

The Cosmic Thrust
by Alex H. Aguirre

ACT I: Angulations of Lushland

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 by through a combination of methods. 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. Does not appear on stage.

(BEATRICE is holding VARG lovingly in her arms.)

BEATRICE: A blue child done up in moss
Shouts into a metallic sunflower:
“Parsimony! Parsimony!
You’d do best to cull the clutter.”

(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: Did Arthur say how to contact him once we've arrived?

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

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

ASTRID: He 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: They know something I don't. What's scarier than that? Plus, don't you feel those vibes? Vibes could spook a centaur.

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

QUANTUM SOLDIER: There you go Sherlock. Something sensible.

STEWART: Your references are lost on me.

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: We've got a winner.

ASTRID: Explain.

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 of a very galactic sort. 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. Glossy compliments. Juicy extrapolation. Windows and velvet. Precise splitting. Hyperspace functioning. Speed and algorithms. Plump thoughts. Glossy abstractions. Every sound a geometry for your new life. Fresh horizons. Warm face. Cosmic canoe.

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

QUANTUM SOLDIER: I'll speak in the linguistic and sonic disposition of Stewart so as to return you to reason (Acting like STEWART.) Remind yourselves 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: That's some disturbing thinking. You think we'll 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.

(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. This 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: (Ecstatically) 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: I'm afraid I haven't. Stewart?

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

ASTRID: Arthur wrote a paper on it.

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 SOLDIER: Cute.

ASTRID: (Closes eyes.) I've wished it.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Then where is it?

ASTRID: Such impatience. Tsk. Tsk.

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

BEATRICE: Ribbons bathed in an alligator's DNA.

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

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: Insubordination detected.

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

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?

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: Passageway!

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Do you have anything to drink?

VARG:(Dances as drinks descend from the ceiling.) Gothic counterparts.

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?

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.

ASTRID: Where did that come from?

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

VARG: Hexagons.

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.

STEWART: Climb a mountain. Pockets are the mouths of pants.

(BEATRICE dances.)

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Freezing the perimeter.

STEWART: Soul traps.

ASTRID: Digressions.
Gluing myself to the wind.
Mirrors in my mouth.
Velvet on the highway.
Sticky associations.
Obsidian arrow.
Skipping the explanation.
Opaque residue.

BEATRICE:
Why must I always play the cyborg?
Boxes of thought.
Colors and directionality.
Pausing the flow.
The shiny features of wormholes.
Sacred scissors.
(BEATRICE hands ASTRID a blue fractal.)

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 door 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.

STEWART: Botanical confusion.
Flailing mechanics.
Celestial focus.
Tiles of memory.
Melting!
Lobster of the holiest quadrant.
Words that sparkle.
Hand me that stepladder.
Stolen cloud.
Diamonds of the deep.
Microscopic maze.
Grey suns.
Warm cylinders.
Forgetting that I was sitting.
Observing my realities collide.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: 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.

Alien energy.

Colors abound.

Fractals dripping from my companion's chin.

Shaving the demons.

Metaphysical prowess.

Shapes of all textures.

Cosmic layers.

Pacing around the pyramid.

The microgods speak to the lushness embedded in the holograms that slide out from under my ontological display.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: You've got quite a knack for this don't ya?

ASTRID: 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?

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

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Go ahead. Why the hell not? We've gone this far.

(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: Nice.

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, 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: Bag of marbles. Bag of salt.

ASTRID: Cycloning around the center. Nudging 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.

(Celestial statues are raised upwards.)

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, she/they floats over and begins humming.)

QUANTUM SOLDIER: What's happening?

STEWART: She 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.

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: 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.

VARG: The table of esoteric terminology.

STEWART: Gather meaning. Arthur sent me here... to gather meaning.

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.)

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. You've got to know it's demented to treat someone like me like this.

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 parody of my favorite author that exists in original dimension?

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

VARG: Snails.

BEATRICE: I toss flowers onto your trail.

VARG: Obedience. Obedience.

ASTRID: I've written the script.

BEATRICE: In your mind?

ASTRID: No, on paper. 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: It's fantastic 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.

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 Hegel, I'm not fit for this.

BEATRICE: What are you fit for?

ASTRID: I am fit for what follows.

BEATRICE: What follows?

ASTRID: Nothing. (ASTRID puts the piece of paper back in her pocket and smiles.)

BEATRICE: You know of Hegel?

ASTRID: Of course. The first course I took from Stewart was on Hegel.

BEATRICE: I adore Hegel. I allow him to live everywhere. What author did you venture to capture?

ASTRID: (Whispers the author's name in Beatrice's ear.)

BEATRICE: And who first informed you of his existence?

ASTRID: Arthur.

BEATRICE: Oh Arthur.

ASTRID: 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 an impossible place.

BEATRICE: How so?

ASTRID: It's 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.

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 works differently for you, doesn't it?

BEATRICE: What works differently?

ASTRID: Time.

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!

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Right. Okay.

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. But are you two 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, she... they... will come back

STEWART: Smooth.

ASTRID: Trust the flow.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Well. I guess we can keep on how we're keeping on. As long as we're making some progress.

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

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Arthur wants 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.

ASTRID: Beams of light are shooting through me.

STEWART: How droll.

BEATRICE: You should treat her with more respect.

STEWART: Says the goddess who deserves respect.

BEATRICE: I am a microgod, not a goddess. There are many of us. I am not special by any means.

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.

STEWART: Scrambled will. Focused mind.

(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 some... time... now.

(OCTOPUS DOLPHIN enters)

OCTOPUS DOLPHIN: Blerben.

STEWART: Blerben.

OCTOPUS DOLPHIN: Ektaphi primrose barootcha.

STEWART: Mirga deenit ambrosia.

OCTOPUS DOLPHIN: Black ocean. (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.

(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? She... they... explicitly stated that I would begin... well... through Hegelian sign language so diligently delivered by Beatrice and Varg.

VARG: Calm diamonds.

STEWART: Yes, of course Varg. Through Hegelian sign language so diligently delivered by Beatrice and 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 returned to that memory since I was invested in pickling.

ASTRID: In what?!

STEWART: In the process of pickling cucumbers.

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 an apple. I am a burnt horizon.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Goddamn it. I miss time.

STEWART: Time is vile.

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

STEWART: Arthur and I have always held similar views on time.

QUANTUM SOLDIER: Yeah. That's about the only thing you agree on, isn't it?

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 tell me if it was possible to create 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 reach of the material world.

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 help in helping me create my own dimension?

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.

STEWART: A battle is brewing! Oh my. The idea of a battle is so thoroughly dramatic. I wish I had a pen.

ASTRID: Throw my memories into the mixing pot. Let my history taste the turmoil so that I may be rid of it myself!

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 him, 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: Hexagons.

BEATRICE: Elevation! A fresh elevation!

QUANTUM SOLDIER: You've done it!

VARG: Calm heart.

(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: Sorry to see you go.

ASTRID: Likewise. You've crowned us beyond beyond. (ASTRID kisses BEATRICE and VARG on the cheek.)

BEATRICE: Please come back.

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

QUANTUM SOLDIER: That's going to dissolve in the tunnels.

ASTRID: It's worth trying. (STEWART holds the door open for ASTRID and QUANTUM SOLDIER and they pass through. He takes one last look at Lushland.)

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

BEATRICE: It's always been you. (STEWART smiles and passes through.)

VARG: Do you think Stewart will manage to create his dimension?

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

VARG: Hexagons.

BEATRICE: Hexagons indeed.

ACT II: A Decadent Void

SETTING

A dimension created by Stewart known as "the void." It is powered by a substance known as lushness, which has been placed into special cones and

boxes. Stewart and Astrid the ability to launch themselves and Steerforth into dream states.

CHARACTERS

STEWART: A philosopher who specializes in phenomenology. He has used imagination-based magic techniques to create his own dimension. He has invited Steerforth, a poet from Earth, to join him and Astrid in their imaginative exploits.

ASTRID: A surrealist painter who studied philosophy under Stewart. Dresses like a statue.

STEERFORTH: A poet from Earth who was summoned by Stewart to the void after meeting Arthur.

ARTHUR: A magician/philosopher that has the ability to travel to different dimensions. Stewart and Astrid's mentor. Does not appear on stage.

STEWART: (Reading aloud from his journal.) A caress motivates a melancholic disposition. A sideways glance requires the supplementation of a shape most suited to the symbolic totality that resides within the breast of the glance's tonal thrust. I bask in the sorrow that leaks from my restless spheres. To blot out a promising horizon deemed elementally deficient is a task peppered with a reproachful temporal groundwork. Much ability is needed to sew up the wounds after such a species of reduction. My secondary soul has been reshaped by an infestation of cretinous craters. My passions are numbed. The stirrings of my quest-fields are draped in the darkest stylings of ontical dread. But. But. A man of the Earth is coming here. Steerforth. Such sparkling symbolism. Yes. Yes. And he shall bring. He shall... (looks up from his writing.) What sort of sensations do you expect our guest will imprint upon us?

ASTRID: The kind that will dissolve, or otherwise deteriorate.

STEWART: I know the source of your disparagement. (Moves towards her.) You're afraid of potency.

ASTRID: I abhor "hope".

STEWART: I do not have "hope", I just have.. joyous.. bubblings.

ASTRID: Descriptive phrase. What's it covering?

STEWART: Another layer of exuberance.

(ASTRID scoffs.)

STEWART: Kindly shelve your disbelief and allow me my indulgence.
Don't you wish to see me happy?

ASTRID: Happiness. Ha! Why do you busy yourself with empty concepts?

STEWART: I knew I should have kept you from that book.

ASTRID: It was already written within my secondary soul. Your restriction would have been in vain.

STEWART: Well I advise that we remain soft with one another.

ASTRID: Like clay?

STEWART: You insatiable tease. (Occupies himself with a cleaning activity.) You can't expect me to be always on the lookout for your sensitivities darling.

ASTRID: I've only got a handful. Perhaps you should get them tattooed.

STEWART: Very funny. Very.. charming. But perhaps we'd better save that charm for a moment better suited to it.

ASTRID: Conservation. What an awful thing to have an affinity for. And what has planted this callow inclination towards conservation in your breast?

STEWART: I'm afraid I cannot appease you with a singular answer.

ASTRID: You're lucky our celestial garden has provided me with the zestful species of energy required to indulge you, or else I'd leave you with a glance so cold that after the pain fermented: you'd be left an elemental eunuch.

STEWART: You're lucky I'm sharp enough to absorb your insults with care.

ASTRID: I've written a dozen odes to your spheres for that sharpness, they had better be absorbed with care.

STEWART: (Beat.) Boy am I happy to be alive! No.. no, could be registered as a triteness. Ah well. Well. I feel a cactus swelling within me. A, dare I say, celestial cactus. No. No. Better to save that for when the rowdiness arrives.

ASTRID: Banish that horrid "when", it only serves to pollute my spheres. I'll be going then. Enjoy your friend. (ASTRID exits and STEERFORTH enters.)

STEERFORTH: Blast the speciality of that speckled trout's stride. Count all my horizons, and soak them all in rye. I never knew a woman who wasn't full of sighs. The universe is full of, little purple eyes.

STEWART: Fantastic! Absolutely fantastic! I was hoping you'd arrive with such a spirit.

STEERFORTH: How could I not? I am flooded by the loftiest of sensations.

STEWART: Oh you flatter me. And you've arrived safely! I was so concerned.

STEERFORTH: Were you expecting me to arrive in tatters?

STEWART: Not at all. I knew you'd make it through. Your handwriting is so delicate, but there is a certain thrust to it that led me to expect someone entirely different.

STEERFORTH: Quick to nail your visitors down, are you?

STEWART: By obligation. It's how I... one of my ways how I.. keep things in order.

STEERFORTH: By shoving me into a category?

STEWART: You put it so brashly! It's certainly not a shoving it's more of a.. delicate, deliberate, soft, loving, kindly.. placement.. into the silhouette of a soul-defining character-group.

STEERFORTH: I see. A soft grouping.

STEWART: It makes sense, doesn't it?

STEERFORTH: I promised Arthur I'd do away with sense once I got here.

STEWART: Ah good old Arthur. Advising my visitors on how to manage their perception. How's he coming along?

STEERFORTH: In agony. Barely well enough to write.

STEWART: Terrible, terrible. But for him it's sufficient, is it not?

STEERFORTH: Have you read his newest pamphlet? He said he sent it to you.

STEWART: Oh him and his pamphlets. What he did say.. about books being too *real* for him.. what were his exact words..

STEERFORTH: "Books impose themselves too forcefully on spatio-temporal horizons, there must be ample room for the void to breathe."

STEWART: Ah yes. Splendid. And did he not continue, "When my ink settles, that is when the ontology of my thought ought to dissolve."

STEERFORTH: He did. Excellent memory.

STEWART: For certain things. Well I wish I could continue playing the jolly one, but alas, I must face the facts of my guilt. I've invited you here,

knowing full well of the dangers one has to suffer to arrive. I feel dreadful about that.

STEERFORTH: Well I treated the whole “journey” as sort of a game. The real suffering is when I’m drowning in idleness. Clawing at the bookshelf for something that gives me a sense of worth. That’s not being very nice to the author I know but, you’ve gotta do what you’ve gotta do to keep your spirits up. And you- you gave me something to do. And I’ve been told I have an appetite for gloom and grit so-

STEWART: So I’ve supplied you with quite a feast then! Oh oh oh that is... humorous.

STEERFORTH: So will we begin my training now or-

STEWART: Of course. Ye- of course! What- what do you think I am, Steerforth?

STEERFORTH: Well you tell me I-

STEWART: Did you infer from my chickenscratch handwriting that I was a host of chickenscratch character?

STEERFORTH: Oh no quite the opposite, your script is.. quite elegant.

STEWART: Oh?

STEERFORTH: Reeks of elegance, I could say.

STEWART: Reeks of elegance! Oh I’ve got to remember that one.

STEERFORTH: It’s not me, it’s probably.. Baudelaire or.. something.

STEWART: Baudelaire? Oh no I should think not. No, it’s you. It’s you. (touches cone). Your language is minted with the stamp of inevitability.

STEERFORTH: And Baudelaire’s isn’t?

STEWART: Well he’s never been here.

STEERFORTH: Maybe he didn’t need the boost.

STEWART: Boost. Hm. A poetic boost.

STEERFORTH: Precisely.

STEWART (Paces.) Is that why you came here?

STEERFORTH: Among other things.

STEWART: But to receive a boost, that is the horse and carriage of your business here?

STEERFORTH: Yes, I suppose so. Is that alright?

STEWART: Of course. But you won't receive so much of a boost as... a reconfiguration. Despite the seemingly scattered nature of the way things flow here, everything is rather solid. Set. Has a direction, and a shape. All those gnawing doubts and worries that have been vague and wispy before will appear to you as so many light bulbs going off, illuminating new pathways of thought. Is that metaphor still in use around your parts?

STEERFORTH: That of.. oh yeah. Light bulbs. Bright ideas. Well the folk I've been slumming it with don't get much of them.. usually but.. yes, the term is in use.

STEWART: Well I'm glad I know at least one of my colloquialisms. I must say, that is one field of study in which I'm severely lacking. Allow me to reset my construction mechanisms. (STEWART performs Hegelian sign language.)

STEERFORTH: With what do I find myself confronted? A seething amalgamation of shadows, crouching in the fog, waiting for some divine or otherwise demonic being to shape them into symbols. Much like a picture of Tanguy's. Most enticing. Most haunting. Most... there. (STEWART finishes performing Hegelian sign language.)

STEWART: I've made myself far too frantic with anticipation, perhaps it is best for me to rest but oh how can I rest when everything has been magnetized and stretched out to contain all diamonds that could leak from the skies that be. (Crouches near box and translates his anxiety into confidence) Fret not, my friend! I approach my service simply and strongly. Any frills or flourishes you might think me to have are, in actuality, necessities. Tools! With which I plow the elemental fields of electric lushness.

STEERFORTH: (Digesting) Alright. And where are these fields? Here? (Gestures to his head) Or here? (gestures to cone).

STEWART: A combination. Where the two meet.

STEERFORTH: Is it where the two meet or is it a combination?

STEWART: You don't let me get away with anything do you? Ha. We aim to dissolve the misconception that pain is necessary to fertilize the poetic seeds we plant with our minds.

STEERFORTH: And what do you use instead?

STEWART: Isolation. Which the nature of our "location" has given much of. In combination with leisure.

STEERFORTH: Such clarity of thought. You must have suffered for it.

STEWART: I have. Not now. Would you like to meet my partner?

STEERFORTH: I'd be honored.

STEWART: Excellent. (begins to signal her)

STEERFORTH: Though. I must say. I have a fear. That I would like to state.

STEWART: By all means state it my friend!

STEERFORTH: I'm afraid that I'm prone to gaps in cosmic processing, along with other metaphysical ailments. As much as I play the poet, I find my efforts thwarted, by practical concerns. And the deterioration of my spirit. I must confess... I've lost my pen on the way here. The losing of that pen has become a symbol for all the intellectual growth I've been deprived of because I have found myself engulfed by a world that is intent on forgetting me.

STEWART: Astrid shall fashion you a new one. Astrid, reveal yourself. And take care in examining her eyebrow, for the stories writ within leak illusions of a most labyrinthine sort, and are sure to stick their teeth to you.

(ASTRID floats in. She is a magnificent, living statue. Hellenistic.)

ASTRID: I have been summoned. And so, I appear.

STEERFORTH: How bold.

STEWART: I'll leave the two of you to it. Ha! I'll be in my study.

(STEWART exits.)

STEERFORTH: Beginnings frighten me. They presuppose an end.

ASTRID: You must-

STEERFORTH: What. Gonna tell me to breathe?

(ASTRID looks at him)

STEERFORTH: Deeply?

ASTRID: You must conjure up all the beginnings that have begun and ended.

STEERFORTH: I've done it. Such anxiety avoided. A brilliant exercise. Astrid, is it?

ASTRID: You know very well what it is. Why do you engage in such formalities?

STEERFORTH: Habit. You know very well what it is. (They both laugh.)

ASTRID: I am a living statue. What philosophical statement is being made there? What flourishes must I be furnished with in order to stick to the walls of your unconscious. Huh? Tell me. I want you to tell me. I want you to tell me with how you squirm. I want you to tell me with how you watch me. Tell me. Tell me. Tell me. Tell me.

STEERFORTH: You're um. Certainly a. Mystery.

ASTRID: Will you be rough with me?

STEERFORTH: Wh- do I exude a roughness?

ASTRID: Perhaps. I pay no heed to the regulations.

STEERFORTH: Regulations? Stewart's regulations?

ASTRID: Call them what you will.

(STEWART enters)

STEWART: My page! My page! It's brimming with the majestic stuff of the Earth! Your influence has been verified, allow me to feel about your coarseness.

STEERFORTH: I'd be honored but I'm not exactly sure what that implies.

STEWART: Oh it's just a small examination of what gives your sensuality the impression of being carved out of stone.

STEERFORTH: Oh. Well then.

STEWART: May I? (approaches STEERFORTH eagerly, kneels, and explores STEERFORTH's hands with intense curiosity. STEERFORTH stares blankly, but somewhat amused). Yes. Yes. Revelatory (he stands) Thank you. I shall leave you now and tend to this sudden flow of earthen ink (He exits.)

STEERFORTH: Does he make you up or do you do it yourself?

ASTRID: You certainly have a twisted picture of how we manage our personal affairs.

STEERFORTH: I am not here to impose judgment. Allow me the intimacy of handing over your list of daily chores.

ASTRID: Ah so you can hold a microscope to how we divide our labor?

STEERFORTH: You've made me out to be quite the sociological mathematician.

ASTRID: Perhaps I'm projecting my own desires upon you. The structure of things has been rather loose as of late.

STEERFORTH: That's why I want to see your list, so I can-

ASTRID: I'm not interested in what I do so neither should you.

STEERFORTH: Aw come now.

ASTRID: If we're going to be sharing the same landscape there's got to be some uniformity of interest.

STEERFORTH: Alright but be warned, I get rather testy when I'm out of my element.

ASTRID: I'm built for pressure.

STEERFORTH: You're a regular submarine.

ASTRID: So, have you figured it out yet?

STEERFORTH: What, of all things?

ASTRID: What's ugly about me. Or rather, where the essents of my ugliness find their origin.

STEERFORTH: I'm completely blind to that ridiculous thought. Despite your maddening diversions, you are loveliness incarnate.

ASTRID: How did you get to be so charming?

STEERFORTH: Ah well you see- upon laying eyes on you, a conveyor belt of horizons was installed within stale basins of my being and the seeds of charm that were stagnant for so long.. were fertilized.

ASTRID: Well. You flatter me much. But I suspect those sentiments will soon be twisted.

STEERFORTH: Now wait-

ASTRID: No need to throw a sheet over the inevitable. Despite my dislike of time, I feel like I had to create some sort of history, so I've made myself believe that there was a terrible battle waged here, and that the blood-soaked soil served as a surrogate for the orbs to speak their dark poetry.

STEERFORTH: Why a surrogate?

ASTRID: Well the best way to speak purely, with all of the heart intact, is to speak through something else.

STEERFORTH: Huh.

ASTRID: (A sensation seizes her.) The hells have begun to materialize themselves in glances gone astray.

STEERFORTH: Your sensitivity is something else. Did you come to develop it over time or-

ASTRID: It's been gradual. I tried to blot things out at first, but it gets rather hard to keep blotting.

STEERFORTH: Blotting can be a bitch.

ASTRID: I agree. Nothing is forgiven. Vanity is what stamps all into being. Virtue is a device sewn from the fear of death.

STEERFORTH: Morbid formulations.

ASTRID: Well I've certainly been given enough time to.. mull things over.

STEERFORTH: Might I examine your hand?

ASTRID: I'm afraid you'll find it of very little interest.

STEERFORTH: Leave the assignation of value to me.

ASTRID: It's a hand like any other.

STEERFORTH: (She gives him her hand he examines it with utmost interest and care.) What a delusion! It's most rich in character!

ASTRID: You flatter me quite.

STEERFORTH: You've learned the ways of the high-society coquette *a priori*.

ASTRID: Yes, well this landscape is furtive ground for that sort of intuiting.

STEERFORTH: I'm sure it was Stewart's doing.

ASTRID: Have you such a picture of our relationship?

STEERFORTH: Perhaps it's a premature formulation but... yes. For danger's sake.

ASTRID: You're a naughty man.

STEERFORTH: Apologies.

ASTRID: Ooh, that's a rare "ology" for me.

STEERFORTH: (Singingly, but not singing.) I'll read from Baudelaire. And stroke your ancient hair. I'll point you towards the mountains that have sprouted from Demeter's care.

ASTRID: Are you participating in the process known as... seduction?

STEERFORTH: Could be.

ASTRID: Let us sleep while I digest it. (They throw their heads back and dream. STEWART enters.)

STEWART: I'm in the habit of drawing ink when the pain is keenest.

ASTRID: And oh and oh my knees do sink when your obsessions hit their zenith.

STEWART: Do you think I do it out of vanity or craft?

ASTRID: Do not fling your doubts on me I find them oh so crass.

STEWART: Ah you're so forgiving and so threatening at once!

ASTRID: My soul is infinitely varied, do you take it for a dunce?

STEWART: I'm afraid we've dug a hole that we cannot get out of.

ASTRID: You're prone to presuppose the worst, it's a habit, logic-spouter!

STEWART: Damn your diagnoses, they drive me positively mad!

ASTRID: All you have to do is reflect for an hour or two, and I'd be very glad.

STEWART: My blood isn't colored with the face you thought it to have.

ASTRID: Draw back the curtains on the windows to hell.

STEERFORTH: I didn't know you believed in such things.

ASTRID: I've re-examined my horizons. (Ties a feather to his head)

STEWART: Is this some sort of... beacon?

ASTRID: Could be.

STEWART: Be.

STEERFORTH: Be.

STEWART: Backwards glance.

ASTRID: Forwards glance.

STEERFORTH: Inclinations forwards! Inclinations backwards!

ASTRID: You're jumbling the dearth of our directionality.

STEERFORTH: Apologies.

ASTRID: A rare "ology!"

STEERFORTH: I abhor remaining.. static.

STEWART: But that which is static is that which buzzes. And which buzzes provides a key to the lushest of labyrinths!

STEERFORTH: I've sealed up my sundry of syllogisms and offer my loins to the skies that be.

ASTRID: Stupid stammering. Reproachful relinquishment.

STEWART: Far too much awakesness. Melts my mirth.

STEERFORTH: Sleep provides the most special of materials.

ASTRID: Including the long harbored hauntings.

STEWART: Inflamed introduction.. to another species of.. star speckled segments.. swung into a jar.

STEERFORTH: Painted with the debris of a shattered horizon.

STEWART and STEERFORTH: There! There! Synchronicity! (They embrace.)

ASTRID: Juvenile, yet zestful.

STEWART: I've tricked the thrust into melting.

(STEWART exits and they awaken.)

STEERFORTH: What a dry awakening.

ASTRID: Rest beckons us. Our spheres are more potent when they're marinated in near-nothingness?

STEERFORTH: Rest is near-nothingness? Hm. Well I'd like to succumb to its charm, but I'm afraid I'll regret it.

ASTRID: Don't let Stewart know you subscribe to the concept of regret.

STEERFORTH: Picky fellow.

ASTRID: He prefers "particular."

STEERFORTH: When did you get to be such a grand-champion of his?

ASTRID: When I realized his strengths weren't stand-alone. He needed the back-up and I loved him so there.

STEERFORTH: Love. Seems like an outdated concept for you two.

ASTRID: It is. But looking back, to view it as a film... it induces... a peculiar pleasure.

STEERFORTH: Even so, it's probably best you did it away with it. Hell I'd do away with it too but I know it's going to suck me back in on my next museum visit so what's the use?

ASTRID: Was that intended to harm me?

STEERFORTH: No, I-

ASTRID: To put me at a distance, then? To keep me quarantined? To keep me sealed off? To keep me from infiltrating your fleshy orbs of human history?

STEERFORTH: I'm afraid you-

ASTRID: Why have you placed yourself before me?! Why do you taunt me with your presence?!

STEERFORTH: You've stung my core, what an onslaught! What torrid methods!

(Silence.)

ASTRID: I was unaware of your sensitivity.

STEERFORTH: Well, usually I'm more hard-boiled but you've got me accustomed to a certain comfort here.

ASTRID: Comfort? You've been incredibly on-edge.

STEERFORTH: Yes well I can't help demonstrating a sort of awareness. A caution.

ASTRID: By subtracting your caution you'll be welcoming the splendors of spontaneity.

STEERFORTH: And you deem me to be the mathematician.

ASTRID: I told you, I'm working towards a uniformity of interest.

STEERFORTH: Women will have their social projects.

ASTRID: And the harder sex will have their influence. Tell me about the death-spirit.

STEERFORTH: I shall tell you through a dream. Close your eyes. (She does.) Conjure up the vibrations of the orbs. Let the aether thrill all around you. (A dream commences.)

STEERFORTH: The chaos of a wanton breast, though it shakes the marble, does not succeed in divorcing itself from the anatomical whole it has found itself attached to. I hear it now. The shuffling of the gargoyles. From watering hole to grassy knoll. Endearing creatures. Their lisping would

strike me as insufferable had I not knowledge of the mirth that bubbles underneath.

(ASTRID crawls with old blanket, holding a small model of Earth with a feather embedded.)

STEERFORTH: The sly articulation of an ovarian ontology. Most peculiar.

ASTRID: Wicked destroyer, the swampwater will snip the syllogisms from your brow and then what will you be founded by? A body that has ceased being a weapon.. more akin to a dusty shelf.

STEERFORTH: Your brow speaks of a delicious sorrow.. a veritable arcade of hope deferred. And behind. And behind. Dozens of grids, erected by spite.

STEWART: I'm craving a visit to the chalkboard store. The influence of the reef has consumed my spheres and if I do not pass it through a series of divisions I will be left mulling over the residue with a dumbed-down heart. (They awaken.)

ASTRID: You've endured more than I thought.

STEERFORTH: Yes. Well. I should report to Stewart. See what he's cooking up.

ASTRID: Stewart is taking his nap.

STEERFORTH: Right. Right. Is that always at a set moment?

ASTRID: Yes, but. He's been feeling rather sick. So. It's shifted.

STEERFORTH: His health?

ASTRID: The cosmic opening. In which he tends to his health.

STEERFORTH: Right. Right. Do you care for him?

ASTRID: What?

STEERFORTH: Medically. Speaking. Are you his.

ASTRID: It's subjective.

STEERFORTH: Right. Is there anything around here that isn't?

ASTRID: Your fear. That's not subjective. It's pretty. Factual. There's no denying it.

STEERFORTH: Do you have any assigned roles? Or do you just sort of. Choose the ones you find. Fitting.

ASTRID: You're in need of a cloak.

STEWART: I'm sorry?

ASTRID: A cloak. You're too. Bare.

STEERFORTH: Is that so? You seem to know a lot about me. About what I need.

ASTRID: You're our guest. You're not used to the atmosphere. It is my duty to tend to those areas where you might be. Lacking.

STEERFORTH: How kind.

ASTRID: Your face. It seems. Clogged. As if a cluster of opposing directions is ready to burst. Forth. From it.

STEERFORTH: Frightening.

ASTRID: Interesting.

STEERFORTH: What?

ASTRID: That you should find it so.

STEERFORTH: I'm only human.

ASTRID: That's not an excuse.

STEERFORTH: What?

ASTRID: You're licking the wound.

STEERFORTH: Only to obtain a... furtherance.

ASTRID: Blast your advances.

STEERFORTH: Shall I retreat?

ASTRID: Sure. No. Sure. Do whatever.

STEERFORTH: Ah. Dragging a vagueness across my thighs. I glimpse your motive. There's something too romantic about all this. Leads me to think the worst. Of how things could break. As they tend to. When such elements are involved.

(ASTRID leaves.)

STEWART: Isn't it awful, when you are struck by a mood that is not in keeping with your aesthetic?

STEERFORTH: Sure. You know, I don't think I've had anything to eat since I've been here and I don't feel the least bit hungry. How come?

STEWART: Perhaps the fullness of our collective thought has made its way to your stomach.

STEERFORTH: I don't think I work that way. Or at least, my biology doesn't.

STEWART: Our biologies are irrelevant unless we are making a conscious decision to bring them out of dormancy.

STEERFORTH: I don't know whether to be disturbed or delighted.

STEWART: Well pick a mood and pet it into submission, I need all your faculties available for harvesting.

STEERFORTH: Harvesting what?

STEWART: The dreams of starfish. Where the celestial and the aquatic reach equiprimordially.

STEERFORTH: I'm afraid I'm going to need a little more de-briefing.

STEWART: Well I fancy myself a sailor of sorts. Though my ship is dialectical and my looking glass is phenomenological, my soul still sings of oceans.

STEERFORTH: As does mine. Now I follow you.

STEWART: You don't happen to have any book with you on the activities of mariners?

STEERFORTH: I only have one book intact, the rest were lost on the journey here.

STEWART: Cease that memory! O pangs of guilt-ridden grief, coursing through my cravat!

STEERFORTH: It really wasn't that horrible.

STEWART: We'll intuit the book! We have enough sensory knowledge of the thunderous pulsations of sea adventurers and our imaginative powers are apt enough to install a referential motor in our minds without inking ourselves into the abyss.

STEERFORTH: But the terminology.. its richness. Starboard, mast, hull, plank.. it's all beautiful but I forget the rest and I really don't want to forsake those traditions.

STEWART: Oh look at you, my little Earthmonger, still holding fast to traditions.

STEERFORTH: Alright fine. Let's break with them. What does this harvesting entail?

STEWART: Well the species of harvesting is aquatic-oneiric so we have to tap into the darkest nets of our subconscious in order to unleash the most potent nets.

STEERFORTH: Will we need Astrid's help?

STEWART: Whatever gives you that idea?

STEERFORTH: Well she seems to possess the capability of giving a genuine cosmic thrust to our goings-on.

STEWART: Hm. Let's act on it. (Calls to Astrid by using Hegelian sign language)

STEERFORTH: I'm excited for this.

(ASTRID arrives.)

ASTRID: For what am I wanted?

STEWART: For plunging back. Far back. Into the riddledome. But this time with paddles.

(The harvesting begins. They are sailing on an imaginary ship. They mime aquatic stuff throughout.)

STEERFORTH: Taste the winds.

STEWART: So foreign, so fierce.

ASTRID: Beauty in motion. A glorious thing.

STEERFORTH: Grab hold of the ropes.

STEWART: He knows. He knows where the objects fall in space.

ASTRID: He very well should. We've got our motors lodged in him.

STEERFORTH: There, there! A whole group of them!

ASTRID: Oh creatures, allow me to coat you in peace.

(ASTRID climbs down from the ship and swims towards them.)

STEWART: What methodology should we adopt?

STEERFORTH: The warmest one we can muster.

STEWART: Right. You be Desnos. I'll be Darwin.

STEERFORTH: Desnos and Darwin. Drinking from the dreams of starfish.

STEWART: The togetherness is titillating.

ASTRID: The starfish have taken to me like cubs to their mother.

STEERFORTH: A synchronicity infinitely profound.

STEWART: The microgods issue wet triangles through the thoughtsphere.

ASTRID: Algorithms of absoluteness. Growing eyes. Growing arms.

Growing legs. Growing... volition.

STEWART: Oh, volition! That which tickles the underside of a pickled ontology!

STEERFORTH: Their vibrations tingle every aspect of that which coats my heart in ink.

ASTRID: Dipping their legs into the grids that protrude from the thick of an armored scholar's thought-blood.

STEWART: Such rawness, such flow!

STEERFORTH: Siblings of the soul. How is it we've only met just now?

STEWART: Spooning my spirit into an indulgence that lends itself to the seething of a congregation of “I’s”, begging the microgods of aesthetics to whip them up an atmosphere they can squirm in.

STEERFORTH: Dragging a cluster of frozen sanity through a column of sandblasted coral.

ASTRID: Tattered tonalities swim between my fingers.

STEWART: The echinoderms have edified their final eidetic reduction.

STEERFORTH: What wonder! What shape! A moment so full!

ASTRID: There are starfish resting in my pores.

(They awaken.)

STEERFORTH: I’ve glimpsed them! The starfish! I feel them all about me! What now?

ASTRID: Just that. The poetry of the thing.

STEWART: Exactly. I’ll leave you now. Good work. Demonstrates much promise. (STEWART exits)

STEERFORTH: Don’t you get sick of always *feeling*? Never doing?

ASTRID: How can you get sick of the essence of life?

STEERFORTH: You seem determined to keep me at a distance. I’m inquisitive, but not enough to sting the flow into a stoppage.

ASTRID: You comfort me much.

STEERFORTH: I think I’m supposed to be having tea with Stewart. Or at least I think he sent some sort of coded invitation my way during the harvesting.

ASTRID: Good that you’re picking up on those sorts of things.

STEERFORTH: Yeah I think we’re supposed to meet to- you don’t have todays do you?

ASTRID: That would defeat all that we’ve striven for.

STEERFORTH: Hopefully-

ASTRID: Do away with your horrid hope, it’s a condemnable poison.

STEERFORTH: Right. Well. I shall be interested to get some details.. or do you condemn those as well?

ASTRID: Details are beautiful devices. As long as they don't clog the cosmic thrust.

STEERFORTH: Understood. Good to know some things are accepted.

ASTRID: There should be something sweet in the way we part.

STEERFORTH: An aesthetic approach to heartbreak.

ASTRID: Your anger's gotten the better of you.

STEERFORTH: Why don't you stick a thermometer in me. Make me all better.

ASTRID: I detect a crudeness. (silence) Only a few times have I tried my hand at imagining the lives of humans but I always throw down my conjuring devices because it seems to me to be quite cruel to introduce a being sewn from superior matter.

STEERFORTH: There's no introduction. What's created by the imagination remains in the imagination.

ASTRID: Not at all! What a puerile way of composing oneself! Bring forth a more enticing theorization.

STEERFORTH: As you wish. Back on Earth, where there are days-

ASTRID: Most grotesque. But yes, continue.

STEERFORTH: I aim to anticipate the pain of the next day with a focused calm.

ASTRID: Don't your dreamspheres translate anxiety into exuberance?

STEERFORTH: Not always.

ASTRID: Can't you trick them into uniformity?

STEERFORTH: I've never figured out how. That's why I'm here.

ASTRID: I understand. Continue.

STEERFORTH: If I know that what awaits me in the physical realm is likely to sting me, then I should level my before-sleep agitations to avoid being overly jostled come morning.

ASTRID: Turns me on. Twists my horizons. (STEWART enters)

STEWART: Shall we all go for an outing?

STEERFORTH: There's an outside?

STEWART: Well perhaps not one that is “tangible” by your standards, but an outside regardless. One that is sure to introduce some foreign sensations to your spheres.

STEERFORTH: I’m not entirely sure I have spheres Stewart.

STEWART: Here you do. “Out of soil, out of habitual conceptualization of cogitation.” A saying between Astrid and I. Speaking of which, has Astrid given you her present?

STEERFORTH: I’m sure she has, she just hasn’t labeled it as such.

STEWART: Ah yes. I’m sure several surprises have streamed you by. I should really revisit my metaphysical barometer.. it might help us in mediating the gap.

STEERFORTH: Ah let the gap grow, we’ll treat it as a fourth companion.

STEWART: A feisty companion indeed! Ah, do you hear that? Astrid’s soul-elements are beckoning towards us.

STEERFORTH: Should we go to her or should she come to us?

STEWART: Let us close our eyes and let our supposed biologies carry us. (They begin to walk in a continuous circle- they walk offstage, then enter again, then exit again, about eight times until finally STEWART arrives onstage, without STEERFORTH.)

STEWART: And so ends our partnership.

(ASTRID enters)

ASTRID: A fragrant death that pulsates forever and now I have motivation to sink into a very certain abyss.

STEWART: Vary your methodology.

ASTRID: And so I will speak. And not in the language I was born of, but that which was launched past all thought, all grids, all feelings, and into my palm, where I can cradle the puddle of all that has been. And my arse twitches. And the staleness crawls, and the lushness is never a certainty. Dread variance. I must now welcome your dark splendors. And so the word exits the wound.

(A final dream. STEERFORTH returns to the void shirtless and covered in symbols.)

STEERFORTH: A coughing up of all that smells of a belonging. The robes torn and burnt, the shadows plucked and glossed. A seeking shucked from the coil, left to ferment in the marble cylinders procured for us by the

goblins that sprouted from a cut in the void. Unregarded by human voices. A succulent swelling of a triangular heart thrice removed from the dust that governs our.

ASTRID: I can't quite grasp the death of structure.

STEWART: But certainly you can feel me coming towards you.

ASTRID: Sure. That much is registered.

STEERFORTH: A picture of my heartbreak goes a little something like-

STEWART: A flipped avocado. Caked with soil.

STEERFORTH: In the sun.

ASTRID: Wrong. There's a midnight within me.

STEERFORTH: Nothing good happens at midnight. Why do you insist on pointing towards it?

ASTRID: The truth has been known to live there.

STEWART: Repugnant sentiment.

STEERFORTH: There, an owl! Fragment of chaos!

STEWART: How we lay mute in such moments.

ASTRID: Such is our nature.

STEERFORTH: We won't get into it.

STEWART: No. We shan't get into it. For we have most different natures.

STEERFORTH: Most different.

ASTRID: Quit convincing yourselves of that, we're cut from the same void.

STEERFORTH: Who ever knew that I was the one who.

STEWART: Cryptic ejaculation or premature exploration?

STEERFORTH: Who ever knew that I was the one who.

ASTRID: A thronging of forests, fed into a maze.

STEWART: I'll freeze your image and lock it in an ancient cabinet.

ASTRID: What dedication, what drive!

STEWART: A picture of his heartbreak goes a little something like.

STEERFORTH: A cactus, tied to a revelation.

ASTRID: Tied to a woman.

STEWART: Dressed all in clay.

ASTRID: There's always been intrigue. But never truth.

STEWART: I abhor the singularity of truth.

STEERFORTH: I abhor these harbingers of wicked sensations!

ASTRID: I abhor memory, it implies a lack of mastery.

ALL: We're all quite particular. And we're all quite numb. (ASTRID and STEWART exit.)

STEERFORTH: Annotations of a grid dipped in lime. A cosmic general's bride translated into seashells, the shining of a triangular moon upon her. A fresh box of metallic string is left for her each morning. The elves bustle as they prepare their star-stew. A triptych of flesh, painted by an astrologer after his leg is gnawed off by a winged bear. A badger in infinite space, gnawing at the blueprints he tears from the ancient walls squeezed between the air molecules. A toddler removes his "I" with a pair of wooden tweezers and is immediately scooped up by the obsidian hand of Time. A prison window vomits an arm covered in chemical notation. A boulder counts his horizons and melts into the Earth. A severed breast teaches me geometry as a lake kills itself with spears sewn from a nymph's eyelids. My lover from a distant dimension watches with a sundial and a lamp tucked inside her cabinets. Astrid. Astrid. I'll never ask why.

End of play.