

***NeckFace* Performance Script and Notes | April 2004**

compiled by Arlene Ducao
spoken/recorded text (except that in parentheses) by Rumi.
parenthetical recorded text by Arlene.

Cast:

N... David Briggs
E... Edward Kulzer
P... Arlene Ducao

Scene 1 (~5 min, recorded sound)

0.00-2.00

*P enters from right and places a bowl on BURG. The bowl contains a closed white jar.
P exits.*

2.00-5.00

N enters, scowling, with tense and furtive movement. He is holding a bowl of chopped up, earth-colored plasticene. He kneels in front of BED. There is a cutout bird lying on top of BED. Using the bird as a template, he hastily sculpts each chunk of plasticene into a crude representation of the cutout. He places the crude sculptures on and around BED. Meanwhile, sound using N's recorded voice is played.

N (*recorded*):

sometimes i forget completely what companionship is.
unconscious and insane, i spill sad energy anywhere.
my story gets told in various ways:
a romance
a dirty joke
a war
a vacancy.
Divide up my forgetfulness to any number--
it will go around.
These dark suggestions that I follow,
are they part of some plan?
Friends, be careful--
don't come near me out of curiosity, or sympathy.

N stands, takes his bowl, and scurries to hide between the two towers of BUILDING.

Scene 2 (~5 min, recorded sound)

0.00-1.30

E enters from left and crosses the entire stage. He turns around and rambles onto the stage in wonder, examining each sculpture. He walks behind BIRDS, and then emerges from the hanging cutouts as his recorded voice is played. He is holding up his bowl, which contains two large

chunks of white plasticene. As his voice is heard, E crosses to BED, kneeling behind it. Using the bird template, he carefully sculpts two detailed representations of the cutout.

E (*recorded*):

If my human throat were not so narrow,
I would praise you as you should be praised,
in some language other than this
word-language,
but a domestic chicken is not a falcon.
We must mix the varnish we have
and brush it on. (*Pause*)
Why this distracted talk?
It's not my fault I rave--
you did this.
Do you approve of my love-madness?

Scene 3 (~5 min, recorded sound)

N emerges from BUILDING and confrontationally stands in front of E. Just as E is about to rise, N drops into a sitting position and starts to maniacally sculpt more crude sculptures with the plasticene in his own bowl. A little dazed, E returns to sculpting his own clay.

Voices (*recorded*):

Your presence draws me out from vanity
and imagination
and opinion.
Awe is the salve that will heal our eyes--
and keen, constant listening.
Stay out in the open like a date palm
lifting its arms.
Don't bore mouse holes in the ground
arguing inside some doctrinal labyrinth.
That intellectual warp and woof keeps you
wrapped in blindness,
and four other characteristics keep you from loving.
They are four birds-- you must chop the heads off those
mischief-birds:
The Rooster of Lust
The Peacock of Wanting to Be Famous
The Crow of Ownership
and The Duck of Urgency.
(We gloried in immolation)
(we used each other as temples of solace)
(our bodies clung, tangled)
(too desperate to know we were drowning)
(into a gorge blinding our already blinded eyes)
(with airy blackness)
(blankness)
Kill them and revive them in another form,
changed and harmless.

E stands and places his sculptures in the compartments of BUILDING. N jumps over to crouch in front of BURG. E walks behind BURG (facing N), holding the plastic bird cutout. A long elastic string attaches a hardened bird sculpture to the plastic cutout. N grabs cutout, which E holds on to the hard sculpture bird. E and N go back to work, pantomiming obsessive, mechanistic hand movements on the two birds.

Voices (recorded):

There is a duck inside you.
Her bill is never still,
searching through dry and wet alike,
like the robber in an empty house cramming objects in his sack,
pearls, chickpeas,
anything
always thinking: There's No
Time!
I won't get another chance!

E stands and tugs his bird, using this end of the elastic to try to pull N into a standing position. At first, N is resistant, even scared, but then he stands. Changing tactics, N becomes more of the pursuer in a courtship/seduction dance. N approaches it rather coolly, which E is continually drawn in. The sound crescendoes until it reaches a loud climax. By this time, N and E are facing each other, still holding their ends of the elastic, each at an opposite end of BURG.

As the recorded voices start to speak again, N and E slowly slowly come toward each other, wrapping their wrists in the elastic-- a sort of hand-fastening. E takes the bowls with the white jar, sets it on the floor, and crouches next to it. He opens the jar and pours out a bunch of white pills. He eats one. At this point, N is now next to E. N crouches, and E feeds him a pill. E then tries to feed N the hard bird. N opens his mouth to take it.

Voices (recorded):

A True Person is more calm and deliberate.
He or she doesn't worry about interruptions.
But that duck is so afraid of missing out
that its lost all generosity, and
frighteningly expanded its capacity to take on more
food.

Suddenly, N seems to snap out of the reverie. He jumps up and away from E.

Scene 4 (~ 5 min, live sound)

N shakes the elastic off his wrist. Having jumped off the performance mat, N is a little bewildered. Looking at the audience for the first time, N refuses to look at E.

N (speaking live):

A true person is more calm and deliberate.
He or she doesn't worry about interruptions.

Shocked, E addresses N.

E (speaking live):

There's a worm--

N:
But that duck--

E:
There's a worm addicted to--

N:
But that duck is so afraid of missing out.

Pause.

E:
A domestic chicken is not a falcon.
This is how a human being can change--

N (*speaking condescendingly over E, walking over to BUILDING*):
But that duck is so afraid of missing out
that it's lost all generosity
and frighteningly expanded its capacity to take on more food.

E (*speaking furiously over N, following him*):
There's a worm addicted to eating grape seeds.
Suddenly, he wakes up--
call it grace, whatever--
he wakes up, and he's no longer a worm.
He's the entire vineyard, and the orchard too,
the fruit, the trunks,
A growing wisdom and joy that doesn't need to devour!

N:
Why this distracted talk?
A true person is more calm and deliberate.

E:
Why this distracted talk?
It's not my fault I rave--
You did this.

N (suddenly very angry):
WHY THIS DISTRACTED TALK?
IT'S NOT MY FAULT I RAVE--
YOU DID THIS!

E (pleading):
You *did* this.

N slides between the two towers of BUILDING.

E:
Do you approve of my love madness?

Scene 5 (~ 3 minutes)

Deflated and dejected, E walks to the pill bowl and kicks it hard. Pills scatter everywhere. E walks to BED. He starts hurling objects at it-- the elastic, clay. He rips up his sculptures and hurls the pieces at BED, all the while saying...

E (live)
I made this for you
(repeat over and over)

N crawls from out of the BUILDING to a microphone on the ground. He speaks into the microphone, and the animation being projected on BIRD responds.

N (live):
This is how a human being can change:
There's a worm addicted to eating grape seeds.
Suddenly, he wakes up--
call it grace, whatever--
he wakes up, and he's no longer a worm.
He's the entire vineyard, and the orchard too,
the fruit, the trunks,
A growing wisdom and joy that doesn't need to devour.

N crawls under the birds, and offstage.

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