

Unforgetting: A Play in Progress

A Word on the Subtitle

In an effort to acknowledge my (the author's) position and accompanying responsibility as a writer not to broadcast simulacra of experiences unknown to me, the characters in this Play in progress, set on London Township Treaty territory, have been to this point and will be at all points future, fundamentally dependent on consultation with people whose experiences are reflected in the characters this Play in progress aspires to present with dimensionality mimetic of people's lived lives.

As such, the Land Acknowledgement, which precedes the Play proper, was written in consultation with Camille Intson, Dramaturge; Skyler Franke, Executive Director of London Environmental Network; Dennis Whiteye, Manager of Community Services with Atlohsa Family Healing Services; Jennifer Chestnut, Environmental Activist and Teacher at Pearson School for the Arts; Stephen Turner, London City Councillor (Ward 11); Ruth Neilson, Indigenous Studies Graduate Student at UWO; and, Kate Wiggins, former Executive Director of Women's Community House and Anova.

To establish mimetic fidelity, the characters Who, Tego, Brother Who, Mother Who, John, and Neighbour are based on real people known to, and thoroughly consulted by, the author in such a way as to produce mimetic dialogue; and actors cast in the roles of [Clerk], [She Who], [David], [CEO], and [First-Nation Member]) will co-write, with the author, in consultation with the Casting Director and Dramaturge, the monologues offered at the end of Act One by their respective characters.

For context, character-descriptions, which involve named Greek mythological correlates, will be provided (as in this draft) to actors during the casting process.

To re-state, the draft of the Play before you is in Progress, as it shall remain. As author, I accept full responsibility for the text but will incorporate lucid critical feedback into the Play in progress, within the confines of the Play's polyvalent structure.

You are not required to complete the task, but neither are you free to desist from it.

- Pirkei Avot

Characters in Order of Appearance

WHO: 28-year-old poet of minor repute who has co-inherited his late father's condominium and thence proceeds erringly towards responsible adulthood. His cultivation of mutual suspicion with Western Univeracity and preference for art over argumentation led to his dropping out after study of theatre and literature. In his friend and ally Tego, he finds a mind kindred in theory but apart from art as a sculptor is enchanted by an architect. Apollo.

FRAXINEUS TEGO: 34-year-old theoretical philology PhD candidate of inordinant brilliance whose autism is formally unknown to Western Univeracity, where he studies, because of the prohibitive cost (\$3000) of diagnosis. Fraxineous Tego is a self-given identity which evokes his fluency in and fidelity to Classical Latin and Ancient Greek. Thinks like a genius; writes like a distinguished man of letters; speaks like a child. Brittany's ex-boyfriend from when they were in first year of undergrad. Unkempt. Alienated but stalwart. Exceedingly witty. Prometheus (or Hephaestus).

JOHN: 60-year-old sexual abuse-surviving social-justice advocate who has entered Western Univeracity to begin his undergraduate degree in social work. Circe (as humanized by Madeline Miller).

BROTHER WHO: 25-year-old restaurant-owner whose skin is too thin for this world (and so he goes about the process of thickening it and thickening it—and it would work, too, if only he could stop the thickening). Capable. Hardworking. Alcoholic. Achilles.

DAVID [BERKOWITZ]: A self-styled incel who goes to a pizza shop with friends during a long night of playing Fortnite. Regular contributor to misogynistic community boards online, principally 4chan, of some infamy. Upper-middle class. White.

MARC [LÉPINE]: A self-styled incel who goes to a pizza shop with friends during a long night of playing Fortnite. Upper-middle class. White.

ALEK [MINASSIAN]: A self-styled incel who goes to a pizza shop with friends during a long night of playing Fortnite. Upper-middle class. White.

ELLIOT [RODGER]: A self-styled incel who goes to a pizza shop with friends during a long night of playing Fortnite. Upper-middle class. White.

[NAME] (CLERK): [Kronos.]

[SHE WHO]: [Rhea.]

[NAME] (CEO): [Zeus.]

[NAME] (FIRST-NATION MEMBER): As they are.

TEGO'S MEMORY OF HIMSELF: Enrobed, Grecian, and debonaire, in considerable (and immediately humourous) contrast to his observed appearance. Zeus.

WHO'S MEMORY OF HIMSELF: Strong but subtle. Atlas.

BRIAN ACTUAL: Charismatic 27-year-old alpha and master of philosophy student at Western Univeracity whose belief in dignified comportment sometimes evokes his slight temper. A silver-spoon conversative who affects leftist politics because he is deeply in love with Brittany. Aries.

BRIAN IN TEGO'S MEMORY: "He probably doesn't even know any dead languages."

BRIAN IN WHO'S MEMORY: Gruff pseudo-intellectual programmatically resistant to revelation.

BRITTANY ACTUAL: 30-year-old alpha and 1st-year philosophy PhD student at Western Univeracity who believes that humans sometimes need reminding they are fundamentally good. Politically left of centre. Tego's ex-girlfriend from when they were first-year undergraduates. Aphrodite.

BRITTANY IN TEGO'S MEMORY: Aphrodite.

BRITTANY IN WHO'S MEMORY: Hera.

[NAME] PARTYGOER 1 ACTUAL: 27-year-old with a young child at home, free for the night.

[NAME] PARTYGOER 2 ACTUAL: Usually quiet and withdrawn but intrigued by Tego.

PARTYGOER 1 IN TEGO'S MEMORY: Flat.

PARTYGOER 2 IN WHO'S MEMORY: Precise when speaking.

PARTYGOER 1 IN TEGO'S MEMORY: Flat.

PARTYGOER 2 IN WHO'S MEMORY: Precise when speaking.

[NAME] NEIGHBOUR: Heracles.

COLE: Patroclus.

MOTHER WHO: 60-year-old psychology PhD(c) at Eastern Univeracity studying the way in which the statistics modularly elicited by police from the perpetrators and recipients of violence is informed by a fundamentally patriarchal and binary paradigm she endeavours to recast in compassionate and nuanced greys; a prepatory teacher of crisis, compassion, and self-care to paramedic students at Western Univeracity; a representative of the Office of the Children's Lawyer, which advocates for the legally voiceless. Athena.

Creative Team To Date

Writer/Director/Producer: Kevin Heslop

Dramaturge: Camille Intson

Casting/Assistant Director: TBD

Movement Coordinator: Dorit Osher

Environmental Consultant: Jennifer Chestnut

Indigenous Consultant: Dennis Whiteye

Resident Buddhist: Kate Wiggins

Greek Mythology Consultant: Keegan Bruce

Contract Lawyer: David Canton

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

KEVIN: We are gathered on the traditional territory of—No, let's try this a different way

“The Two Row Wampum (1613) is one of the earliest treaties signed between Indigenous and European nations. The treaty, signed by the Haudenosaunee and the Dutch, symbolizes an understanding of peace, friendship and respect and signifies the type of relationship they envisioned. Each nation had its own canoe travelling down the river of life and though they must travel it together, each of the nation's people, were to stay in their own canoe with their own language, customs and laws “for as long as the grass grows green, for as long as the wind blows and for as long as the sun shines”. This is the first example of a Nation-Nation treaty of respect and non-interference.” (Law Association Initiative, 2019)

“Water is critical to the lives of First Nations people (Chiefs of Ontario 2006) and an important part of their broad and holistic perspective, which recognizes the interrelationships among all aspects of Creation (McGregor 2009). The importance of water to First Nations therefore goes well beyond providing human and ecosystem services. It has traditionally been used for cleansing, in ceremonies, and to grow medicines (Lavalley 2006). Thus, to First Nations people, the degradation of water quality threatens their very survival (McGregor 2009).”

Now, the sewage system in this city is obsolete, such that, when we experience heavy rainfall, and the Antler River rises, sewage mingles with the river and flows downstream.

Where does it flow to? It flows to Oneida, to Oneida Nation of the Thames; it flows to the Chippewa of the Thames First Nation, to the Munsee-Delaware Nation such that, according to Oneida Chief Jessica Hill, Oneida should have been on a boil water advisory since 2006.

Now: In January of this year, a motion was put before City Council by Councillor Stephen Turner to—for pennies per citizen—pennies per citizen—already allocated in the previous years Environmental budget—to improve the sewage system here.

The motion was dismissed. There were four people in the observation gallery.

We are gathered on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Leni-Lunape, and Huron-Wendat Peoples.

The Nations closest in proximity to us are, to the southwest, the Oneida Nation of the Thames; the Chippewa of the Thames First Nation; and, the Munsee-Delaware Nation.

Now.

Taped to your program are three pennies, which represent the cost each citizen of this city would have incurred to incrementally rectify the cited state of this most basic requirement for life.

At the theatre's exit is an empty bowl. Beside that is a list of the names and numbers of all the city councillors on London Township Treaty territory otherwise known as London, Ontario.

Please consider symbolically giving your pennies to the empty bowl, then take your city councillor's name and number to let them know why they have your support to mobilize change.

Enjoy the show.

I.I

3:33am

SUMMARY: WHO texts TEGO; JOHN; and, BROTHER WHO.

ALARM SOUNDS.

WHO, dishevelled in bed, downstage right, is illuminated incrementally as he awakens in response to the alarm. WHO reaches for his phone, whose display is projected on an UPSTAGE CENTRE-suspended screen wide enough for the following texts, sent through Facebook messenger in real-time, to be legible to the audience. When the Facebook messages to follow arrive, we see—as translucent yellow spotlights quickly brighten and then incrementally dim over three-second intervals at the arrival of each text upon—FRAXINEUS TEGO (downstage left); JOHN (upstage left); and BROTHER WHO (upstage right). The personalized sound of each character's phones caused by incoming texts emit from the quadrant of stage in which they sleep.

TEGO sleeps alone amidst books; bowl with crusted food and a spoon atop a bookshelf.

JOHN sleeps alone with pictures of family nearby and a dog, which perks its ears at the incoming text, curled sleeping at the foot of his bed.

BROTHER WHO sleeps beside his fiancée with an empty can of Labatt Blue on his bedside-table beside wallet and car keys.

WHO *text to FRAXINIUS TEGO*: i would prefer not to

WHO *text to FRAXINIUS TEGO*: have to complete the task before me entirely by myself. as such, i humbly request that you call.

WHO *text to JOHN*: John, Apologies if I woke you. Any chance you could drop by the condo with your pick-up before dawn? If so, please call and I'll explain.

WHO *text to BROTHER WHO*: Brother. Starting on the freezer. Fuck. Drop by en route to work?

WHO waits. BROTHER WHO stirs, checks his phone, responds.

BROTHER WHO: Will do. Good luck.

WHO: *likes BROTHER WHO's text*

I.II

3:53am

SUMMARY: WHO exhumes rotten contents of freezer:

WHO gets out of bed, dresses, pockets phone, picks up and pockets two brightly-coloured foam earplugs from his bedside table. He goes to the KITCHEN, where he opens a drawer and lifts out and unspools a roll of black garbage bags whose constituents he detaches until he has eight separated bags in hand. He opens the first, then the second, then places the second inside the first, tying both bag's open end's four corners together such that he has a sturdy doubled garbage bag. He repeats this process until all eight bags are so prepared.

WHO then withdraws the first foam earplug from his pocket and rolls it into a tight cylinder, and, oblivious of comedy, inserts it deeply into one nostril. Then, the other. Then he retrieves from another drawer in the kitchen a blue surgical mask he then fastens to his face upside-down, then removes, turns, and refastens. From the same drawer as the surgical mask, WHO also retrieves a pair of plastic gloves, which he has difficulty putting on.

Then, masked and gloved and nose-plugged, carrying the four garbage bags which open absurdly with the air on which they drag, WHO walks DOWNSTAIRS. At the bottom of the stairs, he takes two deep, slowly exhaled breaths.

He takes a third breath and holds it and the following events happen in amphetaminic succession: WHO enters basement; flicks lightswitch; approaches, opens freezer; gags; half-fills first bag [Comedy is All]; shuts freezer; walks rapidly away with half-full bag; ties bag; exhales while closing basement door behind himself; lifts shirt to mouth; breathes; brings bag upstairs, outside, to curb.

Beginning to catch his breath, WHO returns downstairs; takes a slow preparatory breath; enters basement; approaches, opens freezer; gags violently; loses breath; attempts to breath through mask and elbow's crook; half-fills second bag; closes freezer; ties bag; upstairs; curb.

WHO sits (lotus?) on condo's porch and chants Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo between deeply inhaled breaths, whose number indicates great reluctance to proceed with task. WHO stands, prepares, enters basement, fills third bag in similar fashion, though with less oxygen in his body and so breathing more regularly, and puts third bag by curb. WHO fills fourth bag in similar fashion, tears half-full bag on bannister of stairwell, slips on garbage, knocks himself out. Time passes. WHO awakens to garbage and stench all over stairway. Gagging, re-bags fourth bag's contents. WHO completes task from which he was not free to desist.

I.III

4:22am

SUMMARY: WHO goes to the variety store.

WHO sees [SHE WHO], walking quickly by on the sidewalk with a bag of groceries from the variety store in hand, being followed by DAVID, MARC, ALEK, and ELLIOT.

DAVID: I didn't even tell you my name yet!

MARC: *scoffing* He didn't even tell you his name yet, bitch.

DAVID: It's [name DAVID uses on gaming platform].

ALEK: [name ALEK uses on gaming platform]. The pleasure's mine.

ELLIOT: What's the problem? Aren't you on the pill?

DAVID: I'm on the black pill.

MARC: *scoffing* I'm on the black pill too!

ELLIOT: Give us a minute.

ALEK: Yeah, he won't need more than that!

DAVID, MARC, ALEK, and ELIOT laugh as they pursue SHE WHO.

WHO registers what is happening as he watches them go by. He thinks of SHE WHO'S safety, then of his own. Self-interestedly rationalizing, WHO decides to proceed to variety store. He does so.

WHO tries door, locked. He knocks, is buzzed in.

WHO: Hi.

(CLERK): ...

WHO: Do you have Febreze?

(CLERK): Uhh... Aisle three. Or four.

WHO: Thanks.

WHO goes to aisle three and finds three types of Febreze on the top shelf, one of each of which he pins with his right arm to his torso. WHO scans the second shelf, and finds, on the third shelf, a canister of

powdered bleach, which he takes into his left hand. As he approaches the counter, a phonecall to the store comes in.

When the cashier answers the phonecall, a spotlight UPSTAGE CENTRE goes up on [SHE WHO] in her home, a bag of groceries at her right foot, her back against the interior of her front door, holding a cell phone to her ear.

(CLERK): Yes.

[SHE WHO] **breathing audibly**: Are you okay?

(CLERK): Fine.

[SHE WHO] **slowly relaxing**: Did you lock the door?

(CLERK): Yes.

[SHE WHO]: Because those four men—**catches breath**—I was wondering whether I should call the police.

(CLERK): NO. No.

[SHE WHO]: Because they—those four men—they said—they said—just—stupid things to me. And they just followed me way home after—

(CLERK): Bye.

[SHE WHO]: I left your—OK. All right. Take—.

(CLERK) **hanging up phone**: She crazy, man.

WHO: She's not crazy; she feels unsafe.

(CLERK): Not my problem.

WHO: She was just harrassed by those four guys pursuing her home.

(CLERK): I saw no four guys.

WHO: I did.

(CLERK): Good for you.

WHO: Good for me. You don't remember those four guys? One of them was carrying pizzas from next door. I saw them leave your store and follow her as she was—

(CLERK): It's not my store.

WHO: I don't give a fuck *whose* store it is. She called you—

(CLERK): Why didn't you stop them, tough guy?

WHO: Why didn't you? She called you.

(CLERK): I didn't see anyone.

WHO: Bullshit. She got home after being harassed and then called *you* to make sure *you* were okay.

(CLERK): ...

WHO: So do you think you'll be okay, tough guy?

(CLERK): That will be \$27.33.

WHO: Is the door locked for you?

(CLERK): \$22.33, Sir.

WHO: Are you safe?

(CLERK): ...

WHO: Debit.

(CLERK): Wait to tap.

WHO *tapping debit card on screen*: Brother, you need to do better.

(CLERK): Need a bag?

WHO: Do you not see the environment either?

With Febreze and the powdered bleach in his arm, WHO turns to leave.

(CLERK): Sir?

WHO *turning sharply as if to prepare for an incoming blow*: Yep.

(CLERK): Tell me: who will you see in the glass on your way out?

WHO dismisses (CLERK) as he proceeds towards the door, taking brief notice of his incoming reflection in the glass of the door as he tries the door unsuccessfully before realizing he needs to unlock the door before it will open. He does so and leaves.

I.IV

SUMMARY: Monologue sequence.

Note: With the circumstances presented thus far, the following questions are to serve as possible prompts for the actors whom, with the author and casting director, will co-write the monologues to appear in this sequence.

Each monologue, each of which will last about five minutes, will be delivered DOWNSTAGE CENTRE beneath a SPOTLIGHT.

HOUSE LIGHTS UP.

(CLERK)

- What is your reaction to WHO?
- What does it mean to be accountable?
- What experience(s) informs your ability to make violence against women invisible?
 - Possibility: Relentless childhood observation of violence against (CLERK)'s mother?
 - What were the circumstances of that violence?
 - Who perpetrated it?
 - Why?
 - Why was it necessary for you to make what you saw and heard unreal, and how have you carried that with you?
- *Exit.*

[SHE WHO]

- Where are you coming from?
- Where are you going?
- What other forms has this kind of behaviour taken in your experience lately?
- What compelled you to reach out to (CLERK) to make sure he's okay?
- What in your experience fostered self-sacrificial compassion?
- *Exit.*

MARC

- Where are you coming from?
- Where are you going?
- Why did you feel that that behaviour was appropriate?
 - Did you know it to be otherwise?
 - If so, why did you do what you did?
- What is the meaning of the “black pill”?
- What and whom do you love?
- *Exit.*

[SHE WHO]’s retort

- What do you have to say to MARC?
- Who does MARC remind you of?
- Would you offer a few words about the way in which domestic terrorism, which often festers online, is overlooked when it involves white, male, upper-middle-class settlers?
- *Exit.*

CEO OF VARIETY-STORE CHAIN

- Where have you come from?
- Where are you going?
- To what lengths have you gone to accrue your wealth?
- What does your wealth cost you?
- How do you justify it?
- What don’t we understand about you?
- *Exit.*

FIRST NATIONS REPRESENTATIVE

- May we begin with eye-contact and shared silence?
- The floor is yours.
- *Exit.*

INTERMISSION

Resident Buddhist Kate Wiggins to lead chanting during the intermission.

II.I

SUMMARY: WHO returns home; messages with TEGO; speaks with TEGO; re-enacts his experience being guided home by MOTHER WHO as a child for TEGO.

WHO returns to the condo with three containers of FEBREEZE (different scents) and one can of powdered bleach. He gags upon opening the front door, puts his arm in the crook of his elbow, dropping the can of POWDERED BLEACH. While holding the FEBREEZE bottles, he crouches to pick up the can and does so.

WHO then proceeds to the kitchen, where he sets the FEBREEZE down on the kitchen countertop as the first of the following texts appear on SCREEN UPSTAGE CENTRE. TEGO, in his quarters, appears under a SPOTLIGHT DOWNSTAGE LEFT simultaneously with the first text's arrival.

TEGO *through Facebook messenger*: how was that?

WHO, setting Febreeze and powdered bleach down in order to respond, sighs.

WHO *through Facebook messenger*: poignant (ital).

TEGO looks up and texts WHO the etymology of poignant through Facebook messenger.

WHO and TEGO mumble the etymology of poignant simultaneously.

WHO *Facebook messenger*: From pungere. To prick.

TEGO *through Facebook messenger*: i need to defer my comps. exams.

WHO *through Facebook messenger*: so do so. re mi.

TEGO *through Facebook messenger*: do i have your permission?

WHO *through Facebook messenger*: fa so.

TEGO sighs, disinterested.

WHO *through Facebook messenger*: la ti.

TEGO *through Facebook messenger*: ... dough.

WHO *through Facebook messenger*: doh, not dough.

TEGO *through Facebook messenger*: dodo.

WHO *through Facebook messenger*: send me a draft of your thesis, prick.

The spotlight on TEGO is turned out. Still visible, he closes his eyes for several seconds and then withdraws parchment and ink from his desk and writes and rewrites the sentence to follow longhand.

WHO prepares himself with NOSTRIL PLUGS, MASK, and GLOVES as before. He lodges one bottle of Febreze bottles in the small of his back, held by the waist of his pants, and slides the can of powdered bleach into his pocket. WHO begins spraying down the condo like a crazed sheriff with magnums in both hands, making shooting sounds to amuse himself as he does so. This process is theatrical and lasts for about one minute. Perhaps WHO pretends the odour are 'villains' he has been tasked to bring down.

Moving DOWNSTAIRS, WHO gags and sprays, sprays and gags. Then WHO takes a deep, preparatory breath at the door to the BASEMENT.

With a flourish, WHO opens the door and sends one of the Febreze bottles skidding across the BASEMENT FLOOR as he retrieves the POWDERED BLEACH from one of his pockets.

WHO approaches the FREEZER on one held breath and starts shaking the can of POWDERED BLEACH inside the FREEZER with increasing freneticism before uncapping and throwing the entire contents of the can into the FREEZER.

Spraying and gagging, gagging and spraying, WHO then going upstairs to and then off-stage to fetch a SMALL FAN from the beside table. WHO brings the SMALL FAN downstairs; plugs it in; and starts it swiveling. WHO stands behind the fan with his face in the crook of his elbow spraying the third bottle of FEBREEZE through its oscillant motion before he approaches FREEZER to retrieve the POWDERED BLEACH, with which, as he proceeds UPSTAIRS, he salts the carpeted stairs.

When the following text from TEGO arrives through Facebook messenger, a SPOTLIGHT DOWNSTAGE LEFT simultaneously illuminates TEGO in his quarters.

TEGO: i don't think that, on account of the unprecedented interruption of the coronavirus and its disease, that i can write, with the same fullness of support and time, the qualifying exams in this september.

WHO: Balanced. Personalize re COVID-19 and call me.

WHO returns upstairs to get a bottle of carpet-cleaner and a small scrub-brush and a small garbage bag to pick up the finer pieces of rot on the stairwell.

TEGO, *in his quarters DOWNSTAGE LEFT, calls; WHO is on the stairs where a spotlight appears when he answers.*

TEGO: Did you look at my thesis yet?

WHO: **sighing** I did and let me tell you a story.

TEGO **unimpressed**: Mhmm.

TEGO, *downstage left, turns to watch WHO as WHO begins to mimick the voices and movements of both WHO and MOTHER WHO, shifting rapidly between both, to communicate the story. Lights?*

WHO: So, when I was five years old, my mother thought that she noticed signs of autism in me because any time soccer practice was cancelled because of the weather or we couldn't find blue tablecloths for the party, or, in any way, my schedule was even millimetrically changed, I would throw a tantrum. And so she'd meet me after school, and say, Are we ready to go, Who?

WHO as his adamantly emphatic his five-year-old self: *Yes.*

WHO as MOTHER WHO: Then let's go. Okay, here we go.

WHO as MOTHER WHO *begins walking forward, jumping from an imaginary curb as he says: UP!*

Down the curb. And then walking, walking, and then we're going to go to the *left* and through the *park* and then we're going to say *hi* to the squirrels

WHO as his five-year-old self **: HI SQWEHWELS!*

WHO as MOTHER WHO: And then continue on and then we're going to get home and now, Who, I know that you like your orange juice after school.

WHO as his five-year-old self: Yes, I do. I *like* my orange juice. Please.

WHO as MOTHER WHO: But how about, *this* time, *instead* of orange juice, we try a bit of ... *grape* juice.

WHO, *mimicking his five-year-old self, is extremely sceptical and abundantly cautious. Considers.*

WHO as his five-year-old self: Is grape a kind of orange?

WHO as MOTHER WHO: It's a kind of juice.

WHO as his five-year-old self: Hmm.

WHO as MOTHER WHO: They're both a kind of fruit.

WHO as his five-year-old self: Hmm.

WHO as MOTHER WHO: I promise.

WHO as his five-year-old self: Hmm.

WHO as MOTHER WHO: So how about, today, we try a bit of grape juice?

WHO as his five-year-old self: ... Can I have it in my orange juice cup?

WHO as MOTHER WHO: *Yes* you can have it in your orange juice cup.

WHO as MOTHER WHO, recognizing a win, pretends promptly to open a fridge and retrieve grape juice and pour it in WHO's orange-juice cup and hands it to WHO's five-year-old self.

WHO as his five-year-old self reluctantly tries the grape juice. Discerns. Opens and closes mouth at its tartness.

WHO as his five-year-old self: OK but tomorrow orange juice.

WHO as MOTHER WHO: Yes, tomorrow you can have orange juice.

WHO: And then the next day, she'd meet me at the door to the school and say ...

WHO as MOTHER WHO: Are we ready to go, Who?

WHO as his five-year-old self: *Yes. Ready.*

WHO as MOTHER WHO: Then let's go. Here we go.

WHO as MOTHER WHO *begins walking forward, jumping from an imaginary curb as he says: UP!*

Down the curb. And then walking, walking, walking, and then Who?

WHO as his five-year-old self: Yeah?

WHO as MOTHER WHO: I know that we usually go to the left and then we go see the squirrels.

WHO as his five-year-old self: Yes. I like the squirrels and to say hello to them.

WHO as MOTHER WHO: You do. And then we go home for some juice.

WHO as his five-year-old self: Orange juice.

WHO as MOTHER WHO: Orange juice. But today, if you trust me, we are going to go to the right. Okay? Because this way **gestures to the right with left hand** connects on the other side of the park, and then we can go home, and we can have some orange juice in your orange juice cup.

WHO as his five-year-old self: Uhm ... *NOPE let's go see the squirrels.*

WHO as MOTHER WHO: Who ... How about if I promise to hold your hand the whole way there?

WHO as his five-year-old self considers.

WHO as MOTHER WHO: Trust me. This way connects on the other side of the park.

Then, orange juice.

WHO *as his five-year-old self considers.*

WHO as MOTHER WHO: Okay?

WHO as his five-year-old self: Okay.

WHO *as his five-year-old self raises his right hand upwards as if grasping MOTHER WHO's.*

Lights shift to indicate WHO is now speaking with TEGO directly.

WHO: We would eventually take four or five different alternate routes from school on the walk home and try chocolate milk and pomegranite juice so that I could learn, incrementally, how to live in an unpredictable world and how to learn what trust means. And Tego, Frax, as far as I know, I didn't have autism; I was just a kid who needed some predictability in his future in order to keep it together. Now, what could be more destabilizing for someone who does indeed have autism, who is of your rare kin, for a global pandemic to break out as he's preparing for his comprehensive theoretical philology exam?

TEGO: Oh, Western Univeracity doesn't know have I have autism.

WHO: What are you talking about? You told me after the party—do you remember?—at Dylan's birthday party when you did the etymology trick. Suffragicide?

II.II

SUMMARY: WHO and TEGO differently remember DYLAN'S birthday party.

During this scene, costumery may be similar but LIGHTING is different to communicate that these characters' memories function somewhat differently.

TEGO in TEGO'S MEMORY; WHO in WHO'S MEMORY; BRITTANY in TEGO'S MEMORY; BRIAN in TEGO'S MEMORY; and ten socially-distanced and enmasked PARTYGOERS flood in from UPSTAGE CENTRE LEFT to DOWNSTAGE CENTRE RIGHT as WHO IN WHO'S MEMORY; TEGO IN WHO'S MEMORY; BRITTANY IN WHO'S MEMORY; BRIAN IN WHO'S MEMORY; and, ten socially-distanced and enmasked PARTYGOERS flood in from UPSTAGE CENTRE RIGHT to DOWNSTAGE CENTRE RIGHT.

PARTYGOERS simultaneously and variously sip, speak, laugh, breathe, talk, discuss, chant, amble, question, interrogate, and laugh as ENERGETIC MUSIC plays in the background.

TEGO semi-spontaneously approaches a couple, BRITTANY and BRIAN, to introduce himself. WHO watches attentively to see how this will go.

All the dialogue to follow is spoken simultaneously by the characters on whom TEGO's and WHO's different recollections are based, such that, for example, dialogue attributed to 'TEGO' is spoken by TEGO IN TEGO'S MEMORY and TEGO IN WHO'S MEMORY simultaneously.

TEGO *to BRITTANY*: Hi! I'm Tego.

BRIAN, *unnerved, quickly glances over his shoulder in wordless communication with a fellow PARTYGOER across the room.*

BRIAN *displaying*: Brian. This is—

BRITTANY: Hi—Tego.

BRIAN: Brit, you want to grab a drink?

BRITTANY: Yep. Bye, Tego.

WHO swoops in.

WHO: If I may, before you go—Brian, was it?—would you do me the favour of please saying one word? Any word?

BRIAN: Here are three. Four. Five.

WHO: Preferrably polysyllabic.

BRIAN: Sorry, who are you?

WHO: That's right. And my friend Tego here has a gift. The key with which to access that gift is for you to say one word, preferrably polysyllabic.

BRIAN: Do you suffer from the delusion that I don't know what polysyllabic means, my friend?

BRIAN gestures "Who the fuck is this asshole?" to his friend across the room.

WHO: I have no doubt you do. You even used one. Congratulations.

PARTYGOER begin to sense tension developing.

BRIAN: Congratulations yourself, asshole.

WHO: I think you meant, Congratulate yourself. Congratulations is a noun; congratulate is—
—

BRITTANY: Serendipity.

TEGO: *riffs on the etymology of serendipity for 60 seconds*

PARTYGOER near the speaker turns the volume down.

PARTYGOERS whispering: "Did you hear that?" "What was that?" "Who is that?" "Did he just make that up?" "Is he drunk?" "What the fuck just happened?"

PARTYGOER: Again!

WHO: Say a word.

BRIAN: Contemplation.

WHO gives BRIAN a subtle but antagonizing thumbs-up.

TEGO: *riffs on the etymology of contemplation for 30 seconds*

The PARTYGOERS are still. Silence.

PARTYGOER 2: Make a word up!

TEGO: Suffragicide.

BRITTANY: Is that like suffragette?

TEGO: Yes, it's like suffragette. It's from the Latin root, suffragium, which means prayer—on another's behalf. In the middle of the millennium just past, suffragium is reinforced from

the French as *suffrage* and we've come from prayer on another's behalf to the right to vote. We have the French Revolution; the king's head rolls. *Suffragette*, suffrage and the feminine E-T-T-E suffix is a neologism—neo: new; logos: word—a neologism that comes from the UK one-hundred and twenty years ago which instantiates the claimed fundamental right of women to vote, to participate in democracy, to have some say over the way in which the society, of which they form a part, functions. *Suffragicide* combines suffrage—from the Latin for prayer on another's behalf through the French for the right to vote—with the C-I-D-E suffix, from the Latin *caedere*, which means the felling of. [Quoting from Thomas Piketty's *Capital and Ideology*] Broadly speaking, social democracy, for all its successes, has suffered from a number of intellectual and institutional shortcomings, especially with respect to social ownership, equal access to education, transcendence of the nation-state, and progressive taxation of wealth. The persistence of equivalent wealth at the disposal of the ten wealthiest people on the planet and the bottom [proportional number here] is fundamentally opposed to democracy because money informs and shapes policy outcomes and policy outcomes, so informed, maximize the retention of power amongst the powerful. {Two More Sentences} *Suffragicide* is the felling of democracy. This is a word for our twenty-first century.

The room is utterly still.

BRIAN: How much, per party, does *this fucking guy* cost to rent!?

In WHO'S MEMORY, the music turns back up; in TEGO'S MEMORY, he is lifted by BRIAN to BRIAN's shoulders and celebrated.

WHO breaks all the walls by looking at TEGO'S MEMORY and then at the audience and then at TEGO'S MEMORY and then back at the audience.

Exeunt.

II.III

SUMMARY: WHO and TEGO continue their conversation on the phone.

TEGO *wistfully*: That was a great party.

WHO: Right. And afterwards, do you remember? Brittany and Brian asked you how you did it, and—do you remember?—Brit told him.

TEGO: That was an informal diagnosis.

WHO: Multiply concurred with.

TEGO: But informal: Western Univeracity doesn't know I have autism because they only recognize a formal diagnosis which costs \$3000.

WHO: What?

TEGO: Western Univeracity only recognizes the certification issued after a formal and procedural diagnosis. That procedural diagnosis costs \$3000 and I can't afford it. When I explained to the Univeracity Registrar that I couldn't afford the diagnosis, she told me that they'd classify me as having Generalized Anxiety Disorder which she said was functionally equivalent.

WHO: What!?

TEGO: They think I'm anxious.

WHO: You are but you're also Austistic.

TEGO: Thanks.

WHO: ... Did Dean Spleen concur with that?

TEGO: Yes.

WHO: Tego ...

TEGO: I have an anxiety disorder because for that they'll take me at my word.

WHO: If you request a deferral of your comps. and they say no, we are going to take this to the Supreme Court.

TEGO: *beat*

WHO: Tego?

TEGO: Okay.

II.IV

SUMMARY: WHO, sitting on his front porch, notices NEIGHBOUR, whom he crosses the road to speak with.

II.V

SUMMARY: WHO, returning home from NEIGHBOUR's, receives a call from JOHN, whose monologue is subverted, prompting candid dialogue.

II.VI

SUMMARY: WHO receives a call from BROTHER WHO. BROTHER WHO receives a text about the death of COLE.

II.VII

SUMMARY: WHO receives a call from MOTHER WHO

The following dialogue is to be memorized and performed silently and through mime as Max Lucas's adaptation of Bon Iver's Holocene plays throughout the scene's duration.

WHO: Hello?

MOTHER WHO: Hey.

WHO: Hey, mom.

MOTHER WHO: How are Who doing?

WHO: *chuckles warmly* Well, I've just had an experience that is going to become a play. Here's what happened.

Max Lucas's adaptation of Bon Iver's Holocene begins to play.

WHO: I'm a coward and my friend is autistic.

MOTHER WHO: *beat*

WHO: *beat*

MOTHER WHO: *beat*

WHO: That's the play.

MOTHER WHO: That's a short play.

WHO: *Laughs loudly* So, Tego asked me for permission to defer his comprehensive exams from september to february. I tell him, Of course you have permission, Tego. Let me tell you a story. Mom, do you remember when I would throw a tantrum any time my schedule was even millimetrically changed and so you put grape juice in my orange juice cup?

MOTHER WHO: Those were the best days of my life.

WHO: And they constituted the foundation of my ability to write this play, Mom. That and that dad was catching the bad guy in Niagara. I told Tego, And, Tego as far as I know, I didn't. What could be more destabilizing to our rare kin than a global pandemic? Mention your autism and the pandemic and they'll defer your comprehensive exams.

MOTHER WHO: Of course.

WHO: Well, unfortunately not of course, because Western Univeracity only recognizes a formalized autism diagnosis which costs \$3000.

MOTHER WHO: Shame.

WHO: He is therefore classified by that institution as having generalized anxiety disorder because for that they'll take you at your word. I told him I'll take that to the supreme court of this country.

MOTHER WHO: That's my boy.

WHO: Apple meet tree.

MOTHER WHO: But you may need to get a law degree to do that.

WHO: *grunts with disgust, sighs* Maybe. So anyway, the power must have gone out because the freezer in dad's basement turned off and, because I was a coward, I didn't deal with it. Then the odour started to rise. So I had to bag the rotten contents of the freezer and put it by the curb. *coughs*

MOTHER WHO: *yucks*

WHO: It was putrid. And then I stand a post to ensure that skunks didn't interpret the rot as a beautifully wrapped feast and call their friends. This will be the central metaphor of the play: there is rot in the basement of our society and we need to be responsible enough to exhume it, because the stench has become intolerable, and everybody knows it. The epigraph of the play—it's just coming to me now—the epigraph of the play will be: You are not required to complete the task. But neither are you free to desist from it.

MOTHER WHO: That's good. Where's that from?

WHO: It's from the Perkei Avot. And what colour are skunks? It's binary thinking—black, white; us, them; him, her—that will feast on the rot we must exhume. We must, therefore, stand a post. It happened just like this. I went to the variety—The putrifaction in the basement is colonial, white, cis, ableist, eco-cidal, suffragicidal patriarchy.

MOTHER WHO: Suffracidal. Like Suffragette?

WHO: Like suffragette. The “-cide” suffix comes from the Latin caedere which—

MOTHER WHO: —Who.

WHO: —means—It means the felling of democracy. Or—

MOTHER WHO: *cautioning* Who ...

WHO: It means that when someone is given the right to vote, their fundamental right to exist in society is recognized. They are seen as of equal value. And whether they cast that vote in-person or through the mail or by blinking their eyelids they claim participation. One person, one vote. That's suffrage. Suffragi -cide means that that right has been and is being taken from a marginalized majority. Suffragicide.

MOTHER WHO: That's a good one. I hadn't heard of it before.

WHO: Tego invented it.

MOTHER WHO: Really?

WHO: He really did.

MOTHER WHO: That Tego.

WHO: You know what I mean? And but then the condo was patrilineally inherited, right? From father to son? What image comes to mind when you think of The Father and the Son?

MOTHER WHO: Don't crucify yourself, Who.

WHO: I'm drinking the clean water I have access to; I quit smoking this morning and I've started chanting (thanks to Kate). I won't crucify myself. But that myth of patrilineal succession, from the father to the son, has been with us for two thousand—

MOTHER WHO: —But Who, you don't have any sisters. The condo couldn't have gone to one.

WHO: I have several billion sisters but that's not the point. The point is that it's certainty in that fable and its concomitant empire—from the catalytic *snap*Romans through the Portuguese and the Spanish and the French (all Latinate languages) through the blend of the indigenous German and the colonizing French we call English to the Turtle Island we call the Americas, we call Canada—that lands us in London, Ontario.

MOTHER WHO: All right.

WHO: It is. I went to the variety store. A woman called. She had been harrassed and followed home at 4 a.m. by four men the cashier, after he called her crazy, claimed not to have seen. I have seen them. And she called the variety store to make sure he was okay. What would it take to allow that putrid behaviour to become invisible. Mom, I am overseeing the putrid exhumed even now. I want to hear it from him. I want to hear what that experience was like for the woman who was followed home. I want to hear from one of the men who stalked her. And she will have the last word. I want to hear from the CEO of the corporation that owns that variety store. Then we sit—in silence—before one of the people on whose territories we'd gathered to watch the play. End of act one.

MOTHER WHO: People are going to need to speak to someone after this.

WHO: They will. Act two. I meet the neighbour across from Dad's condo. He's a firefighter. He was traumatized. He can't drive anymore. I tell him I've abnegated my responsibility to become an adult for too long such that I don't have my driver's license at 28-years-old but that will change: I will get my license and drive us both to therapy.

MOTHER WHO: And now you have two men whose relationship is founded in going to therapy.

WHO: You see what I mean?

MOTHER WHO: In exhuming the rot in their basements.

WHO: It writes itself. This happened. Then John calls. We chat, and then he starts into a monologue about how he was traumatized by the clergy. But it's a monologue I can hear and we start talking about it.

Max Lucas's adaptation of Bon Iver's Holocene concludes.

WHO: I had no idea—it becomes dialogue.

MOTHER WHO: He hasn't told many people about that.

WHO: You knew?

MOTHER WHO: I knew.

WHO: Did he mention about the report cards—

MOTHER WHO: “How would you feel in a classroom two days after—”

WHO: You knew. And so then Brother WHO calls. And he receives—Mom, I don't know if you know, but last night—

MOTHER WHO: Your brother just left. He's going to be with his friends. It's okay.

WHO: You knew about Cole too!? Well, here's something you don't know: this play will be the synthesis of your attentive compassion to the unwell and the dispossessed and the facilitation of exhumation—

MOTHER WHO: Who ...

WHO: This will be a testament to you, to how you taught me how to live with compassion in an unpredicable world, and to Dad, who absorbed the worst of the world's unpredictability in pursuit of justice.

MOTHER WHO: *beat*

WHO: And the play will conclude just like this. The play's epigraph will be—it's coming to me even as we speak—“You are not required to complete the task. Neither are you free to desist from it.”

MOTHER WHO: Who are not required to complete the task.

WHO: *laughs* And then you and I will be speaking after you called just to check in and I will tell you I love you and you will speak the play's last words.

MOTHER WHO: I love you, too.

FIN

Note to Reader:

The person dealing heroine passes a small baggie of heroine and their phone number for free and says, “This is free. If you want more, call this number, day or night.”

To invert this paradigm, I wish to provide one hour of therapy, on a sliding scale, to every member of the audience of this play in the interest of facilitating their own processes of exhumation.