

Under the Green Wave

Nicolas Baird

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**MATERIAL KEY OF THE
MODERN CETACEAN**
(Excerpt)

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UNDER THE GREEN WAVE

Fragments of a Lost Play in (at Least) Eight Acts

Author Unknown

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

in order of appearance

CHORUS

ARTHUR TWISH

GHOST

VLAD VIRAGORE

BARONESS TAM EL-SOGOJ

PHOEBE NILSAKIS

ILARIA MANILAMA

CELESTIAL ATHENA PELLORNEN

ANEDINE CONDOLÉ

ALA BIN AL-ADIN

Act I

In darkness.

CHORUS (*offstage*)

Waking one day in a fog

Lights open on an empty stage filled with fog. ARTHUR TWISH appears with a faceless GHOST. They speak at the same time.

ARTHUR TWISH

An echo of the limerick form
a contrast to the bleakness of the story
fitting absurdity
an echo of an echo of an echo

GHOST

The world looks strange to me
I woke up today
but something's out of place
I think I'm not fully awake

Fade.

Act II

A thunderstorm.

Act III

[Editor's note: Among the few surviving manuscripts, there are but few sorry scraps remaining of this Act. The rest has been lost to time and the insatiable appetites of silverfish and weevils. Thet cast and crew are invited to devise their own work here as a stand-in for what has been lost.]

Act IV

Enter VLAD VIRAGORE alone.

VLAD VIRAGORE
Am I tripping?
oh, shit, don't vomit

BARONESS TAM EL-SOGOJ runs on stage.

VLAD VIRAGORE
Hey, we should get married

BARONESS TAM EL-SOGOJ
Strange... but I shouldn't be wasting my energy thinking about this
I'm already struggling as it is to get over this mountain

VLAD VIRAGORE
In the light you look like heaven
what was my life before this night?
how did I live?
okay, okay
I'm being melodramatic

BARONESS TAM EL-SOGOJ *(aside)*

How queer!

VLAD VIRAGORE

There's something rotten
something ugly inside me
but maybe this is heaven?

BARONESS TAM EL-SOGOJ

How wonderful, how fleeting, how painful...
blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed, I guess

BARONESS TAM EL-SOGOJ runs off stage in an orange light. VLAD VIRAGORE sighs as darkness falls once more.

Act V

Lights on PHOEBE NILSAKIS and ILARIA MANILAMA speaking on the phone, seated facing each other on opposite ends of the stage.

PHOEBE NILSAKIS

I am very close to Ireland
and in the evening
we drink and drink

ILARIA MANILAMA

Notchw
woo lee tsa
app tech ah!

PHOEBE NILSAKIS

We drink, drink, and drink, and drink in the morning
we drink at noon and in the evening

ILARIA MANILAMA

Umbra shh!

natch no!

shh!

Op-ya!-t

snatch alla

PHOEBE NILSAKIS

This means in the case of Margarete her hair is grey

Sulamith plays with snakes

We drink black milk from morning to night

ILARIA MANILAMA

Umresh ' - start 'opiate' again

meaningless

all will be well

there is no outcome

They hang up and sit watching each other in stillness. Eventually PHOEBE NILSAKIS gets up, faces the audience, smiles, and leaves. ILARIA MANILAMA turns slowly to face the audience as the light turns blue. Music plays. Curtain.

Act VI

Curtain opens on CELESTIAL ATHENA PELLORNEN fishing in a well in a white dress.

CELESTIAL ATHENA PELLORNEN (to the audience)

Hi y'all

I've been casting about for a good poem to play with

all of the poems were about birds
pretty self evident
but I haven't been reading a lot of poetry recently
so I've uploaded an old cut-up poem in labyrinths and reflections and
winding flames
I found it on your river, and caught it
with two fingers
and spoke of it with ease
enjoy!

*She pulls ANEDINE CONDOLÉ from the well, who flops to the ground and
begins to shudder.*

CELESTIAL ATHENA PELLORNEN
Share your meager secrets, Anedine
fix yourself in the brain and
drown out the leveling of continents

ANEDINE CONDOLÉ
My greedy of the darkness, and left the trumpets
three faces for tediousness, in the dog nuts I found
Bliz knows, he denied me, by the canal he goes away
to Gorizia; he grudged me, he goes and seeks,
of the dark, daylight, of the dark, Poles in oil
you, you and me, you want icing just help, I take or die,
mines or balusters, juices are here
my drug, my sad drug, in the blue..thunder..thunder!

*ANEDINE CONDOLÉ continues to shake on the ground, splashing CELES-
TIAL ATHENA PELLORNEN, first with water, then with ink that splatters
and stains the white dress. CELESTIAL ATHENA PELLORNEN begins to
weep as the fog rolls in.*

Act VII

The fog rolls out to reveal ALA BIN AL-ADIN weaving at a large loom. She begins to mouth words. As she does this, CHORUS, ARTHUR TWISH, VLAD VIRAGORE, BARONESS TAM EL-SOGOJ, PHOEBE NILSAKIS, ILARIA MANILAMA, CELESTIAL ATHENA PELLORNEN, and AN-EDINE CONDOLÉ – who have hidden themselves as members of the audience – stand and speak her lines, first one by one, then overlapping, repeating until they all speak in echoes at once. The lights fade as ALA BIN AL-ADIN continues to weave.

ALA BIN AL-ADIN
broken - encounter
is stingy is spoiled is strife
I travel on rubber tires
I breathe, relieved now
I picture me in the trees
quivering - when you're close
still dry a fragile little frame
without any fuss
I rest, like a paper towel
frozen - communication
forget it the irresponsive silence
scrambling - when you catch me
ruffles the pillar of your tongue
burning - when you touch me
now I can't breathe

Act VIII

[Editor's note: Although scholars have long supposed its existence, no remnants of Act VIII have yet been found.]

POEMS

CXIV

fire
infinite vision
has long haunted my heart

but you have
left the subtle serenity
of earthly life

a short year of silence
means not giving too much
but in the end the rest

put into place
that is not responsible
for an unknown art of the child's respite

we will return and be defeated
forever good
this is our last stop

ether travels around the world and we drink
even tired people are not too happy
to put us in a secret grave

to be like our wives
pregnant women or dead women
then we must learn

Memories I made by myself, on my own

Remember the backpack of bones? Remember the meeting of crows? Remember the stump by the pool struck by lightning, the berries on the bush in the rain? Remember the books in the swamp-cooler air? Remember the circle of stones?

Remember the first time getting sick on the swings? Remember the easy freedom and the green light? Remember the library reading room? Remember the bridge on the bay? Remember the photo, the blue radiation? Remember the hotel bath?

Remember the winter? Remember the sunburned plant? Remember the muddy flamingoes? Remember the walk home? Remember the cave on the beach? Remember the cliffs and the river below them? Remember the slope of the road? Remember the mountain through the mist? Remember the flashes of light on the lake by the dam, by the rocks, by the boat?

Remember the vultures high above the waves? Remember the call of the elk in the valley? Remember the air all around you? Remember the peach in the grass in the sun? Remember the beat of the drum? Remember the rattling trash can? Remember the blast from the bus? Remember the lines of the sculpture? Remember the rat's heavy body in the trap by the door? Remember the cake and the heat of the table?

Remember the sky before dawn? Remember the heart on the hill? Remember the red bird high in the trees? Remember the flavour, the sweet spicy leaves? Remember the feet of the gull?

Remember the impossible climb? Remember the gloom on the other side of the glass? Remember the horse in the night? Remember the dream of the tuning fork? Remember the eyes on the clock? Remember the wasp on the water? Remember the osprey and rock? Remember the sparks from the fire? Remember the smoke in the house?

Remember the music at midnight? Remember the swallow, the tree, the chase, competition, and flight? Remember the smell of the greenhouse? Remember the sticky-sweet beans? Remember the dark city skyline, the billowing clouds? Remember the crash on the highway? Remember the sand and the sunburn? Remember the ducks in the fog on the pond in the park all alone after dark? Remember the cities of spiders? Remember the beautiful dog?

Remember the path to the garden? Remember the spot on the wall? Remember the bear in the branches? Remember the rest of it all?

Remember the snake in the morning? Remember the wind by the sea?

Remember the feeling of thousands of ladybugs finally, finally free?

mystery laid long dark

closer to reality
the power of
a verdict
is total

the intricate dance between waves wind
in the predawn sky

newfound
identity
with the mysteries
at the ends of the earth

search for
dark side
full bloom
a new species
in the sky

we may finally know why
the sizzling
minefield
locked in
invokes
the dark

one hundred killer whales gather
harnessing the hum
rivers leap from their banks
you leave
by imagining
to breathe
harvesting light like
when the milky way came together

flow
levels
conflict
earth
for ever
combining

flower blood moon
one billion birds
weird light in the sky
beacons
rainy weather
end of the tunnel
edge of fear

hello warm sunshine
we know
that
for millions of years
a new
wave
crashes

search for mountain snow
where stars are born
see the impossible
waves traveling backwards
rhythmic
fire
bringing sight to the
edge of space
re-imagined

spiders
spin their own wool
in spirit if not in body

lifting the veil
the explanation of
a hot and humid rainy tuesday

superfluorescences
light up the night sky

grow their invisible wings

WRITING A POEM FOR YOU

that burns like an arrow passing through St. Sebastian's stomach to
reunite with the trunk of the tree
like the mist in the room that last night, the earthquake night when the
pool spilled out onto the lawn
is easy because even through our waves and curls there was always a
far distance
is easy because you thought I was here and I was, easy because of the
blank lines on the page
is easy because of the dark-yellow sunlight on the train track trees
is easy because of the crocus in the front garden
sometimes when I forget to close my eyes I can see in the corner of the
room
a golem crouching in an impossible pose as if it's been granted the
right to be there
or when I'm not looking I find I can find cool blue pools of starlight
where nightbirds land
or I hear a knock on the door like paths splitting through their
possibilities

the apparition of these faces in the crowd
really makes me think that this is not a place I want to be

you look
for the right words but other than the thought that maybe you
should've said something different
possibly a last push for understanding in the dark night of the — but
anyway it's whole now it's in the past
which thank heavens you belong to so we can move together through
cycles
where the past you and the current me wind tightly round the more or
less fixed
curvature of a top moving on a table from spin to stillness. I never
think of Monet
without thinking of when we stood close to the riverbank then walked
backwards and saw two or was it
four different images your brush-strokes my brush-strokes your water
my reflection on the water

what do you do with useless knowledge? in my head I've got a
mountain of moments and
a field guide to the expressions of your face and I don't know what to
do with either of them

I am afraid

that at the house I left behind some books and the part of me that is a
derivative of the sun which is why I'm writing this poem letter
fishhook key to retrieve it

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is it good?
it's simply everything
space is innocent, initially
but I'm just a person and most of me is made of plants
but I'm just a person and most of me is made of dreams beneath the
city

I find myself drawn to forms of botanical complexity

in a poem I wrote
my voice did not grow wings yet
it was not jealous of yours
one time we talked about love and meant experience
one time we talked about love and meant burning ink with the
residues of pain
you would have carried me through most of it anyway but I never
asked

let me ask now
please make this poem about metaphysics
please make this poem about thanks
please make it a town and make it part of the town
please make it a colour for the heart of the town
for example that lovely purple dahlia
or some other shade to be examined late at night alone in the parlour
with the hooded eyes of the moon

it's the shadow in the purple hour
it will flower
it will not turn purple
at one point I turned into a classic tinted rose and reached the world
through its heart

but in doing so I found that I'd disturbed
the lines of incense roping round the air

I wanted to come along with you and talk about communion
but you said let's do politics without power or communication
just as poetry is
and we kissed flowers
and laughed at the beautiful thought

anyway I'm delighted you're reading this
I thought of some poetry you sent the other day
even that seems sepia now
but at first it was just a beautiful reminder that everyone's in on the
plan

I was once a destroyer of worlds but then we found out we could work
with damp soil

later I lost myself in a party in a poem
in a party in a room of a house in a town near a city by the beach by the
sound of the waves on the shore in a shell from the sea

I lost myself at sea
but a poem is a boat, a song, a call
or a poem is gibberish and you can be thinking about anything at all
please think about something small so we don't have to wait for hours
in the mouth of the fog

calling for the dog
the dog again
always the dog
and always the fog

I didn't say anything to the bushes or ghosts
but when I know who to look for the person becomes clear in my mind
isn't it gorgeous?
isn't it great
to see someone sneak a peek out the window
and once in a while stick a toe in the water
and take a deep breath and
literally become a fish
scales and tail and all?

is your new year coming?
is important information important?
are other people like us?
are our parents's parents' parents finally coming home to rest?
what would we do for a quiet space?
when will we leave the literature
find our way out of the university bookshop and into the grass?
some of us come from beauty and go hand-in-hand with what we
know

but I do archery and politics and think it's just middlingly evil
I did a little dance for fun and my nerves were blinking high and low
but it was real good
then I ended up with this

even when I finally buy flowers the leaves become flowers and the
flowers leave
then we leave to become flowers and I see the flowers in the leaves
and I call to the people who can read the signs
and they say are you sitting down right now?
if so then everything will be fine
until well of course until the accident in paragraph nine

so please can I leave after the next session?
I'm absolutely running out of time
I'm here to stop speaking and pretty much say
I'm unable to express myself through this procedure
I'm unable to move through these impermeable membranes
I'm unable to follow the impossible machine
I'm unable to leave even after release
I'm simply here
called by someone else's voice
there's something new in every hour something new in every house
there's no one here tonight
nevertheless the recording resumes
click scratch red light hum

is it good?
okay good
does your friend have a fresh set of towels?
can you cut to the bedroom doors?
cut to the little nightlight
are you close to the side of the bed
underneath the window?
I heard the air was softer there
I was there by definition and made sure to inspect the contents of the
closet and get some snacks for the party
but said nothing nothing about the accident

I'm just a person and most of me is made of light

behind even the glass pages of this heart
back when I was lying
underneath the window
back there where the air was softer
the air was softer in the night

