

Pipsa Lonka

SECOND NATURE

Rights managed by Agency North.
Translation made possible by a grant from the Kone Foundation.
Translation © 2016 Kristian London. All rights reserved.

The gaze of foreign species is what defines us as human, gives us the correct coordinates. How could they ever be communicated in our own language? It is only in the eyes of a stranger that we can read who and what we are.

– Leena Krohn, Datura

Translator's note: With the exception of certain characters (e.g., Bird Girl, Man in the Brown Suit), the gender of the living was not defined in the original text. To render a fluid translation, the author assigned a gender to all of the living, but this gender is adaptable and exists solely for the purposes of naturalness of expression.

The Conveyer Belt

A moving walkway running down a long passageway (as at an airport or passenger harbor).

People are standing on and walking along the walkway, lost in thought. Some are standing still, allowing the walkway to carry them down the seemingly endless passage; others are striding purposefully ahead, with the walkway easing their journey.

A Violinist stands next to the walkway, playing Johann Sebastian Bach's Sarabande. A battered paper cup stands at the Violinist's feet.

Off in the distance, where the walkway finally ends, the people fall to the ground, dead; another conveyer belt carries their carcasses off to an unknown destination.

Darkness.

A deafening boom.

Life

A lush, expansive park.

The Parent is sitting on a bench under a tree, munching on a sandwich. The Girl stands further off, under another tree, watching birds, talking and rocking herself. We can't hear what this Bird Girl is saying, but she's producing sounds of some sort. Songbirds chirp in the tree and occasionally flit down to the Girl's feet.

An Old Person totters slowly down the path. Someone jogs past.

The Parent turns and looks at the Girl rocking herself under the tree. Then he turns back around and looks directly at us for a minute, on the verge of saying something, but shakes his head instead, then continues eating his sandwich. A second lunch waits on the bench at his side.

A woman and a dog walk past.

The Old Person takes a seat at the other end of the bench and nods at the Parent, who briefly raises his head. The Old Person studies a branch next to the Parent. The Parent grows uncomfortable, raises his head, and their eyes meet.

OLD PERSON

A caterpillar is inching its way along that branch there.

The Old Person points at the branch next to the parent. The Parent turns his head and looks at the branch. Doesn't see it.

PARENT

Aha.

Now he notices the caterpillar.

PARENT

Oh, now I see.

The Parent and the Old Person watch the caterpillar for a moment. Then the Parent turns his gaze back and glances at the Girl, who is rocking herself under the tree. Someone else jogs past.

Darkness.

A deafening boom.

The Conveyer Belt

A moving walkway running down a long passageway (as at an airport or passenger harbor).

People are standing on and walking along the walkway, lost in thought. Some are standing still, allowing the walkway to carry them down the seemingly endless passage; others are striding purposefully ahead, with the walkway easing their journey.

A Violinist stands next to the walkway, playing Bach's Sarabande. A battered paper cup stands at the Violinist's feet.

Off in the distance, where the walkway finally ends, the people fall to the ground, dead; another conveyer belt carries their carcasses off to an unknown destination.

One of the people quite far along the walkway looks up and suddenly sees reality: the death that awaits at the walkway's end. He panics, tries blindly to escape what he sees.

The people on the walkway are startled, aroused from their stupor, look at each other and the person trying to push past them in a panic. They peer up ahead and back behind them but can't see. The Violinist has stopped playing. He looks around, tries to figure out what has happened.

Then, because no one sees anything suspicious, they settle down again and sink back into their own thoughts, as if by common consent, as if nothing had happened, as if they hadn't been warned. The Violinist raises the instrument back under his chin and continues where he left off.

And so people continue on their journey to the end of the walkway, die, and their carcasses are carried off by the other conveyer belt.

Darkenss.

A deafening boom.

Habit

Break room. The Employee and the Intern enter.

EMPLOYEE

And then there's the break room...

INTERN

OK.

The Employee turns on the coffee machine.

EMPLOYEE

You can take a cup from there, unless you brought your own?

INTERN

No.

EMPLOYEE

Well, grab one from there then.

The Intern takes the first mug from the cupboard.

EMPLOYEE

Everyone has their own mug they usually use.

The Employee shows this to the Intern.

INTERN

OK.

The Intern turns towards the door, where there are also a sink and coat hooks.

EMPLOYEE

Yes, there's a sink where you can wash your hands and...

The Employee goes over to the door to show the Intern.

EMPLOYEE

...disinfectant, soap, towels... garbage, rubber gloves... you can hang your lab coat here, and what else?

INTERN

OK.

EMPLOYEE

You'll get used to it in no time.

INTERN

Sure...

EMPLOYEE

And after that, it'll settle into a routine.

INTERN

Yeah, got it.

EMPLOYEE

OK, well... I guess that's about it.

The Intern nods. The coffee machine is burbling; the Employee glances at it.

EMPLOYEE

It's not ready yet?

INTERN

No.

The Employee sighs, takes a seat at the table and opens the newspaper. The Intern looks out the window. Jackdaws fly past.

Darkness.

A deafening boom.

License to Kill 1

A playground in a lush park. A Child is playing; an Adult is sitting on the bench, reading a book. The child draws a large circle in the sand with a stick: my area! Ant trails crisscross the sand. The Child sharpens the stick with a rock. Then the Child assumes a vigilant stance at the border of his territory.

CHILD

Don't cross the line. You can't come in here. Hey!

An ant has crossed the Child's line and entered the circle. The Child squishes it with the stick.

CHILD

Ha! You're dead. You can't cross the line, you can't come in here or you'll die. You hear me?

The Child squishes another ant that has crossed the line.

CHILD

Hey! Die!

Of course the ants are ignorant of the Child's rules and continue following their own trails.

CHILD

You can't come in here! Stop!

The Child squishes any ants that cross the line drawn in the sand.

CHILD

Die. Die. Die.

The Child squishes the little creatures at an accelerating pace.

CHILD

You can't come over! You can't! You can't! Aahhh, no, no, no... Die. Die...

An ant climbs up the Child's leg, reaches bare skin, and bites. The Child shrieks.

CHILD

AAAAIIIIIIII!

The Adult rises from the bench and approaches the Child.

ADULT

What happened?

CHILD

They're biting me!

The Adult looks down and sees the ants.

ADULT

Maybe you should play somewhere else. There are a lot of ant trails running through here.

CHILD

No, this is my area. They're not allowed to come in here.

ADULT

I don't think they understand your rules.

CHILD

I drew a line!

ADULT

Yes, I see that.

CHILD

They can't come in here.

ADULT

How are you going to stop them?

CHILD

I'll kill them. I'll kill every single one that crosses the line. Like this.

The Child squishes more ants. The Adult looks on.

CHILD

Die. Die. Die. Die.

ADULT

That's going to take an eternity. And they're going to bite you again. I have a better idea.

CHILD

What?

ADULT

We'll poison them. The whole nest.

*The Child gapes at the Adult. This is beyond anything the Child has been capable of conceiving
– until now.*

CHILD

OK.

ADULT

OK. Let's go get the poison. Come on.

The Child spears the stick into the sand and jumps over the line to where the Adult is. Takes her by the hand and they leave.

Darkness.

A deafening boom.

The Conveyer Belt

A moving walkway running down a long passageway (as at an airport or passenger harbor).

The Violinist plays Bach's Sarabande. A battered paper cup stands at the Violinist's feet.

People are standing on and walking along the walkway, allowing it to carry them along; some are rushing past the others. And, as earlier, where the walkway finally ends, they fall to the ground, dead, and continue their journey as carcasses on another conveyer belt.

A small family stands on the walkway: a Husband, a Haggard Wife, and their Teenager, who is playing some game on a small electronic device.

HUSBAND

I could have used a bite.

HAGGARD WIFE

What?

HUSBAND

I was just saying I could have used a bite to eat.

HAGGARD WIFE

I see...

The Husband holds his belly for a moment.

HUSBAND

A little peckish.

HAGGARD WIFE

What?

HUSBAND

I'm feeling a little peckish. I could have used a bite to eat.

HAGGARD WIFE

I see... oh dear.

The Husband rubs his belly and looks at it.

HUSBAND

You don't have anything, do you?

HAGGARD WIFE

I'm afraid I don't.

The Husband nudges his son.

HUSBAND

Do you?

TEENAGER

What?

HUSBAND

Something to eat? Do you have anything?

TEENAGER

Nah, I don't think so.

HUSBAND

Nah, you don't think so. Why don't you actually check to see whether you do or don't?

The Teenager digs into his pockets, finds a piece of gum.

TEENAGER

I have gum...

The Teenager holds the gum out to his father.

HUSBAND

Ha ha!

The Husband chews the gum.

HUSBAND

Trying to get by on empty stomach.

HAGGARD WIFE

What?

HUSBAND

I said, trying to get by on an empty stomach.

HAGGARD WIFE

I see...

Then the family arrives at the end of the walkway and dies. Their carcasses continue along the other conveyer belt.



Darkness.

A deafening boom.



Erbarme dich 1

Outside a hospital.

The Sister is pushing her mother out the hospital doors in a hospital bed. The Brother is waiting outside with an old, gray swaybacked mare.

The Old Woman sheds tears of joy when she sees the horse. The Old Woman and Maria the Horse greet each other; the Old Woman strokes the horse's muzzle. The Horse smells the withered, wizened Old Woman.

OLD WOMAN

Oh Maria, you old nag... there... there... Maria, you dear old nag... there... there...

Patients in hospital-issue nightgowns open the windows. The patients and the hospital staff play Erbarme dich, mein Gott from Bach's St Matthew Passion.

OLD WOMAN

Maria... you dear old nag, yes...

A nurse steps out onto the hospital balcony and sings.

NURSE

*Erbarme dich, mein Gott,
Um meiner Zahren willen... (x 3)*

(The same music continues during the following two scenes.)

Erbarme dich 2

A joint funeral for the Old Woman and Maria the Horse. The tables are decorated with candles and photographs of the mother and Maria, both together and separately.

Beautiful, big close-ups of both hang side by side in the center.

The funeral guests shuffle around the buffet, nodding at each other and the family members. A Chamber Orchestra plays silently in the background. The Sister makes sure that the buffet is well stocked. The Brother sits further off, extremely ill at ease.

SISTER

Here are some more of the smoked rolls... Perfect... now there's... please have some, try these. The roast is tender, too... port sauce... good, there's still some of that, too... I'm sorry, I'm in your way... excuse me... yes...

The Sister retreats, sidles up to the Brother.

SISTER

All right. Well, this going well, wouldn't you say?

BROTHER

No.

SISTER

Oh, for goodness' sakes. This is what Mom wanted. A double funeral.

BROTHER

...funeral.

SISTER

Maria lived a good horse life, the best possible... this dinner is a celebration.

BROTHER

It's macabre.

SISTER

It's natural. Animal eats animal.

BROTHER

I'm not going to eat.

SISTER

Oh, for goodness sakes'...

BROTHER

I'm not eating the dead.

Suddenly the Sister bursts out laughing.

SISTER

I mean, it's not like it's Mom!

The Brother can't take this; he stands and slips off. The Sister masks her hysterical laughter as tears.

Erbarme dich 3

The Brother at a hot dog stand. Bites into his third consolation hamburger. Tears mingle with his food.

BROTHER

When we were kids, Mom would always surprise us and take us... to the hot dog stand. It was her, a family... tradition. Sometimes she'd surprise...

The Brother turns to the Hot Dog Stand Owner.

BROTHER

Those are the things that matter. Right? That's what matters... yes...

The Hot Dog Stand Owner doesn't understand what the Brother is talking about. The Hot Dog Stand Owner looks at us, he looks right at us. The Brother takes another bite of his hamburger.

The Nurse, no longer in uniform, comes up behind the Brother and sings over his shoulder – like a guardian angel. The Brother can't see her, can't hear her.

NURSE

*Schaue hier, Herz und Auge
Weint vor dir bitterlich.
Erbarme dich, erbarme dich!*

*Erbarme dich, mein Gott,
Um meiner Zahnen willen!*

Fade to darkness.

The Nurse sings, the Orchestra plays.

Darkness.

A spotlight falls on an image: a horse opening his eyes.

You shall not want

A lush, expansive park.

The Parent leans against the tree and digs at the dirt with the tip of his shoe. Further off stands the Girl, under another tree, watching birds, talking and rocking herself. We can't hear what this Bird Girl is saying, but she's producing sounds of some sort. Songbirds chirp in the tree and occasionally flit down to the Girl's feet.

The Parent peers around the tree and surreptitiously watches the Bird Girl. Then he turns to us and talks.

PARENT

She is my daughter. No, you're not mistaken. She's a special-needs child. Developmentally disabled. She's talking to those birds. I can't hear what she's telling them; she stops talking if I move closer. She won't talk to me. She never has, not to me, not to anyone. Just to the birds. And I'm not even sure she's talking. Sometimes it sounds like she's chirping. Does my daughter speak the language of birds?

The Parent's gaze wanders around the park.

PARENT

I don't know. I don't know anything anymore.

A jogger wearing headphones runs past. She is singing in a language she doesn't know.

PARENT

The only thing I know is that she's happy here. Calm, at peace. Sometimes I think that we could live in a motorhome in this park. Or that I could string a hammock up between those trees there and she could sleep in it. Near the birds. But how would that ever work?

This is a public park, you can't live here.

A man and three dogs walk past. The man talks to his dogs: "Yes, Renny, yes, boy, what do you have there? What is it? Something smells good, is that it? Wait for Gyp, boys, let's wait for him... yeah, Gyp, go ahead and smell it, yeah. No, Charlie, don't tease now... yes, let's go, let's go to the market, this is the way to the market, yes, you boys remember, let's go to the market..."

The Bird Girl reaches towards the foliage and the birds flitting there.

PARENT

Everything's fine here, until evening falls and we have to go home. Then it's horrible. She shrieks, she bites me.

A Mother walks past, pushing a stroller with a babbling baby inside.

PARENT

We do understand each other sometimes. Sometimes we understand each other. For instance I understand her right now. I see the happiness in her. Nothing can take that away from her. Except me. I rob her of her happiness every day. That's why she hates me. And that's why I hate her.

The Parent peers from behind the tree and watches the girl.

PARENT

Why can't I give her happiness? What is it that I don't have? What is that I don't have that those damn chickadees do? What?

Darkness.

A deafening boom.

Funeral Service

A supermarket. Freezer chests filled with acres of frozen meat.

A Pastor in a cassock approaches the frozen meats. She stops at the freezer chests, spreads a purple cloth over them, and reaches in and pulls out a package of meat, which she then lowers to the cloth. She bows her head, prays for a moment, eyes shut. Then she opens her eyes and sings Hildegard von Bingen's Caritas abundat in omnia.

PASTOR

Caritas abundat in omnia...

People are walking past the freezers full of meat. One person is startled by the sight of the Pastor, spins on her heels, and hightails it out of there. Most people just glance at the singing Pastor out of the corner of an eye and grab a pack of meat from the freezer, business as usual. Someone else decides to take action and fetch a member of the staff.

PASTOR

*...de imis excellentissima
super sidera...*

The Manager has come to see what the Pastor is up to. He looks at her, bewildered. Then he glances at us watching him and the Pastor. He is visibly perturbed by our witnessing this.

PASTOR

...atque amantissima in omnia...

The Manager pulls his phone out of his pocket, steps to the side, and calls. His gaze strikes once more on us watching him. He quickly turns away.

PASTOR

*...quia summo Regi
osculum pacis dedit.*

The Security Guards enter; they stop next to the Manager. The Manager shrugs. The Security Guards listen for a moment.

PASTOR

Caritas abundat in omnia...

Security Guard 1 pulls up his trousers by the belt loops, steps up next to the Pastor, and takes her by the shoulder.

SECURITY GUARD 1

That's not gonna do any good. Let's move on.

The Pastor falls silent and shuts her eyes. Security Guard 2 glances at the Manager, who is watching events from a distance. Security Guard 1 nods at the other guard, and both lay hands on the Pastor. The Pastor opens her eyes and suddenly shouts out in an eerily loud voice.

PASTOR

Please forgive us! Please forgive us!

The Manager slips off. The Security Guards tighten their grip and start dragging the Pastor off. The Pastor falls silent and goes totally limp. She lolls there, forcing the Guards to bear her full weight. The Guards have their work cut out for them, as they drag her out of the supermarket. The customers stare.

Darkness.

A deafening boom.

A spotlight falls on an image: A chicken craning her neck.

Humanity

The Bird Girl is standing under a tree, watching the birds. The songbirds are chirping in the trees.

The Parent is wandering around further off, talking into his phone. We can't hear what he's saying, but he's producing sounds of some sort.

The Girls raises her eyes at us, right at you. She moves her mouth as if she were talking, or chirping. But we can't hear anything.

The Girl spreads her hands. The birds land on the Girl's arms as if she were a tree. The Girl receives the birds.

The birds chirp.

Darkness.

A deafening boom.

A spotlight falls on an image: A dragonfly rests on a stalk of grass nodding in the breeze.

The Conveyer Belt

A moving walkway running down a long passageway (as at an airport or passenger harbor).

A Violinist plays Bach's Sarabande. A battered paper cup stands at his feet.

People are standing on the walkway, allowing it to carry them along. At the end of the walkway, they fall to the ground, dead, and continue their journey as carcasses along the other conveyer belt.

The majority of people are walking alone or otherwise quiet. One of them responds wistfully to the violin.

HUMAN

Uuu-uuu-uu-u-uu... uuuu-uuuu-uuuu-uu-u-u-u-uuuu... uuuu...

The others stare at him. They rubberneck, pretending to look at something totally different, or stretch their necks to see who it is who's howling up in front of them.

HUMAN

...uuu-uuu-uuuu-uu-u-u-u-uuuu....

When the solitary human violin has been discreetly assessed to be harmless, people slip back into their own thoughts.

HUMAN

...uuu-uuu-uuu-uuu-uuu-uu-u-u-uuuu...

They still have a little way to go before they reach the end of the conveyer belt and their earthly journey...

Darkness.

A deafening boom.

Existence

A room with a huge window along one wall. The window opens up on a view of a metropolis and its bustling streets. Jill Bolte Taylor is moving on an exercise machine; her legs and arms are making particularly large movements.

The Journalist is doing a story on Jill.

JOURNALIST

Jill Bolte Taylor is a famous brain researcher. In her book *My Stroke of Insight*, she describes suffering a stroke on the left side of her brain on December 10, 1996. As a result of this stroke, Jill Bolte Taylor lost her words. She lost her speech, the meaning of words, their symbolism.

It took eight years to repair that lost ability, to get her speech back, she practiced words for eight years. And when she later explained how she learned to comprehend words again, she wrote: "words are pictures."

Jill moves on the machine meant to support movement. The kind of machine that also lets you make very small movements that effectively strengthen the deep muscles. Jill does this movement now.

JOURNALIST

When she lost language, Jill Bolte Taylor just was. Everything and no one.

She describes that wordless existence with the word joy. Later, after she had relearned words, she names that period of wordless existence using the word joy. She explains that that period was nothing but pure existence for her. All that remained was joy.

The Journalist glances at Jill, who is moving on the exercise machine.

JOURNALIST

Pure silence. Sensations. Sensations were left, but no words to define sensations. She says she experienced a oneness with everything. She didn't have a beginning or an ending.

Jill Bolte Taylor goes back to making the big movement on the exercise machine.

JOURNALIST

For eight years, Jill practiced words. That was her sacrifice. Because when the words returned, she also lost the internal silence she had so loved.

But she sacrificed the silence.

The Journalist looks at us for a moment, completely silent.

JOURNALIST

Yes, so nowadays her head is also filled with the same constant flow of speech like the rest of us. An incessant flood of words, babbling.

Instead of connection, silence, joy, she has words.

The Journalist turns towards Jill and looks at her.

JOURNALIST

Was the sacrifice worth it, Jill?

Jill doesn't answer.

JOURNALIST

Jill?

Jill doesn't answer.

JOURNALIST

Do you regret it?

Jill climbs off the machine meant for moving and exits.

JOURNALIST

This could be interpreted as a response of sorts to my question...

Darkness.

A deafening boom.

Death

Susie is dead. She is lying on the entryway rug. Two middle-aged men are crouching at her side. One of the men is kneeling and petting the dead cat. He can't stop petting the cat. Tears are streaming down his cheeks. The Spouse is standing behind him, looking on.

SPOUSE

Ummm... isn't that enough, honey? Susie's dead... Do you think maybe we should let her be?

MIDDLE-AGED MAN

No. Not yet. Not yet, not yet... this is between my hand and Susie's coat. She's not... Not yet. Still have to keep, still have to...

The Man pets the dead cat. The Spouse looks on.

Out in the street, the Chamber Orchestra plays the J.S Bach aria Schlummert ein, ihr matten Augen in tuxedos and dark gowns. The Soloist stands at the window and sings.

SOLOIST

*Schlummert ein, ihr matten Augen,
Fallet sanft und selig zu! (x 3)*

Fade to darkness.

Darkness.

The music stops.

A spotlight falls on an image: A lizard darts between the rocks.

License to Kill 2

The Child and the Adult at the same playground we saw before.

The Adult sits down to read. The Child takes the stick and starts drawing circles around himself. Stands in the middle of his "country" and waits for ants. But there's no movement in the sand. The Child crouches down to watch, watches, waits. The Child digs into the earth with the stick. Waits. Nothing happens. The Child steps across the line and looks for ants. Doesn't find any. The Child looks at and then walks over to the Adult.

CHILD

I'm bored.

ADULT

Don't you want to play?

CHILD

Yeah, but what?

ADULT

Can't you play the same thing you were playing earlier? This is your favorite playground.

CHILD

But there's nothing to do here anymore.

ADULT

Oh.

CHILD

Cause I had that game that they can't come into my area, and if they do, I get to kill them.

ADULT

Aha.

CHILD

But there aren't any ants here anymore.

ADULT

I see...

CHILD

So what should I do now?

ADULT

Hmm...

The Child looks expectantly at the Adult. The Adult closes her book.

ADULT

Why don't we go find a different park?

CHILD

Which one?

ADULT

One that still has ants.

CHILD

OK.

ADULT

You have to have something to do, right?

The Adult places the book in her bag and stands and holds out a hand to the Child. The Child takes hold of her hand and they leave.

Darkness.

A deafening boom.

Naked

An attic at a summer cottage. Old belongings stacked along the walls, boxes, an air mattress with a hole in it, etc. Outside it's a hot, bright summer day, the light is filtering in between the siding and small, weather-beaten windows. A fly is buzzing at the window.

Three girls are sitting in a circle on the floor. The girls are playing Spin the Bottle. One of the girls spins. The bottle stops and points at Girl 1.

GIRL 2

OK. Truth or dare?

GIRL 1

Truth.

GIRL 2

OK... all right, but you have to be honest.

GIRL 1

I know, duh.

GIRL 2

What's your most embarrassing sexual memory, or like experience that has to do with sex and you're most embarrassed about?

GIRL 3

Ooooh that's bad...

GIRL 2

I have a bad one, too. Go.

GIRL 1

I'm too embarrassed...

GIRL 2

No duh. That's the whole point.

GIRL 3

We're not going to tell anyone. It'll stay between us.

GIRL 1

No but it's like so... weird.

GIRL 2

Well?

GIRL 1

OK... So this was like maybe last summer, or no, it was last summer. I was at my cousins' place on their island, and there's this old playhouse there where I get to sleep, you know, by myself. And then – well, I was there and everyone else had gone to the store or something, so I knew I was all alone on the island, and I felt like you know, like masturbating, and so you know I took off all my clothes and then I laid down on the bed and...

GIRL 2

And who caught you?

GIRL 1

...so well then like... this is maybe kind of weird, but so like I was there and suddenly out from under the bed comes, you know, out comes my cousin's dog. It sleeps there sometimes, I just didn't realize it was there when I started, you know...

GIRL 2

Like, a dog?

GIRL 1

Yeah, and then this dog was like looking at me. Like it was like ashamed or embarrassed or something. And I was so embarrassed by the whole thing, being there naked and the dog seeing me and what I was doing...

GIRL 3

Why were you embarrassed by that?

GIRL 1

I can't explain. It just... like when it saw me. It was like, somehow, I don't know, I got caught, like it wasn't until then that I really realized I was naked and that I was... like, well...

GIRL 3

But a dog will hump a pillow or something no shame in front of the whole world, so I don't get how you could have embarrassed it... or, I mean...

GIRL 1

Yeah... but that's what it felt like.

GIRL 3

Yeah...

GIRL 1

I don't know if anyone else can understand what I'm talking about, but it was gross. The way it looked at me. Not like it was accusing me of anything, but, like, out of modesty. And then it wanted to get out of the playhouse right away, like out where it wouldn't have to see me.

GIRL 2

I don't get it. It's a dog.

GIRL 1

I kno-oo-ow. But still. Or maybe – that was exactly why.

GIRL 2

So that's it?

GIRL 1

Yes!

GIRL 2

Your most embarrassing memory?

GIRL 1

Yes. Is it my turn to spin now?

GIRL 2

Yeah...

Girl 1 spins. The fly is still buzzing at the window.

Darkness.

A deafening boom.

The Human Mouth

A Woman is standing in a dimly lit kitchen in her nightshirt, drinking a glass of water.

Andersson the Cat is watching her from the sofa. The Woman turns, looks straight at us, and speaks.

WOMAN

I had a dream that animals were marching into my mouth in an endless stream. All kinds of animals: Sheep, pigs, cows, giraffes, even lions, dogs and cats. I couldn't close my mouth and I had to swallow all those animals, skin and hair and all.

It was a nightmare.

The Woman drinks one more glass of water. Then she looks at the cat, which is resting on the sofa.

WOMAN

The human mouth, it's a graveyard.

Andersson the Cat looks at the Woman.

WOMAN

A graveyard.

Darkness.

A deafening boom.

A spotlight falls on an image: A fish opens his mouth in the shallows.

License to Kill 3

The Adult and the Child come to the seashore.

ADULT

All right, let's have a look.

The Adult tries to find a spot with ant trails for the Child.

CHILD

What?

ADULT

Wait. I'm looking.

CHILD

Do you see any?

ADULT

...yeah wait...

The Adult finds an ant trail.

ADULT

OK, here's a pretty good one.

CHILD

What?

ADULT

If you draw a circle here, I'm sure it won't be long before you'll have plenty to do.

CHILD

Yeah.

The Child draws the borders of his country with a stick and waits. The Adult watches absent-mindedly. Before long, an ant crosses the line drawn by the Child, and the Child is thrilled. He stabs at the ant, trying to spear it.

CHILD

Stop. You can't come here. You can't come, can't come...

There's some repetition here, of course, but before long the Child is back in the swing of it. The ants continue following their trails, and now there are more of them within the child's borders. The Child stabs at the sand.

CHILD

You can't come! Ha-ha! Die. Ha! Die! Ima kill you, Ima kill you! You can't come! You can't come! Ha-ha! I'll kill you! I'll kill you!

The Dog runs down the shore and sees the crouched Child and the stick he's waving around. The Dog rushes over to the Child, barks, bows, and snatches the stick to play.

CHILD

No! Stop! Waaaaa!

The Child and the Dog play tug of war with the stick, but the Child isn't strong enough to hold on and falls backwards. The Dog runs off, shaking the stick playfully.

ADULT

Ooops. You're OK, get up.

The Adult helps the Child up.

ADULT

It looks like you made a friend.

The Dog brings the stick over and drops it in front of the Child. The Dog waits in anticipation for the Child to throw the stick.

ADULT

Throw it for him. He wants you to throw it for him.

CHILD

It's ruining my borders!

ADULT

Don't be silly.

The Adult pets the Dog.

ADULT

Nice doggy, good doggy... You want us to throw the stick? You want us to throw it? Yes..

The Adult takes the stick.

ADULT

Watch this, here we go!

The Adult throws the stick. The Dog chases after the stick, barking eagerly. The Child watches, wants to join in... The Dog brings the stick, dances around.

ADULT

Drop it! Drop it!

The Dog drops the stick at the Adult's feet, waits for the Adult to throw it.

ADULT

You throw it.

The Child squirms and looks at the stick.

ADULT

Go on, throw it.

The Child takes the stick and throws it for the Dog.

ADULT

Good!

The Dog runs across the line drawn in the sand and the Child springs after it, erasing the lines.

The Dog rolls its head and chews the stick happily.

CHILD

Drop it.

The Dog looks at the Child, drops the stick.

CHILD

Good.

The Child takes the stick. Throws it. The Dog bolts off to fetch the stick. The Child squeals in delight and chases after the dog, erasing the lines even more.

Darkness.

A deafening boom.

A spotlight falls on an image: An ant climbing over sand.

The Conveyer Belt

A moving walkway running down a long passageway (as at an airport or passenger harbor).

A Violinist plays Bach's Sarabande. The same battered paper cup stands at the Violinist's feet.

People are standing on along the walkway, allowing the walkway to carry them along. At the end of the walkway they fall to the ground, dead, and continue their journey as carcasses on another conveyer belt.

Someone at the foot of the walkway sneezes. Then he pulls out a handkerchief and blows his nose.

Darkness.

A deafening boom.

The Choice

A popular restaurant at the busiest time of day. The Man in the Brown Suit and his Wife are eating a meal and nodding amiably at each other.

A couple, grandparents, are sitting at a big table, along with their adult children and their families. The eldest son, now a middle-aged man, is sitting at the head of the table; he is clearly the family's sovereign head. They are waiting for their meal. The Head of the Family is telling a story that the others listen to, nodding...

HEAD OF THE FAMILY

...so I told her that it's everyone's individual choice, that everyone has the freedom to choose for him- or herself, and this is my choice and that's hers, and there's nothing wrong with that, right? That this way we can leave each other to live our own lives and respect each other's choices from a distance. You choose that, I choose this, it's personal and it's not any one else's business. It's called freedom of choice and everyone chooses as they see fit for themselves, right? She's chosen that, I've chosen this, and that's the way the world works...

Waiters carry food to the family's table.

HEAD OF THE FAMILY

Great! Here we go.

The family looks at their meals, satisfied.

HEAD OF THE FAMILY

All right, dig in.

The Head of the Family digs his fork into his meal and cuts. The Man in the Brown Suit cries out in pain.

MAN IN THE BROWN SUIT

Ow!

The Wife of the Man in the Brown Suit looks at her husband, perplexed. The Man is holding his ribs and grimacing in pain.

WIFE

What's wrong?

MAN IN THE BROWN SUIT

My side hurts.

WIFE

Oh.

The Head of the Family chews on the food in his mouth.

HEAD OF THE FAMILY

Mmm! Mmm!

The Head of the Family cuts another piece. The Man in the Brown Suit doubles over in pain, tries to suppress his scream.

MAN IN THE BROWN SUIT

Aaaaggggh!

The Waiter registers the Man's pain. He looks at us, he looks directly at us and is embarrassed that we are witnessing this.

WIFE

What's wrong?

MAN IN THE BROWN SUIT

It hurts...

The Head of the Family cuts into his meal. The Man in the Brown Suit squeals in pain and holds his ribs. The Waiter glances at us a second time, then turns back to his work.

MAN IN THE BROWN SUIT

Owww!

WIFE

Oh...

MAN IN THE BROWN SUIT

He's cutting...

WIFE

What?

The Head of the Family cuts into his meal again, the Man in the Brown Suit cries out in pain.

MAN IN THE BROWN SUIT

Owww!

People gawk at the Man in the Brown Suit. The Head of the Family looks, too, fork raised.

MAN IN THE BROWN SUIT

...cutting me...

WIFE

What?

MAN IN THE BROWN SUIT

Him!

The Man in the Brown Suit points at the Head of the Family, who is putting the fork into his mouth and chewing. The Man in the Brown Suit gasps for breath.

MAN IN THE BROWN SUIT

He's eating me!

WIFE

Stop it.

The Head of the Family cuts into his meal. The Man in the Brown Suit falls to the floor in agony. The waiter glances at us over his shoulder.

MAN IN THE BROWN SUIT

He's eating me!

WIFE

Oh no, help... Call an ambulance, somebody please call an ambulance!

The Waiter hears the Wife's request and disappears into the kitchen to make the call. The Man in the Brown Suit roars and points at the man at the head of the table.

MAN IN THE BROWN SUIT

Stop eating me!

The Head of the Family looks on, flummoxed.

MAN IN THE BROWN SUIT

You! Stop eating me!

HEAD OF THE FAMILY

Lunatic...

The Head of the Family cuts into his meal, irritated. The Man in the Brown Suit shouts in pain and rage.

MAN IN THE BROWN SUIT

AAAAAAAARRGHHH!

The Man in the Brown Suit turns to his wife.

MAN IN THE BROWN SUIT

Help! Ask him...

The Wife looks at her husband, then she stands and looks at the man with his family.

WIFE

My husband has gone insane. He thinks you're eating him.

HEAD OF THE FAMILY

I'm not eating him.

WIFE

Of course you're not. But could you please wait long enough for us to get him to a hospital?

HEAD OF THE FAMILY

My food will get cold...

WIFE

I'm sorry.

HEAD OF THE FAMILY

I've paid...

WIFE

Of course. Excuse me.

The Head of the Family cuts into his meal, the Man in the Brown Suit cries out in agony. The Waiter peers out from the kitchen and looks at us. Everyone looks at the man chewing his meal. The man's family looks at the man chewing his meal. The man cuts into his meal in spite of everything. The Man in the Brown Suit squeals in agony. The Man chews and looks around at his family. He has made his choice.

Darkness.

A deafening boom.

What is a person?

The Man in the Brown Suit is sitting in the hospital canteen, talking to the Man Sitting Across from Him.

MAN IN THE BROWN SUIT

He ate me. Imagine, he just sat there and ate. Gnawed at my ribs. Look at them! What am I going to do with them now? What is a person? What kind of person eats someone else? Just sits there eating, even though the other person is shouting in pain? What kind of person does that? What kind of person is that? He ate me. Ate, just like that, sat there and ate.

The Wife arrives at the doorway, looks at her husband, listens.

MAN IN THE BROWN SUIT

My wife begged him to stop, but no, he just ate and ate. What kind of person does that? And look at me now, what have I become? What's left of me? He ate me, chomp chomp...

The Man in the Brown Suit bursts into tears, the Man Sitting Across from Him nods.

The Wife walks over to her husband, pulls his head into her lap, and strokes his head.

The Man wraps his arm around his wife's waist and buries his head in her lap. The Wife strokes her husband's head.

Darkness.

A deafening boom.

A spotlight falls on an image: A sow tosses her ears.

First nature

Break room.

The employees enter for their coffee break. They're wearing clean white lab coats and thin rubber gloves. They strip off their gloves in the doorway and toss them in the lidded trash can. They remove their lab coats and hang them up on the hooks. They're wearing their own clothes under the coats. They wash their hands and then disinfect them.

The Intern enters. The Intern nods at the others, the others nod back. The Intern strips off his rubber gloves and tosses them in the trash. Then he also washes and disinfects his hands, hangs up his lab coat.

The other employees have already taken their coffee mugs from the usual spots and filled them from the coffee pot. The Intern takes his own coffee mug from its usual spot and fills it from the coffee pot.

Employee 1 opens a package of store-bought pound cake, cuts it into slices, and offers it to the others.

EMPLOYEE 1

There you are. A little something sweet for everyone.

EMPLOYEE 3

Congratulations... you know, and everything.

EMPLOYEE 2

Yes, congratulations.

EMPLOYEE 1

Thanks. The years keep coming, even though I don't recall asking for them.

EMPLOYEE 3

Yeah, that's one thing you don't have to ask for.

The Intern goes over to the coffee pot and fills his mug.

EMPLOYEE 1

Well... Go ahead, have some.

The other employees nod, thanks, and help themselves to cake.

EMPLOYEE 2

Thank you.

EMPLOYEE 1

You too...

Employee 1 offers cake to the Intern.

INTERN

Thanks.

The Intern takes a slice of cake.

EMPLOYEE 2

Pretty good.

The Employees munch on the cake.

EMPLOYEE 1

Better than a kick in the rear.

EMPLOYEE 3

A nice freshness to it, too...

EMPLOYEE 1

True.

Employee 1 opens the newspaper and browses through it.

EMPLOYEE 2

True. It doesn't cost a thing.

EMPLOYEE 1

What?

EMPLOYEE 2

Getting old. It's free.

EMPLOYEE 1

Yeah, well yeah... I suppose...

The Intern opens the window and leans out. The jackdaws are chattering out in the trees and on the roof. The Intern drinks coffee, munches on pound cake. Employee 3 also comes over to the window. They look and listen for a moment.

EMPLOYEE 3

How does it feel, first week behind you?

INTERN

Yeah... it didn't take long to get used to it.

EMPLOYEE 3

Yeah. Habit is second nature.

INTERN

Exactly.

They sip their coffee for a moment.

EMPLOYEE 2

So what's first nature, then?

The Intern and Employee 3 turn to look. Employee 1 looks up from her paper, too.

EMPLOYEE 2

First nature, second... so what's first nature?

EMPLOYEE 3

Hmmm-mm... well...

Employee 1 glances at the clock.

EMPLOYEE 1

All right. Looks like it's time...

Employee 1 folds up the paper and hauls herself up from her chair. The others follow.

Employee 3 pats the Intern twice on the shoulder on the way out. The Intern inhales one last time, then closes the window and follows the others.

The Employees rinse out their coffee mugs and return them to their spots, put on their lab coats, take new rubber gloves from the box, and pull them on.

Darkness.

A deafening boom.

The Conveyer Belt

A walkway running down a long passageway (as at an airport or passenger harbor).

*A Chamber Orchestra, the Violinist among them, plays the J.S. Bach work *Ich habe genug*.
They are wearing their own everyday clothes.*

*The Angel of Time is at the head of the line of people on the walkway. The Angel stands there,
back towards the future, gazing at the people before her. The people avoid the Angel's gaze.*

*When the Angel of Time is about to reach the end of the walkway, she spreads her wings and
sings. People take fright; they stare at the living angel. The Angel of Time walks backwards
along the walkway and sings. People back up out of the Angel's way, until they have the sense
to turn around.*

Angel of Time

***Ich habe genug
Ich habe den Heiland, das Hoffen der Frommen,
Auf meine begierigen Arme genommen;
Ich habe genug!***

Darkness.

A deafening boom.

A spotlight falls on an image: A cow closes her eyes.

The Conveyer Belt

In the long passageway, the automated walkway rolls steadily along, on and on. Now empty, now deserted.

The only sound is that of the motor still running quietly. The air conditioning hums.

Then the walkway motor dies and the belt stops.

The air conditioning hums for a moment longer and then it stops, too.

Silence.

The Living – in order of appearance:

People on the walkway

Violinist

Parent

Bird Girl

Songbirds

Old Person

Jogger

Woman and Dog

Caterpillar

Another Jogger

Person Who Sees

Employee

Intern

Jackdaws

Ants

Child

Adult

Husband

Haggard Wife

Teenager

Maria the Horse

Old Woman

Sister

Brother

Chamber Orchestra

Nurse

Memorial Service Guests

Hot Dog Stand Owner

Horse

Singing Jogger
Man and three dogs: Gyp, Charlie, and Renny
Mother
Babbling Child
People at the Supermarket
Pastor
Manager
Security Guard 1
Security Guard 2
Chicken
Human
Jill Bolte Taylor
Journalist
Susie the Cat (deceased)
Spouse
Middle-aged Man
Soloist
Lizard
Fly
Girl 1
Girl 2
Girl 3
Woman
Andersson the Cat
Fish
Dog
Ant
Person who Sneezes
People in the Restaurant
Man in the Brown Suit
Wife
Head of the Family

Three Generations of Family Members

Waiter

Man Sitting Across the Table

Sow

Employee 1

Employee 2

Employee 3

Angel of Time

Cow

MUSICAL WORKS APPEARING IN THE PLAY:

Hildegard von Bingen: Caritas abundat in omnia.

J.S. Bach: Sarabande: Violin Partita No. 2 in d minor, BWV 1004.

J.S. Bach: St Matthew Passion: Erbarme dich, mein Gott, BWV 244.

J.S. Bach: Ich habe genug, BWV 82a:

Beginning of arias 1 and 3; Ich habe genug and Schlummert ein, ihr matten Augen.