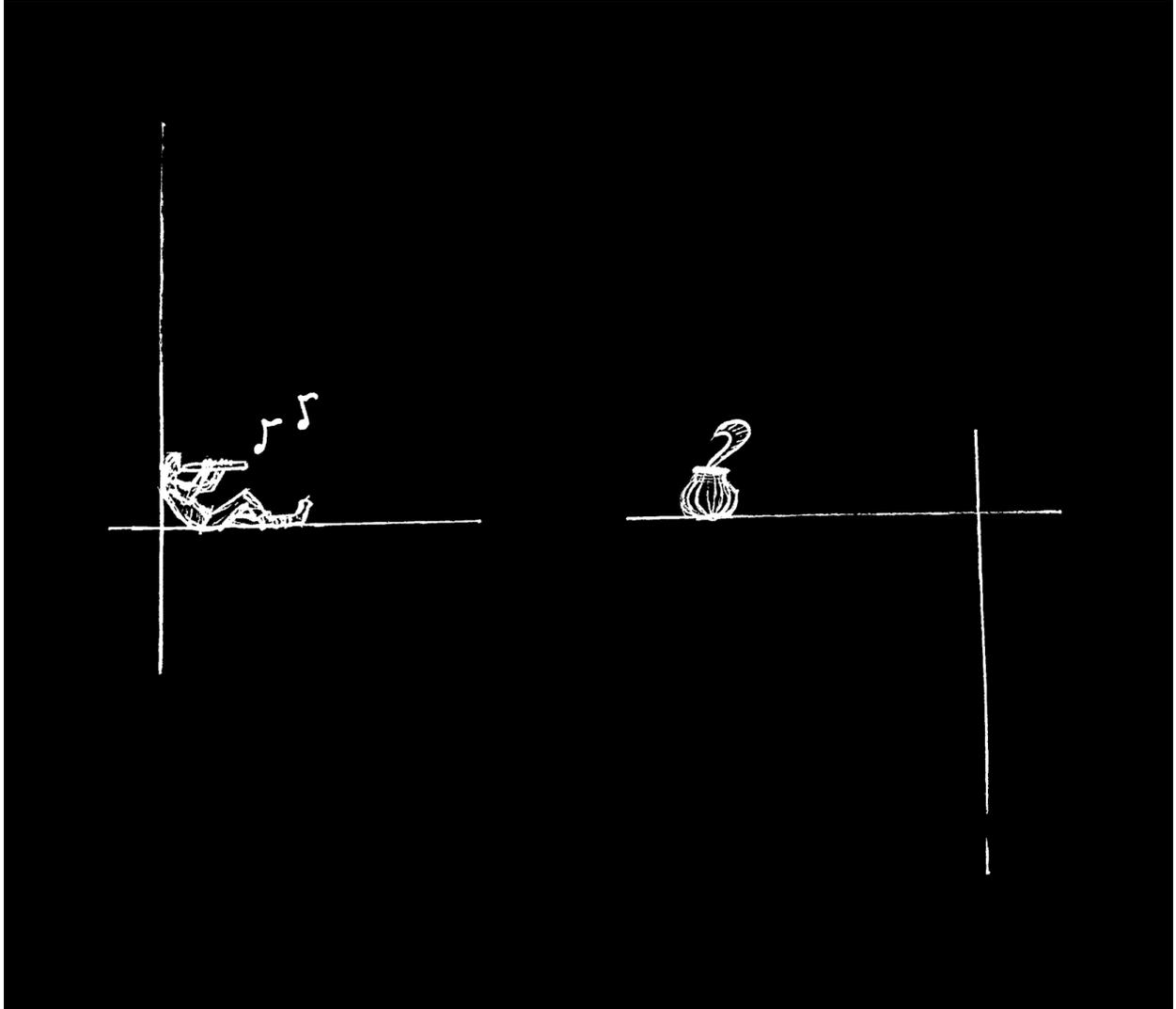


ENTR'ACTE

I present within this black box a representation of a presentation requested of me by the author to represent.



Act IV – Reverie

SCENE I – PRESENTATIONS

Time

Commence!

“The midnight light of summer is the first thing I remember. I asked my mother what makes the night and day. It’s different here, she said, than elsewhere: our summer is the southern world’s daylight, our Winter is their night. The globe counts in days, but we count it by years. Down there, she said, the sun sets each evening and rises each morning, their Time compartmentalized into many neat constituents, silently elapsing through and into a year. Not for us she said. We hibernate like boreal beasts: in the long noon of summer we hunt, we fish, and settle down in the frozen warmth of November when the sun bids its final farewell, and sinks. I was born at the Dawn of the annual day, the first of January, 1924: midnight precise.

THE FIRST BINARY: CONTRAST

I remember light long before darkness. It slants oblique, downward through my window, carpeting the wood floor in a haze of dust and yellow. In the morning it blazes a trail through the brush of my lashes, greeting my sleeping gaze. As it rises into noon it becomes stronger, so bright I cannot see but for the ground. On the ground is old life made earth: needles, leaves, movement. Lit by yellow light, shadows slanting oblique beneath little plant forms, a blanket of past generations of foliage. Birds: bugs. Schemes of colors. Songs. Passage across the sky, so visible it is invisible. Lower light later on, not yet dark but sunset, twelve degrees above the horizon, circling round my home. Yellow becomes orange with tint of purple opposing, the gradient sky. Birds quiet down and I am tired in the murky light of night, and my body, not the sky, bids I rest. I rest.

It slants oblique, getting brighter, down the space of my bedroom. It clears away the branches of my lashes. Greet another day

A butterfly’s
fluttering wings

THE STILL

that's yet the same. The sky having not slept does not wake: it stirs, rotates, in a rhythm. It is a pattern of something I am yet too young to grasp.

As the annual midday approaches, darkness recedes further into its corners. I feel trace heat, but I am never hot. Home is never hot. Cold recedes deeper down its well and reaches me only in the far corners of darkness. Heat is a byproduct of light is a byproduct of heat is a byproduct of matter. It is another pattern I cannot grasp.

So draws forth the annual afternoon. Proportionally Time remains enormous and I cannot yet sense its passage. So the annual minutes tick by, each a life of its own for my young mind. There is no future nor past. The sun dips a half degree lower after every dinner: darkness takes a centipedal step out from its corner. Cold, like a water level, rises an inch up its well. Silences between songs of birds inflate. Things—all sorts of things—are elucidated: endings, rest, space. Differentiation. Long, slow wind like the day's breath moves. Goosebumps. Chills: the cold continues to rise. I notice the moon for the very first Time. I notice sunset, the close of each annual minute, grow dim, dimmer. Manifest in the sky are many more colors, more intricate schemes: a touch of depth streaked with grey. A long, pale blue. A quick sash of crimson, fading just before its climax, an almost color, muted, the merest shade from perfect. And then it dims. The sky bids I rest. I rest.

The annual sunset commences. I acquire my first memory of night. Briefly the clocks overlap: for one short week in late autumn we follow the same clock as the south, the dayclock. My mother says this is how the rest of the world lives. They sleep in darkness and rise with sunlight. I feel the weight of contrast. I struggle with the change: the unending acclimation. I love the light that sinks and learn to love the dark that grows until it dims and light returns. For one short week I am a slave to the inescapable pattern of it. The future waits.

Making wind,
tiny curls of wind

THE STILL

The annual dusk shepherds darkness out from its corners and cold up from its well. The woods I live in change: brown becomes grey and black, shadows grow and occupy greater space. The wind sharpens. The low sun begins to remind. It seems the midday night of Winter swallows Time, leaving us exposed to its absence. The shell of blue daylight is shed, and I am snowglobed by blackness, endless darkness. It is cold, slow, and liberating. The whole world changes with the light, becomes anew. White descends from above, made grey by night. It covers and hides the old life made earth beneath a layer of cold skin: a shell round the offal of summer's dirt and sprout.

Through annual twilight I sleep. I dream of the annual day passed. Woodstove fires in the living room keep me warm while snow and stars color the dark windows. There is no morning or evening. There is only one protracted stretch of deep, lucid cold from one annual minute to the next, unkempt by Time, loosely fused together.

Annual midnight comes and I acquire my first memory of aging. It is a happy occasion. Four. My mother tells me I'll have a sibling soon. Her stomach has grown big. I ask her what she means.

You will see, she says.

CHANGE; GROWTH

I ask will he be just like me.

That could be, she says. But he could also be she. I don't know what she means.

There's a you'll have a brother and a chance you'll have a sister, she says. We won't know till the baby comes out.

Out of what? I ask.

Out of me, she says.

Annual morning surrounds the horizon. The sun returns like an old friend, and I acquire my first memory of remembering. It is now just like it was last year. The annual yesterday, the annual tomorrow. I begin to discern the pattern, the cycle, the rhythm. I am four now. I will never again be three. Time moves in only one direction: onwards. I do not yet find this to be disruptive.

chance

Moving through
beginningless space

THE STILL

In fact I am thrilled. I acquire my first memory of feeling progress, movement: growth. It is the natural byproduct of change and the yin to change's yang. It is the day of change's night, the light of change's dark. With my second memory of summer I feel that I have grown, but I cannot remember how I used to be. I cannot remember how I was different then. I acquire my first memory of uncertainty of self.

I spend more Time lost in the forest. I climb higher in trees. This speaks to me: something primal inside me climbs alongside me, reaches higher branches than my limbs can. I am more able now. I am also more able to speak. I have begun lessons in English and German with my father. They coalesce in a loose patchwork of phrases. I am too young to discern their differences, but they begin to construct patterns in my thoughts. My thoughts follow their syntax like a path from subject to object. It is probable that I now recognize self and other, although perhaps I am too young.

water

My first word was *vann*, . It was phonetically straightforward when I was younger and also it surrounded me. My father brought me to the shore and bathed me in its surf. Cold fjordwater rose from its deep well and numbed my ankles. The sound of splashing imprinted in my mind, a fluid percussion, an organic hollowed dance. The lifeless movement of water; objects in it. The perfect fullness of it. The cold arcane blue, the deepest progenitorial Still, the recollection recollected thereafter forever. This is water. I remember. That was all last year. This is this year. I have memories now.

Squeezed out bloody from an annual midday afternoon tumbles my little sister. She looks like my mother: dark skinned, dark haired, dark eyed. My father is pale, tall, blond. I want to be dark like my mother but I am light like my father. My mother loves my sister more than me now: she cradles her ever after, feeding from her breast, whispering into her dark ears, while I lay in bed and listen. She loves her for her darker

Curling into
endless Time

THE FAMILY

skin, her very daughter with her very skin,
very dark. My baby sister.

What was her name?

I have so much Time now. I spend it
spiting my mother: I go out into the woods
the whole afternoon, midday to unbroken
sunset, and wait for her to miss me. Pray for
her to think I'm lost, to come looking. To
leave Baby Sister in her crib and find me
beneath a hemlock tree, sleeping. I would
stay out and sleep on the cold leafbed,
dewdrops like jewels in the cavern beneath
the canopy, if only I had the nerve. Sounds
in the woods get the better of me: I tremble
and panic and cannot stop turning my head
around. I feel followed, back exposed always
like to some Terror lurking just beyond the
grasp of manifestation.

So I run home. The faster I run the
harder my heart beats, the faster my chaser
chases. It nearly reaches me, its slit maw a
fang's reach behind my quivering nape,
when I break through the trees and escape.
Into the unbroken sunset: dinner Time:
home. Mother. I forgive her. Adrenaline.

We eat rice with leaves. I sit at the table
and eat off of a plate, just like my parents
do. But now it's just my father and I. My
mother cradles my sister, feeding from her
breast. I watch. Once that was me. I was
once where she is now. Baby Sister.

EMPATHY

Months pass without love from my
mother. That's how it feels. She tells me I'll
learn to love What was her name? as I grow
older. Distance. Mother: I see her through a
veil. Something is different but I cannot
place it. A connection has been severed
without my noticing, cut clean in the dead of
night, in anesthetic dreams. One morning I
wake up, and I have forgotten it.

I see my father outside, smoking a rolled
cigarette while he cuts into shape big boards
of wood and fits them to the belly of his
boat. The breeze from the open window
invites me outside and I heed it, sit on a
stump and watch him work.

Do you want to come fishing, he asks,

A fluttering
feedback loop, curling

THE FAMILY

next Time I go?

His fair skin looks fairer to me now. His blond hair is more familiar, and I recognize myself in him. We have the same black eyes and nearly white hair and now that I look his lips are full like mine.

Yes!

The color of the wood, its dry touch, its perfect fit against the belly of the boat call me to some kind of duty. I ask if I can help. He asks me to hold something in place. Put pressure here, he said, lean against it. With your back. Now go inside and find my box of nails, I'm almost out. In the cupboards.

Inside my mother is cradling my sister.

I need nails, I say. She looks up and surrenders to a tender smile. I surrender myself to it, smiling back.

They're in your father's trunk, she says. Are you helping him fix his boat?

Yes, I say, proud, embarrassed.

Look at that, she says, turning her gaze to Baby Sister's sleeping eyes, tender smile unbroken. Your big brother's growing up.

I check the cupboards first but the nails are in the trunk.

Annual tea Time. My mother is preparing dinner when something happens in the garden. A childish scream echoes through the open window and upon her face a flash of panic passes. She runs outside and, timid, I follow. My father is on his way back from work at the docks in town. I turn the corner, tiptoeing around the sounds of my whimpering sister, who comes into view lying bent beneath a rutabaga plant, blood dribbling down her knee. I cringe at the sight, and start to cry. My mother looks at me, lifting Baby Sister from the dirt, cradling her in her arms, and decides internally that I'm fine. She hurries inside, and I catch one last glimpse of Baby Sister's face, grimacing, pudgy. I feel glad that it was not me, that I do not share her pain, but a lurch of dejection flowers in my gut when my mother walks past my streaming face unheeding.

Mamma.

Come inside, Einar.

Twirling ever larger,
a snowballing gust

THE CRISIS

I flop groundward. I can still see Baby Sister's face, wrinkled and despairing. Not out of empathy but rather that mysterious longing for stasis, I yearn to quiet the sound of her wails and clear the snarl from her face. To help her to forget. I wonder if she remembers. I try to remember how it felt to be so small, how it felt to fall. I recall nothing. So too will she forget. She is too young: the pain does not yet count. At last I understand, I think: she is no different than I was four years ago. Delicate and unremembering. Impressionable. Confused. My Baby Sister.

My mother tends to her wound while I scan the German words of a children's story in my room. I hear the downstairs door open and my father's heavy footsteps pass through. Dinner Time.

What was her name? had a fall today, my mother says at the table. She serves us spoonfuls of sliced carrots from her garden, and grilled cod from the fjord with lemon and salt and herbs. She sips wine and I sip water. My father lights a cigarette. That familiar scent. Baby Sister twists her carrots.

Are you okay? my father asks Baby Sister in his most tender baby voice.

She got a little scrape, my mother says, but she's all right.

When can we go fishing? I interrupt.

Tomorrow, my father says gently.

I face my meal and chase it.

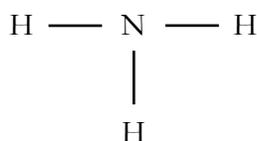
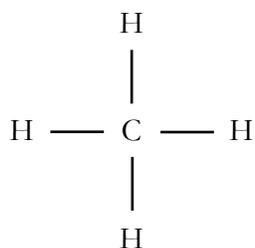
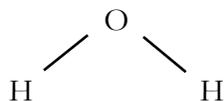
A carrot gets caught in my throat, and my body seizes taught. I acquire my first memory of pure, visceral instinct. My whole torso tenses up and my chest won't breathe, my lungs and mind lurch in trapped pressure, reaching, pulling, grasping to open, no breath to cough, no air to gasp—gripping the edge of the table—and Ah! I cough it up, a spongy orange fibrous mass, back onto my plate.

Are you okay? my father asks my streaming, coughing face.

Yes, I cough in response. My throat burns like it's coated with rust.

OXYGEN-FREE ATMOSPHERE

An airborne eddy,
caught in a high current



WORK

My father wakes me early. The sun slips sleeplessly across the horizon, peeking through the trees, surrounding all sides.

Outside, water falls from sky to fjord, crystallized high in the sky and condensing, descending, splattering onto the Ofotfjorden where a Dawn mist coils, curling. I shuffle out of bed and go downstairs for a glass of water. The cold clean liquid opens the sleeping passages down my body, till it drops into my stomach and I can no longer feel it. I indulge its hydration, slow, subtle, rinsing my insides, my sleeping passages blooming awake, cleansed. I step outside into the light rain, cold marks striking my skin. Puddles of mud collect beneath my feet, and it seems all the world is mired in water this morning. I go inside and rinse my face.

I return to my room to dress and to prepare. Baby Sister is still asleep: a fetid fume has swallowed our shared room, emanating from a soiled cloth diaper. She does not look peacefully asleep, but tosses and turns, as though the blanket's too hot. I grab my clothes and a bag and hurry downstairs where the scent does not follow.

My mother is in the kitchen, chopping dirty roots plunged from her garden. Her fingers are coated in soil and fertilizer from the nursery in town. I step outside to find my father, who is standing in her garden, gathering things from his shed. Holes in the dirt that once enwombed the turnips, carrots, rutabagas lay like craters from small explosions, trenches plucked of life and soilsmeared.

What should I do? I ask. In the cloudy Dawn light and backed by black trees he looks colorless, a grayscale portrait. My father: he who made me. He rolls a barrel of drinking water out from the darkness of the shed. Overnight he has overtaken my mind. He coalesces into my every thought, backed by the empty darkness of youth's mental landscape. It is a great black cavern and he is the lightning bug, the dewdrop. He is in me: my father. He is in the water, he is in us all.

Absorbing neighboring
currents, inflating

THE VALEDICTION

rain

Within a moment, mist swallows the
land, dropping us into a cosmos of waters,
into the great deep grey of the sea.

Just gather your things, he says.
I have.

Say goodbye to your mother and sister.

I return to my room, where the smell of
my sister's diaper still lingers. She is asleep.
Tenderly I gaze, briefly, and descend again
the stairs. My mother is not inside: I go out.
She is in the garden, kneedeep in fertilizer.

We're going, I say.

Stay safe, she says, kissing my forehead.
On her knees she's as tall as me standing.
Kisses my cheek. Listen to your father out
there. My Einar. I love you.

FAREWELL, MAMMA. TO THE SEA.

The dark clouds threaten to drown the
light . I ask my father if it's safe.

The rain may help us, he says.

Trust. I retrieve my bag. He is loading
our belongings into the belly of the boat.
Standing, soaked, whistling. It is grey from
here to the sky.

My father kicks the kickstand up and the
boat falls upon the physics of the wheels of
the trailer beneath it. He drags it towards the
shore, and my mother hands me a bag of
bread and roots. I gaze, turn, and follow.

The distant sea is across the road, down
the embankment, the tide massaging a
gravelly clearing between trees. My father
wades kneedeep in the water, till half the
boat is floating. Push your weight against it.
I'll pull up the trailer. He runs round me. My
full weight against the half-waterborne
vessel, its trailer starts to recede from under
me, and the boat gives way to the gentle tide.
Two hands slink under my arms and hoist
me aboard, their bearer following close.

Welcome to the Ofotfjorden, he says.

Out from under the trees, the rain picks
up.

My father
rows our vessel forth, facing me with his
back to the boat's nose, and I acquire my
first memory of

THE WONDER OF ADVENTURE.

He pulls out a map and opens it on his
knees. This is the Ofotfjorden. Look.

Roaring now, through
the vast empty sky

THE VOYAGE

It is fed by the sea. These are the waters
which you hail from.

COACERVATION

Water droplets

Here is Narvik. Here is our home, in the Rombaksfjorden east of the main fjord. You can follow the trail with your finger into Rombakstbotn, and then into town.

He runs his finger along the blue trails of the map. Here is where we are going. The shallows on the Northern shore: there will we find cod, pollack, catfish. Perhaps an eel, if we're lucky.

With a fist on each oar, he sews us seaward. We glide: I dip my finger and puncture the placid surface, ridged waves scooping out the wake. Shorebound birdcalls grow quiet and fade. All is silent but the gentle rhythmic dip of the oars, the fluid percussion: the organic, hollowed dance: splashing. I remember. The distant buzz of Narvik slips silently into earshot and diminishes. Out here it is tranquil.

The day begins to heat up. It is midsummer and the annual high noon sun sweeps round us, spirals round us, chirally. Cool water lit by sunlight melts skyward, steams off the fjord's surface. Deep, dark clouds pass over flashes of blue sky, burying the high sun as the day ages.

A CRACK OF LIGHTNING

All goes white then black, one then zero. A divine roar pours down from above, sweeps across the fjord, deafens us, shakes our boat. begin to pelt us, light but quick. I experience panic.

It will settle, my father says. I remember.

Rain arrives in drizzles for hours before the Northern shore comes into view. Now the morning mist has been swallowed up by the darkening sky. It is becoming clearer while the sky clouds over. Thunder continues to crack, lightning to blind. The fjordscape vibrates with potential energy. Greygreen mountains reach up into the dome of clouds, glistening with dew. Moisture is everywhere. Everything shimmers, greysilver.

A storm is coming, my father says.

The wind is colder, longer. I steel myself.

Cloudgathering,
watergathering,
chaosgathering wind

THE STORM

Water droplets,
water droplets,
water droplets,
water droplets,
interacting—

H₂

H₂O

NH₃

CH₄

Mixing, exchanging, combining—

Arriving and dying, reviving and imbibing
one another, this vicious vivid interplay.

Merciless young life.

Hungry little things.

Living and dying in a whirlpool, in a second.

Robbed and plundered and spinning,
robbing and plundering and spinning,
a Reverie of innumerable primordial
umwelts.

My father rows.

I tickle the water.

In my mind's eye my sister sleeps.

My mother digs for root food.

I feel the whole family.

Crack! my father's whitelit face flashes;
soaked, he gathers, untangles, shifts,
positions, winds, wraps, rows, leading.

I bundle things beneath a canvas tarp to
shield them from precipitation. Then I
remove my jacket and let the water soak me.

Cold but free, wet yet wild: I am human,
a living and breathing natural creature, spun
from the dirt around me, from my mother.

Part of a system of regeneration and
degradation: decomposition: life turned food
turned soil turned life.

My father hands me a slice of bread.

Consumed, it mixes within me, becomes
me. The rain pelts harder, more ferocious.
The Storm encyclones us, enraptures us—
gathers round us a lucid coldness, a bitter
wind, rewinding, reminding: violence: chaos:
something happened in the fjorden: here:
now. Crack. Roaring God in torrents down.
Midsummer. Father—Mother.

We'll cast out now, we'll catch them in
the fray, his voice casts out to me. I have
never fished before. He will teach me.

He withdraws a sick green colored worm
to match the beaten algae bobbing
overboard. He unsheathes his fishingrod and
ties his hook and pirk, needles his bait, and
casts out—all seemingly in a single motion.

The postoperative lure buoys lifeless on
the surface till the rain soaks it through and
sinks it. The anchorshaped pirk pulls it deep.

We're fishing for cod, he says. They like
this Time of year and these waters.

I remember cod: toasted buttergolden
with fresh greens from my mother's garden.
Cushioned by sliced rootflesh and rice,
seasoned. Longcut bread laid out and
oilglazed. My mother's voice calling out
middag. The constant putrid expulsions
waking me at night: perfectly natural they
called it. You did too. Once I was as she is
now. As I am now so she will be. Onwards.

Passing threshold and
exploding, enrapturing,
roaring God in torrents
down

THE STORM

A PARTICLE IN AN ARRAY

Rain tickles my lashes and my cheeks. It drips down my brow. Flashes of lightning pass us, confusing, strobing our vision while water approaches from all angles. The rain sweeps sideways off the fjord's surface, splashing into the boat and at our elbows, battering down over our heads: I cannot see.

SELF-ELEVATION EX CONFUSIO

Tugged by wave and wind, our boat skews and turns while my father maintains the line. He trades his grip from right to left over his head, ducking under the line as the boat spirals round the sunken lure. With his hands off the oars our boat is lost to the fjord's will.

LOYAL TO THE SOIL

A CRACK OF LIGHTNING;
A METAMORPHOSIS

All at once the water transforms from obstacle into advantage. Soaked sufficiently through I cast away my fear of rain. The smattering water on my face is the sweat of my labor, and a rhythm becomes discernable in which I am a predator, no longer vulnerable, no longer confused, but eager, and enthused like a creature. Filled with life.

CONNECTING THREADEND TO THREADEND:
A FEEDBACK LOOP IS RISEN

Chaos finds its pattern at present: I am encoded to distinguish these structures of noise. I see loops and rhythms and harmony in the fray. I become the fray. I harness it.

THE MONOMER HUNT

Atop this ecological plateau I see all. I become an extension of my father who is an extension of myself. We are one in and with the boat: our vessel: together.

(THE MONOMERS FLEE)

We drift round the shore in torrents of rain. On occasion I spot parcels of fish dash beneath the surface and out of sight. We are not alone out here. The low grey sky and thundering, surrounding rain drown the sounds of birds on the shore. I hear nothing, see nothing but water.

HUNGER;

Hunger grows in me like desperation on my father's face. Howling wind tunneling through us. Living things skirting by our lure. Outsmarted.

SYNERGISM
(SYNTHESIS)

Hold this, my father says, handing me the rod. He puts his fists on the oars and rows our vessel along the shore and around the corner to another inlet. Here, he says. I hand him the rod and he casts out again.

A cascade, a cosmos of waters: skyborne, falling groundward, hydrating, enthusing young life

THE PREDATION

LOYAL TO THE (FEAR OF) SOIL (INTERLUDE):

Birth
Growth
Maturation
Self-Realization
Purgatory
Decay
Death
Rot
Decomposition
Absorption
Fertilization
Fecundation
Nutrition
Growth
Bloom
Blossom
Hydration
Life
Age
Predation
Consumption (Murder)
Digestion
Excretion
Festering Putrefaction
Degradation
Soil Reclamation
Reintegration
LOYAL TO THE TOIL:
Generational Progression
Cyclical Repetition
Instinctual Inheritance
Taxonomic (Specific) Development
Taxonomic (Specific) Divergence
Taxonomic (Specific) Radiation
Ecological Stasis
Opportunity
Adaptation
Generational Evolution
Evolutionary Advancement
Evolutionary Obstruction
Evolutionary Adaptation
Discovery of Collective Advantage
(Slow) Development of Social Systems
Trial and Error
(Fast) Development of Social Systems
Production of Culture...
...Postmodernity?

A small excerpt of sunlight breaks through the dense clouds. It is brief: it passes. The wind has slowed to a calm, the deep breath before the plunge. My father breathes in and breathes out. Our boat sits still, spinning slowly round its center axis.

A bird darts from shore to fjord surface and sinks its face into the water, emerging with survival beakgripped. It departs into the grey veils of distant falling rain.

We're next, my father says. I can feel it.

I look at him, his pale face, his wet blond hair. How does he feel it? What does he feel?

INSTINCT

A CRACK OF LIGHTNING

BLUB! THE LURE BUOYS, PULLS

Aha!

His left hand darts to his reel and he winds, winds, winds, pulling.

My heart begins to race.

Sweat on my skin drowns the water.

The sweat of my labor.

Middag. Cod. Toasted buttergolden.

My father! He is crouching now. He has his weight holding back the rod. He has one clenched fist around the center of the pole, the other reeling. Reeling. Waiting. Reeling weight. He breathes hard; he grips the boat. The line goes slack and reels back out. He pulls harder, continues reeling: a predatory tug'o'war. He is winning; he is losing.

He wins.

The poor creature flies aboard and is consumed by panic. It flaps about, bounces. Its body seizes taught. It tenses up: its mind and fishfigure lurch in trapped pressure, reaching, pulling, grasping to open, no water to breathe, unable to gasp—no hands to grip with—and Ah! my father strikes it with a mallet of ironwood, and it goes still.

THE FIRST STILL OF VIOLENCE

I acquire my first memory of pure empathy. I have felt it before but not like this. This is mortal empathy. I have become a witness to death. A witness to murder: that evil faculty of life, that malicious necessity. That hierarchy of survival: hunter and hunted: death giving life. I weep for it.

Drowning young life
in a flood, decomposing
dead life for maggots,
fertilizing all death for life

THE UNWRITTEN YEARS

HE RETURNS

We share a deixic thread.
unwind in parallel.
are one construct: once lapped.

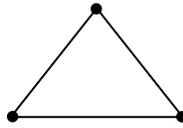
THE STILL

is the first Still image of the film of your life:
the progenitorial Still: the bedrock whence
your whole life bounds outward:
out from death into life unto death.

Myth meets light, Time, heat, rhythm;
he meets darkness, cold, and change;
growth, language, and his sister.

THE FAMILY

is the unit. The fourth point:
four molecules doth
a monomer make.



Myth discovers duty.
purpose.
empathy: •.

THE CRISIS

is the stimulus. It is the crossroad of Time:
The path splits in two—
one leads to death the other to life.
Myth endures.

THE SYNTHESIS

is an unwitting recognition between four
points. It is the invisible lines that unite
them into a diamond or square.

THE VALEDICTION

is the illusion of Self and Other.

THE VOYAGE

is the discovery of impetus.

THE STORM

is the Hippo.

THE PREDATION

is the process by which monomers coalesced
in a soup polymerize with one another and
metabolize neighboring to
usurp their natural resources by which
accumulation of nutrients they develop the
potential to expand their natural process of
cellular reproduction and produce by
chemical reaction the building blocks of the
first of four biopolymers which together
constitute the ingredients for the conjuration
of my dear friend:

LUCA.

These are the Unwritten Years: the mystery.

water droplets

From whose corpses is borne
the first tiny sproutling
of a whole generation:
she is a mother: her name is LUCA

THE CHIRAL ENANTIOMERS

THE HIPPO

is the father of death.

He is the embodiment of chaos.

He is the natural 0 to LUCA's 1.

He is the merciless, impartial catalyst for all suffering: the equal & opposite force against any good

thing.

He is the bee's poststing death.

He is the bipedal's violent delivery.

He is the inward shiv of sexual envy.

He is the everlooming knowledge of death, the unending fear.

He is accident.

LUCA

He is light, pleasure, and warmth. He is deeply personal: he will never forget your name. He has dedicated his (and all) life to taming and mastering (or at least evading) the Hippo. He yearns for stasis, pacifism. He is the sole shareholder of the autopoietic code. He shares it with everyone he can: he is an evangelist. He reveals to the lost two paths where they see only one: he puts a fork in every avenue. He endows free will. He is the cryptogram that opens the future to manipulation, that reveals the plasticity of tomorrow. He is opportunity and synergism.

THE HIPPO

She surrounds LUCA and all life. She is a constant force against everything. She is the lifeless vacuum swallowing LUCA's sphere-shaped haven. She is the inhospitable plains where predators lurk in high grass. She is all that is unfamiliar and menacing and sinister. She is a harbinger of disorder, a personification of struggle. She is pure conflict, pure friction.

She is the shade that portends all strife. She is the shepherd of death and she is War.

LUCA

is the mother of life.

She is the master template of synergy.

She is the natural 1 to the Hippo's 0.

She is the autopoietic feedback loop for all natural systems: the impetus to feed, to multiply, to commit

any living deed.

She is the instinct of survival.

She is the process of reproduction.

She is the carnal, vocative exchange.

She is the chemical motivation to endure, the reward system.

She is autonomy.

THE HIPPO

She is darkness, pain, and vacuum. She is impersonal: she holds no grudge. She leans against LUCA's weight equally in all directions. Like the herbivore Hippo she is not aggressive but defensive. She will reward any close wanderer with 3,300 pounds of grief. She will put a glitch in any code, a lag in any initial conditions. She responds to everything: she sees all. When someone is standing tall she will sweep at their knees and fell them. She is just. She is both predictable and unpredictable: she is the opposite of whichever you predict her to be.

LUCA

He is harmony: he is perseverance and victory. He is continuity. He is instinct. He is the herald of reality.

He is perception. He is interpretation. He is the fabric(ation) of reality. He tutors us in sensation: instructs us in the conversion of stimulus into information. He is our guide through this perilous realm of the Hippo. He is the thread we weave.

She is enraptured in War against the Hippo, skirting his calculated strikes, evading his mortal thirst for ruin

THE EMERGENCE

HEART OF DARKNESS

“Nothing is,” quoth the Hippo. “All is free and loose in my estate. Nothing bears connection here, nothing suffers attachment. All is unengaged. All is unknowing, all is unknown. Nothing endures truth here. Nothing endures pain.”

“In a beginningless text,” quoth LUCA, “limitations are an illusion. The pattern is a product of chaos. It is borne by chance and Time. It is the loop of a thread. It endures in space, it composes a Still image of itself. It finds itself in your fray and sustains itself. It recognizes itself: it is a family of events.”

“I rise to meet it,” quoth the Hippo. “I am its crisis. Nothing bears connection here. All is unengaged.”

“The pattern intuits your fervor,” quoth LUCA. “It evades you. In doing so it discovers self and other. This is the synthesis of its identity.”

“Farewell,” quoth the pattern to the fray.

“I will not let it proceed,” quoth the Hippo. “I will end its illusion of reality.”

“It recognizes your agenda,” quoth LUCA. “It knows now it is prey. This knowledge gives it impetus. It embarks on a voyage toward existence.”

“I am the storm,” quoth the Hippo. “I am the vacuum you are bound in. All is part of the fray.”

“It hears,” quoth LUCA, “but does not heed you. It perseveres. It must grow, so it must become the predator. It invades your realm and exploits you. It harnesses your energy and steals it from you. It propagates.”

“In and endless text,” quoth the Hippo, “my flood will never harbor self. All is part of the noise.”

“The pattern mirrors itself,” quoth LUCA, “and spreads.

“It engenders me.

“I am the product.

“I am the mother.

“I inherit and impart and thus continue.”

“Why?” quoth the pattern to itself.

“Because it is what separates us from the void.”

THE BOUNTY

We have emerged from the storm with one dead fish. It lays in its own blood before me. It has at last, at least, stopped twitching.

The dense, contourless cloudcover of the storm has dissipated into a bedrock of dimmed shades of grey, creases of light breaking through in crevices giving way to a deep blue sky. We are now one moment past the apex of the annual day: noon precise is behind us. I can see it in the shade of blue.

The wind has slowed considerably. I can hear the birds now that the noise has disappeared. I can hear my father’s voice.

We won, he says. We beat the storm. We caught dinner.

But I am not hungry. I am filled by the nectar of the hunt. I feel not the passage of Time. I have tamed and mastered the present.

Are you ready to go home? he says.

I say nothing.

Let’s cast out one last Time, he says. We are back on the eastern shore near the mouth of the Rombaksfjorden. He ties a new hook on his line and needles a new lure. He repeats the whole process and casts his line in the deep beside the shallows. It is evening now: I can feel it in the air.

It is serene. I can see the bark of the trees on the shore unobscured by rain or cloud. My eyes are allseeing.

A DISTANT CRACK OF LIGHTNING

It is strange that the same storm is somewhere else now. Other creatures are caught in it as I speak, leagues away, pelted by different rain of the same primordial soup.

Not us. We are free now.

Ah! my father calls, and starts reeling. My heart leaps within me: I lean forward in case I am needed, grip the side of the boat, and wait. Anticipation.

The figure of a slithering eel breaks the surface writhing, struggling against my father’s will to feed. He leans into the boat with his full weight, but the line snaps, and the eel swims to freedom, back into the sea.

But she perseveres through his storm,
endures his rage,
and surmounts it. Once the sky is calm,
a butterfly comes by her flowers to feed