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# ESCHATON

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or, (*ihr* | *wir*)

*for* Five Actors, Prerecorded Flute, Five Prerecorded Synthesizers *and* Fixed Media

TEXT

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## NOTES FOR THE INTERPRETERS

**Forces:** ① This work is to be interpreted by **five actors**, each made distinct in the text by **color**. The capitalized text in red is to be **prerecorded**, per the **Recording Guide for Flute, Synthesizers, and Red Text**, and played back in dialogue during performance, with each sound file titled **RED\_TEXT\_( line number between 01 and 23 )**.

**Interpretation:** ① **Line breaking** indicates the flow of semantic ideas. **Unbroken lines**, whether they are shared by several actors or spoken by an actor alone, indicate a **unified, continuous thought**. **Broken lines** indicate a **brief pause**; not a full beat, but a breath. **Double indents** indicate a kind of non-semantic break, which may be interpreted freely in **silence, modal change, scene change**, or any others. **Ellipses** indicate a meaningful silence. ② **Text enclosed in parentheses** is not spoken, but the actions described within are **staged** as the text is projected before the audience. Note the color assignment of character still applies within parenthetical text.

**Media:** ① **Each text projection** is accompanied by the fixed tracks which are prerecorded per the **Recording Guide**, with each sound file titled after the first **three to ten words** of its associated text direction.

ESCHATON

or, ( ihr | wir )  
Hlynn

lied to. ( here, in a place as old as any other, saw a child in battle. their claw deep in a quarter of bread, barked at, bare toe nails scraping the jagged concrete like a knife testing crust. ) it happened. no reason to believe it didn’t. trust. hunger. and if blame, then forgiven. gentleness insofar as the deserved pain is felt. the retributive anxiety. ( every word interrupted by a cough or wheeze of lungs damaged by small pieces of metal, carcinogen, and psychoactives. ) lied to. no reason to believe it didn’t.

Thread, she speaks. In knots.

Das älteste Wort in der ältesten Sprache ist „Ama“.  
Es ist Sumerisch und bedeutet „Mutter“.  
Ich fand das immer herzerreißend:  
Solange es eine aufgezeichnete Sprache gibt,

*It’s been seventeen years.  
Anything?  
I’m to trace the very edge of the tip of my third finger  
From the center of your forehead, just below the hairline, to the space between your eyebrows;  
A becoming your profile of my finger;  
As to maintain precise pressure from your hair to the underside of your chin,  
Taking care after the brow, nose, the lips,  
And then to grab one side of the jaw to each of my hands,  
To torque my wrists towards me,  
To see your eyes reflect the sky, and the sky your eyes, as the ocean to its superior?  
And you would have me speak?  
Sixteen years.  
no reason to believe it didn’t.*

ist „Ama“.  
Es ist Sumerisch und bedeutet „Mutter“.

WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER  
You.  
And the leaves.

lied. insofar as the deserved. was there a vision they had? ( yes, beneath the bridge, with a stranger. a needle in the arm, the Mutter slashing with her voice through the forehead. ) you worried. you should be. trust. hunger. ( and there was blood on their mouth in the mirror, the pinks and purples and triteness of it all in a fog around her face, her voice. ) jesus, her voice, right at the front. they could feel it in their blood, like tar. maybe they lived. maybe they lived it. trust. you should be.

( It’s you in the back, who raps on my shoulder and draws me through the doors; Who passes me through before I can catch up with you. You’re in the rain, you’re smiling. ) I’ve never seen someone . . . ( You raise your eyebrows and laugh, you gesture. I sit in the door. Light’s drawn through the mist in colors over your head, beneath the canopy, and as they play around you, on you, with you - )  
I am too . . .  
I was . . .

Thread,

AND WHEN YOU CAN’T REMEMBER ME  
I was . . .  
And the leaves . . .  
AND WHEN YOU HEAR,  
SPEAK,  
NO FORM  
I’ve never seen someone . . .  
NO FORM  
I was . . .  
AND WHEN YOU  
I am too . . .  
NO FORM

Solange es eine aufgezeichnete Sprache gibt,  
Solange es Sprache gibt,  
Es gibt Familien,  
Kinder.  
Ich fand das immer herzerreißend.  
Die Kinder weinen,  
Sie weinen, weil etwas fehlt.  
Sie rufen „Ama“, sie wissen nicht, was es bedeutet.  
Immer herzerreißend.  
Für sie bedeutet es „Schmerz“.  
Es bedeutet „helf mir“.  
„Etwas stimmt nicht“,  
„Ama“,  
„Etwas fehlt“,  
„Ama“, „Ama“,  
„helf mir“,  
„Ama“,  
„Etwas fehlt“.

you were told it looked like they had murdered someone. ( old bits of blood and wall all over the sheets, ) like tar. ( and there was blood on their mouth in the mirror. ) their teeth. ( naked and heaving with pieces of body and wall down the lips, the chin, ) *the jaw to each of my hands*. ( the claw, deep. a child. ) ( a child. the Mutter. )

*It's been sixteen years.*

she

speaks.

( you, somewhere as old as any other, ) was there a vision? ( climbing out of the box, claw deep in a quarter of bread, locked eyes. he barked. ) „Etwas fehlt“. ( arms were buried in the shoulders, the axillae, and electromagnetic energy repelled. on the jagged concrete, hurt like hell, ) no reason to believe it didn't. „Etwas stimmt nicht“. ( then a palm became a forehead, fingers became the *inferior incisors*, )

*And you would have me speak?*  
*As my palm learns the bone of your forehead, and my fingers the roots of your hair,*  
*My left index exposing the red beneath your right eye,*  
*My left fifth tracing the skyline of your inferior incisors,*  
*Grazing the lips, thank god.*  
*Finally.*  
*It's been seventeen months.*  
*You speak in knots through the fifth*  
*As I'm to oscillate between pressure of skin and pressure of bone.*  
*You look up,*  
*Waved her head,*  
*Looking at each other like that*

WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER  
Thread,  
And the Mutter.  
NO FORM

( the *inferior incisors* became the superior, with his cheek in the way. ) perhaps not. but the child wishes. the Kind would have it go differently. „Etwas fehlt“. ( but neither the bread nor the old blood. these were there, right in front of them. ) no reason to believe. it didn't. *And you would have me . . .*

*fourteen years and seventeen months.*

she

*And you would have me* speaks.

. . .

I am too . . .  
( climbing out of the ) . . .

( I am beneath the canopy with you, swinging. ) And one of us tells the other that we're stargazing, and that the white specks pecking through the green are the ones we're meant to see. ( If you tell me, it's sincere. If I tell you, I'm guessing what *you would have me* say. And the rocking is so gentle, ) perhaps you only notice by the movement of my shoulder against yours, ( reaching for a motion beyond our control. ) Your hair is red . . .  
No . . .

Black . . .  
No . . .  
And I have read these rhythms to you before . . .  
Maybe . . .  
Your hair, it was . . .  
I was too . . .

YOU WERE TOO  
YES  
AND THE-  
And the rainbow, it was still there.  
The light that she . . .  
When I . . .  
In the rain . . .  
YES  
You're - She's smiling. I've never seen someone . . .  
AND WHEN YOU CAN'T,  
EXPLAIN IT  
WILL YOU?  
I am too . . .  
WHILE YOU CAN'T,  
WILL YOU?  
YOU ARE TOO  
We . . .

in

„Not“, die Kinder weinen,  
„Ich habe Not“,  
Aber das ist nicht das, was sie weinen.  
Wie könnten sie,  
Wenn ihr Bedürfnis zu dringend ist, Zeit mit Sprache zu verschwenden?  
Aber du zwingst sie.  
Die Kinder werden zum Sprechen gezwungen.  
Ohne Mitgefühl erzwingst du Sprache.  
Du kannst ihr Weltbild nicht sehen,  
Du weigerst dich.  
Also rufen sie „Ama“.  
Das ist alles, was sie tun können.

I was . . .  
We are . . .

*And you speak knots to me,  
As though you would have me untie.*  
WILL YOU?  
*After eleven years?*  
WILL YOU zwingen me?  
Zwingen my fifth beyond the incisors to the rear muscles of the tongue,  
*To find the knots,  
Assess them with my smallest digit . . .  
As though you would have . . .  
As though I could untie?  
Would you?  
After seventeen . . .  
No.  
It cannot be done.  
Whether you would have me or not,  
It cannot be done.  
And I will not do it.  
Not with my hand on the back of your tongue.  
Not with the heel pressing into the front lower teeth,  
Not while they open, my elbows became your shoulders.  
You . . . We would have it go differently.  
It cannot be done.  
no reason.  
it didn't.  
no reason to believe.  
After twenty - seven years,  
my hand became your jaw,  
In the second before you untie yourselves.*

lied. ( the blood on the bread, the wall on the sheets. ) lied to. ( like they had murdered someone. ) this time they ran, ( no reason. ) the beard of their assailant brushed the back of their neck and their bare toe nails scraped the concrete, ( like a knife testing crust. ) their vision? lied to. ( the Mutter's voice slicing through the blood and the sheets. ) lied to. no reason. if anxiety, then retributive. ( the old bits of crumb and wall and blood on their chin, ) it was good. they don't want you to worry. it was all good. ( and they cleaned themselves before they paid in cash. they told you that though they looked like a wild animal in the mirror, they could wash away the wall. it was all down the drain as easily as it fell onto the chin. they told you they ate together after, paid in cash. ) and it was all good. no reason.

Immer herzzzerreißend.

*And you speak,*

Ich fand das.

*After five days.*

Die Mutter.

*And you would have me speak.*

Ich fand das.

*No.*

Die Kiefer flattern, die Lippen . . .

*No. It cannot be done.*

Ich fand das.

EXPLAIN IT  
WHILE YOU CAN'T  
I was . . .  
WILL YOU?

*No.* There was . . .

There is no rainbow through the green. Its time was beneath, a different one, *almost four years ago*. ( There is only the light we are meant to see. ) So you say. ( So you say as you pull my lips onto the glass between us, ) you; somewhere above me. But I feel nothing. Not your lips. Not the glass. Nothing. Not your warmth. But you are right next to me? ( There, in the back. It's you. Smiling, in the rain. Smiling, beneath the green. Smiling, beneath only the stars we are meant to see. They're drawn in mist around you. ) You are so . . . Yes. You are so . . . Yes. You are so . . .  
And I . . .

EXPLAIN IT  
NO FORM  
WHEN YOU SPEAK  
*No.* Form.

( Form in your lips on the glass between us. Form in these rhythms I have read to you before. Form in the stars we are meant to see. Form in the canopy, in the movement of my shoulder against yours. Form in the light drawn through the mist in colors over your head. ) It was red . . .

*No.*

Your hair, it was brown - Light brown.

*No.*

Please, it was . . .  
Black, it was . . .

*No.*

All, it was all of them. It was all of them. It was all.

No.

NO

Who are you?  
Tell me who you are.  
All of you.  
I don't know you.  
My god, I don't know any of you . . .

. . .

. . .

. . .

die Lippen

. . .

Die Kiefer flattern, die Lippen

. . .

Die Kiefer flattern, die Lippen klammern sich unbeholfen aneinander,  
Und sie weinen immer noch.  
Und die Mutter sagt: „Ich bin es.  
Sie haben einen neuen Namen für mich erfunden.  
Ich bin Ama.”  
Du bist zur Not geworden.  
Du bist zu Bedürfnis geworden.  
Du bist Hunger geworden.  
Du bist Schmerz geworden.  
Du bist das Fehltetwas.  
Nicht Ama. Nur die Mutter.

and was it all good? Yes. all. it was No. what did they tell you? the bread, the claw, the blood, the tar, the wall, her voice. Anything? the Mutter. even the Ama.  
here, in a place as old as any other, maybe you saw it. maybe they lived. but lied to. no reason to believe. not even a reason. maybe you will see them again, and  
they will be the one to tell you. maybe you will believe it, hearing it from them. because you always believe them. no reason not to. no reason to believe it didn't.

Nein. Du bist nicht Hunger,  
Oder Bedürfnis, oder Not, oder Schmerz.  
Ja, etwas fehlt.  
Du bist nicht die Mutter.  
Es tut mir so leid, du bist nicht meine Mutter.  
Du bist ihr.  
Und ich bin wir.

We are . . .  
YES  
And they are . . .  
. . .

Das älteste Wort in der ältesten Sprache ist „Ama“.  
Es ist Sumerisch und bedeutet „Mutter“.

Explain it?  
While you can't?  
Will you?  
NO  
I WILL NOT BE COLD WITH YOU  
BUT WHILE I CAN'T  
IF I CAN'T  
THEN I CAN'T  
Will you? I am too . . .

Will you?  
...  
Will you?  
...  
Will you?

Thread, she

*It cannot be done.  
And in seventeen years,  
In eleven minutes,  
In thirty - five days,  
Now.  
Right now.  
I will collect the top part of your skull from the east,  
And I will collect your lower jaw from the west,  
Just as you would have me.  
And I will not speak.  
I will hold you together with my hands again,  
And I will remember your eyes as the ocean,  
And mine as the sky.  
Your hair, it was white.  
Yes.  
It was white.*

speaks. In knots.

Thread, she speaks. In knots.

( 我不会说话,

也听不懂。

但为了你, 我会努力的。)



## AFTERWORD

At autumn's conclusion in the yards and forests of upstate New York, gone forever are countless foliages of the native angiosperms. In the coming spring their replacements of similar shape, color, and kind will readorn the limbs, the soil, the stems, and perhaps thus be considered descendants, rebirths, reincarnations of the previous winter's dead. But the cycle of progeny is of no similarity to the growth, discard, and replacement of the leaf. So how does this dead end become a cycle in one's perception of a plant, and how does the land swallow up its evidence?

How, in the Treaty of Big Tree, does the annihilation of the Iroquois Confederacy become a transfer of land, a leg of the civilization inhabiting current-day Rochester's evolution? How is the stark, immediate cutting-off of an object of ancestry, origin, language, food, dance, paint, sculpture, architecture, music, magic, transfigured to an interpolation, a lineage, a passing-torch between peoples? As the murderers kill their own in turn, an abolitionism becomes a segregation, becomes a gentrification, a stratification of the human beings entitled to home ownership and corporate office work, from those treated as less-than-animal in their relegation to rental housing or, worse yet, the undersides of tarps, bridges, and refrigerator boxes. From whom do these metamorphoses come? Certainly not from time, and certainly not from the motion and collision of animal bodies.

The Lampyridae population's waxing and waning down the belt of the American East Coast; the spectrum of the Milky Way's visibility between lightbulb-lit cities and moonlit forests; my old friends and lovers speak of our memories together in terms of proximity, as though assessing how easily the miles between our moments could be retravelled in a blue van heading pastward along an interstate. Are these stories we are told? Perhaps. Are they stories we tell ourselves? Most likely. But despite its cruel fiction, I can find within myself no shame towards the comfort I take drawing an arbitrary procession from genesis to eschaton. And I can find no untruth in a coupling of the widening of space with the persistence of time.