**Theatremorphosis**

This was a performance piece commissioned by Suspect Culture and the CCA Glasgow for their large-scale gallery installation, Stage Fright. The aim of the exhibition was to revisit the interface between the visual arts and theatre, but finding, where possible, new areas of exploration. The theatre makers and visual artists invited to participate were Luke Collins, Graham Eatough, David Greig, Patrick Macklin, Sharon Smith & Felicity Croydon (Max Factory), Nick Powell & Jonny Dawe (OSKAR) and Dan Rebellato. The installation ran April-May 2009.

*Theatremorphosis* is a performance in a cage. Each day an actor is given a short script which he or she is required to learn. They begin performing the script when the gallery opens and each time they reperform it, they are asked to perform it the same way they did the previous time. Any mistakes, variations, slips and stumbles are therefore incorporated into the performance as it goes on and the piece virally degrades through the course of the day. There were six different actors and therefore six different characters.

Each of the 37 texts is different and together they tell an ongoing story about transformation. During the course of the ‘run’, we had some serial visitors who came to find out where the story had gone.

There were various interpretation events and projects around the installation of Stage Fright. You can see me and some of the other contributors speaking about the project here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bwWYfhRdEbE>

There are various reviews and previews here:

* The Scotsman <http://www.scotsman.com/news/theatre-reviews-interiors-stage-fright-the-little-mermaid-1-1033431>
* The Guardian <http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2009/apr/18/review-stage-fright-cca-glasgow>
* The List <http://www.list.co.uk/article/17095-stage-fright/>
* The Herald: <http://coffeetablenotes.blogspot.co.uk/2011/04/suspect-culture-make-exhibition-of.html>

I discuss *Theatremorphosis* at some length on my own website:

* <http://www.danrebellato.co.uk/theatremorphosis>

**3 April 2009**

I am sitting in the train when I pass the scene of the accident. In point of fact the accident occurs as I am gazing from the window. I see a silver what looks like Volvo XC90 followed if I’m not mistaken by a black 1.8 Honda i-VTEC and the Honda draws near and bumps the car in front and then drives alongside it and forces it off the road. The car turns over and that’s where the road diverged from the track. I have returned to that moment again and again. I have replayed it in my mind again and again. There is no detail of that scene that is not crystal clear in my mind’s eye. The halogen headlights of the Honda, the blue map-reading light of the Volvo, the child strapped in the back seat frozen as the car leaves the road. I subject myself to fierce interrogation; should I have acted? What was it in my power to do? Calling for an ambulance would have been appropriate but I was stuck, I am stuck. Turning the scene over and over in my mind. I can see it now even as I talk to you.

**4 April 2009**

Thank God you’re here please you have to help me there’s been an accident I don’t know what to do my daughter’s in there I don’t know what happened one moment we were driving and the next something hit us from behind I swear he didn’t have his lights on and we must have turned over twice three times over and over and her leg is caught it’s caught in the wreckage her leg is caught between the door and the steering column she’s crying she’s crying she thinks she’s going to die she thinks she’s going to die and I don’t know what to do my car is fucked to shit and you have to do something the car’s going to blow and I don’t know what to do you have to get in there you have to get in there and save my daughter you have to save my daughter and my Pioneer DEH-P700BT Bluetooth CD/MP3 Tuner with USB-in and iPod Control you have to help me please you have to help me.

**7 April 2009**

Do you have any change? Do you have any spare change? I just need a little spare change for the journey home. Just a little change for the journey home and if you could spare me another £2.65 I could get a grande latte from the Costa Coffee at the station. Spare a little change, sir? Madam? A little change for the train fare and a coffee and a croissant, not almond, nothing like that, I’m not taking the piss, just a plain croissant, a coffee and a plain croissant for the train, and if there’s any left over a cheap paperback book to read while I take my coffee and my croissant save me staring hopelessly out of the window as the fields flash by as the farmhands and the tractors and the cows and goats and the banks by the old rivers some of which have been canalised as they all flash by, sir, madam, as they all flash by?

**8 April 2009**

I am a child. I am a child and I am in a burning car. My mother crawled out of the broken window but I am still strapped into the child seat. The car is on its side and it’s certainly on fire. The stereo is still playing and the song that it is playing is ‘The Way I Are’ by Timbaland featuring Keri Hilson & DOE and this is the song that was at Number One when I was born. I watch the flame make shapes in the space above the passenger seat. I see myself in the window and there are flames reflected in my eyes. The smoke is thicker now and it is beginning to irritate my nose and throat so I cry. Breathing is more difficult and that makes me cry also. I disgorge vomit from my stomach onto my pale blue t-shirt but this does not make me cry, instead I simply look at it. I lose consciousness. I am unable to breathe and I am starved of oxygen so I die. I die and what that feels like is like you are water that has drained away. But then I feel the opposite sensation and I know I am being reborn. I reach out to touch the face of God. Soft hands lift me back into life. Who am I now?

**9 April 2009**

Would I recommend my life to anyone else? You have to be kidding, Yvonne, I said. The questions she asks. Makes me want to scratch at her eyes and skin. Perhaps take a knife and stick it to her. Take my 8cm Henckels Professional ‘S’ Paring Knife and stick its ice-hardened FRIODOR® blade in her. I do not recommend my life. My life is stuffed with silence. I am at home. When I think of the afternoons I’ve spent just calling out: is anyone listening? Can anyone hear me? Silence except for music. Then again: is anyone listening? Am I alone here? My only companion at such times is my Bose® SoundDock Portable iPod speaker system which features a credit card-sized remote for command of the speaker volume and basic iPod functions from almost anywhere in the room. Is anyone listening? (Simply Red.) Can anyone hear me? (M People.) Am I alone here? (The Kooks.)

**10 April 2009**

The situation is that our marriage has become stale. All day every day the same damn thing. I believe Angela doesn’t see it. I believe Angela is happy with the way things are. I believe that Angela sees her life in all the colours of the rainbow but for me as a man it’s different. It just cycles, round and round, hour after hour, day upon day. In this respect I believe men and women are different. For a man you see and I know this won’t go down well with the PC brigade but for a man I believe you need to act spontaneously. If a man is forced to repeat himself, he becomes less of a man. I have a small circle of guy friends who feel the same way and we meet in a spontaneous environment every fortnight and we are spontaneous. This is not something that Angela understands. She doesn’t understand the situation.

**11 April 2009**

It’s the same old story. I’ve heard it I don’t know hundreds, maybe more, I’ve lost count. It’s got so that I can see the signs from the beginning but I don’t speak up at the church because there’s no use telling folk. I hear them at night. He’s out in the garden mostly. Growling. She’s inside with her music. It’s not right. I read a book by a guy, his name will come back to me in a minute. What the gist of it is is that all the stories in the world well in fact there’s only seven or something. There’s (a) Quest, there’s (b) Voyage and Return, there’s (c) Mucking About With Guns or something, there’s (d) I Can’t Believe It’s Not Butter or, no, but something. Anyway. I think he should add Boy Meets Girl, Boy Falls In Love With Girl, Boy Screws The Whole Thing Up. He’s outside making noise all hours, she has headphones she doesn’t listen, she doesn’t care.

**14 April 2009**

A man’s spontaneity is something that comes from his animal nature. A man has an animal nature and it is that animal nature that allows him to be free. This is what Angela does not understand. I read a book by an American poet that had a considerable impact on me. In this American poet’s book he advocates, no that’s too strong a word, he recommends yes he recommends that men have become I’m paraphrasing now but, well, women, they have become feminized and unable to act in the moment. They are forever looking over their shoulder. He recommends and it’s so easy isn’t it to mock ideas like this but he recommends that within a man there is a hairy man, within the civilised man and his Gillette Fusion Power razor with its five Powerglide blades, flexible comfort guard and enhanced indicator lubrastrip there lurks, and I find it interesting that he uses this word, a beast. And I am becoming a beast and a hairy man, day by day. I am slowly regressing and I tell you it feels good.

**15 April 2009**

I run a website. It’s my escape hatch: www.escapehatch.com. I have to do something creative. So I host feeds to live CCTV cameras around the world. I will confess that Google Street View has taken the wind out of my sails. But I persevere because you have to persevere, whatever life may throw at you. Or Google, ha ha ha. I’m kidding because it’s fine. It’s an escape hatch into other world kind of thing. I need an escape hatch because I feel trapped sometimes. I am a copywriter. Copywriter schmopywriter because what I do in fact is I write the subject lines for Spam. ‘Hot Babes Go Wild With Animals’. That was one of mine. ‘Breaking News of the Top Pick Stock’ was another. That went round the world. I like it because it’s creative and you have to be precise with words but to be honest the repetitivity – is that a word? the repetitiousness, the repetitiveness? What’s the word? Well whatever.

**16 April 2009**

I am a girl, aged one year and eight months, which is an unfamiliar experience to begin with. I remember dying in the heat of the burning car. Then I was lifted by the hands of what I shall call an almighty spirit and pressed back through the, what, the membrane that separates non-existence from its opposite. I think that is the best I can do by way of description just now. And as I woke into life, I discovered I had been reborn as a girl. I feel physically identical. I do not experience my body as changed. I cannot claim to have had significant internal experience of my own genitals when I was a boy. Don’t get me wrong, I’m not an autotopagnosiac, I’m just a girl. I opened my eyes. I opened my eyes and found that I was back in the car. The same intensity of heat, the smoke in my lungs within seconds, but this time I would die as a girl. My last thought as I die for the second time is this.

**17 April 2009**

I don’t like silence and I don’t do it very well. The first time my husband struck me I’m like: you do that again and I’m going to the police, you hear me? I’m going to the police and you won’t see the kiddie ever, all you’ll see, you pig, is the inside of a prison cell, you lift a finger to me again. And he hits me again: a punch that knocks the hearing out of you. I was going to say my threat again but if you repeat yourself you’ve already lost, so I chose silence which in my head is powerful but to him maybe he’s just shut me up. Sometimes, when he gives me nothing back, I find that I start to babble. I long for him to talk me through his day, to unburden, fix him a drink, ready in his hand for when he gets in and I just listen, silent. But that never happens and now it’s come to this.

**18 April 2009**

I am a free runner. I have a pair of sneakers and a tracksuit as you can see. I leap from my first-floor window, spring off the garden shed, over the wall and I crouch cat-like on the pavement, before springing across the railings into the estate, where I pass across concrete balconies and abandoned lift shafts like smoke and fire. I am smoke and fire. Across shopping centres and multi-storey car parks, hand over hand, wheeling and careening, my feet flashing, I find myself at the edge of the city. On the bypass, the cars are panthers, the cars are bears. I see the lights of a Volvo arriving and as it passes by flick-flack across the dual carriageway but a dark thing behind it catches my heel. I am stunned and I fall by the way. Scratches to my face. I stumble to my feet. I am bleeding. I leave a trail. Where to go?

**21 April 2009**

I do not consider myself a beggar. Beggars do not travel first class. Nor am I homeless. Nor am I for that matter an alcoholic. I sit neither in station concourses nor underpasses. I do not employ the polystyrene cup technique. I use no handmade signage to announce my plight. I do not, in point of fact, call upon the sympathies of my interlocutors. I do not mask my petition with the conventionalities of ‘the cup of tea’. I am at all times direct, honest. I specify my requirements, I announce a schedule of my desires. I wish to buy a seat and would prefer not to use my own money, et cetera. Passers-by respect my honesty and more often than not donations are forthcoming. Your own contributions would be welcome, naturally, but I do not insist any more than I beg.

**22 April 2009**

When we bought this house I thought where are the doors? It’s all so exposed. All windows, everyone looking in. The front door is at the rear for privacy. He came home. I pretended to be asleep. I heard him fix himself a beer. I hear him put his feet up on the sofa and he turns on the Pioneer 60-inch HD Ready 1080p KURO with Digital Terrestrial and Satellite Tuner. I hear the deep blacks of the plasma screen. I hear the theme from Newsnight. He’s asleep after twenty minutes. I go to Joe’s room and I pick him up out of bed, dontwakeupdontwakeupdontwakeup, and I carry him downstairs. The car’s already packed. I tiptoe past my sleeping husband dontwakeupdontwakeupdontwakeup and gently gently open the back door. Child in the child seat, key in the ignition. My Volvo roars into life. The headlights momentarily illuminate the front room and my confused, waking husband. I reverse into the road and race away.

**23 April 2009**

Let me put it this way, I’ve been an advocate of Web 2.0 before it got a name. I swear to you, before the dotcom bust, I was already saying user-generated content, social networking, wikis, blogs, hosted participation, yes? I predicted the bust too. I was the first one to say boo.com should be renamed boohoo.com because I saw it all coming. escapehatch.com is my contribution and most people think it’s just a YouTube lite, even if the protocols are much dinkier, though the level of user engagement leaves the rest standing. You can mash-up my CCTV streams, build forums within forums, customize every aspect of the dashboard, and the code is totally public; I’ve allowed developers to change my sitecode live; Linux nothing, this is Web 3.0. In eighteen months the site’s fallen over once and it was back up in 15 minutes. Last week one archived CCTV stream had 15 million hits. I watched it once out of curiosity and it scared me. I was on my own. It’s dark in this room. Dark outside.

**24 April 2009**

It has taken me three hours to gather enough for a first-class seat and as the train pulls from the station, I find that it is getting dark. I open up the *Telegraph* and I graze the columns and idle away at the crossword but soon I am gazing from the window. We pass through an industrial area, then construction sites, then suburban homes, until we find ourselves in countryside. Blood-red horizon. The only signs of man are the motorway that bobs back and forth, sometimes running right up against us, sometimes veering off to dart between the hills. It’s on the motorway that I see the car and I have to click off the soft light that illuminates my table because behind the car is something else. Something huge and black with lights shining from it. At first I think a car, but it isn’t a car. There is spill from the recessed lighting and I press my face to the window shielding my eyes with my hands to see better. What is that thing?**25 April 2009**

And I find that I am sleeping better. My sense of smell is much improved. I have told Angela not to wear perfume. I have to get up and breathe air from a window. I am a new type, a new type of man. As a boy I found the appearance of hair distressing. Now I rejoice in it. I am a hairy man and in my dreams I bound freely through the dense forests of Eastern Finland. In my dreams I take what I want and those around me are afraid. I debated with myself about whether to strike my wife. It was so hard, let me tell you, to lose my shaven impulses but when I first struck her I knew I was doing what men have done since we built the first civilizations in ancient Babylon. Even before that. My wife talked back to me and without thinking – without thinking, this is the thing – I reach back and struck her across the face. The move was so natural: reach back, swipe, strike your wife. I do it every time now.

**28 April 2009**

I’ve recently redesigned the site to make less use of Flash, because looking in my domain stats I found that 21% of site visitors were trying to access my website on an iPhone and of course that was no-go, so I have this funky little bit of HTML that duplicates some Flash functionality and it works with touchscreen devices, because I am super-pro the tactility if that’s a word of touchscreen devices and I honestly think I would marry Jonny Ive if he asked. The key is that anyone working with a touchscreen and trackpad can capture a CCTV stream and someone did because I got an alert and they’d tagged it monster, they’d tagged it monster, and naturally I’m curious so I drag in the stream and fire it up and I’m sitting there in the dark, it’s dark because I’m alone, and there’s a car in the distance and a train look, you can see the lights of the train and the lights of the car and the picture’s not so good but behind the car what the hell is that I’m squinting at my screen and I think it’s a bear, that car is being chased by a bear.

**29 April 2009**

I’m relaxing into the first class seats. There’s a breadth to first class seating. There are levers that recline the seat. You are guaranteed a table. These are the things for which it is worth holding out. I don’t remember when I first decided that first class was appropriate. Certainly not as a youth, as a youth I simply boarded trains and sat where I I I no I no no I no yes I accept that I find it hard to say what I saw through the glass the perfectly clear glass but the brightness within and the blackness without you will I guarantee it see only a mirror but yet I see I see I do see okay deep breaths deep breaths what I see behind the car, along the A-road, side of the hill, outside the city, the Volvo and then what I at first thought or after perhaps do I have to say this? But yes a bear a bear. Yes yes laugh now, a bear. Behind the Volvo a bear, lolloping because there’s no other way to describe what a bear will do lolloping along the A-road and gaining on the car the Volvo and I squint and look hard and I think that I see I see triumph in its halogen eyes.

**30 April 2009**

With some concentration I find that I can live through my own death. At first I blacked out when the moment came. But by digging my fingers into the webbing between my thumb and forefinger the pain generates what I think must be a shot of adrenalin which allows me to ride over the death-bump and I stay conscious for the whole thing. Dying is draining away and death is being drained, though that is not, in all honesty, an undesirable state and I find that I relish it, relish it such that when I feel the twitch of rebirth, of life coming to claim me again, I miss it, yes that’s not too strong a word, I am almost reluctant to go, to be filled again, the feeling of regret and languor, almost as if I don’t want to be reborn in a burning car, a burning car, my new-born genitals the first to go, the soft hairs on my head shrivelling instant in the wave of heat while outside outside the roaring the roaring.

**1 May 2009**

Joe is not hysterical, I’m hysterical. Joe is in the child seat laughing and I’m trying to operate the TomTom One v3 3.5" Sat Nav with UK Maps because I don’t know which way we go once we get on the motorway. And I trying to keep an eye on the road while programming the thing when there’s this bump and I think we’ve been rear-ended but I look in the rear-view and there’s no car there but I stop the car and I’m about to open the window but I think better of it. I have this I want to say intuition that there’s something out there and that’s when the roaring starts which is when I start to get a bit wobbly even though I say to myself Angela he was asleep he was drunk he couldn’t have got his car out he didn’t know where we were going but and this is where I really lost it I look up and behind the car I can see this pair of eyes, they’re glowing, it’s like halogen, and the eyes are shining and Christ in heaven Jesus Lord fucking Christ in heaven there’s a huge black bear pounding towards the car and it’s Kenny, it’s my husband, it’s Kenny.**2 May 2009**

I have spent a day among men. And it’s when you spend a day among men that you realise how much of our lives we spend among women, stared at and teased and tolerated like some kind of beast in a cage. A zoo creature, there to delight but fundamentally not understood. Angela thinks when I spend a day among men that I return grumpy; she calls me an old grump. This is the persistent tactic of the female. To belittle my anger, to domesticate the raging beast, stroke my snout. But having spent a day among men I am not to be domesticated. I refuse intercourse of all kinds and instead crouch and hunker before the television, my head filled with male things. When she attempts to go, when she gets the cub and her headlights drag across my sleeping face, I stir and I rouse. It piques the fury in me. It plucks at the fur beneath the skin. I feel my spine arch with it. My teeth are long now. My skin hardens. My engine roars.

**5 May 2009**

necessarily, my grasp of the situation is partial. I am dying and being reborn each minute and the heat the heat. It is like sitting in a room with a single, swinging lightbulb. Swing: my mother is screaming and the car has been thrown into a ditch and Swing: she is fiddling with the seat belt and Swing: my mother is reaching for me, reaching for me and her jacket has caught alight as she Swing: she is crying and trying to open the door above her head but a huge I think it is a paw smashes the glass and the rain and shattered pieces pour in, the rain evaporating into Swing: mother trying to grab me from outside give me your hand give me your hand screaming Swing: boy now, girl now, boy now, girl now, the tides of my life flow in and out and I do not worry about dying I have done it a thousand times before but then it would be true to say that

**6 May 2009**

I’m running, as you can see, through a forest of silver birch trees and I’m shedding clothes. Although it is winter, the depths, as they say, of winter, I am shedding my clothes, and leaving them behind me, though in point of fact, because I don’t want to be found, don’t want to be discovered, I am throwing them to one side, flinging them to one side, with increasing force, further and further, hoping to divert them from my course. In my hand as you can see there is a knife. And as you can see the branches are scratching my naked skin so as to draw blood. You will have noticed the blood welling from the scratches. The blood feels cold as I whip through the forest of the Ardennes. The Ardennes? No, not the Ardennes. Just a forest, and then the ground falls away from me. The ground falls away from me the forest gives way entirely. This has the force of a dream, if a dream can be said to have force, of course it can, a dream, it has force.

**7 May 2009**

and I can’t remember whether are supposed to stand still when you see a bear because they can only detect motion or whether that’s just for the T-Rex in *Jurassic Park* or whether it’s that you always keep eye contact or you never keep eye contact and whether you lie on the floor face down to be non-threatening or if you make yourself as tall as possible because I have read that bears are the most dangerous mammal on the planet but I believe I have also read that they are essentially pacifists in the sense of not wanting to do you harm are they in fact vegetarians because I have some nuts in my bag I find myself thinking absurdly and what I do is split the difference, looking towards this bear, this great black bear, standing it must be 12’ tall with shining eyes and yellow teeth, looking towards it but not in its eyes and the bear throws up its head and bellows out this roar and birds fly up**8 May 2009**

I find myself trapped by language. Not its insufficiency, not the babble of the pre-verbal, which I find, in its way, a release and a contagion, a sort of pleasure if you will. I find words themselves, these words, which I glimpse, as if from a distance, in the discourse of my mother and father, the grunts of derision and cruelty, tricked out in phonemes and transmitted to me as my *lingua franca*, they are the prison. Once upon a time and a very good time it was there was a moocow coming down along the road and this moocow that was coming down along the road met a nicens little boy named baby tuckoo. Only in this instance the moocow is a bad teddy and he has peeled back the roof of the car like the lid of a sardine tin and his breath seems, if this were possible, even hotter than the petrol fire that has reached the interior, consuming the R-Design Leather-Faced Off-Black/Calcite upholstery with a smell like a moocow in an inferno and with his paw he pulls me from the tangle of my car seat and I am in the air, I am in the air.**9 May 2009**

Blood  
Blood  
Blood  
Road  
Blood  
Road  
Blood  
Road  
Paw  
Clump  
Swipe  
Clump  
Back

Bitch  
Swipe

Bitch  
Blood  
Snout  
Clump

Snout  
Car  
Swipe  
Blood  
Car  
Swipe  
Breath  
Lungs  
Roar  
Blast  
Shout  
Speak

Shout

Man  
Roar  
Bear  
Roar  
Bear  
Man

Bear

Man  
Road

Blood  
Road  
Road**12 May 2009**

as you can see I am face-down in the earth. My husband who is a bear has stepped on my back on his way to the car. My back may be broken but I don’t dare move to find out. I hear a great ripping sound, ripping like paper but metal though. And I hear our child crying and I think it’s pain but it’s hard to tell because the voice is different, it’s a different pitch and my husband roars, it’s like the revving of an engine but an engine deep in a hole in the ground and I believe he has become something deep in the earth, the very earth into which I am pressed my back perhaps broken. And he takes my child, our child, my child, he takes our child and he, he is ‘he’ still, he starts to run, the child held in his jaws, gently I believe but I only see them as he flashes by and they recede into the trees, the distance, and I am alone, conceivably with a broken back and**13 May 2009**

I don’t hallucinate. I don’t see stuff. I’m not that type. I have never had feverish delusions. I have never seen a ghost. I don’t hear noises in the night nor voices in my head. I do not believe that the stick looks bent in water. I am immune to optical illusions. Thus it is with great confidence that I trust the evidence of my senses. Yet I rubbed my eyes with my foreknuckles, like a man in a cartoon, to be assured of their testimony. I took the handkerchief from my top pocket and I rubbed at the glass. I peered closer and shielded my eyes from the compartment’s lights. Out on the road, I am looking at a car speeding down an A-road. I can see the woman driving. There is a child in the back: a boy? a girl? I can’t say. But behind them, its paws pounding along the tarmac, and, so help me, gaining on the car, is a bear. And as it draws level with the car, the bear lets out a howl, a howl I don’t hear, but I see its yellow teeth and a flash of red tongue, and it swipes the car with its paw. The car tips down on its side then turns and rolls and turns and rolls.

**14 May 2009**

cradled in the safe embrace of my father’s car seat feeling the deep rumble of his roaring engine and the comfort of his furry upholstery, his powerful chassis navigating us safely between the trees, the ground shaking beneath us, his undercarriage scraping at the ground, woodland creatures scampering beneath tree roots for safety I imagine of course I can only imagine but as we cannon from tree to tree I find I have forgotten pain, forgotten the imminence of danger, forgotten even whether I am boy or girl because somehow none of this matters when I am**15 May 2009**

There are seven basic principles of Parkour.

1. Everywhere is empty. 2. Up and down not just left and right. 3. Play where they work. Ow. Ow.4. Be always moving I think it is. 5. Wear light, non-restrictive clothing and proper shoes. 6. You’re never you’re never you’re never alone yes you’re never alone. 7. It’s – I think – It’s - I forget what the seventh one is but it’s probably something like cities are trampolines or that kind of thing because if I’m being honest and if I can’t be honest now in the back of an ambulance with blood pouring from a gash in my leg inflicted on me by a great black bear a great black bear how the hell is there a great black bear just you know by the side of a motorway swiping – I mean Holy Christ – swiping a person down so that they fall stunned into a ditch what sort of country are we in that this can happen in fact what country are we in we seem to be going very fast are we going very fast I think we are can we stop please can we stop I think I can feel the morphine kicking in yes it’s kicking in.

**16 May 2009**

r r r r kinduv, kinduv growl, g g r r, lr lr, if if, not if, if if, can can’tn’t canen’t can’tencan, b’come a kind of, kinduv, beast beats beat bee beet breest brest, thump p p p, foot a foot a foot a foot, tick thick thistle bristle brisk brick thrick thirsk thirst thistle burst in skin in skin in skin in in n n n n n, grips grip grisp grisps grasps rasps g g g feel feel l l skin in taut tort taught ought ort ort n t to to to t t t my son my girl m m m m m m killn’t killn’t killencan’t willenwon’t bristle burst skin burst borst brust rust rubst rubs strub stub stubble l l l pound thump foot left eft heft let lest lets slet slept didda? didda? diddie? Thump mannenwas mannenwas mannenwas newbie nowbie nowbeast beast now yeast beast n n n raw roar rore **19 May 2009**

I suck in hot air the air tastes hot in my mouth if heat is a taste which it is because a white wine at room temperature just isn’t the same mmm wine I usually have one on my return my return from running I push the key in the door and hope to meet no neighbour on the stair when I am in disarray bruised and flushed and make the steps up to my own door a second key and in when I press my back against the door to keep out the outside the outside that I have in my way conquered no conquered is not the word I have not let it conquer me which is different but in its own way to me that feels like a conquest I have conquered the conquerer the outdoors the Great Outdoors and yet here I am in an ambulance not outdoors not outdoors by any means yet I have the strongest sense of being outdoors even in this box this tin box rattling along a lane with a bear Christ a bear pounding beside us the thought makes me start with fear I start and draw a breath and**20 May 2009**

I report from the edge of things.

Every moment a tiny death and I change.

With each new life I find I am changed again.

to boy to girl to boy to girl to boy to

with each birth I look the other way

I cannot say if my experience is of general application.

I cannot speak for other gendernauts of my type.

But I find I am not where I arrive but I am in the crossing.

Not in the moments of dying boy, in the seconds of living girl but in the dying and the burning off of things

I don’t deny the pain, but even the pain

not the pain of living but the different pain I assure you quite different of dying of finding yourself at the edge of things

I can bear the pain of dying because it is all pain, there is no edge to it

Life pain pains because of peace glimpsed at pain’s edge

I am edgeless pain, made of pain, pain makes and unmakes me, I find comfort in it

**21 May 2009**

Look. Look what it did to me. This leg. Christ, look at it. It’s in shreds. It’s in shreds look. And my face. Look at my face. I’m a mess look. God, I’m such a mess. Look, don’t look. I don’t know how you can bear to look at me. I would turn away. I wouldn’t look, just don’t have that impulse in me. I mean, look at me. Do I look like someone who would look at me? Just look. Can you believe this? That’s what a bear will do to you. A bear, god god, look at me, I’m shaking, I’m shaking uncontrollably. Look at my hand, it’s shaking look. My leg, I can’t keep my leg still. Look, I can barely stand up look. Look, I’m having to support myself on the bars of this cage look. Look, this is serious. I need a doctor look. Look at that, of course I need a doctor. Just look. **22 May 2009**

Listen to that silence. Listen to it. It’s breathtaking. My husband was crashing through the trees with my child in his fat hairy arms, but the noise has stopped, you can hear it. His heavy flat feet, more like paws, the fucking beast. The ground was shaking but no longer. Place your hand to the ground. You can feel it is no longer shaking. Do it because it is. I don’t know what he’d been eating but he stank like I don’t know what. Turns my stomach because I’ve still got it in my nostrils. You won’t have though because he’s long gone. Smell the air, it’s quite safe. That’s how you know I’m telling the truth. Because he’s not here like I said. The beast, he’s taken my child, the beast, he’s not right, the beast, it’s not right, the beast, the beast. I look up. The moon. The trees. The night. Like nothing was here.**23 May 2009**

The train approaches my destination as it does every day. I will snap the ticket through the barriers and, since the public have been generous today, I may buy an evening or local newspaper and conceivably some Juicy Fruit chewing gum. I am not the sort of person that one would ordinarily associate with gum. But I find Juicy Fruit chewing gum, manufactured incidentally by Wrigley’s, a perfect and complete experience. I enjoy removing the paper sleeve with my thumbnail, inserted at the place where the loop of paper overlaps. With a single hand I can flip the stick of gum from the silver paper and I push it into my mouth, enjoying both the sudden dryness of the powdery gum, and then the s-shape that it forms as I subject it to the first chew. I ball up the silver wrapping and paper sleeve and I flick it into a basket attached to a lamp post at the egress of the station. My aim is not good but those rare moments of success cheer me while failure, because of the odds in its favour, cannot rationally bring me down. I have a short walk from the station to my home and it is almost as though Wrigley’s have me in mind since the length of my journey is precisely that required to extract all flavour from the gum. On this day, however, we are held at a signal.

**Theatremorphosis Schedule**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Date | **Performer** | **Character** |
| 3 April | **Lewis** | **Stuart** |
| 4 April | **Stephanie** | **Angela** |
| 7 April | **Lewis** | **Stuart** |
| 8 April | **Chris** | **Joe/Hannah** |
| 9 April | **Stephanie** | **Angela** |
| 10 April | **Damien** | **Kenny** |
| 11 April | **Cindy** | **Yvonne** |
| 14 April | **Damien** | **Kenny** |
| 15 April | **Laurie** | **Username** |
| 16 April | **Chris** | **Joe/Hannah** |
| 17 April | **Stephanie** | **Angela** |
| 18 April | **Cindy** | **Yvonne** |
| 21 April | **Lewis** | **Stuart** |
| 22 April | **Stephanie** | **Angela** |
| 23 April | **Laurie** | **Username** |
| 24 April | **Lewis** | **Stuart** |
| 25 April | **Damien** | **Kenny** |
| 28 April | **Laurie** | **Username** |
| 29 April | **Lewis** | **Stuart** |
| 30 April | **Chris** | **Joe/Hannah** |
| 1 May | **Stephanie** | **Angela** |
| 2 May | **Damien** | **Kenny** |
| 5 May | **Chris** | **Joe/Hannah** |
| 6 May | **Cindy** | **Yvonne** |
| 7 May | **Stephanie** | **Angela** |
| 8 May | **Chris** | **Joe/Hannah** |
| 9 May | **Damien** | **Kenny** |
| 12 May | **Stephanie** | **Angela** |
| 13 May | **Lewis** | **Stuart** |
| 14 May | **Chris** | **Joe/Hannah** |
| 15 May | **Cindy** | **Yvonne** |
| 16 May | **Damien** | **Kenny** |
| 19 May | **Cindy** | **Yvonne** |
| 20 May | **Chris** | **Joe/Hannah** |
| 21 May | **Cindy** | **Yvonne** |
| 22 May | **Stephanie** | **Angela** |
| 23 May | **Lewis** | **Stuart** |

**Stuart** is a man who begs money to travel first class on trains

**Joe/Hannah** is a child who changes gender each time they are reborn

**Username** runs a website that aggregates CCTV feeds

**Kenny** is a hairy man who turns into a bear

**Yvonne** is a free runner who confronts a bear

**Angela** is a beaten wife who runs away with the kids but is chased

**Theatremorphosis**

NOTES FOR PERFORMERS

1. Learn the text as thoroughly as you can, until you can perform it verbatim.

2. Although you’re under lights, the gallery can be cold. Bring another layer.

3. Choose where you want to put yourself in cage. You can face in any direction. You can sit, stand, crouch, lie down. You can bring in a chair. You can be away from the mesh or right up to it. You can incorporate movement.

4. At the beginning of the day, start by performing the text a few times – maybe five or six times - just to fix a performance you’re comfortable with. Then start the repetitions.

5. It is very difficult to repeat even a short performance exactly; you will quickly get lost if you try to reproduce everything from one repetition in the next one. I would suggest that in each performance, as you’re performing it, you should take ONE thing from each performance and incorporate it in the next performance. If it is taking you 45 seconds to perform the text, it still means that by the end of a day you’ll have incorporated around 300 changes which is more than enough to keep in your head.

6. You might find it useful to transfer your attention every so often: if you’ve been concentrating on the intonations for a few repetitions, try thinking about your physicality for a few more, then think about where your gaze is directed, and so on.

7. Your actors’ training and experience gives you an instinct about mistakes which means that when you make an error you instantly make a mental note never to make that mistake again. Be very conscious that this exercise is asking you to work very precisely against that instinct.

8. For long stretches of time, the gallery will be empty and you will have no one to perform it to. I want you to continue to perform but you will want to think how you will cope with performing to no one at all.

9. Remember: the mistakes are part of the performance. Mistakes are mistakes but they are also what make the performance interesting.

10. Thanks for agreeing to work on this. I hope you find it a rewarding challenge.

**Dan Rebellato**