

Unlanded

Will Owen

danceplay masque

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Introductory Information

Concept & Synopsis: *Unlanded* is a choric/group playwork. It is a multi-form (danced, spoken, mimed, sung, etc.) stagework that incorporates a dozen scene-like vignettes that are, as a practical matter, a play-within-a-play. The plot of the little playlet nested in the framing performance begins with the establishment of a business partnership between an artist and the artist's trusted-friend-and-business-associate, and it goes on to play out the consequences of that for the artist's wife-and-muse and her family of poor relatives; it ends after the relatives discover that the associate misappropriated the venture, and one of the relatives' children, her-or-himself an artist, launches on a business partnership with another of the relatives' children as a trusted-friend-and-business-associate. The relatives are the performance team of players and dancers; they are a fusion of troupe/ensemble/chorus line/chorus/*corps de ballet*. They, variously, dance and play all the many roles -- those of the performance that cradles the play-within-the-play, and those of the enactment-within-the-performance. Though of course distinguishable, these two simultaneous registers also pervade one another, and so are orchestrated into one continuous, fluid, dance-and-play action. The recurring themes of the vessel performance are those of dancers and players preparing for performance, city dwellers getting through an urban day, and early humans foraging, hunting etc. in a near protocultural, nomadic habitat. The various personalities and roles played by the relatives are those of the characters and personages found in any large extended family, and the specifics of these will naturally emerge in the collaborative creation of the concrete stagework welled up from the abstract script. In addition, between the vignettes, and also moving, woven into the play's other action, are a busker/travelling minstrel/folksinger, the Guitar Player, and her/his sidekick, the Kid. This play is a stagework that, primarily, fuses enacting that is dance theater and enacting that is spoken theater. This play could be of particular interest to dance theater choreographers and spoken theater directors interested in language-rich theaterworks that call for a fusion of their ever more closely related theater arts. Indeed, this play, which also includes songs, is designed to enable the collaborative deploying of a particularly wide and eclectic fusion of today's performing and theater-making arts and crafts -- old and new -- including the range of digitally enabled sound mixing, lighting design, and prop robotics.

Cast Breakdown: Players and dancers of all ages.

Scene Breakdown: An empty space in which the players and dancers conjure up an array of overlapping settings, which are set by what's acted and danced.

CHARACTERS

THE POOR RELATIVES *a large extended family* (**RLs**)

THE ARTIST *a solitary searcher and careful craftsman* (**AR**)

THE MUSE *a great beauty and the artist's wife and widow* (**MS**)

THE ASSOCIATE *a loyal friend and practical businessman* (**AC**)

THE GUITAR PLAYER *a busker/travelling minstrel/folksinger* (**GP**)

THE KID *the Guitar Player's friend/roadie/sidekick/running partner* (**TK**)

*

Unlanded

prologue: *The Poor Relatives are engaged in activities of preparing/getting ready, in particular, activities typical of actors and dancers getting ready to go on and play and dance, activities typical of city-dwellers getting ready for another urban day, and activities typical of early humans getting ready to move on as a primate band; also, as throughout, the RLs' lines are to be played "variously", that is, the phrases (signalled here by the textmarks of capital letter and endpoint (period, exclamation point, etc.)) are to be spoken-and-acted/looped-and-overdubbed/mimed-and-danced by and among the many characters/roles/figures/voices devised and enacted.*

RLs

How're we doing for time? Breathe, focus and relax.
There's water there. This just can't last.
Just make sure it don't come loose. Can you see?
The sun's way up. One last bit of tea?
Hurry, hurry or we'll be late for school.
It's only stressful now. It starts, we're cool.
This is always so chaotic. It's that way ev'ry day.
The nature that encircles recedes us to far away.
Listen, I... We make our wording order it.
There's no ordering this mess. Dumptrawd!
Can't you get to throwing all this stuff away?
I'll get to it. Get to it maybe someday.
Dreary housing short we're living in's at fault.
It's not that way on this screen. Mindvault.
Way we keep us docile. Waiting for that break.
Yeah, I found a place. Not far, but how I'll make.
The ends meet now. Oh turn it off I just can't take.
It now? No time to care for distant wars?
I got to get to work. Who recalls how far's?
Finish your breakfast. You'll need the energy.
I've lost my shoes. Love's just brain chemistry.
Is that why then I can't -- no wonder...
Just get over. The way you put me asunder?
Fierce and heavy-hearted. Both at once.
That's maybe why. My boss treats me like a dunce?
Almost not breathing in the hunting hiding place.

Instant of the stone's throw. I see the creature's face.
And heart-racing still speed to kill enraged. Still hungry?
No. When I see all this I'm still 'way too angry.
HAAARGH! Still so warm and bloody in my hands.
I dance for closeness with. The binding bands.
Can you tie it a little tighter? Understand I got to move.
Moving on. Triumph and sadness whereby we prove.
I stand like it stands. Run like it runs.
The trees. The antelopes. But what of the humans?
The dancing makes the life live in me.
The chanting makes its bleeding mem'ry.
C'mon, okay? And give us all a kiss 'fore you go on your way.
No not okay. But still. Have a wonderful learning day.
Yeah, I just love the song-and-dance thing. And for?
One moment. Forget it all til I can launch on more!
I'll deal with it later. Promise? Now I got to go.
Pressure's on from the economy. That money thing you know?
So what? Now say...?

Ahka-ack, ahka-ack
stand me back
jump me back
ahka-ack, ahka-ack, etc.

Can't talk now. I'll call you later.
Got no time left for no sleazy faker.
If good God help me find my dancing shoes.
You'll see an instant of me deep-heart blues.
Upended. Like birds struggle and then fly.
You go figure. Hard to ask how or why.

Ahka-ack, ahka-ack
jump me back
dance me back
ahka-ack, ahka-ack, etc.

I think that's it. This is so confusing.
The love it takes. So stop refusing.
Where the flamelines race and trace.
Eyes shared, sparking in the darkness, face to face.
At the ingathering. Against the night.
By drums and cryouts conjured into flight?

Ahka-ack, ahka-ack
dance me back
drum me back
ahka-ack, ahka-ack, etc.

Every day's the same and diff'rent, ey?
Can't even stop changing what role who's going to play?
Well today, he'll be the artist and she the muse.
Right now. See them, getting ready for their cues.
And be sure to call if something happens.
I worry anyway. So call if nothing happens.

Ahka-ack, ahka-ack
dance me back
call me back
ahka-ack, ahka-ack, etc.

The land that reaches out all 'round us.
Bearing our footstamp. Less threatening surrounds us.
The center grovesward clearing. All quieting, attend.
Even that's not clear here. What's beginning and what's end.
Shshsh...they're ready. The artist and associate.
To make. The fateful deal that seals their fate.

Ahka-ack, ahka-ack
call me back
play me back
ahka-ack, ahka-ack, etc.

*

TK

So how you feeling today? Pretty ready?
Going to be one of those days I guess.
Yeah, just stay in there holding steady;
we'll make it if we try...well, unless...

GP

Here today, gone tomorrow --
windwhirl ashes, love and sorrow --

*who's here tell our trouble-story
of lostlove's pain'n'glory?*

*

1: the artist and the associate, in the prime of life

AR

And so we'll venture there together you
and I fast friends so strongly loyal to
the safeguard of my leisure needed for my work --
while you, who bluff and hearty so surely shirk
my art and vision ways, yet rightly fitting,
sternly work so well for hard-earned profiting.

AC

In true trust with you and your great-souled heart
I'll care for these means -- taking my part --
and make them prosper through the time to come
so these mere market chattels may become,
by my work below and God's blessing from above,
a treasured bounty that shelters those we love.

AR

And now, my fortune's husbanding assured,
I'm free to work -- and work -- in peace, knowing

AC

largesse munificent, your wife and family has insured

AR & AC *together*

'gainst poverty, by our friendship's overflowing.

RLs

(You idiots! Shshsh...you can't do anything about it.
Can't they? Maybe not. But wouldn't you? Oh no I...
There in the prime of life. Shout out about it!
How could they do something so stupid? Oh, it's not to cry.

Look! Now like gods descended for us from above.
Now the artist and his muse. In youth's careless love.)

*

TK

Hey, like be so great to get some coffee --
like chill, take a break from all the stress --
hunker down in confort time 'cause maybe...
my life...maybe just can't fix this mess.

GP

*If you'll hold, go on and hold me
I'm told it helps so with the pain.
So yeah hold, go on and hold me,
'til I can stand alone again.*

*

2: *the artist and the muse as newlyweds*

AR

The gold of dawn will soon sweep bright across

MS

the shoresand that this night did bear the toss

AR

and restless roil of nets of silver moonlight on

MS

the breakers' tumblespark at ocean's edge.

AR

Come on.

MS

No, stay.

AR

But waking life of work awaits us.

MS

There is no life, but love, that dreamlike sates us.

AR

So vast -- so like the surface of the mighty sea
in cloudless, moonless night completely empty,

MS

and facing up to the milk-pale spray
of circling stars that gaze and say

AR

ask not what I can make of this

MS

just live, all now, this loving kiss.

AR

And yet the wake of work tugs me away.

MS

Oh stay, and speak of how you love me, sleepingly.

MS & AR *together*

What I/you live in innocence like children play
you/I hunt and kill with all art's poetry.

MS

And so you have to go?

AR

But I'll be back.

MS

But after every going, none come back the same.
Isn't it the myriad small separations -- yes, in the rack
of creakless time so swiftly still -- the constant change...

how it adds up the time apart that so endangers...
finishing by making, of true lovers inconstant strangers?

AR

Wait for me here.

MS

Now where else have I to go?

AR

I live for you, you know.

MS

You live for what you have to do.

AR

That too.

MS

No, wait. ... No, don't. Already it's...

RLs

(Look at her. Left all alone like that.
Even bigger idiot than I thought. How 'bout?
What? No. This ain't no place or time for eat and drink.
Why not? Nor nothing else neither. You think a wink?
From you? Might wake her? Frog'u'd work better. Mister hot!
I bet she's naked. Under our clothes, who's not?
Be quiet. She's not asleep. Oh she's a goddess.
Of loveliness. So wond'rously urbane, so free from stress.
No mortal she. Nope -- no way. Man, what I'd give.
Hah! You'll never swim up there. Where all the starfish live?)

MS

I look at you, alone, now that he's gone
and in the frankness of my gaze,
both dark of night and hope of dawn
seem they, fused -- saintly lucidity, worldly daze?
The hand that plunges -- touches pleasure's marrow --
as the other holds the brambled roses,
perfume petaled, wet and curled as Earth-ploughed harrow,
as the yelp-spent doglet at my feet, asleep reposes?
The hand that shields from prying -- also of eyes --

what in faith's locked save to true love's honest
treasureing -- as the blood red of roses courage cries
that we all need to daily live, and love, our best.
The handmaidens at work arrange and order --
house of truth, theater to mask disorder?

*

TK

No, I can go. I think I remember
like how to get there, but I'm not sure.
It's like my memory's so sore and tender
that...um...it's everything's so unsure.

GP

*Hand in hand walk on together,
now, now shows way to forever,
leave but time for one more rime --
and I'll go with you one more time.*

*

3: *the marriages of nieces and nephews*

RLs *getting ready to go to a wedding and then welcoming the bride*

(What? Not another wedding! I'm not going.

Yes you are and we're taking the children.

I can't wear this. It's ridiculously ugly.

No one will ever notice. The plodding streaming.

Sway limbs. Under the far sky-heaven.

Daubed and feathered. To drum and melody.)

So sing, and sing, the paeon sing, and sing and sing

the admiration song to beautybride now entering.

To all around, her head tips high, her eyes strike proud,

as she defies their chokes of joy, their laughs of tears -- the crowd

knows all too well the both for better and for worse

that hidden destiny will, fickle, treacherous disburse.

RLs *women (many with infants), and girls, with the bride*

Laugh now, and hug us close and longly for good luck
for soon, when little ones like these to sleep you'll tuck,
beyond such searing love a world of stress and cares --
vortex of snares --
will cut and stab your bright hopes down to dark despairs.

RLs *men and boys, with the groom*

Laugh now, and hearty drink to our health and your own,
your girl's strong beauty and when, after all this, at last alone
so sure astride, a master, one with your land and its fertility,
harvest richly,
'fore dispossessed by draught and freeze of time and penury.

AR *to the bride and groom and relatives*

My works I give you as befitting gifts.

AC *aside, absconding*

(And now, and here, no one will miss my swift self-eclipse).

MS *to the bride and groom and relatives*

And with my love I grace you as befits.

RLs

From paradise of celebration we now return, as we all know --
forgetfulness at end -- to living's endless hew and sow.
(Good morning. Running a bit late are we today?
Here the deer hooves have wedged the dust. How far away?
Yes. But still I'm ready. Here come all the customers.
Now? Not far. Like us they too move like slow foragers.
Oh no... Lucky we have 'em. Hello. How can I help you?
This clayeydust with water, holds the form. You too?
Can make a slingstone hardened in the coals.
If taught. Can mark the song-signs on the mud-shard.
But by then the hunted, be gone as departed souls.
Once you've learned it's easy. But it's the learning that's so hard.)

*

TK

Oh man, that's good; I feel so better now.

Like sunny days and rainy days, the whyway
mood weather changes, but I don't know how --
way nothing's diff'rent for me, yesterday, today?

GP

*Today I'm going to take my world,
shake it loose and let it fly --
way whirlwind love fells boy and girl,
like they didn't even know or try.*

*

4: *the artist at work, teaching a child of the relatives*

AR

The metal and the marble, and the brush
press-coloring the canvas are the visible
touchstones concrete and at hand -- so hush --
and listen with all senses to the invisible
they sing for you in mind's abstraction
where you can live, free of mortal distraction.

an RL *girl or boy*

And so I will, by nature's measure
ever sight the physical in golden section
to make the interplay of pattern and figure
trace the shadow of the ideas' refraction.

AR

The man, the woman; the serpent and the lamb.

an RL *girl or boy*

The chaos and the ordering; the ocean and the land.

AC *aside, observing*

Oh fools so vain this world's so full of,
all your creation's such stupid silliful;
the real and serious is making money
to lessen pain and escape poverty.

*

TK

They like always come back don't they,
same old same old you got to deal with?
Changing them, now that's the way to get away.
Problems...but they're the what you feel with.

GP

*I represent the oldland,
so scarred from sea to shining sea;
so what's it take to understand
ain't no they 'll care'n'heal -- 'cept you and me?*

*

5: *the relatives and all their children*

RLs *women*

The pain of giving birth.

RLs *men*

The drudge of earn to pay.

RLs *children*

Mom 'n' dad work lives away, so we can happy learn and play!

RLs *women*

Betray and break up, oh hard dismay

RLs *men*

to maybe make up

RLs *women*

so long as pride don't get in the way.

AR *aside, observing among the relatives*

We live as violent and garish, blind
as creatures of the lightless deep sea floor --
the weight of ocean a somnolent ignorance --
and dart to life only when sex or fear sieze the mind,
unsluggishing for a flurry of frantic gore,
as when strange animals in spark surprise swift dance
their dance of coupling or fearing killing:
the inching conchglove snatch upbellied
by the snag-foot unicorn's numb swilling --
so quick the darkfast ocean closes in unsullied.

RLs *men*

The rut and rot of life and job so tired and known

RLs *women*

yeah, children born, and goin' to school and sudden grown --

RLs *men*

the happiness and prides,

RLs *women*

the shames and worries;

RLs *men and women*

the laughter and the tears, the agonies and the joys...
and how our children well -- or not -- will tell our stories.

RLs *children*

So play, and play, and playing sing, happy childhood girls and boys!

*

TK

Sometimes I just want to rest my head,
close-shut in my arms so down like this...
you know, all the tie-up I know's ahead --
all day ev'ry day -- all I've known's like this.

GP

Who knows some else's trouble-suffering

's only by one reachout offering --
shoulder burden, share the darknight valley --
so closely walk -- hallelujah -- there's dawn's glory.

*

6: *the artist's death and the muse's mourning*

AR

Now, even now, an instant from that end
that we always, all know there's no way to forefend,
but wishful, dreamily ever unbelieve
will really come: mine does, and free at last I leave.

MS

No, stay. You taught me to face up, stare down, both live
and die, and now leave me to fighting both alone?
Out loud I cry for me without you; oh what I'd give
to laugh alive with you, not live within, stone
cold fell sorrow confronting the loss of you I grieve,
as solitude and silence me of my own life bereave.

an RL *girl or boy, presenting her with sculpture/depiction/drone-
contraption, etc. of a bird or similar*

Look, I made this to comfort you -- a little work of art both for itself
and for its purpose -- for you.

MS *laughing, then moving away with the funeral procession*

The birds are gods, for no one sees them age and die.
They seem never to work, only play and fly.
And as a keepsake of your love for me
and him, I'll behold this long as I can see.

RLs

(What's the matter? I don't know.
It's not to you it's happening. I know.
Stop blubbering. It's embarrassingly disfiguring.
It's just a bunch of ritual gesturing.
I always cry at funerals and weddings.

Relieves the stress of loss? So our dim dreadings
real though they may be are not what make our fears --
it's but our bright thoughts of them that our awareness sears?)

RLs with **an RL** girl or boy, as if playing, making something with
an imaginary friend, possibly launching another bird -- or something
-- contraption

Perforce our recollection at once holds on and lets go,
to make and let invention upspring off anew
from memory and play, and keep on doing so,
dialoguely working, back and forth, like me and you?
Ideas we share emerge eternal, ephem'ral --
glimpsed and gone, back to forever -- kernels
in explosive bloom: dance and dancer,
song and singer loosed unapart by see-and-hearer.
See, now like here, as you hear phrase and see gesture,
what they form up in the mind, or do our minds make
what forms? With whom does what you understand partake?
Look, and can you tell another what it is? You go figure.

*

TK

Got to get moving, we want to get there.
Like just can't stay here all day you know.
Like maybe got but losses to cut's not fair --
but like nobody cares -- so I'll just go?

GP

*Don't no one plan end lost alone,
left in shambles, memory of home;
love lived here, and now's gone,
now I'm still here, and you're still gone.*

*

7: *the widow and relatives at tea*

MS & RLs

My wonderful one, so kind of you to come!
Well I'm so glad to be here 'cause this way.
I see your face and hear your voice. What fun.
It is to come here for tea. And endless gabblywabbly.
With nut cases galore. Without words, related.
I thought that was some novel. Oh famously.
That you never read. Only initiated.
What's wrong with began? That ev'ry happy fam'ly.
Must be wounded crazy. And drink tea.
And whiskey! What? They had another baby?
So what's the news of all the aunts and uncles?
No, working on my projects. That're going well?
Always. You see, it fills out the wrinkles.
So that's why I keep getting fatter. And so, pray tell.
In what modality. Are your projects aburgeon now?
So even I'm not getting older. Oh so we wish.
Not bad these little sandwiches. And how.
Another cup of tea? Or more of this dev'lishdelish.
Cream and sugar thing? Oh a sliver of a wick.
And stop feeding the dog. You'll make her sick.
I shouldn't. But you will. Yes, eating keeps me fit.
So terrifically so? As a matter of policy
I always put off everything until. As long.
As possible. So who can't use a bit more money?
So why's it always hell on Earth that that makes us strong?
Such stupid accidents. So unforeseen and wrong!
Stop crying. No my dear, keep. Keep crying.
To sorrow there's no end. Like senseless dying.
So what about the game? Oh! Played terribly.
No, I don't get around much anymore.
They lost and badly. And so deservedly she.
Left him just like that? About time, the old bore.
Specially with his whore habit. No? Oh, my dear.
Self reliance. And who really loves you. Is learned best.
When true love. Unrequited. Puts independence. To the test.
I still hear, but my legs aren't what they used to be.
What? Yes, tonight and we're all going together.
Oh I've seen it. And? Oh, the staging and the story.
Completely lame. But the singing -- treasure of thrushether.
Just goes to show. 'Bout Nature's opera of daily weather?
So any chance there's some coffee in your kitchen?

Keep you rock and reeling every which way for no reason.
You know such things can't really be explained.
It's still a good painting. And life's sour, tough sledding?
That I'm too lout to like? Body bright, but soul-maimed?
So invisible to me. You've got pictures of the wedding!
No, they didn't! Oh newlyweds always need new bedding.
They weren't invited. Let me see! And look what she's wearing!
Standards now. All gone thank God. Why I'm beyond caring.
One last bit of tea? Maybe another dram, wee dram?
I have to go now or. Don't worry I'll drive you.
Could always count on you. To never give the slightest damn.
It is so good of you. And you know I always miss you.
What, one last? Yes, don't mind if I do.
I'll be in the car. Watching and waiting.
Worried but hopeful. Breathing but aching.
If that were all. Oh, you eager dog.
Look, maybe one last kiss. At the slipping.
Of la moretta and the bauta. All so agog.
Here, I'll make you one. At the stripping.
Down to the ashamedness. Enabling and crippling.
True self or masking? Just asking... At the last.
Best hope that I might hold you fast.
I'll make you another. Token of the castle.
Of all my dreams. Troweling in the butterjoint.
Laying up the courses. In the bustle.
And teeming of building. The point.
Of it all. Something I think. Despite the disjoint.
The silent screams. The muffling moans.
Here -- some doppling jamtop tow'rs upon the keeplets of the
scones.
So now. Like this was both our first kiss and our last.
Not later? Declining in the lengthening shadow of the past?
Darkest shades, brightest sun does cast.
So daily, count your blessings while they last.

*

TK

I don't know what to do -- can't make up my mind.
Like I feel so surging empty all inside --

got bees like mighty buzzing in big spacewide --
can't handle now...for sure no future of no kind.

GP

*Wake up come morning, got you on my mind;
sleep when the night gone, still I can't find
peace from your mem'ry, love you'd leave behind --
I may be a poor girl/boy, but my love's sweet'n'kind.*

*

8: *the associate tricks the widow, taking the relatives' inheritance,
and night falls and all sleep*

RLs *The first part -- marked by parentheses -- which itself is
interweaved, can itself be interweaved in through the second part, in
which the associate drives a bargain with the elderly widow. The
syllabized rhythmic of the first part can used with very varied voice
soundings -- unworded dance chant that could also be versed
narrative -- and it can slowly get louder and faster until about when
the widow signs, in the second part. In the third part all settle down
for the night with a songlike incantation, and then the Guitar Player
sings a song.*

(I don't want to see this. I know what happens.
Earth and Sky conspire with their daughter.
Ahka-ack, ahka-ack, hushah-ah-hushsha-ah, etc.

It's just another ordinary, slight-of-hand deception.
To hide from her husband, Time, the son who will dethrone him.
Ahshuh-huh-hasha-ah, ahshuh-huh-hasha-ah, etc.

No ordinary to it. It's monstrous and terrible.
Fearing what he did to his own father will be done to him.
Huhyuh-ah, rushah-ah-ah hushah, etc.

He stumbled into it. He was really trying to help her.
He devours his own children. Absconding, she gives birth in hiding.
..., etc.

You're too lazy to fight it, so accept and just live with it.
She entrusts her child to painted caves and greensward groves.
..., *etc.*

Besides, it's completely everyday. Every deal that's way.
And instead brings him the clothes that wrapped his littlest one.
..., *etc.*

We all have our insecurities and need insurance.
Smelling, he trusts his judgement, and swallows the stone she placed
inside them.
..., *etc.*

It's not so bad. It was done with good intentions.
Far away, the warriors dance and clash their weapons tirelessly.
..., *etc.*

It's just taking care of business. Caring for the clients.
So from old Time's hearing the clang and banging mask the baby's
cry.
..., *etc.*

You got to trust that people're doing their best -- we're only human.
What's more, a nymph goddess holds the child suspended between
earth and heaven.
..., *etc.*

I don't understand what there's to be so upset about.
So old Time's eyes can't see him there hung up 'tween life and death.
..., *etc.*

It's all so upside-down upended. Shouldn't be that way.
And once full grown, it happens: pitiless he sicklecuts them off.
..., *etc.*

You'd rather not know. And believe some pious story?
And with a warrior cry triumphant, slings the spume springs into the
restless sea!
..., *etc.*

I don't want to even see him get away with it. He doesn't.
The shield bearer, now first of the gods rules and orders and

defends.

..., *etc.*

What do you mean he doesn't. Of course he does -- look around!
Gives the laws for gods and men. But justice-power escapes him.

..., *etc.*

Can't you just let up some -- give us a break why don't you?
As from the barren wound, dripping, blood sows into the Earth.

..., *etc.*

Bunch of hysterical angry old bitches -- let it go why can't you?
And fierce like raging Nature, see the furies bloom!

..., *etc.*

You know, just forgive and forget, there's got to be a place for that.
Who pitilessly vengent restless hound the perjured down.

..., *etc.*

Why like so remember crimes and lies? People like want to get
theirs, that's all.

And matronly guard honor, save order for the blameless, children
with no power.

..., *etc.*

I'd rather not know. That's just how I feel. It's better to believe.
His own weakness -- that for him, the conqueror, he's excepted?

..., *etc.*

We'll make the best of it. There's nothing we can do about it.
Huddling so frightened, behind the rampart bulwark of his tinsel
aegis?

..., *etc.*

But I feel so battered by chaos and injustice.

That merciless serpents every which way around and behind the
shining shield?

..., *etc.*

C'mon, it's just another sordid and absurd trickstering to grab some
more.

Leaving us stranded, suspended between here and there.

Ahka-ack, ahka-ack, hushah-ah-hushsha-ah, etc.

Look, tomorrow's another day, and this will all be over.
Anguish-eyed, carefully standing, up above the grass fronds.
Rising up to see and face the certain danger -- now, or later?)

MS

You were his friend. So trusted. So I trust you.

AS

You can and should. My loyalty merits that you do.

MS

His works, lands, money -- how can I, alone now, see to

AS

his legacy and intentions -- and help your every nephew?

MS

Why yes, exactly. You understand so well.

AS

I do. I do. I'm here to all your fears dispel.
Take comfort from me, now you are old and worried.
I was his faithful, disinterested -- through all the storied
years of his stubborn, genial creation --
support and partner in business association,
along with serving as his lawyer, as I,
unpaid

MS

serve on -- and so I thank you -- now as mine.

AS

Oh it's nothing. So set aside all lingering suspicion --
how after so much so long of shared vision,
working hand-in-hand to successful purpose,
could I betray his generosity that binds us,
fall prey, to common conflict of interest?
Oh! In truth I do assure you. Now rest

MS

Not quite yet...

AS

I feel inside so love and honestly
that I'm untainted by hypocrisy.

MS

And maybe not for many years ahead?

AS

What I'm suggest and offering then -- as I've often said --
is generous to a fault under current circumstances

MS

and you're sure will also see to my fam'ly's chances

AS

of benefitting also from your husband's great largesse?
Of course. That's why I've set it up this way. No less,
you see, will go to you and all of your beloved yours
than fairly should, depending when Heaven's doors

MS

might open for my mortal self's sad soul?

AS

I suppose. We all don't know how long the role

MS

of our continuing and changing personsworth
is scripted to play upon this Earth?

AS

Until whenever we're sent off for dead. That's why

MS

Our worth?

AS

Why I -- I'm a good man -- that's why I
am pious and respected by all who know me --
like you do. I'm devoted to good works.

MS

(And if beneath disinterest self-serving lurks?)

So if I sign and then -- tomorrow -- die?

AS

Why this fair price that now as you can see
is what the market worths all your husband
left to work with me in freehold land
and chatels real you will receive this way:
one half now at signing for you to spend away
in needed daily living and necessity,
and one half to your heirs after you die.

MS

And that way there'll be something then for them?

AS

Exactly so. And in the interim --
here is where you sign -- I'll care for and keep
his lands and things and -- sharingly -- I'll reap
the benefits -- of course while paying you your rent

MS

Why always a pittance -- not worth the paper on which it's sent?

AS

The conjuncture's always so unfavorable -- so untoward
for sustained profit and advance -- why times are hard
that's all -- and for commodities most of all --
as every sage economist'll confirm for you withal.

MS

I don't understand -- don't understand at all.

AS

It's best to sign then here; in truth in all
of this, trust me. I have the best for you
and all your goals devised as I would do
were your great-hearted husband here.

MS

He's not. And I am groping in anxious fear
of what's best to do, not sure at all if...am I?
still the same as who was then the woman I...
was then...with him -- so much does time and sorrow --

and fortune -- as if from evening to morrow
were a night like life that passed in sleep
changes youth to age in a winking deep,
and wrenches who we began to who we become.

AS

Yes, but if you sign here now the sum
of half of what I'm buying it for will come
first thing into your bank tomorrow.

MS

For so I need the money.

AS

As for the rest I'll

MS

Borrow?

AS

Well yes...but no...but in effect...so safe and prosperous
until you die I'll keep the land and all its use.

That way -- if soon for instance -- then your nephews all,
this fair price now of the other half will windfall
upon their heads and help them shift their way
through their lackadaisical life of play.

(My industry it merits me my reward.

Application and ambition is a lifelong judgement sword;
it cuts the offal meat from the hard bone --
swift discarding it, like tailings peeled -- yes, it does unthroned
the placid blunt, self-satisfied with supple, shiftless living
in their airy, hermetic dungeons, inefficient and unworking.)

It would be best however, to avoid misunderstanding,
as they might take it a bit unforgiving --

with humans, you always know resentment's lurking
somewhere -- not to breathe a word of this to any, notwithstanding
the implications for them and the impact...

it's best it hits them unbeknownst, an accomplished fact.

Please sign, while we're all alone, your name here freely.

she signs

MS

Done. Believing it was best. But wonderingly
...wonderingly, as doubt and afterthought
always persist

AS

but can be quickly full forgot

MS

as time evermore swiftly down spiraling days
of slowly aging recedes it all into a haze
except the growing work of simply breathing --
heart keep beating -- waiting and and accepting.

AS

So sleep a moment -- as this sun sets still
shining twilight through the room -- I will
soon be back to see you often...whenever...
there'll be time (in this fam'ly they all live forever!
Oh, it seems there are some here -- handmaidens
of lovingkindness -- announced by the cadence
of their carefree laughter -- and oh as free as me,
of lurking interest and hypocrisy?
What right have they -- hah! so saintly free --
to all the land I've worked so long and profitably
and now I'm keeping -- signed over legally --
and yes, the longer she lives the more it's a gratuity!
So I think it's best -- not so? -- that they not see
me rub my hands -- at all I'll keep -- with avid glee.)

RLs *joined by the Guitar Player and the Kid -- these lines possibly
only voiced by a few, as the others "stand down" as if to rest, go to
sleep etc. as night falls -- also, beginning as simply spoken, these
lines can be gradually transitioned through rythmic chanting to
melodic singing*

Oh circling stars
sparks in dark distance
to our sad eyes
so shamed by hurt and wars
extend some solace
and some peace besides.

Oh heaven-distant
echoers of infinity...
perhaps it's only
the inner brilliant
light of hopefully
we bear for all to see.

Oh mighty glory
that we hold in mind
but so broken and apart...
all just some story
we make ourselves to find
some calming for the anxious heart?

Light of beauty
light of lovingly,
if in you we breathe and die
why fear if it's delusion'dly
that we strive for living kindly
in the sun of hope-enabling mercy?

*

GP *playing and singing, after setting up etc., like a busker
performing on street corner or in subway gallery etc. at night*

*For this world that run
asparkle 'round her sun
's this night but one more night
of spin from dark to light?*

*Can conciliation's birth
quell rage of men on Earth --
invoked make for that grace,
mild as child and mother, face-to-face?*

*Do we thus tantalized, but dream
that contrary to all we seem,
this human life can be
by love, from violence, set free?*

*Great haze of stars in dark that shine so bright
where our planet's days play out in vast of night --
til all things living's last release,
dream children dream of sibling peace.*

*

9: *the old age and death of the widow*

MS

Hello, my dears; how're you today?

RLs

Not as well as you this morning! It takes.
A singer I would say. To blow away.
Near a century. Of soldier candles.
Marching so brightly. Upon the iceing on the cake!

*These are the happy mornings
of which sweetest singers sing:
pearl, rose-petal dawnings,
and all the love this day will bring.
These are the happy mornings
that we're here today to sing:
our hearts abrim -- all laugh and play --
salute you on this happy day!*

MS

Here, help me stand so I can reach to put them out --
if I still can...

RLs

Breathe in. And then breathe out. That is the first.
Thing we begin. There at the thrill. Of our newborn's.
First anguished cry. And now. Lean in. And ffffffff...
Mow them all down. In one long sigh. For all.
The years gone by? Hip, hip, hurrah!

*These are the merry moments
of which happy memories are made:
graven, rose-hued instants,
in mem'ry, lovelier, as they fade.
These are the merry merriments
of all the love this day did bring.
These are the merry merriments
that we're here today to sing!*

MS *laughing*

How wonderful it all still is but I'm...
Oh no, I couldn't even think to eat that now...

RLs

Aye. And ain't it that the second thing that we begin?
Swallowing? With all the driven sureness.
Of the howl-monkey. Now near calm. Gruntling.
At the milk-nipple. And sating, starting.
On our primate venture. That at its most blessed.
Ends like this?

MS

Help me, help me will you? Now I can't walk.
Now that's the truth of it, I try to hide;
so I recline most of my time now, asleep
to any plans now, much less to-dos tomorrow...
just tumble in the mirror-wheel within
of re-and-disfracts surfacing and gone --
lap up and run off -- rushing, welling from
the glasspool spring of mem'ry that turbulent --
so clear but restless -- to me yet remains.

RLs

And so when walking ends? That for the upright.
Nomad primate. It enabled thinking.
And foretells. Aware enough? The imminent.
Stumbling to the wayside. Pleadeyes!
To who turns back from the troop advancing.
To smooth a lastbed speck. Of grassland shoots and dust.
On this Earthwide savannah. Calling to the others.
To gather. For murmuring and guarding.
The becoming. Of language and fellow-feeling.

MS

If one of you could reach for me a drink
of water please right now?

RLs

Here, raise her up. She can't.
Send for the doctor now! Oh, something! Do...
Why? And what? The last breath that we watched for.
Is now breathed at last. Now this is the sound.
Of persons weeping. For a long, strong life.
Well lived. Good. Now quietly ended.
So diff'rent. From the sound of persons wailing.
At the terror. Of the news. Of loved lives.
Unjustly, violently ended.

*This is full-sorrowed mourning
that loving memory it makes:
graving, bright-hued storying,
on mem'ry, by the telling that it takes.
This is this just one upright's story
that all our love this day does sing --
so ordinary, yet no small glory
that is the best your life can bring.*

*

10: *the relatives and their non?inheritance*

RLs *engaged in routine, everyday-life activities -- possibly many also talking on the phone, etc. -- in the mixing of them, these lines can be repeated a few times -- in slightly different order and by very different voices and intonated so they have somewhat different meanings -- also adding more and more overlapping until the sound effect is that of the undifferentiable hum of a crowd of people talking etc. -- maybe even seamlessly transitioning into a -- remixed and amplified -- recording of the audience as its members milled about in the lobby of the theater, took their seats before the performance etc. etc.*

What do you mean? She sold it to him. How can that be? Eon years and years ago! Before the boomtimes. There's nothing we can do about it. And told no one? What? Haven't you heard? I'm floored. No, what? So what? We were so surprised. So he just gets to keep it? That nothing changed? It must be what she wanted. Right off our backs? But she was always so generous. I don't believe it. Why? Maybe she had to sell it. So he just got lucky? What was ever ours about it? Who would know how long she'd live? Now it's worth a fortune. It was hers. We don't know what happened. Yes, we do. He shows up with the paper. This ancient half price is the chump change left for all of us. He was her lawyer. And he did it with no witnesses. And all that time he had the other half for free. Like she loaned him the price of the other half. Interest free for her whole life. So he did it clean and legal. What didn't she see? What a con artist. How do you know? Maybe he thought he was helping her? What don't you see? You're just too good. I can't imagine. Just bamboozled it right out of her. It's wrong. So sue him! And wait until we're dead to learn we've lost. He took advantage of her. No, he's known as such a good man. Aren't we all? And get nothing in the end after our lawyers get through with us. Possession's nine tenths of the law. In time, who's not respectabled after their appropriating? So just shrug? Shouldering the fatalism. Regret and worry adds no value. But he's a crook. And so what's new? There must be recourse in the law. For those angry and empowered enough to reach for it. Barely maybe. Aren't you? You could use more gumption. Money too. Counting on the grace of those who own the state today? They're on his side. Born to lose, you say? How you talk is how you think, even when you're joking. Who's joking? This is serious. And you're just going to laugh your way through it? We owe it to our children. They didn't have any. So he took it? And he'll keep it. No other way around it. We never had it. What were they thinking when they started? So what are we going to do? Now what should be ours that we never had is not?

*

GP *as a street singer performing for an everyday lunchtime crowd in the business district of a big city -- because these songs are in a jazzpop mode she/he can put up the guitar and use a mike-with-amp-*

on-rollers with backing-tracks-from-phone set-up, as do many such singers

*How lucky you
who've found a love that's true and deep;
how lucky you
who've found a loving heart to hold and keep.
How lucky you
who tried and true
say "I love you"
and back it comes "I love you too".*

*How lucky you
who live the dream of one-and-only;
how sad for me
alone and free
who live only to wonder why
why oh why am I
so ell-oh-en-ee-ell-why
oh why so lonely?*

*Oh me oh my
you'd think the world could change;
oh me oh my
don't you find it strange
that we can't re-arrange
it all so lonely me and lonely you
might find a way
to meet and say I -- yeah, you got it.*

*How lucky you
who've found a love that's true and deep;
how lucky you
who've found a loving heart to hold and keep.
How lucky you
who tried and true
say "I love you"
and back it sings "I love you too".*

TK *passing the hat following GP's streetsinger performance*
You know it don't need to be a lot, just something --
get us by and to tomorrow...um, through today...
Like when you focus on your personal identity thing,

today, who you are is who you give your money to away.
Hey yeah, like got time for another song?
Like one more could've-been-love, affair --
I know you're busy, but won't take long --
'cause like how many of them stories we got out there?

GP

Thank you -- I just don't know how to tell you
how much I appreciate your giving me your attention.

TK

So maybe who you are now's who you pay attention to?
Got to pay who you owe to...but like our intention
ain't for like you got to pay, but want to give...
though fact is we still need the money to live.

GP

*Here again,
caught up in the braving and dare; here again,
risking a new love affair.
Though it's something we've so often been through
your arms and kisses still feel so new.
So take me up in taking you --
make me forget what time will do.*

*Oh, win or lose,
here I am loving again.
Yeah, win or lose,
I'll take my chances then --
find out the hard way
if heartbreak comes my way
or win or lose
at long last love is here to stay.*

*Don't tell me now,
that time's curse is cast;
don't tell me now,
that our love can't last.
If only love without love could do,
I wouldn't care if it ended too -- so so silent and deep and again and
again take me down in this loving of you.*

*As I sing of love bright and new,
tell me what else a woman's/man's to do,
but risk again and again until true love's dream does come true.*

*Yes, win or lose,
here I am loving again.
Yeah, win or lose,
I'll take my chances then --
find out the hard way
if heartbreak comes my way
or win or lose
at long last love is here to stay.*

*

11: *a new artist and a new associate in their youth, the artist intent
with a sculpture/painting/drawing/drone-contraption, etc. as the
associate looks on*

AR

The hard part's always landing the flitting thing --
we all know you or I could as eas'ly launch --
oh yeah, you bet -- and not suspect a flipping thing --
so now we're stuck -- staying in there -- huh! -- mighty staunch.

AS

I got to say you got my admiration,
but won't catch me chasing no hallucination.

AR

No way -- it's more an unfix'd lifestate:
there's the -- stuck there -- creatures of the sea,
and equ'ly fixed, there's those of land -- so what's the fate
of birds that one or other, also fly so free?

AS

Got me. But you know it's taking all your money --
time going too -- fix and fuss with all such mimicry.

AR

And so you'll help me? Trade my property
to free up time -- the extra land, houses, money
I have no time left to use -- so there's out there maybe --
you're a loyal friend -- a deal that works for you and me.

AS

You know, I was myself just thinking right along
those very lines -- both profitable and long.

AR

And so we'll venture there together you,
and I fast friends and strongly loyal to
what for your advantage I can do --
as you for mine will also staunchly work so true?

AS

Of course. Your capital, by my work and business sense,
'gainst poverty'll be, a bulwark-treasure, strong defense.

AR

So by what will and habit shackled --
back to it -- so happ'ly, so practicedly,
free -- so strangely used to it, calm embattled,
like when birds wrench into flight, defying gravity?

AS

Uh-huh... Yeah, I get it: you're like permanently stranded
there, at the tipping point, where birds, not yet flying are still
unlanded?

AR

Yeah? And that's the way I like it?

AS

Yeah! So that's the way I'll help you keep it?

AR

Okay. Great. Stuck there, flailing and suspended,
as when the gallows trap gives way, and yet
as if so ardent for the arduous -- the world upended,
featherlimbs asworling shape the air, and... Yeah, you bet...

AS

Okay. Great. But how long can you keep up the wing beat?

AR

Reckon almost as long as breathing -- so to speak?

*

TK

I'm trying to get better but it's tough.

You'd think it was like your own fault, getting sick.

So what, so getting yourself better's still rough.

Maybe we could find a show -- might help -- see some music.

GP

...living and dying on rock 'n' roll highway --

yeah for as long's 's I still stand

I'll be on here with my rock 'n' roll band --

yeah, living and dying on rock 'n' roll highway.

*

epilogue

RLs *variously engaged in activities of finishing up/standing down, particularly: activities typical of actors and dancers just after performing, activities typical of city-dwellers back home after another day, and activities typical of early hominids settling in for another night in their wilderness habitat*

For us the stars are shining. Heaven-sent.

Don't worry. Somebody'll tell you. How it went?

No they won't. All can gather closer. For fear.

No, they only tell you what we want to hear.

For yes, the fears of humans are always calling

for our calming. Like our sorrows for our consoling.

So how was work today? Oh, okay. Same as ev'ry day.

Still, you can tell me 'bout it anyway.
Exhausted but elated. Always feel that way.
So how'd it go? Your exhilarating learning day?
Have you done your homework? No, not yet.
The sentinels are out. In case? Well, don't forget.
Night-hunters wide awake for sleeping prey.
I still can't find my shoes. What? No way.
Be careful. Don't untie it all the way.
'Cause we're going to need it again tomorrow, ey?
I hope so. But we'll see if anybody shows.
They do, they do; they don't, they don't. That's how it goes.
We'll do our best. Yeah, but first we got to find your shoes.
So you can see an instant of me dance them deep-heart blues?
Just make sure it don't come loose. Can you see?
The day is done. At last. One last bit of tea?
Don't need to see. This just can't last. You sure?
Emerging and returning -- within unboundedness so pure.
Look at the way from here so nothing, still I move
my feet and hands to something it's sure you've...
I dance for closeness with. The binding bands.
Can you tie it a little tighter? Understand I've got to move.
Moving on. Triumph and sadness whereby we prove.
I stand like it stands. Run like it runs.
The trees. The antelopes. But what if the humans?
The dancing shows the life live in me.
The chanting makes the dieing mem'ry.
C'mon, okay? And give us all a kiss 'fore you go on your way.
Standing between earth and heaven for another night and day?
So what? Now say...?

*

song and dance finale

RLs *singing and dancing, possibly to backing tracks punched up on their phones, and possibly having dis-costumed/re-dressed, etc. to look very much like the members of the audience/people about to walk back out into the street, etc.*

*Oh every day, working away
and with no end in sight.
So tough you say, shrug it away;
keep on, keep on with all your might.*

*It's not a dream; we're wide awake,
just disguising our despair --
to show that we can take
how life defies us all to dare.*

*Today, tonight oh so alert
in ev'ry way this human can
risking the risk of getting hurt
I'll 'gen take on what we began
at that first breath when being born
that leaves us sure that we'll be torn
at that last one comin' -- don't none forget --
from living that can be so hard, but yet
that now oh I, you and so few here regret.*

*Oh every day, working away
at this that only humans know --
this learning so the hard way
that's the only way to grow.*

*It's not so bad; could be so worse,
this that makes of life a fight --
create a self beats fear and stress --
so launch and keep on keep on with all your might.*

*Today, tonight oh so alert
in ev'ry way this human can
risking the risk of getting hurt
I'll 'gen take on what we began.*

*