

Lushland by Alex Aguirre

SETTING

Lushland, a purely psychedelic dimension where nearly anything is possible. It is covered in surreal paintings and aquatic imagery. There are many objects on stage that the characters frequently interact with. Lushland can be entered by conjuring a wormhole through a series of bizarre mental exercises. Arthur knows these methods and has taught them to Stewart, Astrid, and Quantum Soldier. The atmosphere of Lushland is hallucinogenic and causes the characters to trip.

CHARACTERS

STEWART: A philosopher who specializes in phenomenology (the study of consciousness and perception). Arthur is his mentor and friend of many years. Recently broken up with Astrid. Expert at the waltz. Wears a suit.

ASTRID: A surrealist painter who studied philosophy under Stewart and was formerly infatuated with him. Obsessively listens to symphonic music. Wears a stylish turtleneck.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: A freelance soldier/scientist from a distant dimension. Contracted by Arthur to accompany Stewart and Astrid on their quest into Lushland. Dressed like he's in a rock band.

BEATRICE: A female microgod, inhabitant of Lushland. Covered in sparkles. Extraordinarily elegant.

VARG: A male microgod, inhabitant of Lushland. Covered in moss. Skinny and twitchy.

OCTOPUS DOLPHIN: A highly intelligent alien creature, inhabitant of Lushland. Looks like a cross between an octopus and a dolphin.

ARTHUR: A philosopher/magician that has the ability to travel to different dimensions. Serves as a guide for Stewart, Astrid, and Quantum Soldier.

ARTHUR: (In hand puppet form.) Antithetical persons linger in oceans unocéaned. Glorious holdings of optical mirth entice the deluded quantum soldier who breaks off from his self-assigned union with the dustdoomed gatherers of his hellish holocene to join an eager entourage in a journey truly weird. Following my blessing, my student Stewart, modern philosophy's greatest hope, swiftly yanked my

ratty Hegelian spellbook from a nondescript knapsack and handed it to Astrid, a sunstreamed sweetling otherly blessed by natural magnetism. I drank absinthe and spat on my defaced bust of Kant as they studied the way to the realm I'd been telling them of. We cynics (I am post cynic but still punish my sin with the inclusion) disregard keys because the doors appear keyless to the numb-hearts that weave nothings out of inherited shadows. Beyond the subastral prison is Lushland, the souldirected realm.

The shell-born abode is the feminine glow made immaculate structure. Dreamspeaking microgods clad in oceanstuff renew their feverish loyalty to the boon around them with each spatial shifting of the sporadic mindstuff classically labeled Time. We won't speak of space, for it will be generated and vanish in front of you, wordlessly, but you will perceive words, because that's the only way you'll be able to bear witness to the cosmic thrust. My students, Stewart and Astrid, as well as Quantum Soldier, who I paid in potions and herbs, were invited to aid me in my investigation of this area that I ventured into when I was just beginning my training as a phenomenological sorcerer, And so, I conducted my magic in austere defiance to the puckish protestations of the as yet unrevealed entities, who believed these earthspawned tryhards could not handle the intensity of the trip. Why did I not come with them as a mentor and guide? Lushland is freakier than any potent tome of magic or philosophy, and I am too old to trip balls.

(BEATRICE is holding VARG lovingly in her arms.)

BEATRICE: An amphibious child done up in moss

Shouts into a metallic sunflower:

“Parsimony! Meanness! Miserly muckage!

The child is averted to constructions unnatural, but the child does not see.

Past the false form.

(VARG gently howls.)

The billiards table is properly set.

The monsters have had their coffee.

Liquid prayers leak from the dome.

The clerks scratch away at their ledgers.

A slender woman skips through a stone garden.

A microscopic cactus dangling from her neck.

The oily string having been retrieved

From a goblin's ancient associations.

How do I come to know these things?

The letters in the lake tell me so.
I survey them after billiards.
It's almost always a loss.
And now I'm afraid to win.
Because then the letters might go away.
I get the feeling that the letters show pity on me.
I notice such moral predispositions
In the hearts and hands of many mystics.

A foray into a fantastically foreign schedule:
Hermetic tabulations.
The violins have been awakened.
By a lioness.
In a wooden dress.
Stupendous.

(ASTRID and STEWART enter Lushland and spot BEATRICE and VARG.)

VARG: Blueprints for a glowing horizon. (He gently steps out from Beatrice's embrace.)

BEATRICE: Welcome to Lushland.

VARG: Oysters.

ASTRID: Thank you. We're very excited to be here.

BEATRICE: And we're spun into silver to hear it.

STEWART: (In a whisper to Astrid.) I was expecting a more cryptic welcome.

BEATRICE: Expectations have no place in Lushland. Your journey will be much smoother if you let go of what you think might happen.

VARG: Oysters of ignorance.

BEATRICE: How is Arthur?

STEWART: Deteriorating violently. Misery has consumed him. He has not left his bed in months.

BEATRICE: That must hurt. I know your bond runs deep. It seems that he has let gravity get the better of him.

VARG: The spine of the thought vibrates in its own vacuum.

(QUANTUM SOLDIER enters and looks around for a few moments before finally exhaling thick plumes of smoke from his nostrils.)

ASTRID: Always playing the alpha.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Alpha?

VARG: Angular acceleration.

STEWART: Arthur said he debriefed you on how to make contact with him when we arrived, so we could conduct the investigation more thoroughly. How'd he say to contact him?

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Something about webs. What kind of webs, he didn't specify.

STEWART: Now that's not exactly helpful, is it?

ASTRID: Arthur said that these two would help us contact him if we needed his advice.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: And here I was hoping to get away with not speaking to them.

ASTRID: Why wouldn't you want to speak to them?

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Those vibes. Don't you feel them? Vibes would spook a centaur.

STEWART: The sense of mystery that surrounds them is certainly uncanny.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: How'd you get to be so intuitive Sherlock Homonculus?

STEWART: That reference has no meaning for me, I really shouldn't have to keep reminding you of that.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: I guess you're not such a literary type after all.

STEWART: We're from different dimensions. Sherlock Holmes does not exist in mine.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Have I really brought up Sherlock Holmes that many times?

STEWART: Enough times.

ASTRID: Are you trying to say that Stewart isn't sensible?

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Winner winner, pataformal dinner!

VARG: No stomach machinates correctly for gastro-systemics spawn somatic damnations.

STEWART: Oh yes, that reminds me, is there any food around here?

BEATRICE: Irrelevant.

VARG: Prim pocket empty no more!

BEATRICE: The suckling you've become will listen to waves and feed on moments.

ASTRID: Defend your disgust.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Okay sure, he knows his books. He's got me there. But once you get past the books, what else is there?

ASTRID: Books point to the essence everything. Or at least, that's what I try to tell myself. What else is there? Nothing. Without books you've got nothing.

STEWART: I will hold my tongue.

(BEATRICE and VARG hold their hands in the meditative position and begin humming.)

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Do you hear that?

VARG: Transmission galactic given. The dolphins and the octopi have reunited in a metaphysical cave. Fins and tentacles and water. Counting the levels. Reveling in multidimensional love. Sound notches and the swimming frogs. Shapes for all thought models. The fountain of being has been created in the mouth of Time. Special stylings. Velvet in my eyes. Bend your expectations. Grab for what's moist.

(VARG's transmission boosts everyone's high.)

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Music from the journeyman. Sending us on our way.

STEWART: The maze has begun to melt. And so I go, fading.

ASTRID: The slant has been glowing for many moments now.

BEATRICE: Vocabulary of filth, press yourself into my palm. Allow me to cut through this celestial storm.

VARG: Warning! A piece of a galaxy has been bathed in cosmic swampwater!

ASTRID: Swimming in a pool birthed by the sublime.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Extractions.

STEWART: Of ignorance?

ASTRID: I've been able to stay here. Regardless of what's been... happening.

VARG: Wooden fences. Growing teeth.

STEWART: I've been afraid of this moment.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: I'm pretty sure seventeen hexagons just demonstrated your fear to me. It was a gnarly affair.

STEWART: What a river we've been trapped in!

ASTRID: I am a mother to my own ignorance.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Blasted introspection. Contaminating our spheres.

STEWART: Calm your exclamation. Feed your anger into one of *these* spheres. (Indicating spheres on the set.) Watch for the result.

ASTRID: Changing the wave after the background collapses.

VARG: A loop! Water makes tears. The cycle is silver.

BEATRICE: The dialectical fish are circling us.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Realities slowly separating.

STEWART: Stunning mathematics.

ASTRID: The room is starting to freshen itself.

BEATRICE: Windows and sparrows. Many diversions. Blood of the inversion. Listening to the flow.

VARG: Counting the steps toward oblivion. The jelly of the floor. Spatial dimensions. Loading the bowl. Language of threads. Electric twist. Transforming into many blue selves. Clouds with glowing outlines.

BEATRICE: Celestial notes. Dropping heavy boxes. Grids and teeth and horizons and all that makes me fuzzy. The galactic highway imagined. Abstract architecture of the self.

VARG: Triangles again. Alien fractals.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Oh fuck.

STEWART: Composure.

ASTRID: The maps have been painted!

VARG: Triangles.

BEATRICE: Forgive his fixation. I see that you're clairvoyant.

ASTRID: Perhaps.

BEATRICE: Do not be shy, my girl. Flaunt your abilities. A voice calls me and the message says: Tumbling! Mossy graveyard. Ghosts of all strings. Mosaic of souls. Pristine vocabulary. Juicy extrapolation. Windows and velvet. Precise splitting. Hyperspace functioning. Speed and algorithms. Plump thoughts. Glossy abstractions. Every sound a geometry for your new life. Warm face.

VARG: Moments have shrunk themselves. Logic has been shelved. Purple horizon. Digressions pepper the field of my thought. (Dances.)

ASTRID: The intention lost... here I am a person flailing.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: I'll speak in the disposition of Stewart so as to return you to reason (Acting like STEWART.) Remind yourself of what we're supposed to be doing here. The moment is being manipulated by our attitude toward it. If we surrender to the wave we won't be able to accomplish our task.

STEWART: I wouldn't say that, pretender. We won't get to the truth by avoiding it.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: (In his normal voice.) The truth plays hard to get.

STEWART: Ha. Although that is an understatement, we're going to want to be fully submerged in the moment in order to yield more properties.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: (As STEWART.) There are enough properties as it is. You just have to focus on one.

STEWART: And what about figuring out how they work as a whole? How about that?

QUANTUM SOLDIER: That's impossible. There are too many things to consider.

STEWART: You really think there isn't a unifying thought?

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Wall of mermaids.

(Lights turn yellow.)

VARG: Fallen starbeam?

ASTRID (Clearly in a hypnotic trance.) My appetite is beginning to simmer.

BEATRICE: Terrible tidings. Insidious insert.

(Lights turn back to blue.)

QUANTUM SOLDIER: (In his normal voice.) Explain that.

STEWART: You're going to have to give me time.

(VARG and BEATRICE start blaring like sirens.)

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Now *that* you can unify. Learning by spending time on something isn't the way things work here. Either you get it or you don't.

STEWART: Are you saying I'm not up for the task?

QUANTUM SOLDIER: I'm saying that you should know in your gut if you are or not. And if you are, you're going to need time.

(VARG and BEATRICE cease blaring and QUANTUM SOLDIER returns back to his own personality.)

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Let that one sit for a little.

STEWART: Noted.

ASTRID: The pond is reflecting the hope. The pond is reflecting the hope.

BEATRICE: Merging waters. Lucky frog.

VARG: Epistemological crickets.

ASTRID: Interesting one.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Varg is channeling Stewart. That doesn't look good.

STEWART: I am an apple in a shadowy lane. I am the vision that propels itself onto your orange bra strap.

ASTRID: Are you talking about me?

STEWART: Why did you have to threaten to leave my side?

ASTRID: May I speak bluntly?

STEWART: Please.

ASTRID: You wanted me too much.

STEWART: I couldn't help myself.

ASTRID: You have to be more subtle next time.

STEWART: I don't understand why you always have to do this to me.

ASTRID: Because you have to learn.

STEWART: And what happens once I learn?

ASTRID: Then you can have me.

STEWART: Oh then I can have you? Once I've gone through all the treacherous courses?

ASTRID: Yes!

STEWART: And how long is that going to take?

(VARG and BEATRICE blare like sirens again.)

ASTRID: You never know when to stop, do you?

STEWART: I'll leave a hotel key in your thoughtspheres.

ASTRID: Charming. Subtle. Smoky. (Spits.) Thoughtless.

STEWART: We require a shift! Have mercy on our hearts!

(VARG and BEATRICE cease blaring.)

BEATRICE: The dictionary of energy. Have you encountered it?

QUANTUM SOLDIER: That's Stewart's territory.

STEWART: Arthur has mentioned it. It's a concept in esotericism.

ASTRID: Arthur wrote a paper on it. It is a kind of taxonomy of modes of being that transmits the given mode to the reader.

BEATRICE: Exact light.

STEWART: He did? I've read all of Arthur's papers and I-

ASTRID: He wanted to keep it secret.

STEWART: I see.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Do you have the dictionary of energy here?

BEATRICE: If you wish it, it will be.

QUANTUM: Cute.

VARG: Microgods of hyperdimensional mathematics, send forth the dictionary of energy.

(VARG reaches towards the ceiling and the dictionary of energy descends into his hands.) The fields are fertile.

STEWART: I hope there's no end to what they show us.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Yeah. Because it gets you loaded.

ASTRID: Oh?

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Look at his pupils. (ASTRID inspects STEWART's pupils.)

ASTRID: Damn.

STEWART: Apologies for my biological alteration, I just witnessed an ancient book of magical knowledge materialize out of thin air-

BEATRICE: The air is not thin.

VARG: The air is its own possibility.

STEWART: Right. Apologies.

VARG: Insubordinance detected.

BEATRICE: Infinity weeps! (VARG and BEATRICE speak in the language of OCTOPUS DOLPHIN.)

BEATRICE: Ooden.

VARG: Mirgen blerben.

STEWART: My hands have been melting. Just as I expected.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: I'm glad you've been enjoying yourself.

ASTRID: A snake with impossible eyes just swallowed my ego.

BEATRICE: Deserts on my tongue. Hiding the compass.

VARG: Cabins and fire.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: (In a trance.) Locational analysis. (Snaps out of it.) What the fuck?

BEATRICE: He has detected the matrix. Hand him the treasure.

(Varg hands QUANTUM SOLDIER a bouquet.)

VARG: Beatles in my heart.

STEWART: Articulating the corners of the void.

ASTRID: The event has consumed you.

STEWART: I just wish we were somewhere more familiar.

ASTRID: You do? You've fallen to embrace the foreign, haven't you?

STEWART: I see you and my renewed sight with you as its motor has wiped clear the canvas of strivings I may have painted prior to-

ASTRID: I am painter. You philosopher. Clarity clears, and we are here.

VARG: tactically tied, or rather, dissolving to welcome other birds into the heartfoxed equation.

ASTRID: Other birds?

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Do you have anything to drink?

VARG:(Pulls sheet off a picture of a goblet) Gothic counterpart.

STEWART: Owls in my thoughtspheres.

BEATRICE: We must weep. We must weep and ride the bicycles into the swamp.

STEWART: Astrid, can you examine my hands for a moment?

ASTRID: That is one possibility you shouldn't count on.

BEATRICE: Ribbons bathed in an alligator's DNA.

ASTRID: All of this is beginning to taste the same.

STEWART: I'm starting to be here again.

VARG: Analysis of the void. Drinking tea in the garden.

STEWART: What void?

BEATRICE: The one that rests on the horizon.

VARG: Piecing it all together as the world crumbles.

ASTRID: Which world?

VARG: All worlds. Watch them crumble. (VARG transmits mental video to ASTRID through Hegelian sign language.)

ASTRID: That was extremely blue.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Lexicon of removals, paint me a different shade of

Lovely.

VARG: Hexagons!

ASTRID: Where did that come from?

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Ignore it. It's not me.

STEWART: I'm thirsty.

ASTRID: Skipping the bridge. Swallowing the boundaries. Chemicals on the floor.

STEWART: My face has turned into a chart.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: At least we're starting to be honest.

VARG: Portal forest.

BEATRICE: Visit your nearest one.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Freezing the perimeter.

STEWART: Soul traps.

ASTRID: Digressions.

Gluings myself to the wind.

Mirrors in my mouth.

Velvet on the highway.

VARG:

Sticky associations.

Obsidian arrow.

Skipping the explanation.

Opaque residue.

BEATRICE:

I play the cyborg to remain organic.

ASTRID: You are nature and I came to be healed.

(BEATRICE hands ASTRID a blue fractal.)

BEATRICE: Boxes of thought.

Colors and directionality.

Pausing the flow.

The shiny features of wormholes.

Sacred scissors.

ASTRID: There's something about being handed a fractal that just tickles me silly.

Skipping past a patch of grids.

Ocean of the self.

Responding to the waves of being that splash into me.

Ontological jiggle.

Flames of infinity.

Splitting tension.

Triangulated sorrow.

Ancient notes.

Seemingly random.

The fence grew teeth and I fell down.

There's something scrappy about the way I look into the abyss.

Layers upon layers of soulstuff.

Mapping out the tonal charge of the atmosphere.

Organic maze.

Light pouring through her palms.

Whimpering with a handkerchief.

Greys and blues.

Greys and blues.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Botanical confusion.

Flailing mechanics.

Celestial focus.

Tiles of memory.

Melting!

Lobster of the holiest quadrant.

Words that sparkle.

Hand me that stepladder.

VARG: (Removes image from behind clinamen and gives it to BEATRICE who in turn gives it to QUANTUM SOLDIER.) This is your brain.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: (Takes the image in amazement.)

Stolen cloud. Diamonds of the deep. (Showing the image to Astrid.) Grey suns. Warm cylinders.

STEWART: Making sense of the middle. Discarding the rest. A

labyrinthine moment. Embedded in the flux. It's all coming back. It's all coming back.

ASTRID: (Varg hands her the dictionary of energy.) What use are books

if there's no singular God?

STEWART: Their use becomes maximized once we realize there is no God. Knowledge takes God's place.

BEATRICE: Knowledge and intuition.

STEWART: Teach me about intuition.

BEATRICE: Have you ever held a seashell in your hand that was still wet from the ocean?

STEWART: Once or twice.

BEATRICE: Try it again, once you descend.

STEWART: I'm going to descend?

BEATRICE: We all will.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Ain't that the truth.

STEWART: Why a seashell?

BEATRICE: Seashells understand that everything is and isn't.

VARG: Something that human beings fail to do.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: To our credit, we aren't given much choice. We can't go around trapped between realms.

BEATRICE: Why not?

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Because babe, we don't have the luxury to be indecisive.

ASTRID: You could've fooled me. What's more indecisive than a human being?

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Squirrels.

ASTRID: Fair.

STEWART: Selves are changing.

Colors are ignored by the shapes they came from.

Fractals dripping from my companion's chin.

Shaving the demons that pace around the pyramid.

The microgods speak to the lushness embedded in the holograms that
slide out from under my ontological display but the lushness has not yet found its response.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: You're quite the connoisseur of poetic darkness.

STEWART: Am I detecting a compliment or do my ears fail me?

BEATRICE: It wouldn't be the first time they've failed you. We've been
sounding the alarm all the while.

ASTRID: What alarm?

VARG: The alarm of the Absolute.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Doesn't ring a bell. Why don't you enlighten us?

BEATRICE: We'll have to change your perceptual rendering.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Haven't you been doing that this entire-

(VARG begins to blare like a siren.)

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Duration! (VARG stops.)

(BEATRICE and VARG perform Hegelian sign language as the eyelids of

ASTRID, STEWART, and QUANTUM SOLDIER all flutter frantically..)

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Woah.

ASTRID: Damn.

STEWART: Sweet.

BEATRICE: Your astonishment pleases us but you must do away with it so that you can process what is to come.

STEWART: Consider it gone.

VARG: Don't fool yourself. One must work hard to have astonishment abolished.

(Celestial statues are lowered down onto the set.)

STEWART: Blood of all hues. Spilling onto the hovering idea.

VARG: Painting the ladders. Shucking the seconds. Melting the space.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Yeah. Ever since I did acid, I don't see objects either, I just see the space they take up.

BEATRICE: Golden tears. Bound breasts. A leap detected.

VARG: Broken mirror. Inky stare.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Call me a biscuit, can't argue with you there.

STEWART: Sack of marbles. Bag of mildewy memories.

BEATRICE: Dear Stewart. As fresh as you intend to be, your weak grasp of spontaneity dooms you to repeat worthless illusions in the attempt to be free of those... soul traps, as you call them.

ASTRID: Mortality is a wayward guide. We cyclone around the center. We nudge the perimeter.

STEWART: I've never questioned the way my lovers frown as they leave Me.

ASTRID: Mysteries of the soul... delete yourselves.

STEWART: I am a grid dipped in lime. (VARG places sheet back on picture of goblet.)

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Well. I guess we can keep on like this. I've got a pretty good high going. As long as we're making some progress.

STEWART: Progress is always made when the air is full of hallucinogenic substances.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Arthur swore he wouldn't give me another gram of this stuff if we muck around with nothing to show for it.

ASTRID: Trust the flow.

STEWART: Yes. The progress is within us. The pen will record the happening when it feels like it.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: One, pens don't have feelings. Two, Arthur want scientific evidence. Not barely factual pontification.

STEWART: Pontification. A word used by non-intellectuals to demean intellectuals. Interesting.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Don't you mean boring? I feel like every time you use interesting it means boring.

VARG: Do you think they are ready to meet Octopus Dolphin?

BEATRICE: Certainly not. (Makes humming noises.)

VARG: Oh lalala. Oh lalala. Keys.

(OCTOPUS DOLPHIN enters.)

OCTOPUS DOLPHIN: Ooden.

VARG: Ooden.

BEATRICE: Misten frum?

OCTOPUS DOLPHIN: Inverted piano. Privati altimoray.

BEATRICE: Stairs.

STEWART: What strand of swampwater has just twirled me into a falling galaxy?

VARG: Sideways does the tale deliver itself.

BEATRICE: Pinning the thought to the ocean.

OCTOPUS DOLPHIN: Mirgen blerben.

VARG: Oh!

STEWART: May I let my soul swim within your song?

VARG: Grotesque but permissible.

BEATRICE: Permissible but unforgiveable.

STEWART: And so I will put on my swimsuit.

(STEWART folds his hands across his chest and closes his eyes and once

OCTOPUS DOLPHIN realizes this, floats over and begins humming.)

QUANTUM SOLDIER: What's happening?

STEWART: Octopus Dolphin is teaching me about... estosquambasis.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Which is?

STEWART: The art of melting.

OCTOPUS DOLPHIN: Mirgen blerben. Mirgen blerben. (Purple lights flood the stage.)

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Oh damn.

BEATRICE: Oh damn. Is right.

STEWART: Octopus Dolphin, why must you tickle me so? (Demonic laughter.)

ASTRID: The body is the bucket that collects the before-time.

STEWART: Romantic excursions. Opaque rain.

ASTRID: Your insinuations dry my tongue.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Octopus Dolphin is turning everything purple.
Why?!

OCTOPUS DOLPHIN: Mirgen blerben.

ASTRID: I left my velvet underwear in a sphere.

STEWART: May I retrieve it?

ASTRID: Seal your expectation.

STEWART: Message received. My cabinets are smiling.

VARG: Level swiveled. Moisture made.

OCTOPUS DOLPHIN: Think of me not. Think of me not. Blerben freekan.
Blerben fripped.

(BEATRICE and VARG engage in Hegelian sign language.)

ASTRID: They want you to remove Octopus Dolphin from your
consciousness. They say it is too much for you to process at once.

STEWART: As reluctant as I am to do such a thing, I will respect their
suggestion. (He strokes OCTOPUS DOLPHIN.) Inverted piano. Hint
registered.

OCTOPUS DOLPHIN: Ooden.

STEWART: Misten frum.

(OCTOPUS DOLPHIN exits.)

(VARG performs Hegelian sign language and QUANTUM SOLDIER begins spinning.)

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Why?

VARG: To assist contemplation.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Logical.

STEWART: Gather meaning. Arthur sent me here... to gather meaning. (VARG holds up the dictionary of energy and invites STEWART to peruse it, which he does.)

VARG: The table of esoteric terminology.

STEWART: No feeling. I've been going through life with no feeling.

ASTRID: You're forgetting the cubes that have tickled your journey.

STEWART: Broken fluff.

BEATRICE: You have a knack for leaving all your soulstuff on the table.

STEWART: (Horrified)

Vile manuscript.

Polluting my intention.

(Walks away from the dictionary of energy.)

Weighing me down with crooked glimpses of a false past.

I cannot let it go. (Walks towards it again and kneels.)

I must weep on its odious cover.

Bathed in black.

A broken hand beating against a scarred chest.

Another symptom of diseased ambition.

Insert your coffin into my pupils.

I will absorb your own relationship with the nothing.

Bond with me in this rejection of progress.

Let us be anchored by our wicked past forever.

(BEATRICE draws him towards the revolving octagon through Hegelian sign language.)

Avalanche of daggers.

Hurricane of sick hearts.

Visualize all that is coated in oblivion.

(VARG guides STEWART into the octagon)

ASTRID: Throw my memories into the mixing pot. Let my history taste

the turmoil so that I may be rid of it myself!

STEWART: Now shift.

Now let it all shift.

The thought is enough.

Store this bastardized history in your purse.

Pluck the shadows from your veins.

Shed the doubt.

Reverse the ditch.

(Octagon stops and VARG escorts STEWART out of it.)

Forgive and make meaning.

Edit the way the mirror finds you.

ASTRID: Do less and you will conquer.

BEATRICE: Glide.

ASTRID: Glide and conquer.

BEATRICE: Exquisite improvement.

VARG: Moving past the point but keeping a lizard wrapped around the mouth of it.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: The mouth of the point?

VARG: A query that quakes with fear.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Not fear. Boredom. With your-

STEWART: Literary liberty? Of course that would be the thing that bores you. (*QUANTUM SOLDIER marches up to Stewart and trips him. Stewart hits the floor with a thud and QUANTUM SOLDIER drags him across the stage by his collar.*) Stop struggling and accept your physical inferi-

STEWART: (*To Varg*) Role reversal! Novis elefractay!

VARG: Insolent inverse. Octura neutralis. (*Performs Hegelian sign Language. STEWART wriggles free and does to QUANTUM SOLDIER exactly what was done to him.*)

STEWART: Symphonic top hat! Residue of a red world. Twirling me into a cave. Always. That is your activity always.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Bring the balance back. Stop lioning out like this.

It's demented for a pathetic pontificator to do combat with a quantum soldier!

STEWART: And what kind of someone do you falsely crown your being with? Pig! Bleeding bug!

VARG: Potion gushing from a faraway tank.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: A kind of someone that makes sure that pricks like you are buried deeper into the nothing than anything else swallowed up by this rolling game. (STEWART begins to sob and releases QUANTUM SOLDIER.)

VARG: Rainbow fractal tucked inside a swamp bunny's brain.

(STEWART and QUANTUM SOLDIER pass out on the floor.)

ASTRID: Now that the false alphas are asleep, we can indulge in higher matters. Beatrice, would you like to join me in a piece influenced by my favorite author that exists in my original dimension?

BEATRICE: Of course darling. Literature has always elevated my gaze.

VARG: Snails.

BEATRICE: I toss flowers onto your trail.

VARG: Obedient as onyx is in statues freshly known.

ASTRID: I created the script the evening Stewart and I ended our romantic rendezvousing.

BEATRICE: In your mind?

ASTRID: Not particularly. It appeared on paper like magic. The only scrap of paper I've brought with me. Let's read it together.

BEATRICE: No need. I can download it into my consciousness and recite from there.

ASTRID: I love that you can do that, but I'd rather us read it off the physical version, if that's alright with you.

BEATRICE: Perfect violets.

ASTRID: I'm glad. (ASTRID reaches into the pockets of her dress and removes a piece of paper.) You read for Tulsa, and I'll read for Silvia.

VARG: I am covered in moss. Why do you think that is? Is it because Nature is an illusion?

ASTRID: Let's begin (Holds the paper up so that her and Beatrice can read it.) It has been winter since yesterday.

BEATRICE: Don't think I haven't noticed.

ASTRID: The horizon's as still as ever.

BEATRICE: You didn't expect it to move?

ASTRID: Yes. I did. Didn't you?

BEATRICE: Well. Yes. I did. But I didn't expect you to know about it.

ASTRID: Expect me to know about your expectation?

BEATRICE: It sounds silly when you say it like that.

ASTRID: How should I say it?

BEATRICE: You shouldn't say it all. Stop getting caught up in it.

ASTRID: In what?

BEATRICE: Words.

STEWART: (In his sleep) Samuel Beckett.

ASTRID: What else is there to get caught up in?

BEATRICE: (Silence.) I'm pausing for the silence.

ASTRID: Oh good.

BEATRICE: Can you say your line again?

ASTRID: Of course. What else is there to get caught up in?

BEATRICE: I don't know.

ASTRID: You know. You know.

BEATRICE: I know that you still do.

ASTRID: What?

BEATRICE: Expect it to move.

ASTRID: Oh.

BEATRICE: The horizon.

ASTRID: Well. Yes. But you weren't supposed to know that.

BEATRICE: Time, you can get caught up in time.

ASTRID: Take it up with Bergson, I'm not fit for this. (Breaks away from the script.) Why aren't you and Varg blaring?

BEATRICE: Literature can do whatever it wants. (Returns to the script.) What are you fit for?

ASTRID: I am fit for what follows.

BEATRICE: What follows? (VARG takes the script and eats it.)

BEATRICE: Enjoyable exercise in waiting. Its destruction secures its infinitude. Varg wouldn't have nourished himself with it if he didn't like it.

ASTRID: Aw. I'm so grateful to Arthur for this. And to you two, of course. As you know, he's mentored us for so long. Working with us intensely. So that we would be prepared when we arrived here.

BEATRICE: Oh yes. Lushland certainly requires... preparation.

ASTRID: It's a nearly impossible place.

BEATRICE: How so?

ASTRID: It's almost... too beautiful to exist.

BEATRICE: Too beautiful? Is there such a thing?

ASTRID: Too much beauty creates too much promise. I can't stand promises. They have a tendency to break my heart.

BEATRICE: I see. Well. What if you knew that they could be kept?

ASTRID: How would I know? There's no way to know things like that.

BEATRICE: Varg. I promise I'll always love you.

VARG: (Gazes intensely at BEATRICE.) Snails covered in hexagons.

BEATRICE: Infinite lake. See? I fulfilled my promise.

ASTRID: Fascinating. It really works differently for you, doesn't it?

BEATRICE: What works differently?

ASTRID: That which measures moments.

BEATRICE: I suppose so. But so does love.

ASTRID: Pardon?

BEATRICE: Love. It shifts me. And it appears to leave you still.

ASTRID: What a thing to say.

VARG: Purple-

ASTRID: Will you cut that out?!

QUANTUM SOLDIER: (Waking up.) Temper temper.

ASTRID: When did you regain consciousness?

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Right about when you decided to be super pretentious.

VARG: Volcanic burn.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: He's tapping into the stoner lingo embedded in our collective unconscious. Nice.

ASTRID: They!

QUANTUM SOLDIER: What?

ASTRID: He's not he, he's they!

BEATRICE: Varg is he. The embodiment of charismatic chaos incapable of being grounded in anything but visions, sweetened by the feminine other.

STEWART: (Waking up.) My thirst for a sphere of literary solace has been blasphemed by base primality. My vistas have been chucked from my basin of transcendence.

BEATRICE: The perpetual denial of transcendence. That is the ink that binds the essence to the motor.

ASTRID: Labyrinthine wardrobe, dress me in a fresh remembrance.

STEWART: Of things that never were.

ASTRID: Such transparency. And such a complete face.

VARG: Slick tunnel.

BEATRICE: Have you silenced your impulses?

ASTRID: Perhaps. But not for you.

BEATRICE: As is the way it should be.

ASTRID: Move for me. Let me bathe in your love.

(BEATRICE dances.)

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Okay, this is nice and all. Very beneficial for your spiritual evolution I'm sure.

But are you two frolicking ladybugs , haha you literally look like- never mind that- are you actually taking notes so we have something to show to Arthur when we get back?

STEWART: One of the properties of the Lushland is that it ensures perfect memory.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: And when did you discover that?

STEWART: When Octopus Dolphin was here.

BEATRICE: Octopus Dolphin is always here.

VARG: Ooden.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Stop! If you keep doing that they will come back.

STEWART: Smooth.

ASTRID: Beams of light are shooting through me.

STEWART: How droll. I need a key not a wall.

BEATRICE: You must dump your darkness and forge full bodied respect for the tangibilized purity that is Astrid.

STEWART: Says the goddess who deserves respect.

BEATRICE: I am a microgod, not a goddess.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: In his defense, and I don't know why I'm coming to his defense but in his defense, you are kind of like, goddess hot though.

BEATRICE: I appreciate the compliment. Now transport your thoughts elsewhere. There are many of us. We are not special by any means. And I do not need respect, for I have a hand in creating it. Respect for artists that is.

ASTRID: And does that involvement remain in Lushland or-

STEWART: Beatrice, Varg, Octopus Dolphin, and the hyperdimensional starfish are the only denizens of Lushland, have you not registered that already?

BEATRICE: You are greatly mistaken Stewart. Astrid has been in Lushland since birth, that's why she's having a far more delicate, flavorful experience here: in one of its higher levels.

STEWART: Hint registered. Scrambled will. Focused mind. Previous ignorance dissipating.

(The lights dim as ASTRID performs mime puppetry.)

STEWART: Octopus Dolphin. I am speaking to you in low light. In an ambient atmosphere. I am embedded in your pupils. I have been for many... cycles... now.

(OCTOPUS DOLPHIN enters)

OCTOPUS DOLPHIN: Blerben.

STEWART: Expansionem conceptus.

OCTOPUS DOLPHIN: Ektaphi primrose barootcha.

STEWART: Mirga deenit ambrosia.

OCTOPUS DOLPHIN: Un mar infinito. Un mano rosado. (OCTOPUS DOLPHIN dances with BEATRICE and VARG.)

VARG and BEATRICE: Blerben! Blerben!

ASTRID: I remember when I was a child of daisies.

STEWART: I remember when you were a child of mine.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Too much information.

VARG: Calibration! Begin calibration!

BEATRICE and ASTRID:

Naked and pierced.

The compartment stretches towards infinity.

System of backwards glances.

Bathe me in a fresh destiny.

The gap challenges me softly.

The lights contextualize my resistance.

Grid of thunderous implications.

Erase the narrative.

Make invisible the direction.

Negative stirrings.

Displace my gaze.

Velvet image.

Vibrating gently.

VARG and STEWART:

Sonic commentary quartering the cohesion.

I promise to keep my thoughts in a bundle.

A dark blue orb.

Plucked from the glistening fields.

Is singing violently.

The concept whispers to the essence as it melts.

Prick this quadrant.

Swim this pond.

Documenting my turning away from objects of fear.

Programming my focus.

Ensuring love and elevation.

The attempt boils in the heat of the moment.

The banner of contemplation only flies when intrigue hath impregnated
the twin impulse.

Swedish mazes puzzle our muted geographic trust.

The bare level of anticipation is nestled in a dying fire.

Swallow the falling step. Swallow the falling step.

Rain is required to make tangible the weather's grin.

Grey horizon. Grey horizon. Triangle blocking the click.

STEWART: Revenio, vacker aliena!

(OCTOPUS DOLPHIN exits.)

QUANTUM SOLDIER: How do you think the calibration's going?

ASTRID: It appears our consciousness is merging with theirs smoothly.

STEWART: We should conduct an oneiric survey.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Lucky for us I brought a harvesting syringe.

ASTRID: Don't you find such a tool rather primitive?

QUANTUM SOLDIER: A primitive man stands before you.

ASTRID: And you take pride in being primitive?

QUANTUM SOLDIER: There's no reason to be ashamed of what gives me my strength.

STEWART: The appearance of strength, you should say.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: (Removes syringe from his jacket.) Do you want to do the honors, Sherlock?

STEWART: I suppose. Is it clean?

QUANTUM SOLDIER: As my conscience.

STEWART: That's rather troubling.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Use the goddamn syringe.

STEWART: (Takes the syringe and examines it.) Which of them should I assess first?

ASTRID: Varg. His essence-points appear to be more detectable.

STEWART: I believe you're correct. (He approaches Varg.)

VARG: Thick desire. Hollow heart.

STEWART: Where do you keep your nightmares?

VARG: Clams.

STEWART: I see. (Stewart bends down and inserts the syringe into Varg's left knee.)

BEATRICE: Barren field. Red cyclone.

STEWART: What do you see, Varg?

VARG: My love evaporating.

STEWART: And what exactly does that look like?

VARG: The silhouette of her lips. Endlessly reverberating against my skull.

STEWART: (He pulls the syringe and it is slowly filled with a thick purple liquid.)

That should be sufficient. (He removes the syringe from Varg's knee.)

ASTRID: Poor Varg. (She approaches Varg and kisses the area where Stewart inserted the syringe.)

QUANTUM SOLDIER: I think we've got all we need. Let's begin the journey back.

ASTRID: You want to leave?

QUANTUM SOLDIER: We've got to start kicking around the idea of it.

BEATRICE: Biocomputers humming. Senses put on hold.

VARG: Tunnel. Tunnel. Water. Light. Frozen llama. Frozen llama.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: So how are we gonna cube our way out of here,

huh? How are we going to cube our way out?

STEWART: Sew up your tentacles.

ASTRID: Tentacles. Stewart, have you been thinking about Octopus Dolphin?

STEWART: Of course not, why would I? Octopus Dolphin explicitly stated that I would begin, through beautiful Hegelian sign language delivered by Beatrice and Varg-

VARG: Calm diamonds.

STEWART: Yes, of course Varg. That I would begin to violently hallucinate if I did so. Why would I purposefully attempt to violently hallucinate? I've got no cabinets to bury. No dark moon to store.

ASTRID: Mhm. I've sure you've got no reason at all for wanting to blast yourself out of this reality! Nothing to do with me!

STEWART: With you? Certainly not. I haven't wanted to blast you out of my reality since since I was invested in pickling.

ASTRID: In what?!

STEWART: In the process of pickling cucumbers. And even then it was just an exercise.

ASTRID: And why were you invested in that again?

STEWART: In how it compared to the pataphysical access of memory.

ASTRID: (Giggles.) You're ridiculous.

STEWART: (Swaying.) Oh settle down.

BEATRICE: I am a rotting apple. I am a burnt horizon.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Goddamn it. I miss time.

STEWART: Time is vile. (To Varg) And enough with your temporal resistance!

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Good one. Even Arthur would crack a smile about that.

STEWART: Arthur and I have always held similar views.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Yeah. Except on life.

STEWART: Perhaps. What's sparked your interest? I've noticed your disposition has shifted.

VARG: Clams!

BEATRICE: Bury the flag! Bury the flag!

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Where is logic when I need it?

STEWART: (Lightly pounding his chest.) Right here for the taking.

VARG: I am a bishop. I am a lamp.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: My snails are covered in regret.

ASTRID: I've always hated velvet.

BEATRICE: When do you think they will install the path?

VARG: Perhaps never.

BEATRICE: Agreed. May we dwell on the never.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: A desert spotted.

STEWART: An aversion swiveled. Beatrice, I was wondering if you could do me a favor.

BEATRICE: Favor?

STEWART: Yes. I was wondering if you could assist me in creating my own dimension.

BEATRICE: You speak so bluntly.

STEWART: My ear for the cryptic has been getting worn.

BEATRICE: Detestable yet understandable. Purple polygons. Well. What species of dimension would this be?

STEWART: One where I could conduct my research in the way that it ought to be conducted. Without interruption from the material world.

BEATRICE: Elaborate.

STEWART: I want to ignore everything and sleep into myself. Become myself fully. To do that I need my own dimension. Something far removed from the thought killing system that lies in wait for me.

BEATRICE: I still don't know why you need this.

STEWART: Perfection. I don't know what it is yet. I have to know. And the only way I'm going to know is if I have a space of my own to find it.

BEATRICE: Is this not a space of your own?

STEWART: Lushland is yours, not mine.

BEATRICE: It is every bit yours as it is mine.

STEWART: That's very kind of you to say but it simply isn't true.

Lushland knows you and loves you. I am still a stranger here.

BEATRICE: It hurts me to hear you say that. Lushland loves you.

STEWART: Where is the proof?

BEATRICE: Do you not feel content here?

STEWART: Not particularly.

BEATRICE: There you go. That which loves you is not supposed to make you feel content.

STEWART: Your logic is getting a bit faulty.

BEATRICE: Why do you get so caught up in logic? What has logic ever done for you?

STEWART: Logic has given me the greatest pleasures of my life. It is what I use to make sense of things.

BEATRICE: And what use is there in making sense of things? Why can't you just let things be?

STEWART: Things generate meaning. That is their use.

BEATRICE: You should speak to Varg.

STEWART: Will he be of practical assistance?

BEATRICE: Speak to him. You won't regret it.

STEWART: We'll see about that. Varg?

VARG: Delineation of a moist horizon.

STEWART: Varg, what do you know about creating dimensions? Surely you helped in creating this one?

BEATRICE: Varg was born in Lushland. He did not create it.

STEWART: Then why should I consult him on this matter?

BEATRICE: Because he has things to say.

STEWART: I'm beginning to doubt that they're of much-

BEATRICE: Use?

STEWART: We're repeating ourselves. Very well. Varg. Speak to me.

Please.

VARG: I was born backwards. I was designed so that time would fail me. I sought refuge in my imagination. I ended up here. I am a creature forged from pain and loneliness. I accept that. It is how I receive the light. I am a victim of my obsession with the nonsensical. This is true. It is also true that there is sense in nonsense. Just as there are fragments of being to be found in nothingness. Everything is mixed with its opposite. This is the vehicle of bastardly logic that I happily drive. Even though pride is a curse. But what isn't? Consciousness. The biggest curse of all. The biggest blessing too. Now do you see why I am this way? Meaning scares me. It is a far nastier thing than death. Not that I know much of death. Reason begets order. Order begets lies. Deceit. Total oblivion. I prefer to soar. The only trouble with soaring is that you tend to miss the hearts of those your own heart has been designed for. All I can do is release my own truth. And my own truth is that there is only excitement and boredom. All of experience falls into those two categories. If you're not excited, you may as well be dead. I've said too much now. I will zip up my hexagons and seal my faucet for good. Or at least... until another purple river rushes through me and I regurgitate its contents. For me and no one else. For you and no one else. There is no truth. That is the only truth. There is no truth. That is the truth that makes all horizons possible.

BEATRICE: So Stewart. How was that for you?

STEWART: Most interesting.

(VARG begins to shake violently.)

BEATRICE: He's been invaded by a vile entity.

VARG: Backwards backwards I am pulled backwards.

ASTRID: We're losing Varg!

BEATRICE: Dying heart. Dying mind.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: We're thinking too many negative thoughts. It's poisoning him.

STEWART: (Frantically.) Blerben!

QUANTUM SOLDIER: No! Octopus Dolphin can only be summoned in environments of unconditional love. Even if you were to summon them, we'd get a bastardized version.

STEWART: What's the alternative?!

QUANTUM SOLDIER: We have to sacrifice our comfort to save him.

STEWART: Anything! Just tell me what to do, with specifics! Enough of this guessing game!

QUANTUM SOLDIER: See! Right there. You're letting your frustration get the better of you. You can't do that.

STEWART: So what should I do, silence my mind?

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Impossible. You're way too high.

STEWART: So what should I-

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Look at Varg. Really look at him. Try and take him in. Inhale him. Absorb him. Do everything you need to do to let him know that he matters.

STEWART: (Takes a deep breath and attempts to absorb Varg.)

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Beatrice, you know what to do.

(BEATRICE engages in Hegelian sign language.)

ASTRID: (Absorbing Varg.) A fuzzy note. A fuzzy note.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Astrid is climbing his frequencies, you need to do the same thing Stewart.

STEWART: (While attempting to absorb Varg.) A history deleted. A world forged from filth. Forgotten and left to dry out. That is me. That is you. Know that.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Less force.

STEWART: (Sweating profusely.) Infinite crocodile in the limited lagoon, know your strength and swim. (VARG stops twitching and drools.)

QUANTUM SOLDIER: That's it! Keep going Stewart!

STEWART: The scales of being have been draped around your forehead. Swiftly and invisibly. Let the glow guide.

VARG: Rhombicubodecahedron.

BEATRICE: Elevation! A fresh elevation!

QUANTUM SOLDIER: You've done it.

VARG: Center calmed.

(Long silence.)

STEWART: We should leave.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Leave while we're ahead?

STEWART: Something like that.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Well. We certainly have enough to show Arthur.

BEATRICE: Reassurances are always in vain.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: (Sobs quietly.)

BEATRICE: We are sorry to see you go. It's been a pleasure.

VARG: History is a bird.

BEATRICE: Varg. The immediate realm.

VARG: Vibrant tears for your leaving.

ASTRID: Likewise. You've crowned us beyond beyond. (ASTRID kisses

BEATRICE and VARG on the cheek.)

BEATRICE: Please come back whenever a shift is acquired.

ASTRID: I know I will. (Picks up a fractal.)

QUANTUM SOLDIER: That's going to dissolve in the tunnels. (QUANTUM SOLDIERS uses HSL to exit through the portal.)

ASTRID: It's worth trying. (ASTRID elegantly waves goodbye and uses HSL to exit through the portal.)

STEWART: Museum of consciousness, you've birthed the purest ocean.

BEATRICE: It's always been you. (STEWART bows away, holding his hands in a circle, and uses HSL to exit through the portal.)

VARG: Will the tweed troubler spark into being his bodiless zone?

BEATRICE: Of course. He's made it his destiny.

VARG: Hegel's holograms.

BEATRICE: Made whole.

