smiles and nods to him. A pool of light /

appears showing his desk. /

THE LOST SON goes to the desk and starts /

slowly writing something. /

EPILOGUE: THE FOUND SON

The rest of the cast start to slowly fill the stage as an old Armenian hymn softly plays. They dress the WIFE as THE MATRIARCH.

THE MATRIARCH

It is not enough to speak the words. We must tend the garden. To find what seeds remain and let them take root. Make them grow wildly out of control. Look for the little pieces of memories strewn across winding, uneven paths. The ones left to be found, collected, and put together. Like little pieces of forgotten bread. Each piece will nourish the famine. Each piece will give you strength. Each piece will force you to look for the other one. It may be a journey of many lifetimes, but they will remain on the path waiting to be found.

The cast looks at THE LOST SON. Waiting. THE LOST SON stands up and comes downstage center. He holds up the paper and looks at it. Turns it and shows the audience a piece of Armenian writing.

THE LOST SON

Eem - anoonuss. My name.

Blackout.

END OF SHOW.