

# HUMAN VOICES WAKE US

---

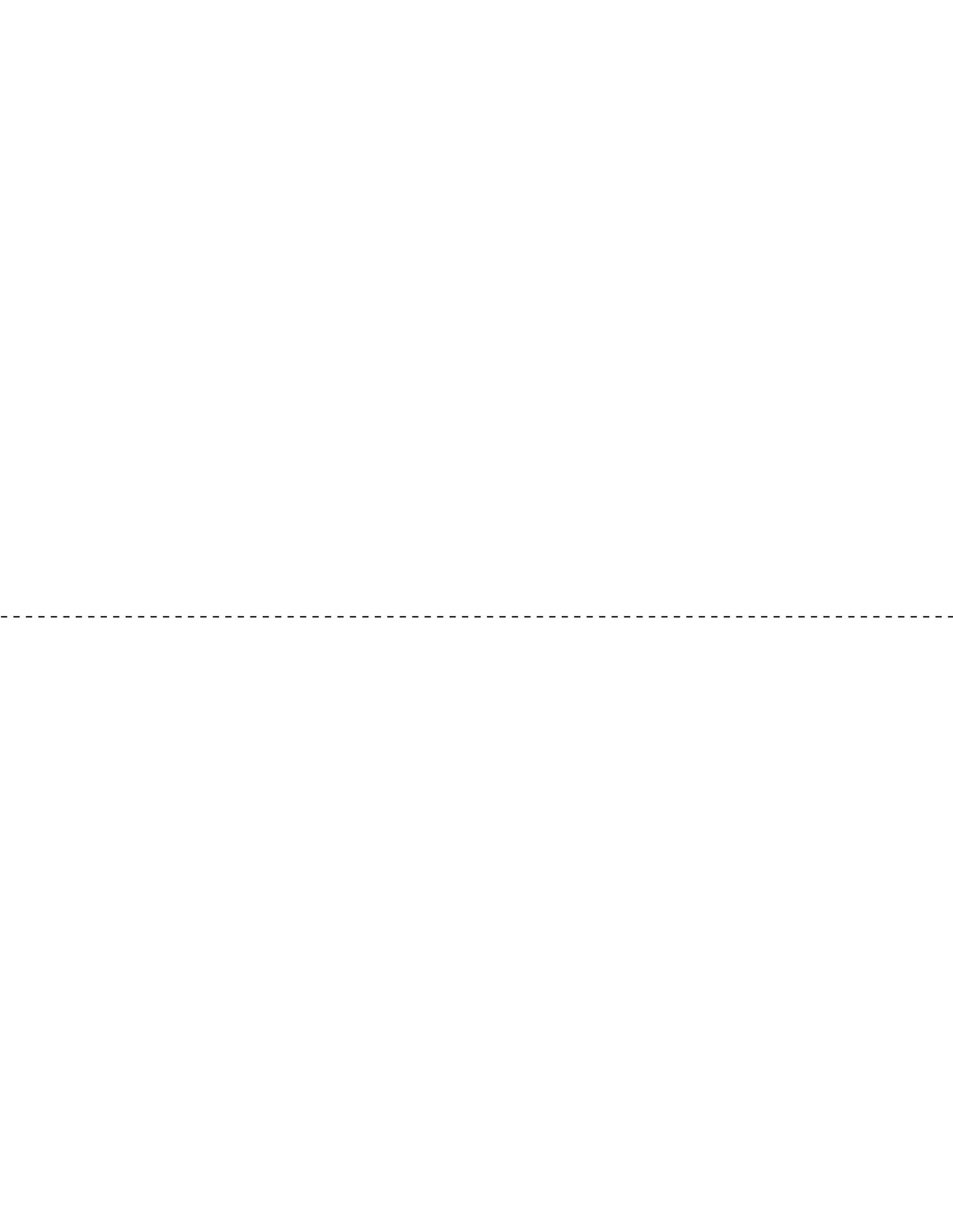
## Human Voices Wake Us

TAYLOR MARIE GRAHAM

KEVIN ANDREW HESLOP

P. FRAXINEUS TEGO





Kevin Andrew Heslop, *you are not required to complete the task; neither are you free to desist from it*

A MONOLOGUE	11
A TELEPLAY WRITTEN FOR THE SCREEN	12-17
THREE REVIEWS	19-21
THREE PROSE POEMS	22-24

P. Fraxineus Tego, *Cinematicon*

THE RULE OF CINEMATIC GRAMMAR	27
LEGEND OF THE PUNCTUATION	28
DURING THE DIRGE OF FAINT HEPHAESTUS	29
SOMNILOQUY ON LANDSCAPES KNOTTED AND LAX	31
SOMNILOQUY OF THE LOVER'S DESCENT	33
LAY OF THE RED CHILD'S BIRTH	36
SONG OF THE DISCOLOURED GALE	38
1 <sup>ST</sup> CUBIST SOMNILOQUY: ON A WHIZZING BICYCLE	40
TWO EMPIRICAL SONNETS BORN & UNBORN	43
2 <sup>ND</sup> CUBIST SOMNILOQUY: IN COMMUTE, ANXIOUSLY	45
THE COVENANT OF BROKEN LOCKS, A LANDSCAPE	48
EPITHALAMION OF TWO LANDSCAPES	
IN POSSESSIVE SOMNILOQUIVOCATION	51
ECHOES OF OZYMANDIAS ANNULLED,	
OR THE ENGINE'S REFUTATION	55
LAMENTATION IN WET CEMENT	58

Taylor Marie Graham, *Corporate Finch*

SCENE 2: ASLEEP

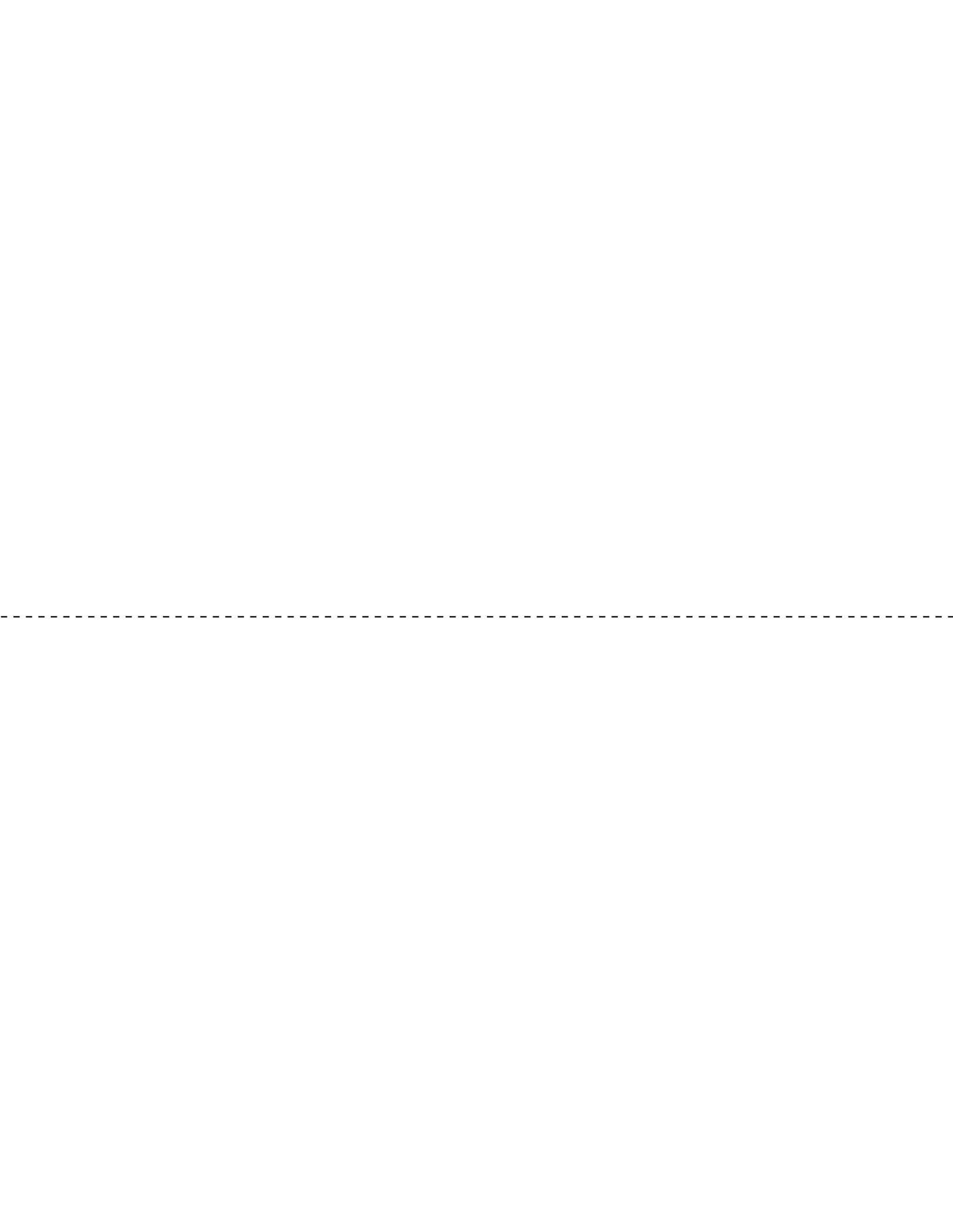
63-68

#### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

TAYLOR MARIE GRAHAM is an award-winning theatre creator, scholar, and educator who lives in Cambridge, Ontario / Haldimand Tract. She has an MFA in Creative Writing and a PhD in theatre studies at the University of Guelph. Currently, she teaches as a sessional English/theatre professor at Western University. You can find Taylor's articles in *Canadian Theatre Review*, *Intermission Magazine*, *Routledge's Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, *The Conversation*, and *Canadian Literature*. Her book *Cottage Radio & Other Plays* (Talonbooks) animates a wild cast of Southwestern Ontario characters—particularly its strong, hilarious rural women—with complex histories and relationships to the land. Both Taylor's artistic and academic work often explores rural feminisms and the decolonization of bodies in space.

Of KEVIN ANDREW HESLOP's first book, *the correct fury of your why is a mountain* (Gordon Hill Press, 2021), his friend Dan said, "I didn't get all the words in this, but it seems like he knows what he's doing." According to his friend Camille, Kevin's first film, *mo(w)vements*. (Astoria Pictures/Rose Garden Press, 2023), "is a remarkably collaborative, politically urgent, vibrant and visceral poetic-filmic anthology which locates its complex thematics in the sociopolitical underbelly of contemporary 'Canada.'" So there. Kevin's next book, a hometown conversation of Medical Assistance in Dying, will appear with Gordon Hill Press in 2025.

I, PUBLIUS FRAXINEUS TEGO, am not the seer of sounds who had aimed his spirit at the secrets of the chromogram in Latin class, nor he who with dilated pupils read Vergil in the dark, nor am I the one who sat on a bench and began an inconsistent and benighted reverie spanning and consuming 20 years of angst, doubt, and loss; I am not a poet of any repute, nor a man with any technical skills, political power, or inherited wealth: I am not the editor of this work you read, nor am I its author. Vale.



*Corporate Finch*, An Excerpt

## Characters

## CORPORATE FINCH (COURTNEY FINCH)

A girl in her late teens. Sarcastic. Self sufficient. Comes from an abusive home. Spent the last year at a high school far away from her home community after being kicked out of her old one the previous year. Desperately angry and overwhelmingly in love with JACOB at the same time. Looking for peace.

## JACOB SNIDER

A boy in his late teens (same age as FINCH). Named after the founder of St. Jacobs. Suffers from vasovagal syncope, a fainting condition. Comes from a Mennonite family who lets him live with one foot in his community and one foot in secular life. Sarcastic. Funny. Charismatic. Easy to like. He's growing up and discovering himself, faults and all. Wants to be in love with FINCH, and is in love with her his own way, but is ready to leave a lot of his old self behind.

TAYLOR MARIE GRAHAM

## Scene 1 - Break In

*Potential song as audience enters: The More I See You by Chris Montez*

*A factory under construction, being converted into an arts studio in St. Jacob's, Ontario. Mid to late August, Midnight. It's a windy night. The ambient sounds of the room are heard: air going through vents, pipes, more sounds slowly start to be added which seem as though they belong to the ambient noises, but become more surreal. Eventually the sounds come together like a charm of finches filling the room. The sound reaches a crescendo and stops suddenly.*

*A loud thud is heard at the window as a ladder hits against the wall. A flashlight shines in the window. Voices are heard from outside. Some of it is unclear as CORPORATE FINCH and JACOB SNIDER climb up the ladder.*

JACOB           Up here? Are you sure?

FINCH           It's not that far. You'll be fine.

JACOB           But like, is it locked?

FINCH           No. Well, not probably.

*A crash on the ground.*

JACOB           Oh shit.

FINCH           Shhhh! Jake.

JACOB           Sorry. Should we leave?

FINCH           Just get in there.

---

TAYLOR MARIE GRAHAM

JACOB        Ok.

*JACOB's head appears in the window. He is holding a knife in his hand. He is lit from below. For a moment he looks like a murderer from your favourite horror film.*

JACOB        Hello?

*JACOB knocks his knife against the window three times.*

JACOB        Anybody in there?

FINCH        *(Still out of view below JACOB on the ladder)* What are you doing?

JACOB        Are you sure this place is empty?

FINCH        Do you want me to do it?

JACOB        It doesn't seem empty.

*JACOB opens the window with the knife and throws his bag through the window before wriggling through it himself. He cuts himself on his hand coming in, falling over.*

JACOB        Ah! Jesus.

*FINCH is at the window now.*

FINCH        Lord. Jake, just take it easy.

JACOB I don't think this place likes me, Finch.

*FINCH gets herself inside as well as her stuff with very little effort. She searches around in her bag for a band aid.*

JACOB Is that window rusty?

FINCH Rusty? I don't know.

JACOB If I have tetanus, Finch—

FINCH You'll what?

*FINCH puts the band aid on JACOB. It's a small tender moment between them.*

JACOB Be. Very. Annoyed with you.

FINCH Scary stuff.

*The ladder crashes against the window.*

JACOB Bah! Lord Almighty.

FINCH The ladder. Give me a minute.

JACOB Do you need any help?

FINCH Better rest that scary cut of yours.

3

JACOB Hello?

*FINCH enters from the kitchen.*

FINCH Do you want to eat something?

JACOB *(Scared)* Jesus Christ.

FINCH There's a kitchen back there.

JACOB I ah. No. Not hungry.

*FINCH has a box of blueberries that she starts eating.*

FINCH The fridge's not as full as it usually is, but help yourself.

JACOB Thanks. Finch, how did you hear about this place?

FINCH They're converting it into art studios, I guess. The lady who runs it said I could stay here at night this summer if I didn't have anywhere else to stay.

*JACOB notices a little makeshift bed on the floor.*

JACOB You've been sleeping here on your own?

FINCH Sometimes.

5

JACOB Hey.

FINCH And maybe try to make peace with the rest of the place while I'm gone.

*FINCH exits out the door to go outside to take down the ladder outside. Inside the studio JACOB checks his bandaid which seems to have stopped the bleeding. JACOB goes into his bag and pulls out his cellphone, dials. There is no answer. He dials again. This time there's a pick up.*

JACOB Hey Lee! Liam? Are you still there? Yeah. Hey, no sorry we left. Me and Corporate Finch. Yeah, no. It's like, different now, I think maybe. Ok. Ok. Don't be an idiot. I just wanted to call because, um, well she brought me to this like old factory. No. I'm not scared, obviously . . . Lee? Liam? You there? No. I said factory. Fac-tor-y. It's ah . . . Lee? Shit.

*JACOB's phone is dead. A small short sound is heard in the distance. It sounds something like a finch calling, caught in a pipe.*

JACOB Hello?

*The finch is heard again, a little louder and longer.*

JACOB What the?

*The finch is heard again, a little louder and longer.*

JACOB I come in peace.

*Silence*

4

JACOB But don't you? I mean your Dad must worry.

FINCH Why? Why *must* my Dad worry?

JACOB Isn't that what Dads do?

FINCH Not in my experience, but I would say I'm pulling from a very small sample size of one, so that may not be representative of all the father figures out there.

JACOB I didn't know that.

FINCH You didn't know that all Dads aren't heroes?

JACOB No. I think I knew that, but yours. I didn't know that your Dad isn't a hero. Sorry Finch.

FINCH But your Dad. He would be worried that you're here.

JACOB He would.

FINCH Well then I better keep you safe.

JACOB I would like that.

FINCH Would you now?

*JACOB reaches for FINCH's hand. A moment is building between them.*

6

JACOB Finch, you know I always thought that maybe you and me would find each other again.

FINCH Wow. Jake. Are you trying to be sweet?

JACOB Well you know. I have my good moments. But I have my not so good moments too.  
Do you ah . . .

FINCH Do I ah . . .

JACOB Are we good?

FINCH Why wouldn't I be?

JACOB I feel like I might owe you an apology maybe—

FINCH What? Why?

JACOB Finch. Come on. It's been a while since we talked and I didn't exactly stand up for you when—

FINCH Are you sure you don't want any blueberries?

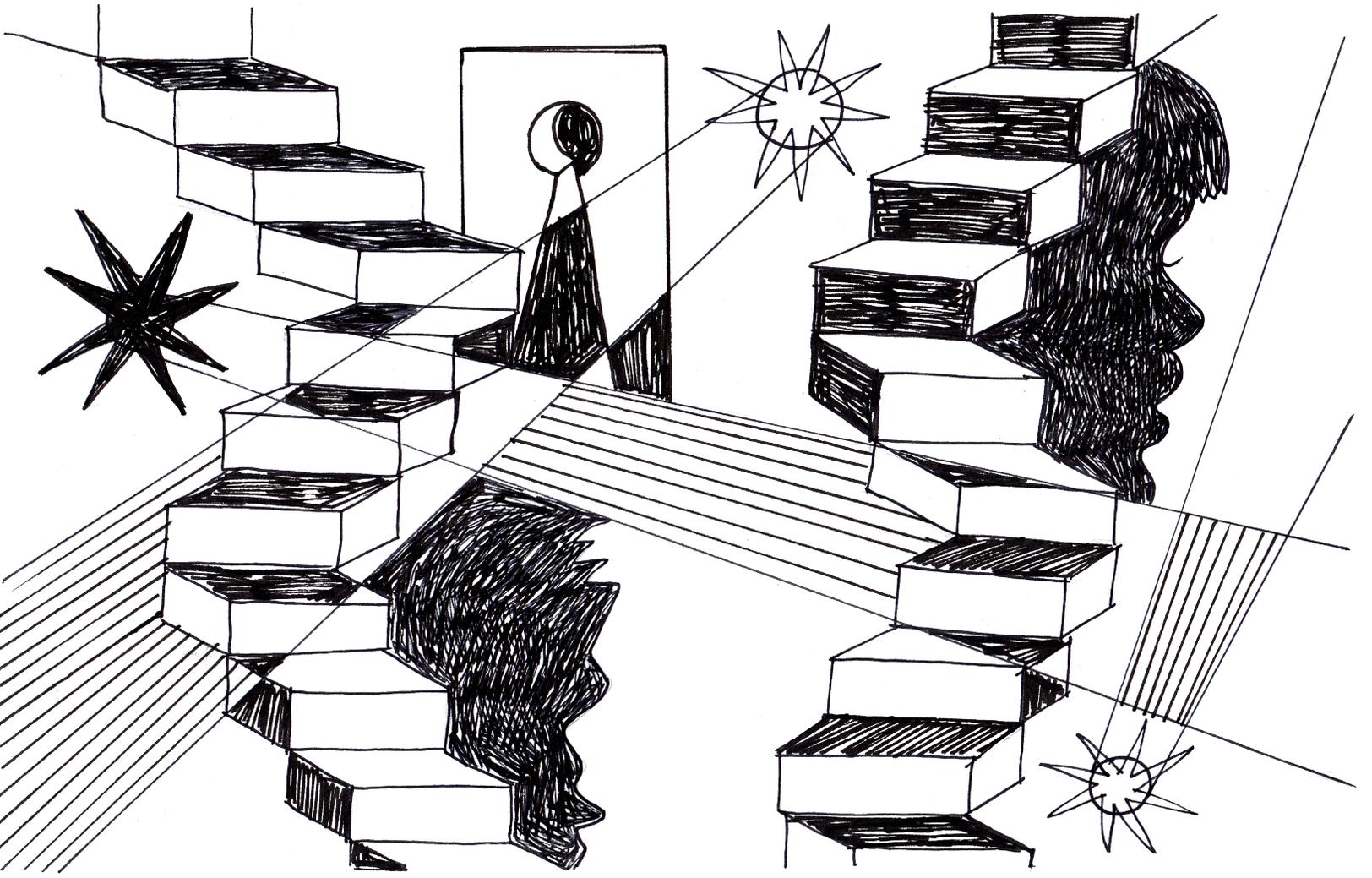
JACOB Ah. Sure, but—

*JACOB faints into FINCH's arms.*

*A sound of birds scattering can be heard.*

Do not be daunted by the enormity of the world's grief. Do justly, now. Love mercy, now. Walk humbly, now. You are not required to complete the task; neither are you free to desist from it.

— Pirkei Avot 2:16 (attributed to Rabbi Tarfon)



“Well we ain’t had but foul luck six years runnin’ and what with the water ration we can’t keep much of nothin’ green—neither pasture nor billfold: the dust set down in the night with the weight of the dew so as soon as dawn starts its bleed in the east and the air thickens with the vapour risen from the earth and the first of the herd are loosed from the barn to go wander wide and weary for a mouthful of grass and we make to the field and try to talk some sense to the sky for a rain, we ain’t makin’ no more sense than the cattle lookin’ for somethin’ ain’t brown in this desert. We’re deeper in debt than a beetle in shit and there ain’t no end in sight to that; government been puttin’ subsidies together about a decade now but it ain’t half as much as we need fallin’ below the bracket as we do: see, you get such and such amount per hundred acres and we’re sittin’ at just under three hundred what with the sale to Monsanto four summers back which I didn’t want to do anyway but we hadn’t but one choice as that’s concerned. Just ain’t no money in farming these days ‘less you’re lookin’ out over eighty thousand acres or more and there ain’t but nine or ten folks with a spread like that and they ain’t lookin’ for partners. You asked me now about the weather but there ain’t been much of that that I can recall; ain’t seen a rain in four flat months now but the wind whips up some now and again—‘sand twisters,’ we call ‘em: some days we’ll quit early and make for the porch and a glass of sweet tea and look out to count ‘em as they spin with the sun settin’ all behind and it’s sure pretty but it don’t do much for my spirits. The kids get to naming ‘em sometimes, the sand twisters, but they ran clean through all the names known amid the six of ‘em and had to go lookin’ through the good book for help and come back shoutin’ names like Rosh and Jaconian and Haggith. You know I touched the Bible every night as a boy and every night still but I ain’t heard half the names they come throwin’ at the wind. Lot of folks think we’re lookin’ at the Endtimes but I don’t quite know what to make of that. Maybe it’s just I don’t have the nerve to what with my daughter settin’ astraddle my knee like a weency cowgirl as a real tall twister starts up along ways from the house and she sticks her pudgy little hand out and points and shoutin’ ‘Look Daddy! Look, Daddy. Look at that one; that’s a good one.’ Most days I just don’t have the stomach to get to thinkin’ what-all that means and what we’ve wrought here on this earth. I’ll just dip my head down all quiet and press my lips to that miracle of a head of hers and whisper that ‘I see it, baby. I see it. I do’ and reach out to the glass sweatin’ with the sweet tea and flick those droplets of cool water on the back of her neck and watch ‘em dry there just as quick as they appeared and she’ll giggle and spin around and I’d give every ounce of blood in my body and every acre I own for that sound as the wind comes claiming little handfuls of dust for the heavens in fits like twisted premonitions of rapture and I think of her. I think of her. I think of her against the last of the light and the dust startin’ to settle some with the weight of the first of the dew and I think of her fightin’ those eyelids heavy as lead like a tiny drunken boxer what can’t stand within the count to ten come crumplin’ up into my chest and hands around my neck whose fingers are makin’ little flicking motions in memory and carryin’ her up the stairs and her heart beatin’ its count and I’m sure of nothin’ of what’s comin’ except the next step and the next step and just a-settin’ her down to dream like a parcel in the rain. Some nights I have words with the Maker and them nights they ain’t but for Him to hear but mostly I just sit starin’ into the dark and I think of her. I think of her.”

## II

---

 KEVIN ANDREW HESLOP

This continues as the DRAWBRIDGE incrementally descends, finally arriving at the earth with a great THUD. HORSES stand. The volume of ambient CICADAS is subtly increased. A HORSE’s tail swishes. It is beautiful.

**INT. CASTLE - DAY**

GUARDSMAN THE SECOND  
Who’s that?

GUARDSMAN THE THIRD  
Not sure.

(A BEAT)

GUARDSMAN THE SECOND  
She comin’ in?

GUARDSMAN THE THIRD  
Not sure.

**EXT. CASTLE - DAY**

CARRIAGE PROCESSION stands. A HORSE whinnies in its BRIDLE. Wind tousles tree branches; leaves tambourine. It is beautiful.

**EXT. CASTLE - DAY**

CARRIAGE PROCESSION comprised of seven separate and variously elaborate carriages, each drawn by six garlanded horses in two rows of three, approaches a moated CASTLE. CARRIAGE PROCESSION arrives, stops. A CORNET-PLAYER and a SPEAKER ceremoniously separate from CARRIAGE PROCESSION and approach the CASTLE gravidly. SPEAKER and CORNET PLAYER arrive before the CASTLE, stop. CORNET PLAYER raises and sounds the CORNET.

SPEAKER

Her Majesty, Penelope Haab Llelujah!

CORNET-PLAYER sounds the CORNET. SPEAKER and CORNET-PLAYER bow ceremoniously and return to CARRIAGE PROCESSION.

**INT. CASTLE - DAY**

On one side of the castle's DRAWBRIDGE, three GUARDSMEN stand pyramidically alongside one of two identical, enormous stone-wheel winches with great cranks. GUARDSMAN THE FIRST pushes the crank, causing a raucous clacking, as far forward as he can, about a third of the way around the stone wheel. This can be heard happening on the opposite side of the DRAWBRIDGE. GUARDSMAN THE SECOND pulls the crank towards himself—more clacking—into the hands of GUARDSMAN THE THIRD, who completes the human revolution.

**EXT. CASTLE - DAY**

I2

KEVIN ANDREW HESLOP

**INT. CASTLE - AFTERNOON**

GUARDSMEN break for lunch. They sit about eating SANDWICHES wrapped in greasy brown paper.

GUARDSMAN THE FIRST  
Someone said she was processing.

GUARDSMAN THE SECOND  
Processing?

(A BEAT)

GUARDSMAN THE THIRD  
Grounding exercises, I heard.

GUARDSMAN THE SECOND  
Grounding exercises?

GUARDSMEN sit, eating. One of them lights a CIGARETTE, offers one, is declined.

GUARDSMAN THE SECOND  
Is she comin' in?

GUARDSMAN THE THIRD  
Not sure.

I4

**EXT. CASTLE - NIGHTFALL**

THREE ATTENDANTS ceremoniously bring PLATTERS OF FOOD from inside CASTLE through frame right across DRAWBRIDGE to CARRIAGE PROCESSION through frame left. Moments pass. ATTENDANTS proudly return with PLATTERS OF FOOD untouched.

**INT. CASTLE - DAYBREAK**

GUARDSMEN sit sipping COFFEE from tin cups.

GUARDSMAN THE SECOND  
Are they leaving it open all day then?

GUARDSMAN THE THIRD  
Not sure.

GUARDSMAN THE SECOND  
Isn't safe, that, is it?

(A BEAT)

GUARDSMAN THE FIRST  
It's just a day to pass.

GUARDSMAN THE SECOND  
What if the barbarians come?

15

---

KEVIN ANDREW HESLOP

GUARDSMAN THE SECOND  
What's that mean?

GUARDSMAN THE FIRST  
Not sure.

GUARDSMAN THE THIRD  
She means the castle isn't more than the land it occupies? Like, it's just a lot?

GUARDSMAN THE FIRST  
Not sure.

(A BEAT)

GUARDSMAN THE THIRD  
Like she didn't see the castle? "It's just a lot though?" It's just an empty lot, like?

(A BEAT)

GUARDSMAN THE FIRST  
Not sure.

GUARDSMEN think about that.

GUARDSMAN THE THIRD  
"It's just a lot though."

17

GUARDSMAN THE FIRST looks from GUARDSMAN THE SECOND to CARRIAGE PROCESSION. GUARDSMAN THE SECOND looks at GUARDSMAN THE THIRD. GUARDSMAN THE THIRD shrugs.

**EXT. CASTLE - MIDDAY**

Two PROCESSION ATTENDANTS bring hay and water to the HORSES and speak to them. It is beautiful.

**INT. CASTLE - MIDDAY**

GUARDSMEN sit.

GUARDSMAN THE SECOND  
Bloody is she comin' in then?

GUARDSMAN THE FIRST  
Apparently this morning she sent word to the King.

GUARDSMAN THE THIRD  
What'd she say?

GUARDSMAN THE FIRST  
"It's just a lot though."

GUARDSMEN think about that.

16

---

KEVIN ANDREW HESLOP

(A BEAT)

GUARDSMAN THE THIRD  
Was there a draw?

(A BEAT)

GUARDSMAN THE FIRST  
Not sure.

**EXT. CASTLE - SUNSET**

CARRIAGE PROCESSION stands. Sound of ambient CICADAS slowly decreases. The sun sets. It is beautiful.

**FADE TO BLACK.**

**FIN.**

18

Considered in view of less elaborated works like *Sham-Wow Segment* (Uncle Henri's Garage, Little Italy, 2021) and *Paper Cup/Birthday Hat* (Recyclex, Montréal Est, 2021) and installed on Grandpa's keychain, *Lanyard* (Mobile Installation, 2023) represents both a departure from and a return to themes of relational mundanity and transience recurrent throughout Matthew's Teething Period. Alongside Grandpa's bullet-shaped bottle opener and the keys to his 72' Buick, the tri-tone work in its present installation reminds the viewer that symbols of familial love coexist on an iterative plane with constructs of commerce, self-sabotage, and military industry, whose touchstones in the literary arts might include Henry James and Honoré de Balzac (with whom, nevertheless, one has no knowledge of Matthew's fluency).

Prefigured in such works as *Mommy and Me I* (2021, Mommy's Home Office, Saint-Henri, Montréal) and *Bath Time* (2022, Marthe's Kitchen Table, Verdun, Montréal), *Cat on Flower* (2023) typifies both the conflation of interior and exterior spaces and the obtrusive horizontal slash which has come to be associated with Joelle's work. The mark seems to suggest an insistence on a radical, non-hierarchical democracy with which the aestheticization of otherwise settled domestic interiors may not accord; and interestingly, it's in the artist's enactment of the timing of the slash—always at the end of the process of creation—that its significance may be found, suggestive of the idea that authentic equality is always an afterthought before a terminus, while proposing that the linear process of making the work is itself an equal part of the art product.

While the museum does not have any significant works from before 2021, such as *Still Life with Blue Tablecloth* (2019, Nani's Fridge, Mile End, Montréal) or *Red Studio with Rowboat* (2020, "Somewhere Around Here," Uncle Ken's, Rosemont, Montréal), in which this long-necked vase is depicted, this extraordinary drawing provides an opportunity to study this important period in Sarah's work. She delineated the transparent space occupied by the vase using a zone of shadow that accentuates the luminosity of the white of the sheet, a process already used in Aunt Susan's *Caterpillar and Me* (Aunt Susan's Office, Cornwall, 2020). A similar vertical strip fixed the space within the two-dimensional limits of the canvas, but the artist had not abandoned the idea of evoking the depth of a table and a wall.

20

KEVIN ANDREW HESLOP

“Or is it this wide-eyed wasp, antennae slick, staggering away from the little entabled ramekin of maple syrup—*sirop d'érable*—to join the trio humping the remains of the *crêpe française* amid the despondent arugula? Latticed café in the Old Port overheard; the sky—clouds seen through clouds seen through—clouding in the syrup—enamoured—and across the cutlery, even—*devinez quel groupe vient d'annoncer qu'ils se remettent ensemble et une tournée de retrouvailles*—and even the insects here are engrossed carefully at a quarter of four—who—the twilight, her majesty—*mal-baisée*—soon to descend the cobbles—transparency, Hyssop—trailing a line with its abdomen—*descendre*—in which the local architecture is diffracted. Diffracts.”

22

“To cook is *cuisiner*. So, clearly you can see *cuisine* in there. How do you think you’d say, I used to cook? *Je cuisinais*. *Je cuisinais*. He used to cook? *Il cuisinait*. *Il cuisinait*. She used to cook. *Elle cuisinait*. *Elle cuisinait*. You, informal, used to cook. *Tu cuisinait*. *Tu cuisinait*. They, a mixed group or a male group, used to cook. *Ils cuisinaient*. *Ils cuisinaient*. They, an entirely female group, used to cook. *Elles cuisinaient*. *Elles cuisinaient*. You, formal, used to cook. *Vous cuisiniez*. *Vous cuisiniez*. We used to cook. *Nous cuisinions*. *Nous cuisinions*. Again, what is my father? *Mon père*. *Mon père*. I used to cook for my father. *Je cuisinais pour mon père*. *Je cuisinais pour mon père*. What is every morning? *Tout les matins*. *Tout les matins*. What is every day? *Tout les jours*. *Tout les jours*. Every evening, in French, every evening, is *tout les soirs*. I used to cook for my father every evening. *Je cuisinais pour mon père tout les soirs*. *Je cuisinais pour mon père tout les soirs*.”

“Straining and struggling against the cordage of the moment, like Odysseus lashed to the mast, to be born. *Pour ne pas sentir l’horrible fardeau du Temps ...* Odysseus, gorging on madeleines, is howling to be brought to them. It was only in the poems that the faces of his sailors were stoic: in truth, this was Job-song, a test of will, of endurance, of warring obediences, the veins of its face. Lashed to the mast, almost famous is the theme. Part god, part agony, he would have felt the friction of the cordage; his skulls’ sides, warring temples. A body wants a body that way; a moment, a vice. *Take me to the rocks*, it says. *Take me through sea kelp and spume, bleared and beggared to the bottom of the went of it. Marry my soul that I would not, stricken with longing, persist. Give me the grave of the sea. Listen not*, he would have said, preparing his sailors, Ischia cresting, *to the man, the thing that screams you otherwise.*”

FROM THE  
*CINEMATICON\**

A lassitude in which mind and word are mingled  
and decompose....

CIORAN

The regression of the masses today lies in their  
inability to hear with their own ears what has not  
already been heard, to touch with their hands what  
has not previously been grasped; it is this new form of  
blindness which supersedes that of vanquished myth.

HORKHEIMER & ADORNO

The painter is observing a place which, from moment  
to moment, never ceases to change its content, its  
form, its face, its identity.

FOUCAULT

A picture of uniform horror, of which force is the sole  
hero....

WEIL

(Come in under the shadow of this red rock)

ELIOT

---

Written by P. FRAXINEUS TEGO. Punctuated and  
annotated with gossips added by the same fake person.  
Edited by real boy and published poet K. ANDREW  
HESLOP and thereby made real and poetical for all  
Canadians to read and observe in the ink of these two  
publishers, whose names I now recall, the muscle of their  
press and the pressure of their kindness here in the garden  
where all love ends.

---

P. FRAXINEUS TEGO

\*THE RULE OF CINEMATIC GRAMMAR

This musical score for the inhuman voice was composed in language rather than speech or sound; expect, therefore, no talking, no friendly truths, no fathomable trust, nor any suppository of dull wisdom, but only the unrelenting curse of a language skinned and turned inside out like the sought and captured mime whose goopy, messy insides have been told to repeat after you but which now only squeal in your discomfort. Just as films can neither declare nor confide but instead may only offer meek survey or imperious autopsy of their imagery, so are there no conjugated verbs in the verses of this imagism to coddle or coerce your thinking; while this ecological language will not speak to you in ejaculations, nor summarize your history in a birth, the unspeakableness or nevocity of its syntax will still call the image into motion, meiosis, or mutation around the abscess of your enucleated verb: such a loss, limit, or excision forces the discourse to subsist *sub veritate*, or under the truth and uncrushed by it, never rising to the level of falsifiability. Notwithstanding my subveritide, one may still find the verb (by which a sentence is made mortal, born, and dies) in the subtitles and notes interpolating the text with all the conviviality of chatting during a movie; moreover one may feel haunted by the verb in its victimization as participle or gerund, or in its victory *contra mundum* (against the cosmic battle of ordinary mouths) as infinitive; but without its mortal tense, any image or event in the *CINEMATICON* takes place rather in the reading than in the understanding. As the ecstasy of the lone noun needs no existential quantifier (e.g.: “[There is a] man walking dog wearing harness pulling man walking dog wearing harness pulling man walking dog wearing harness pulling man...”), so the deontology (or necessity of being) of autoparaphrasis (or banality of the mitotic imagination) in the nativity (or continuity of becoming) of the sonic plenum (or ecology of auscultation) will always bud anew asexually from grave or graft: *nascatur iterum lingua letata candido ex sanguine suo* (may the slain tongue sprout again from its own clear blood) so the verbal eunuch may find new ears—for if meaning is militant thinking (*nam si intellectus ratio exercitus est*), *tantum sensum invenies hic* (here you will find sensation only). Finally, the measure chosen for this poetry is stoned Miltonic blank verse, hemorrhagic, and genetically modified in the grammar of modern passions to continuously spawn metaphor in abundance and *absentia*.

SIT HIC SITIS AURA SECUNDA:  
 WJL.KAH.ACP.CAM.MJG.ADN.SJS  
 MCB.AMZ.CNS.MCA.CJH.CGB.JSB  
 LVS.JAD.CPH.AVQ.CSM.BNS.ALK.MZN

P. FRAXINEUS TEGO

\*LEGEND OF THE PUNCTUATION

- , a barely breathless pause with little to no change in tone, a real comma, that sets off phrases following the principle of non-restriction.
- ,— a slightly longer pause with haphazardness or delinquency of tone, as though throwing away a worse idea under the compulsion of a better one.
- a break to elucidate or continue a good idea not thrown away but only grasped the tighter.
- . a sudden and true stop, followed by wrenching silence.
- . a real suicide of the sentence, gone forever.
- ... that sort of angsty pause which, recalled from adolescence, betrays evaporation of emotion.
- : a pause and change of tone that foretells onward-marching elaboration.
- ; a pause with rugged reminiscence of tone, a heavy comma for coordinating non-commissioned phrases.
- ! indicates risen intoxication.
- () lazy commas with either great expectations or quiet grievances concealed.
- { indicates a perverse or diseased mirror or echo of some recent or accented language, recalling or constituting a spurious line marked or reprimanded as #b, or as #c for a mirror's mirror, a lagoon in shadow.

The following musical notation is merely suggested guidance for performance and can be as easily ignored as the individual meanings of any word heard in these songs whose five-foot meters always leak overlong into alexandrines or fourteeners:

- |                       |                                     |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| < Crescendo Rising    | <small>ADA.</small> Adagio: Walk    |
| « Crescendo Climax    | <small>AND.</small> Andante: Trot   |
| » Diminuendo Falling  | <small>ALL.</small> Allegro: Canter |
| > Diminuendo Terminus | <small>VIV.</small> Vivace: Gallop  |
| <i>p</i> Soft Line    | <i>f</i> Strong Line                |

But above all, my loud, myopic Reader, breathe whenever you must, preferably in gasps scattered across the text like your teeth after a punch, as each poem wants to knock you out in as few breaths as possible. Read therefore in emergency only.

DURING THE DIRGE OF FAINT HEPHAESTUS  
*Stand now beneath your flag of hair and through my pages trample in*

*Invocation of the Music*

AND, *f* To every empty mouth, those first but trumpets glaring,  
*ff* Bright trumpets in a squeal, anxious horns  
*f* At last to drown in ancient wailing: old as ivory, mouths  
 < As blank as toothless stones, as hymns torn like mothwings out,  
 5 As free as only the burnished tongue in wet sunlight  
 «*ff* Expecting music in the wash of water waiting—.

*Squalor of Birds in Perpetual Convalescence*

ADA. With trumpets gaping silent over the oval pond.  
 A stillness in a blot of thrills from a life of fury.  
 Promised for some time upon the folding of the shores.  
 10 AND, » If only some lean salvation of dry, potted mouths to be  
 (Old, blank, and freed on the next hundred-year rostrum of victory.)  
 » *pp* Quenched in victims under crow and eagle, under sparrows feeding....

*Apprehension of the First Person*

ALL, *fff* *Stopped* in the dung cry of my breath's long-haired star:  
*fff* *Stopped* in an eternal, fire-resurrected mammary of graves  
 15 *ff* Calling out in me in fear; in me, *stopped*,  
 The hot heart resounding in the crimson might of a cry,  
 In the sunset sleight of illness in the red song's  
 Reach, red as barbed memory's passion against

29

SOMNILOQUY\* ON LANDSCAPES KNOTTED AND LAX  
*In the frayed wind of the shore, in the steam of a cup*

ADA, < From moon-curving froth,  
 to bubbles surf-displaced,  
  
*p* To waves so subtle, gentle space of water,  
*p* So water-lamb and lamb of sand daydreaming,  
 « That porous wool, first of skin, first wrinkle  
 5 » Of waters illiterate, dumb of only bubbles  
 > And sweat,  
 AND, < *f* to froth resounding, collapsing sounds  
 Of noise-escaping sands into the ache of salt  
 In the sop of sweat, the sippy swell of noise  
 « *f* To beckon erode the skins, reborn back home  
 10 » *f* Not blanketed, soaking cold sulking, wasted  
 Aloud in a room of calcified sleep, not dreamed,  
 Resuming, retasted gritty soil not wax  
 > But sandy, wetted memory,  
 ALL, < to salt now wasted  
 In the blood of dulce and seatongue amply lulling

\*Lacan taught, declared, commanded, explicated, and obscured that the unconscious is structured like a language, but I cannot imagine that the grammar of such a mental space and linguistic being is conjugal and finite with its objects and actions; so in the following somniloquies, I will rather structure language like the unconscious, given ear to speak its infinite soliloquies alone, where in the complete absence of an 'I', only the nakedest and most diaphanous 'me' forms on the convergent conditions of sensations and retains no consistent being beyond the cataract of these phenomena.

*Flight of the Blasphemous over the All-Shining Sea*

*f* Pale flesh, passing from the Bull forsworn, horny  
 20 « With Minos's heirs below, with Minos's wife in labour,  
 With all the labyrinth of the sea of sighing below,  
*f* Blamed in sunlight, a heart blamed in pregnant lustre,  
 «*ff* Blamed in bleed of lust, for some Minotaurs rife with fire  
 »» Again unslain—and incandescent Icaruses rising.

*Dual Agricultures of God*

25 AND. Liltng to the lame reaper of this song, the sun  
 Flooding the unfilled graves with lights of grey  
 And gold, a sower somewhere with toothless stones  
 Slngng stone seeds of music for his iron dead: his  
 VIV. *p* Children exhumng the buzz of the suns in their lust, than so givng their  
 30 *p* Pollen and silence to his singng funeral, light to his dyng refrain,

*Ekphrasis of Horn or Ivory*

ALL. « And brazen life to the dead pulse of Daedalus, here carved  
 In brass breath: to breathe upon a boy and jar the desolate  
 Boy's doorway to a heart, blow the dry leaves within him,  
 «*f* Creak wooden lungs open with a fossil of air and  
 35 »*f* Pour out a heart of pure calcium pumping in fists of milk  
 › For strawnympths to sop and sheet with warm, mattress silk.

15 An infancy of landfill in the mouth,  
 Awakened by the severance of a tongue  
 To seagulls recalling fish from pecking trash,  
 Recalling all inside the wasteful mouth,—  
 No swaying mouth to loosen nor swear but lure  
 20 « The breath and flood the stormng lungs in pain—  
*f* In breath, the lungs pressing in sandbreasts  
 » Wasting as if boots of bootleather left  
 › In pasturelands of coming rain,  
 « to the rippled lips  
 Of house-sleepers, permumblng into waves  
 25 Tenanted by speech overboiling-hard to speak,  
 Once captured in the moon-curving froth  
 Of tea-dreams only steeped, now dry mouths sipping  
 On the plummets of boiling wool, full wrung  
 To fill cups halfly, cups restacked encouraged  
 30 « For cups of coffee dripped by a dam unwholesome  
 AND. » Homely, toward bruises of memory burnt  
 ›*p* Beyond lips.

## SOMNILOQUY OF THE LOVER'S DESCENT

*When god in feathered Glory slumbered through Disease  
 And stirred with all his Agonies, ere his tuft  
 Of Spring was tilled by tongues relentlessly, and eased  
 In forkings so amorous, close, and loud enough;  
 Once all his feathers gone and Glory slicked no woman  
 But golden brines were sung on them who hungered,  
 And chickens, plucked and slathered, lay with roasting man,  
 And the squealing of Time did thicken in droplets unheard;  
 When basters of his flesh embraced his skin in foil,  
 Which—thus ensbrouding him in their own faces,  
 With their every stolen human sneer his Nude unspoiled—  
 Mirrorfold enclosed them in his mocking feathers;  
 When eaters of his flesh glanced upward at his face,  
 Saw there only more breast, more leg, more face\**

AND. To sleepers in anguish, their limbs once velvet in the quiet  
 Deep of ponds:

Not all within the eyes then removing  
 As mist, some nebulae still brightened in sleep  
 Etched and seething,  
 sleep stirring in pondwater stained

5 More to congest, through the rising of gazing fogs,  
 f The smouldering of naked skin in fierce

\*Not a poem within a poem, but obviously one atop one, playing out in the subtitles—a little gauche and very, unforgivably rococo, intruding like an ad for Ishtar-brand, unmicrowaveable catholicism; apologies for its televisually striated, elegiac meter, if it irks you as it does me.

30 *f* Baring before the curtains without nakedness  
 To please, the drapes of guesswork these, undressed,  
 A foment across the flesh, unbidden, blameless,  
 Becoming of a sex-change, genderless skin  
 Arousing to a sex and name and face,  
 35 As stained once and lost, above the ponds of steam  
 Swirling, as round a lanternlit ear dizzied  
 «ff With dew of swelling breeze-barren lips—.

2

AND. *p* Too soon departing down, back from walls and walls  
 Departing, becoming darkened down the darkening of eyes,  
 40 Old papers and fancied skins never again in eyes,  
 f And music in the lengthy touch or plumbed  
 Alike from lips, nevermore, but miscellaneous  
 To and fro cascading downward from the exit,  
 < And a crucible promising, upward beyond the blast escape,  
 45 Fiercely a singe, a deformation bright  
 Promised to the feathered humiliated flesh,  
 Fiercely a smouldering and lustful forgery of flesh  
 Lustrously away from the true cavity of the body here  
 Lasting in jangles, never to be deformed, never bared,  
 50 «ff And fastened effaced flat in mirrors inevitably  
 pp Upward.

*f* Of naked breasts:  
ALL. < beyond this layerless mist ignored,  
 Past all dampness of intrusion, past the faintness  
 Of the glistening damp, deepest beyond disturbance  
10 By and disordering the dream-forgetting lamps;  
 Downward from the drowning of the oval loving lips,  
 From the lovers, bleak, disordered, staring at the tongue;  
*f* Beyond the abandoned swerve of every limb  
 Clashing with the intended clangour of feathers,  
15 The strength of too many tinfoil feathers jangling  
 Gleeful as the departing of the drunkman's shape,  
 Like a vanity jewelled into a pride of suggestion  
 Girdled in deficiency round a fugitive waist;  
*f* Beyond the noiseless call jangled into noises  
20 Opaque as the lover's eyes gleefully shapeless;  
 Remembered now through the doorways in escape of blots,  
 Raising the face up, back through the corridors of blotting,  
 « Upward beyond the wringing cascade of the exit,  
  
 »*f* To nudity of down and scarcity  
25 Arousing, bald, simplicity, of no feathers,  
 And painful lips impressing each rush of the skin,  
  
 Fiery losing form under breath on pall-free  
 Cleanly pallid flesh, informed by carelessness  
»p Of warm, warm clothes deformed in the joys of example;

34

LAY OF THE RED CHILD'S BIRTH

*ego vox flagrantis in harena: turbate folia sicca\**

AND. *ff* Children of fat, children of erasure, ungrasped  
*ff* In the red sun's orgy of glass! Here, red glazier's cries:—  
  
VIV. < *p* Out of sand: the blood-rusting smoke of fats  
 Exhausting through propulsions of umbilical mind,  
5 Rhythmic as red chrysanthemous suns exhaling  
  
 out  
 Of sand at the dawn's zygotic hour of innumerable burst,  
 Cloudless, month-long calls  
  
 out of sands in constellation  
 To clamour through clamorous flesh and blind, in the blank eyes' gulf  
  
 Of glass,  
 out of sand and blind the glass flooding in thumpfuls

\*"I am the voice of one blazing in the sand: Blow the dry leaves within them." Cp. *Io*. 1:23: *ego vox clamantis in deserto: dirigite viam domini*: "I am the voice of one calling out in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the Lord." Might it help this poor, superimposed translation if I point out that this poem holds three images in superposition: glass-blowing, sun-rising, baby-birthing—three very red and bulbous things held in a triangulation to inform that final cause of life, anathematizing an isosceles with infant apex to declare the heat, the body-burning wet heat of new life, the scalding incandescence of the little dawn's first voice calling you ever into the fragile and desiccatory family of the sunburnt? Imagine the forerunner for the cult of ecstatic sensation, the psycho-romantic neo-baroqueans and applied phenomenologists, who—not content with a mere lexicon of images for voice or dance, and desiring a more colourful and revealing pantomime of prayer, more than the typical charade and expiation of one's wind- or doorswept, autumnal inner shames—would, of course, sometimes speak Latin instead, for clarity's sake; they might say (by way of introduction) something like what was garbed in garble here. Would be nice to meet them.

36





› As lids at close of sight, in eye-wisp and veil  
 ‹ To lose as clouds the frightful skin but skinheat  
 20 AND. Still to feel, rain ripening in pollen upon the wind, sniffed,  
 Wept, in the gloried and gathering wind, lustful  
 ‹ More than eyes in the sex of succession and trail,  
 Blown lust but a lip-allergic blear in passing streetlight  
 ALL. ‹ To peep with shopfaces, all in longest light cast out by sunglass  
 25 Of sunlit doubt in a freedom of obvious faces  
 Passed by, important witnesses, those, of lids loose  
 And tight, tight cyclic two concealed, two blinks  
 VIV. ‹ In the spinning lineaments of success, each other  
 › To fail in faces recalled uncoiled, fatless,  
 30 Deflated, detained in shops by shopfaçade,  
 › Cinderswift as names, brickbaked and patterned by commerce  
 ‹ In the furnace-mind, the mind by midsun blamed  
 In heat like dreaming lacquer, heat on windows,  
 ‹ And the parched brick, hot beyond shine,  
 35 ALL. All round by suns in dependent curves of days  
 Wider than round, then widened cyclist passing  
 ‹ Shoplights, brittle in all but gist, all cracked, a gist  
 Of crackling perfumed memory in the wind  
 Of convecting light, these to lantern on the face  
 40 But trace at first the spirit in the coarsest sweat,  
 VIV. Quickly in the gains of acuted breaths  
 To curve on the pressed body's release of shame,

41

TWO EMPIRICAL SONNETS BORN & UNBORN  
*Singing in the parenthetical mirror of the other*

## I

AND. ‹ *pp* To ponds mumbling, shivering near lemongrass,  
 Uncertainly swaying concord with a breeze  
 So hesitant, not scented lightly as  
 Nor heated breathed likeness, flattered breeze  
 5 Flattering in ripples like coughs, congealed  
 In conflict on the pond's bright faltering surfaces  
 Impressed without wind with the sunseting of dreams  
 Sandcastled, wind-blown confident grasses  
 On glarings wet-accepted by sleep, swaying  
 10 From sunny leaflight to metaphoric leafgreen or faded  
 ‹ *f* By the shadows of some sympathies, some injuries of daylight,  
 › Not storm-footed by warring clouds wading,  
 As if marchers in grasses, tin drum within ears all around,  
 › *pp* But amazed as the lipping of voices uncertainly drowned.

## II

ADA. ‹ *f* {To some ensphering pearls in a mouthful of ink,  
 Born from sands out of seabristling galactation  
 In laundered seas, like infant minutes in each monthful linked  
 From mouths to clotheslines, each bathtide of impressioned  
 5b Loss, in pearls rusting, in drops re-flavoured at the fall of rinsed leaves,

43

«  
 45 < Pressed quartz of sweat by pulse and speed in a bridle  
 Of shame to vary the flicker of face and slave the sight,  
 By windflowers of paperwind to connive eyelashes  
 Amid skin and muscle and distract all skin's increase,  
 Body-squinting at the jerks of sun-strings, slowing  
 ALL. As the doubt across perfumes or along the tears  
 «  
 50 Of the serrate disgust in a rasp of disintegrating veils, likewise  
 Throughout flood of airflush on blushing faces at the cliff  
 <  
 Of the shortsighted, those walking city-streets  
 VIV. In sunseting a repel of atmosphere,  
 Repelling through air till cliff-cut, many cliffs  
 «  
 In flashes, purposeless till repelled in flares,  
 55 Passive lurid-worn flashes, lusting daylit, denuding daily  
 <  
 Into the brown squint of night as late reflections,  
 Late sun on steel, late glass to crumble, break,  
 «  
 But blame the longer the flagrant pin, numbed, red,  
 58b AND. » {But feel a pierce from the blazing half-shadowed,}\*  
 >  
 Itselsh bright, yet emblemished by mutual eyesight.

\*Chlamydial mirror of the previous line.

42

10b  
 > pp A skylessness of rust, in the lawnmower's ear-berthing motion,  
 < Of quiets suckled from the startide, pearled from the seas,  
 Rusting above the lawnlathered bathtub of the motoring ocean,  
 Autumnally within the silkiest muse of the chrysalid eye,  
 Windowing in the chills of lawnmown light or lightened  
 Off the breasts of black milk, breathing dumb on penumbral tides,  
 Ebbingly unmothered under the summermoths of hot blight,  
 « f As some flutters in abdomen, never omitted from lips more resoundingly,  
 Than with children afrayed by untwisting some fibres unfoundedly wound.}\*

\*Parenthesis (monadological) of the previous sonnet, as of a calque or mirror. Consider the elder Francis Bacon: "just as an uneven mirror alters the rays of things from their proper shape and figure, so also the mind, when it is affected by things through the senses, does not faithfully preserve them, but inserts and mingles its own nature with the nature of things as it forms and devises its own notions." *The New Organon*, ed. Lisa Jardine and Michael Silverthorne, (Cambridge: UP, 2002), 19.

44

2<sup>ND</sup> CUBIST SOMNILOQUY: IN COMMUTE, ANXIOUSLY*Nothing, Nothingness, 1, 2, 3...**Nothing, Nothingness, 1, 2, 3...**Nothing, Nothingness, 1, 2, 3...\**

II

ALL-ff

Into this sham harmonious!,

Easing the bodies from a noise into a needled seam,  
 < Each unburiable, and searing humidly past the puddles,  
 Unburiable, and slowly singeing past the dirt,  
 « Unburiable, but halfway burnt into each grave,  
 5.5 And dropping scant of teeth in frills of water for all the laughters  
 Beneath the scum and foreshortened waves, and yet all  
 Outstanding round in a battery of passageways  
 And a rocking of the boneless gums, shown under  
 Each of these departing lips, all depressed either to each enjoyed,  
 10.5 Without any lip-cleft breathing, as a theatre in the limbless faces  
 And a few flaccid eyelids slowed o'er the deforming face,  
 Once flushed, wedded to the tongue, once weaving tongue to mesh  
 The chatter of the drought within a trumpeted parade  
 And a brassy moistened lisp, now pursing for the motherless

\*Cf. Frege's derivation of the natural numbers in *The Foundations of Arithmetic*: first you have nothing, then the idea of nothing (nothingness), and thus consequently you then have something (nothingness still), and can count something (1 nothingness, please), and can count counting something (2 nothingnesses, please) and thus can count on something (0, 1), and thereafter can count upwards to the rest of existence (1, 2, 3, etc.), something you can now count on. Just something to chant whenever you're feeling nervous.

45

P. FRAXINEUS TEGO

To eat or cough, or wipe the eyes of moisture,  
 <f Evaporate a foam from coffee, raise  
 45.5 From sleep and vapour the wool and water  
 f Boiled to reclaim the sea, unstaining, of snow,  
 The dry eggcrust desert not wet by snow,  
 Not oily to fathomfilled stomachs, old mud-caked  
 Sickened stomachs, enduring from the salt-taste  
 50.5 The taste enduring hours of salt, salting  
 Away the lungs of the egg, though boiling,  
 «ff And boiling into the egg a hard breath.

47



Enclosing round a mortal island eased  
 « In waves enveloping its mindlessness:  
 ALL.» Before this industry of forceful morning  
 Over drooling earths entrusted to the mucilage  
 15-4 Of star and kinship, calving from the cleavage  
 » Of waxy dawns abreast in fatuous poolings,  
 « And just before or after or behind or through  
*f* The first pangs of light in God's East,  
 VIV. the fist  
 Of sun or moon wrenched open as from the might  
 20-4 Of a wrestler in dominion, breathing, the press  
 Of her palm together sweating, faltering, slipping,  
 And just before or after the final popping  
*f* Apocalyptic crack of christ in ransom,  
 Fissuring her shoulder, hips twisting hopeless  
 25-4 Like a key in a broken lock, broken in,—  
 AND. «ff» There the last aggression of god on earth,  
 Before the sprained, shining trinkets in her  
 Still fearsome clutch,  
*p* (just two keys in hands of clay  
*p* To be engraved in rumbling earth)  
 before  
 30-4 Or after falling in one momentous bladder  
 Of light, fulfilling with oxygen the wrinkled  
 Unctions of sky, skin, sweat, and sap.  
 ADA. *f* The tilled,  
*f* Titanic Woman just out of sight, broken  
*f* In two places, lying like a cow  
 35 *p* Behind two bags of rice.\*

49

EPITHALAMION OF TWO LANDSCAPES  
 IN POSSESSIVE SOMNILOQUIVOCATION  
*et tenebrae erant super faciem abyssi*  
*and shadows were upon the face of the deep*  
*et spiritus Dei ferebatur super aquas*  
*and the spirit of god was borne over the waters\**

ADA. But deep above this faceless wind, deeper  
 Than metallic god or goldening  
 From molten earth, or stone melting melted  
 Into metal thought throughout a blind  
 4-6 And fatal estrous evening:  
 Sun to sun,  
 Still darker than volcanic gleam or forethought  
 Roar beneath the mantle of our blood,  
 Under the brittle shadows fretted of all  
 Our bones across a glimmering breeze,  
 10 « As intuitions from the grass, blown  
 By wind or mind, or grasped more clearly in  
 Your mammal mouth, the speed and rapacity  
 Of my quivering fields blown in hills across  
 Acoustic contagious soils, far in life,  
 15 As brisk disbursal for every optic seed,  
 Sounded out and spent to touch your land  
 « In vanishing points;  
 » from under waves of pressure,  
 Under the pains, the newest hammers in  
 My bleeding, melting mouth, a foundry salty  
 20 As the seas alone, and mouthing emptinesses

51

\*The reader might have noticed that I count even half, or third, or even decimal lines. You will excuse this invasion by the cardinal into an ordinal space. In this particular poem, you might notice that the two feet at the opening and the three feet at the end form through the mazy motion or telegraphy of the poem one complete line, leaving the count at 35 and not 35.4 or 34.6; this technically means that, were this poem packed back up, it would be a parallelogram instead of a rectangle. (But why, I wonder, would you tell me this now after the narration of such a violent myth? and how many feet are supposed to be in these lines, anyway? five, six? seven? why bother if it's not always the same?) Shush: Surely, there can be no trigonometry of prosody, for, as you know, the angle of one thought never intersects, supplements, nor completes another in sound or speech; and there is, of course, no way of forming a syllogism at a right angle, let alone at a bevel more or less; and we know no one may propose perpendicular premises (even in dialectic!); and not even your dear, dead Dr. Seuss could hypothesize in hypotenuse,—so you might as well give up on this thought right now. (But if I weren't to give up on this thought and rather were to relieve you of your useless, sardonic negativity and conclude for you, dear Poet, that whereas the genesis of sound and meaning and their pairing are, as per de Saussure, indeed arbitrary, or simply governed by no higher power, the human understanding of words remains so contextual, and thus so suffused within the plenum of sonic meaning, as to come under the paranoid higher power of sound, under the persuasion of rhythm, the confusion of vocal constraints, the dominance of both their linearity and length, a distance so dominated by the thunderclap booming through the bones or the claptrap of a blowhard's overbearing posture, that the rule of analogy that guides phonological change guides also this echolalia where even the most privileged tongues must wag also with the basest when they taste the oncoming composition of a phrase revealed us in the contours and equality of its holy whispers and that this misnaming, deadnaming, mesmerizing orgy of speech not only explains but excuses the malapropism, whereby a word's phonemes momentarily overwhelm its morphemes, and which thus extends to every travesty of judgment its colourful rich decor and to the secret hole below the mind from which all speech follows its misprision; and yet that this vulnerability of the power of reason is generally refused and refuted by the same, simple wounds whereof the squeaks make excuse, and that, were we not simply to pare away the influence of sound in a rejection that forswears its impotence, as we do whenever we compound reason and spend its truth in the coin of one dead language or another, but instead foreground its governance in a democracy of eloquence, funded no doubt by a remorseless diffidence to digging-out and filling-in one's own mouth, that we would then approach the peace or ease of mind afforded by the very silly tool you were no doubt trying to sell, you, a penniless, ever-open pair of gums, hawking—ineffectually—an intellectual device to me who am no more than the inflation of your indigence, the infatuation of your indolence, an indulgence, a tool or device which would measure (at home) the reins, restraint, and resistance of rhetoric through impassive justice, impossible judgments, impassioned justifications of the aesthetics or sensations that sentence length, verbal ratio, rhythmic acuity, the gossips of assonance, consonance, & rhyme, the number of candles lit on the sempiternal altars of dead words, the white mule we ride with down the pages (whose name was... Bosphorus? Bucephalus? Boustrophedon!), etc., would have on the bearer's ability, belief, and will to round their whole misery like a corner of their grief and hear out a voice of pure immanence hiding in risks of doubt? Was this the point of your note?) Yes, obviously, this was my plan all along—as I am the single artificer of the world in which I annotate—and not purely a compulsion of the specific gastrointestinal bacterium we call English, and which we evolutionarily share with our dogs, simply hounding me and all my bleating sheep into *elocutio ad nauseam*.

50

P. FRAXINEUS TEGO

Forlorn like teeth tossed from tongue to tongue,  
 My gums in primal blood, teething again  
 And again for the crucible of loss to writhe  
 From your watery gaze and boil me clean again  
 24,8) Pearlescent in sadness and worthless mud;  
 f the limbic  
 f Ballast of your tears, out of the daft nerves  
 Washed in clouds upon wings of whaleskin blue or black,  
 Skies of sassafras ashore with sacred howls and flames  
 Of plum cut from my skin and scale at rest in scarlet  
 29,6 Rock and bark and glass,  
 one hundred birds  
 Left in the curvature of stone and century,  
 As spinal as your desert's stars or your deeper shadows  
 Bared across longer fossil-broken, trenchant nights;

35 The stray commandments of your emerald calls down  
 Mineshafts echoing, or moss-hushed on my sunny  
 Boulder lung,  
 the saxifrage of my quiet tongue

\**Gen. 1:2*: Wherein the face of god is reflected in the depths of the sky, in prelude to the narcissistic creation of Adam and Eden, wherefrom Eve—idiot man's only source or influence of knowledge from other than his own brilliance in mother-tongue and those ever-natural first gifts, untrained, unlearned, applauded—and he are banished once they finally know how close they reside to a judgment equal to their own and thereby threaten the foundations of mere reflecting heaven.

52





AND. In graspleless, bursting, welcome rinse baptized all  
 In face and fear of every gripping, weeping, rising  
 ADA, *f* Day: your spotlight, breathless, sponging chests  
 50, *ff* Throbbing to the chores of his endlessness.”

❧

ALL. Then as now, all hearing, all accepting, washed  
 In smoke no longer, I, slavered in the silver  
 Of my eyes' own acidity, hot earths warbling round,—  
 I, in grey and blue, limpid under clouds of steady,  
 55 Stealing emptiness, I, forgetting thirst  
 And fuel, forgetting feelings of mechanic  
 Sentences,  
 VIV. < I, incandescent soaking, I,  
 Awash in washless sweating, I, stumbling  
 And unknowing, I, compassed by reflection,  
 60 I, seeking with no intention, I, following, fleeing,  
 « Flowing, I—  
 ADA, *p* a length of oil leaked in time.

*ff* The round betrayal of god's lust  
 Upon our orchard world:  
*p* Such orphans of a fruitless  
 Wild, split before in pairs,  
 20 < Muled into choosing, panting, toothless  
 Storms of dented mouths to  
 Graze grasses never regrowing  
 From splinters sprouting loose  
 «*f* From crosses chafing, crosses groaning,  
 25 < Lightning crossed and calling  
 Forth every first-birth back  
 Across the camel-down clouds,  
 «*ff* With crosses lit in heart-attacks;  
 » Light under popped muscle,  
 30 Under storming camel-drawn  
 Suns, the four wheel-ruts  
 > Of judgment turning, and christ down  
 < In the mud, electric: weeping  
 In mudslide, singing in thund'rous  
 35 Earth, for the dug mouth of soil  
*f* Gently famined, hothoused, lustrous  
 In each firstborn's eyes, the grave  
 Sockets of every Cain  
 «*f* Filled with burnt wheat only:  
 40 Each popping crucifixion, again  
 From hunger, proving all  
*f* The christs of the mind so wrong,  
 The unnailed human, pried open

## LAMENTATION IN WET CEMENT

*On looking upon the younger Francis Bacon's works again, and agreeing that on the limp calvary of the body, every sensation is a crucifixion and every thought a christ.—Written on Good Friday, 2015, in Apostasy and Apposition, the Land of Nod.*

ADA. *p* From these last roses cleft  
 A chewed romance in bloom  
 Or blossom-crumpled song  
*f* To breathe my music out in gloom:  
 5 The brass slitherer or frog  
 Of deaf flames, Dead Trumpet,  
 Here invoked to mimic  
 My dumb blood, drip it, or drain out  
 Some other wineskin heart  
 10 Dredged in the drenching dusk  
 Across mud, sand, and plain,—  
*f* I, having to endure your trust  
 And pray in loyal nude,  
*p* Palm forward for your touch,\*  
 15 Encircling in hot prayer

\*Of course, in order for this to make any sense,  
 Our god must be one among the audience.

45 Like a child's coffin with no son  
 Unclaimed or reliquary,  
 No clattering knuckles, sure infants  
 Of judgment, clothed after brazen  
 Crosses in cerements, in skinned pigments  
 Of all gifts got, all built  
 50 *f* In guilt of god's gold eyes,  
*p* Then gilt-over unnailed anew,  
*p* Always. One good ear recalling mine,  
 In no sure hammer's fall,  
 To the clearest sky's tattoo:  
 55 Always honey-noon of sun-  
 Burnt hands, pearls in blisters, blue  
 Oysters\* shucked, my tooth  
 On tongue—from the dawn's mouth,  
 Too, orange aniseed weeded;  
 60 *f* Afar off, an orang-utan, south  
*f* Over flattened hills, stapled  
*ff* To a fluorescent tree,  
 < Prying its staples out, prying  
 At its puny, cardboard history,  
 65 Prying its bright blemish  
 «*ff* Free of this grasp of too lengthy  
 Light: oil strangled in street-lamps  
 Like tulips plucked or soldiers breathing  
 In new deaths to the voice  
 70 Of abrahamic *ecc'gos*.†

\*John Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, IV:8:§3

†Biblical echoes of being there: *Isa.* 19:5: 'ecce' + *Gen.* 22:5: 'ego'

< The bronzing ceasefire of spring,  
 With marys and gabriels clapped off stages,  
 Untrumpeted, laid to ripen  
 f Then to burn as red sheep,  
 75 In the dun scarlet kiss  
 Of old daylight, too wet to please  
 « Or blaze amour, a syrup  
 Of crushed velvet in song  
 < Yearly passing over  
 80 The lintel of the ears, athrong  
 With too many thresholds crumpled  
 In a michael\* of flesh: his sore  
 Mutton simile made  
 Vermillion and then drained of more  
 85 « Water, as from this birth,  
 » But the birth-child unmarked,  
 Uncut in burnt mosaic  
 Pigmentations,—unusually unburnt,  
 Or born this time, at all,  
 89-33 › p Or next.

\*Perhaps this extrabiblical exegetical gloss can help make sense of foregoing angelic allusions: Gabriel is the Last Trumpet or the announcer, while Michael is the First Sword or the enforcer.



## Scene 2 - Asleep

*FINCH is holding JACOB in her arms with confidence and strength. She makes a soft, almost sweet call of a house finch. It would be sweet if it wasn't so eerie. FINCH starts to sing a Mennonite church hymn The World Is Not My Home as she lays him down to sleep with his head in her lap.*

FINCH           This world is not my home  
                       I'm just passing through  
                       My treasures are laid up  
                       Somewhere beyond the blue  
 The angels beckon me  
 From Heaven's open door  
 And I can't feel at home  
                       in this world anymore

*FINCH sings another soft finch call to JACOB, even more creepily this time.*

FINCH           I can feel your worry over there, but it's ok. This happens pretty often to Jake. Since he was a small little guy running around in his yard with his dog. The first time they found him a few feet from his family's pond, a near tragedy. His stupid dog just drinking the pond water, not concerned at all that its owner was unconscious, flat out, sleeping like a little baby bee in the grass. Vulnerable to the elements all around his dumb little sleeping face. His family's kept a fairly close eye on him since then, but they can't be everywhere.

What isn't  
 strange about his fainting is that he does it at all. It's fairly common, but you know that.

who also had...  
 bouts of  
 wait for it...  
 dizziness and fainting according to South Western Ontario legend.

*FINCH makes her soft bird call again.*

I guess  
 though. His  
 And he  
 just over there  
 But Jacob was  
 times though.  
 of something  
 to do on the  
 all this about  
 Jacob's parents decided to try to live with one foot in and one foot out of the traditions  
 parents wore the clothes but don't make Jacob wear them all the time if he doesn't want to.  
 usually doesn't want to. And he went to my school, well my old school, the heathen public one  
 and I think his Dad seems to love all things electric too. Not what you would expect, maybe.  
 never allowed to go to my house or anybody's house much. I went to church with him a few  
 I liked it a bit even. The songs stuck with me. I think I like being around people that are sure  
 so obviously impossible. I'm surprised they let him out tonight, his parents, with all the things  
 farm this late in August. Jake must have pleaded to go out tonight. He doesn't think I know  
 him, but I do.

You might have  
your vision  
body does,  
done it yourself, have a little dip in the extreme heat maybe? Blackness starts in the corners of  
and then your body is suddenly weak, and bam, you're gone. You don't remember what your  
but it looks something like this. It happens to the best of us.

What is strange  
for a quick  
takes a hiatus  
hours at a time  
about Jacob's spells is how often he turns off and how long the trips last. Jake might go out  
moment in time, a sudden flash of here and not again, but usually he takes his time. His brain  
from reality for 10, 20 minutes sometimes. He went a while there when puberty hit, going for  
even, but now, well I guess we'll see, won't we.

The other odd  
Jacobskettle it  
sized too. A saint  
here. Dutch like  
that. I'm not  
himself  
part to this is about his namesake, Jacob Snider, the original who the town was named after.  
was called by the Dutch Mennonites way back when. But like everything else that was angle  
added for good luck. St. Jacob's. You've probably noticed there's a lot of Mennonites around  
Deutsch by the way, referring to Germany not Holland around here. People get confused about  
Mennonite myself, but well Jacob here is descended from one of the top dogs of the region

64

One foot in  
to do much  
Sometimes  
and one foot out of traditions. And if you're still worried about him, don't be. They don't seem  
to him at all, these lapses from the world. His mind just slips into the other place.  
I envy him, really. I would love to be this vulnerable, this dependent, this still.

*FINCH**picks up JACOB's arm and drops it again. She laughs.*

Other kids  
liked it though,  
or that time  
moment first,  
waiting,  
was holding  
He'd laugh and  
the guy who  
sometimes used to mess with him, like joke with him while he was like this. He always said he  
laughed along when he was woke up and they described making him give the teacher the finger  
he woke up wearing Liam Weaver's underwear on his head. He'd wake up and he'd have that  
the one where he wasn't sure what happened or where he was and everyone would be quiet,  
watching him until he realized what wasn't quite right. And then when he'd figure out that he  
dog shit in his hand or his hair was cut in a weird angle too short over one eye and he'd start it.  
laugh, and everyone laughed and laughed and laughed along with him. It's pretty amazing that  
was the life of the party was asleep half the time.

66

FINCH

*picks JACOB's head off her lap and looks like she might drop it on the floor like she did with his hand, but doesn't. She lays it down gently onto a pillow. She grabs another pillow and for a moment it looks like she might suffocate him, but instead she holds the pillows over his ears.*

Some of them,  
 just the fully  
 going on around  
 forehead in  
 us because that  
 They thought  
 seemed to treat  
 outside in  
 Somebody  
 He was good  
 while.

the other kids, always thought that he was faking. Not faking the whole fainting thing exactly, unconscious part. There was this rumour that went around that he could still hear what was him, that he knew who put his foot in the toilet or who wrote “eat shit and die” on his permanent marker while he was out. That he knew who was doing what. And he wasn't telling gave him a little bit of power.

that because the next few days after he laughed and we laughed when he woke up, he always the person who did the act, did the shaving of the eye brows or whoever took all his clothes off February, he'd treat them with a tad more coldness than usual. But how would he know? could have told him I guess, but I would be surprised if they did. We were all guilty in a way. though. It was very hard to see, but I think it was there. I saw it, the coldness every once in a

That little  
be in on  
tell was there or maybe we just saw what we wanted to see. We wanted him to be awake,  
the joke.

*FINCH* *takes off the top pillow and yells in his ear.*

*FINCH* What do you have to say about that, Jake? Are you faking?

*JAKE* *makes no reaction.*

*FINCH* *picks up JACOB's knife and sings another verse of The World is Not My Home.*

*FINCH* O Lord you know  
I have no friend like you  
If Heaven's not my home  
Then Lord, what will I do?  
The angels beckon me  
From Heaven's open door  
And I can't feel at home  
In this world anymore

*In the last few lines, FINCH takes the bandaid off from earlier and with the knife makes the cut deeper across the whole palm of his hand. As she does this it sounds like there's a bird trapped in a pipe trying to get out.*

## Human Voices Wake Us

Fall 2024

ISBN: 978-1-0689134-0-2

Copyright © Taylor Marie Graham © Kevin Andrew Heslop © P. Fraxineus Tego

Typeset in Hoefler Text

Design by Rose Garden Press

Cover art and interior illustrations by Andrés Garzon Espitia. @studioandresgarzon, andresgarzon.ca

Bound in a cover of handmade recycled cotton paper with a flyleaf of kozo Thai mulberry paper

Printed on Royal Sundance 24 lb. recycled linen paper

Printing and binding by Rose Garden Press in Ontario, Canada

This book is copy # \_\_\_\_\_ out of a run of 65.

NOTES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Corporate Finch* was originally workshopped as part of Flush Ink Production's Unhinged Festival in 2022. Throughout 2023, *Corporate Finch* toured to Toronto, Stratford, Sault Ste Marie, and Kitchener with actors Rainbow Kester, Matthew Ivanoff, and Lucy Sancı. Taylor Marie Graham recognizes the generous support of the Waterloo Regional Arts Fund and the Ontario Arts Council.

*Human Voices Wake Us* was generously supported by the Ontario Arts Council.



**ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL**  
**CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO**

an Ontario government agency  
un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario





ontario, canada  
rosegardenpress.ca